

The Critique of Nishida Kitarô by Sôda Kiichirô:  
A Metaphysical Issue  
左右田喜一郎對西田幾多郎的批判：  
一個形上學的問題

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**關鍵詞：**西田幾多郎、左右田喜一郎、梅洛-龐帝、場所邏輯、拓樸學邏輯、形上學、認識論、心理學、虛無、自我覺醒、意識、超越、創作

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## Abstract

In 1927 Nishida Kitarô wrote a response to the critique of Sôda Kiichirô, represents an unprecedented occasion to rebuild, in a suggestive way, his "topological logic" – an expression to be discussed in this paper –, in particular concerning the quirks of a certain kind of metaphysics. More positively, it helps us to cast some light on his understanding of the history of German Philosophy since Kant.

Taking this essay as a cornerstone, I would like to take the opportunity to synthetize, in English, the core of my interpretation in this field, centred on the distinction between ontology, mêt-ontology, and logic, if not metaphysics, of absolute nothingness. What is more, I will interrelate certain schemes in Nishida and Merleau-Ponty, especially the idea of "making".

I focus here on the first two sections of the essay, as I attempt to untangle the intricate conceptual relations between self-awakening and nothingness. Firstly, I explore the significant shift from epistemology to psychology, casting a new light on the relation of Nishida to metaphysics. Secondly, I reconsider his idea of overcoming ontology, distinguishing what I call "a first sketch of topologization".

## 摘要

一九二七年，西田幾多郎提筆對左右田喜一郎的批評做出回應，代表他首度以暗示的方式重建他的拓樸學邏輯——筆者會討論這個說法——尤其關係到某種形上學的詭辯。更正面的一點，這篇文章幫助我們釐清他對自康德以降的德國哲學史的理解。

以這篇文章為基礎，筆者有意透過這個機會，以英語綜合整理個人在這個領域的詮釋之核心，亦即以絕對虛無的本體論和邏輯之間的差異為主軸。此外，筆者將找出西田幾多郎和梅洛龐帝某些方法之間的關係，尤其是針對「創作」這個觀念。

筆者專注探討這篇文章的前兩部分，企圖解開自我覺醒和虛無之間錯綜複雜的概念性關係。首先，筆者會探討從認識論到心理學的巨大改變，重新釐清西多郎和形上學的關係。其次，筆者會重新思考西多郎「征服本體論」的觀念，凸顯出我所謂「拓樸化的初步輪廓」。

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

In a celebrated essay, Nishida Kitarô (西田幾多郎 1870-1945)<sup>2</sup> had to defend himself against a critique of his freshly born "logic". He had discussed it one year before, in 1926, in the founding essay "The Place". The year itself was a symbolical one, the last of the Taishô, and the first of the Shôwa era.<sup>3</sup> Sôda Kiichirô (左右田喜一郎 1881-1927), a banker, economist and scholar in Neo-Kantian Philosophy, described it as "metaphysical", and coined for the occasion the expression "Nishida Philosophy" (西田哲学 *Nishida tetsugaku*).<sup>4</sup>

Unfortunately, Sôda died in 1927, at the dawn of the development of the "topologizing logic". However, his tremendous critique was followed, three years

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1 This paper, in two parts, is the result of two conferences. 1) "「蕪雑なる私の論文 *Buzatsunaru watashi no ronbun* [My Muddled Essay]」 Topological Logic and Metaphysics by Nishida Kitarô," given in 2013, December 4, for the 102<sup>nd</sup> Soochow University Lectures in Philosophy, First Semester (Cristal Huang), Taipei. 2) "Place and Metaphysics. Nishida Kitarô's Response to Sôda Kiichirô, and correspondence with Mutai Risaku," Team Research Project: "Comparative Research on History of Ideas concerning Japanese Buddhism" (Sueki Fumihiko), International Research Center for Japanese Studies, Kyôto, 2014/01/11. I will sometimes refer to the discussions that followed these conferences. I would like here to thank all the persons and institutions that help me to realize this paper.

2 Nishida Kitarô, "Sôda hakase ni kotau" ["Responding to Doctor Sôda"], published in *Tetsugaku kenkyû* [Philosophical Research] (April, 1927), pp. 1-40, **hereafter "S.H.K.,"** republished in *Hataraku mono kara miru mono e* [From the Seer to the Seen] (1927), Takada Atsushi, Klaus Riesenhuber, Kôsaka Kunitsugu et Fujita Masakatsu (eds.), *Nishida Kitarô zenshû* [Complete Works of Nishida Kitarô] (Tôkyô: Iwanami, 2003), vol. III, pp. 479-504, **hereafter N.K.Z.,** III, pp. 479-504.

3 Nishida Kitarô, "Basho" ["Place"], *Tetsugaku kenkyû* [Philosophical Research] (June, 1926), pp. 1-99, republished in *Hataraku mono kara miru mono e* [From the Seer to the Seen] (1927), N.K.Z., III, pp. 415-477. The Taishô era (大正 30/7/1912-25/12/1926), and Shôwa era (昭和 25/12/1926-7/1/1989).

4 Sôda Kiichirô, "Nishida tetsugaku no hôhô ni tsuite Nishida hakashi no oshie o kou" [Asking Doctor Nishida for Some Lights about the Method of Nishida Philosophy], *Tetsugaku kenkyû* [Philosophical Research] (October, 1926), pp. 1-30. Cf. Yusa Michiko, *Zen & Philosophy. An Intellectual Biography of Nishida Kitarô* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), pp. 205-209.

later, by the theoretical challenge of Tanabe Hajime (田邊元 1885-1962), denouncing this logic as contemplative, involving a kind of Plotinian emanationism,<sup>5</sup> and, two years later, by the philosophical pamphlet of Tôsaka Jun (戸坂潤 1900-1945), taking it as an idealism, representative of "bourgeois academism", from a Marxist point of view.<sup>6</sup> Tôsaka imposed the labels "Tanabe Philosophy" (田邊哲学 *Tanabe tetsugaku*) and "Kyôto School Philosophy" (京都学派哲学 *Kyôto gakuha no tetsugaku*).<sup>7</sup> Additionally, we might argue that the Kyôto School, historically born with Nishida, really achieved its dialectical form within the frame of this tense dialogue.

The critique by Sôda, concerning essentially, as Nishida himself recapitulates, the "metaphysical" interpretation of the idea of place,<sup>8</sup> is thus pivotal for the elaboration of this representative moment of contemporary "Japanese Philosophy".<sup>9</sup> What is more, it represents by itself one of the best direct introductions to Nishida's thought. For this one, driven here to the brink for an answer, in an open academic debate, distantly echoing the *Objections* and *Réponses* of Descartes, and despite his humble appreciation of "The Place" as "My muddled essay", wrote here one of the rare texts where he develops his

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5 Tanabe Hajime, "Nishida sensei no oshie o aogu" ["Requesting Professor Nishida's Elucidation"], *Tetsugaku kenkyû* [*Philosophical Research*] (May, 1930), pp. 1-40, republished in Nishitani Keiji, Shimomura Toratarô et al. (eds), *Tanabe Hajime zenshû* [*Complete Works of Tanabe Hajime*] (Tôkyô: Chikuma, 1963), vol. IV, pp. 303-328.

6 Tôsaka Jun, "Kyôto gakuha no tetsugaku" ["Kyôto School Philosophy"], *Keizai ôrai* (Sept., 1932), republished in *Tosaka Jun zenshû* [*Complete Works of Tosaka Jun*] (Tôkyô: Keisô, 1966), vol. III, pp. 171-176.

7 Yusa Michiko, *Zen & Philosophy*, *loc. cit.*, pp. 231-232, p. 250.

8 "S.H.K.," p. 503. See the text, quoted at the end of the present study.

9 For a presentation of Japanese Philosophy, in English, see James W. Heisig, Thomas P. Kasulis, John C. Maraldo (eds.), *Japanese Philosophy: A Sourcebook* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2011). In French, see Michel Dalissier, Nagai Shin et Sugimura Yasuhiko (eds.), *Philosophie japonaise: Le néant, le monde et le corps* (Paris: Vrin, 2013). Presentation (radio broadcast in French) in "Philosophie japonaise: l'école de Kyôto" (2013 November 15), *Les nouveaux chemins de la connaissance*, une émission d'Adèle Van Reeth, avec Michel Dalissier et Sugimura Yasuhiko, réalisation: Nicolas Berger (<http://www.franceculture.fr/emission-les-nouveaux-chemins-de-la-connaissance-philosophie-japonaise-l-ecole-de-kyoto-2013-11-15>).

arguments so clearly, searching "the root giving the reason why the critique took place" (批評の由つて起こる根底 *hihyô no yotte okoru kontei*). At the same time one might call it a work of dazzling clarity, because it does not divulge the coming "refinements" (精錬 *seiren*),<sup>10</sup> and increasing complexities, of his still young and immature "logic".

Still, it furnishes us some remarkable insights on this abstruse thought. Accordingly, in the present study, in two parts, I will not undertake a description of Sôda Philosophy, or survey his historical and general intellectual relation with Nishida. I will rather take up "Nishida philosophy", as it was exposed in this polemical context, and enlighten its fundamental straits. Moreover, I will meditate on it beyond this restricted frame, stress linguistic insights and issues in the history of Western philosophy, and propose in English a synthesis of my interpretation of this domain.<sup>11</sup>

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10 "S.H.K.," p. 479.

11 In French, See M. Dalissier, "La pensée de l'unification" ["The Thought of Unification"], in Jacynthe Tremblay (ed.), *Philosophes japonais contemporains*, (Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 2010), "Sociétés et cultures de l'Asie," pp. 109-123, "La topologie philosophique. Un essai d'introduction à Nishida Kitarô" ["Philosophical Topology. An Attempt to introduce Nishida Kitarô"], *Les Archives de philosophie*, (Paris: Centre Sèvres, 2008), tome 71/cahier 4, pp. 631-668. In Japanese, M. Dalissier, "Nishida tetsugaku ni tsuite no ronjutsu no kokoromi" ["An Attempt to Expose Nishida Philosophy"], *Yearbook of Nishida Philosophical Association* (Kahoku: Nishida Philosophical Association, July 2010), no. 7, pp. 119-140, "Nishida tetsugaku – kaishaku no dokuji essei" ["Nishida Philosophy – An Original Essay of Interpretation"], *Cultural Configurations in Modern Asia*, Collected Papers of the International Symposium (2010/11/20-21) (Kyoto: Graduate School of Letters, Doshisha University, 2010), pp. 79-86 (Chinese translation, *ibid.*, pp. 231-236). In English, I only treat until now the subject in an ancient study, in relation to analytic philosophy: see M. Dalissier, "Unification and Emptiness in Predication. The Stoics, Frege, Quine, Strawson, Nishida Kitarô; History of Logic under a Topological Enlightenment," *Philosophia Osaka* (Osaka: Philosophia Osaka, March 2007), no. 2, pp. 19-42.

## Step 1. Topo-logical Psychology: from "Objective knowledge" to "Self-awakening"

First of all, I need to highlight what is meant by 場所の論理 *bashoteki ronri*, an expression I will translate as "topological logic", or better "topologizing logic", a decision arrived at within the context of a recent debate. This topology is neither mathematical nor psychological,<sup>12</sup> and so to avoid the redundancy in speaking of a topo-logical logic, and stress the difference between these topologies, I already used the term "topo-logy" in my first conference mentioned above (see the footnote at the beginning of my introduction). Since then, during an International Symposium at Dôshisha University, Jacynthe Tremblay gave a detailed paper on this topic,<sup>13</sup> stressing the risk to translate *bashoteki* by "topological", because of philological straits concerning Ancient Greek and Japanese, that may engender possible confusions with the mathematical meaning. Another problem is the identification of 場所 and τόπος, to the prejudice of χώρα, in using derivatives of *topos*, emphasized by Augustin Berque, during this symposium. Tremblay suggests using the expressions "*propre au lieu*" [proper to the place], "*topique*" [topical], to translate *bashoteki*, and "*la topo-logique*" for *bashoteki ronri*, an interesting solution, but difficult to adopt in English.

So, in my second conference mentioned above, I added a step 5 to address these problems. As we will see in the second part of this study, Nishida uses for the greatest part *bashotekironri*, and almost not *basho no ronri* or *bashoronri*. We need thus to give full meaning to the particle 的 *teki*. *Bashoteki* grammatically means what possesses the quality, meaning, feature, character, manner of the

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12 See my treatment in Nishida Kitarô, *La science expérimentale suivi de Explications schématiques. Essais de philosophie, III* [*Experimental Science, followed by Schematic Explanations. Philosophical Essays, III*], translated in French (with Ibaragi Daisuké), introduction and commentary by M. Dalissier (Paris: l'Harmattan, 2010), Coll: "L'ouverture philosophique," 401 pages, here pp. 84, 145-149, 267, 270.

13 Jacynthe Tremblay, "Les propos épars de Nishida concernant sa propre logique" ["The Scattered Words of Nishida concerning his own Logic"], Colloque philosophique franco-japonais, Dôshisha University, December 13-14, unpublished.

*basho*. But what does it mean? In the present paper, I will adopt a philosophical interpretation of *teki* as expressing an *operation*, as in "unifying" (統一的 *tôitsuteki*). Interestingly, the Japanese reading is *mato*, expressing a mark, a target.<sup>14</sup> Since there is neither in English, nor in French any satisfying adjectival expression for *bashoteki*, but only "of the place", "topical", "local", "localizing", I will use "topo-logical", or "topo-logizing" rather than "topologized", to translate it, to refer to the already inherent *logical, operating and unifying* features of the place. It is clear that what is "proper" to the place (in the sense of Aristotle *ἰδιον*, and of a particle that I will analyse later: たる *taru*), is that it is logical, operates, and unifies. Moreover, such a place includes its own restructuration, something I will call later "topologization".

Hence, I will keep, following Nishida himself, the expressions "topological logic", or "topologizing logic", despite their eccentricities, to translate *bashoteki ronri*. I prefer it to "*la topo-logique*" (Tremblay), or "topo-logics", because the adjectival and philosophical meaning of *teki* in *bashoteki* is lost in the hyphen. I prefer it to "logic of place" or "*logique du lieu*", because Nishida uses *bashotekironri* rather than *bashoronri* or *basho no ronri*. Such a "topological logic" is 1) *adjectivally characterized by the operations (teki)* of the place: unification, ontologization, wrapping, superposing, condensation, retreat; 2) *logically informed by these operations*. Hence, we must think in terms of accommodating the redundancy rather than rejecting it: "topological logic" expresses the truth that the kind of *logic* involved here is *topological*, the very logic that belongs to the place itself. It could be a logic *of* place, since, in Chinese, 在 de originally indicates this correlation, but in a rather *subjective* meaning of the genitive case, as Nishida also would want it. In sum, in "topological logic", this "logic" is "logical" as a matter of "place".

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14 See M. Dalissier, *Anfractuosité et unification. La philosophie de Nishida Kitarô* [*Anfractuosity and Unification: the Philosophy of Nishida Kitarô*] (Genève: Droz, 2009), Coll. "Hautes études orientales – Extrême-Orient, 11/47," pp. 99, 150, 244, **hereafter, A.U.**, pp. 99, 150, 244.



These general hermeneutical frames exposed, let us come now to the response to the critique by Sôda. The first section of the essay begins by offering a spectacular example of topo-logical opportunism: wanting to know what is knowledge seems a *contradiction*, because a disturbing distance erupts in the genitive knowledge *of* knowledge, an impossibility of the type: "The eye cannot see the eye". Yet, the solution by Nishida, precisely takes occasion of this "circularity", "unavoidable" (避くべからざる循環 *saku bekarazaru junkan*) from the position of "formal logic", and makes a first step into topological logic: "There are several genres *in* (中に於て *naka ni oite*) our knowledge, we can distinguish [in it] successive phases" (次位 *jii*), and "change positions" (立場の推移 *tachiba no suii*). What does this change mean, at first *formally*?

A) This change is not a bare passive "transition" (推) or active "progression" (進めた *susumeta*), but instead conjugates, both in a kind of retreat, a withdrawal, a making room for, in the sense of 避く *saku, sakeru, shirizoku, noku, doku*.

B) Changing consists in moving while "removing" (移), that is "going through adding new positions" (新なる立場を加えて行く *shin naru tachiba o kuwaete yuku*). *Yuku* expresses both the fact of going and disappearing.

C) Topo-logical "transcendence" (超越する *chôetsu suru*) is never "the fact of going out of knowledge".<sup>15</sup> To preserve it from what is metaphysically "transcendent" (超越的に存在するもの *chôetsuteki ni sonzaisuru mono*), as the One or Being, one has to conceive transcendence from within "immanence", as well as self-transcendence, though in a different sense than in Husserl, or Michel Henry: "A self-awakening subject that would not be immanent is a self-contradiction (自家撞着 *jikadôchaku*)."<sup>16</sup> In short there is a "transcendent place" (超越的场所 *chôetsuteki basho*).<sup>16</sup>

15 "S.H.K.," pp. 479-480, 482.

16 "S.H.K.," pp. 486, 495, 499. *A.U.*, pp. 415 ff.

Now, what do these changes mean, in respect to the *content*? Nishida distinguishes accordingly knowledges as follows.

(1) There is objective knowledge as "knowing objectively an object" (対象 *taishô/Gegenstand*), knowing "the world of nature, according to determinative judgment", in the sense of Kant. The "categories of givenness" are here "time, space, and causality". Nevertheless, "objective" already refers to a kind of activity that "objectifies".<sup>17</sup>

(2) Thus, we find "objectifying" (対象化する *taishôka suru*) knowledge, as "reflection on the subjective act", knowing "the finalist world, according to reflexive judgment", or reflexive category. However, we will see that the "act" (作用 *sayô*) is itself "already objectified", presupposes "acting" (作用する *sayô suru*), and thus "making or doing" (する *suru*). As a result, this subjective reflection "already inclines towards the direction of self-awakening form".<sup>18</sup>

(3) Then, we find "critical philosophy", trying to encompass the reciprocal opposition of (1) and (2), where the "world of psychological objects", followed by the "historical world", is always approaching the "form of self-awakening". For sure, such an *encompassing* already refers to "place", and this *approach*, still to be justified, signals the presence of "will".<sup>19</sup> For the moment, it means logically that "subsumptive judgment" encompasses both determinative and reflexive judgments, and this provides us the topo-logical "reason wherein" (所以 *yuen*) the "distinction of determinative and reflexive act of judgment" takes place, —or in Emil Lask's terms, "constitutive and reflexive categories".<sup>20</sup> Besides, these distinctions of (1), (2), and (3) offer us a first sketch of the famous

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17 "S.H.K.," pp. 479, 482, 485.

18 "S.H.K.," pp. 479, 482, 502.

19 "S.H.K.," pp. 479-480, 482, 502. On the ambiguity of critical philosophy, compare pp. 479-480 to 482-483, 498-499.

20 "S.H.K.," pp. 488, 492, 498. See p. 494: "because it stands into (に於てあるが故に *ni oite aru ga yue ni*)."

distinction of the "place of determinate being", "of oppositional nothingness", and "of absolute nothingness", as stated in "The Place",<sup>21</sup> as well as of the mechanistic, biological, and historical worlds, in the late Nishida.<sup>22</sup>

To summarize the argument: the "deepening beyond that point" (以上は深める *ijô wa fukameru*) position, in the double sense of the Latin *altus*: deepening and elevating, would make the circularity disappear. For whence do you know *a circle is vicious?* (in the sense of the French: "*D'où savez-vous/tenez-vous que...?*") You can explain it, logically, yielding definitions; but you cannot understand it. There is not only a logical aporia: "We speak of a circle: but at the very moment we knew it was unavoidable, that matters were simply not returning to the same place. It is only while standing in the same place that it is possible to know we have to return there." This is why *we have to shift the place to speak of logical viciousness; but then it is no more vicious in an absolute sense, hence we have escaped from it.*

One might protest that this shift would represent an *infinite regress*. Yet, this would be to adhere to, or return, to formal logic, and in the end to a "vain sophism" (空虚なる詭弁 *kûkyo naru kiben*).<sup>23</sup> For topo-logical elevation would be conceived of as a mere transition between external levels, such as in "knowledge of knowledge", "form of form", and so on. And such a conception would lead to logical repugnancy, "self-contradiction" (*jikadôchaku*), a vicious character.<sup>24</sup> But the question returns: how do you know it is vicious, apart from any *ad hoc* explanation? In brief: the objection entails a *petitio principii*. It is impossible to know why there is something vicious here: but that is precisely what the opposition requires. As usual in Nishida, a reader of James Royce, a

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21 Nishida Kitarô, "The Place," *loc. cit.*, p. 433.

22 See, for example, Nishida Kitarô, "Rekishiteki sekai ni oite no kobutsu no tachiba" [The Position of the Individual in the Historical World] (1938), *Tetsugaku ronbunshû dai san* [Philosophical Essays, III] (1939), *N.K.Z.*, VIII, pp. 307-366.

23 "S.H.K.," pp. 480-481.

24 "S.H.K.," pp. 480, 485.

fallacious *regressus* must be transformed into an effective *egressus*.<sup>25</sup> However, the motivation for this transformation, contra Bradley, will be topo-logical, and not metaphysical, as in Royce, or mereological, as in McTaggart.<sup>26</sup>

In contrast, "self-awakening" testifies precisely to this position of knowledge, no longer objective, and giving form to an external object, but deepening itself from within: "Self-awakening must reflect itself deeply within itself" (*first definition* of *jikaku* to appear in the essay).<sup>27</sup> What does it mean? Negatively, six things:

1) Self-awakening (自覺 *jikaku*) is not "self-identity" (自己同一 *jikodôitsu*),<sup>28</sup> in a *formal logical sense*. Matching characters, we understand that the unifying self (自) is not reducible to the identity (同一), and awakening (覺), limited to one-self (己).

2) Self-awakening is not, in a negative topo-logical sense, the "self-contradiction" (自家撞着 *jikadôchaku*) of a purely transcendent subject, bringing (着) conflict (撞) *into* its own (自) house (家).

3) We will see that *jikaku* is not to be taken in a classical *psychological* sense, given that it refers topo-logically to an ontological fact.

4) Nonetheless, it would no longer be taken in a classical *metaphysical* sense, because this fact is not "transcendent".<sup>29</sup>

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25 *A.U.*, pp. 174 *ff.*

26 See Frédéric Nef, *Qu'est-ce que la métaphysique? [What is Metaphysics?]* (Paris: Gallimard, 2004), "Folio essais," pp. 589-600. See pp. 442-444, 561.

27 "S.H.K.," p. 481.

28 "S.H.K.," pp. 480, 482.

29 "S.H.K.," pp. 486, 489.

5) We arguably discard also, along with a certain psychological meaning, its *pathological* meaning: for example, when 自覚状態 *jikakujôtai* signifies the state in which a patient can feel by itself his symptoms (pain, anguish, weariness).

6) What is more, *jikaku* is not to be taken here *strictly* in the *Buddhist* meaning of self-enlightenment, as opposed to the action of enlightening another (覺他 *kakuta*). The considerations of alterity and intersubjectivity in *jikaku* will take place after.<sup>30</sup>

One has to remember here the huge tribute Nishida pays to Buddhism, confessed in "The Problem of Japanese Culture": "I would like to consider the idea that there is in Buddhist philosophy (には…があり *ni wa ga ari*) something that is by itself a unique way of seeing and thinking things, and would like to conceive of it as a logic of a self-contradictory identical place, a logic of the heart/spirit (*kokoro*)". However, he refused a few lines before to assimilate his position with "Buddhist philosophy, where one had not advanced beyond that point (では…以上に進まなかった *dewa ... ijô ni susumanakatta*) than simply making the subjective self a central problem."<sup>31</sup> And let us keep in mind that the glyph 進 *jîn* means "to progress" (*susumu*) in Japanese, but also, in Chinese, "being in function", "functioning". In this sense, Buddhist philosophy could not function, work, make its way, at a deeper philosophical level. I will demonstrate later that this idea of making, working (*suru*), is determinant for topology and metaphysics. For the present, the point is: Buddhist philosophy has to be understood *from within* and not *as* topological logic. For sure, "there is something" unique *there*, in here, but that has to be conceived of topo-logically.

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30 Nishida Kitarô, "Watashi to nanji" ["Me and You"] (1932), *Mu no jikakuteki gentei* [*Self-Awakening determination of Nothingness*] (1932), *N.K.Z.*, V, pp. 267-333.

31 Nishida Kitarô, "Nihon bunka no mondai" ["The Problem of Japanese Culture"] (1940), *N.K.Z.*, IX, pp. 1-94, here p. 71, an essay that has to be distinguished from the three lectures given at Kyôto Imperial University in 1938: "Nihon bunka no mondai" ["The Problem of Japanese Culture"], *N.K.Z.*, XIII, pp. 5-30.

All very well, but what does "self-awakening" signify, more positively? It should be taken rather, in first approximation, in the literal sense: "To know distinctly the position, situation in which one is set forth, as well as one's values and capabilities."<sup>32</sup> This quasi "prophetic" knowledge seems to *fall from nowhere*, a little bit as this propositional form that Nishida endlessly repeats: "One might think that..." (…と考える *to kangaeru*). In brief, *jikaku* is from the root, "epistemological", rather in the sense of FICHTE than RICKERT, for "there is no self-awakening that does not possess the signification of the subject of knowledge" (認識 *ninshiki*).<sup>33</sup> Henceforth, we will speak of epistemology in the sense of this "theory of knowledge" (認識論 *ninshikiron*).

Nonetheless, Nishida gives it, more *philosophically*, the meaning of "self-reflection" (自省 *jisei*), focused on the self (自), in contrast to an objectifying "reflection" (反省 *hansei*), opposing (反) "intuition".<sup>34</sup> By contrast to this reflection, he evokes the "self-awakening, which is proper to the unification of intuition and reflection", a formula that gives the quintessence of the title of his second major book, *Intuition and Reflection in Self-Awakening*, referred to in several places in the response to Sôda.<sup>35</sup> This *unification* is so crucial, that the *henological question* of "how to tell [explain, expound, preach 説く *to ku*] this unity" matches *the topo-logical question* of knowing "whence does *X* come from?" – wherein *X* can be a "distinction", such as subject and object, a "privilege", such as that of the "will", a "category", such as "givenness", or a fact, such as "There is knowledge". Precisely, these two questions will finally appear in the fundamental formula, for: "The *unificator* of subject and object that *stands in the place* of true nothingness, *i.e.*, what sees itself."<sup>36</sup>

32 "Jikaku," *Daijisen* (Shogakukan, 2012), electronic version.

33 "S.H.K.," pp. 489, 495. See p. 503.

34 "S.H.K.," pp. 479-481.

35 "S.H.K.," pp. 487, 489, 494. See also p. 485: "Self-awakening is the union of power of understanding with perception," and 491: "In self-awakening, judgment and perception unites immediately."

36 "S.H.K.," pp. 484, 486, 491-493, 499 (emphasis added). See also: "To take form through the

Self-awakening is thus a unifying self-reflection, and not a differentiating reflection. Now, let us review four faces of this self-reflection.

- Self-reflection is likened to the topo- and not psycho-logical sense of "introspection" (内省 *naisei*): selfhood (自) is never far from interiority (内)<sup>37</sup>.

- There is a "self-reflection of form in person" (形式自身の自省 *keishiki jishin no jisei*), where it becomes its content. By contrast, in its logical and objective use, in formal (Aristotle) and transcendental logic (Kant), form is respectively *applied* and *unified* to an *opposed* content.<sup>38</sup> In a unifying self-reflection, on the contrary, we find the "form of subject unifying the acts of thinking and perception." Thus, such a form differs, firstly, from the "simple" one of "formal logic", to which "anything at all, which is thought, must at least fit (当嵌まればならない *atehamarebanaranai*); secondly, from the one set forth to content, when KANT, following the "principle of givenness", "searched for the objectivity of knowledge in the unity of content and form".<sup>39</sup>

- There is a "self-reflection of knowledge in person", as containing will and intuition, that differs from objective knowledge, *opposing* subject and object.<sup>40</sup>

- There is a "self-reflection of consciousness in person" (*third definition* of *jikaku* in the essay), where it is no more an epistemological, psychological<sup>41</sup> and phenomenological intentional consciousness, directed toward states, contents, or aiming at lived experience. The reason why will be given later.

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union of form and content" is to stand "in the position of self-awakening," unification is topological.

37 *A.U.*, pp. 114-118, 544-546.

38 "S.H.K.," p. 480.

39 "S.H.K.," pp. 480, 487, 489.

40 "S.H.K.," pp. 484. See p. 490.

41 "S.H.K.," pp. 486, 498. See pp. 488-489.

A caveat, such as the one already discussed earlier, that all this would entail a "self-awakening of self-awakening", comes from the fact that one has identified self-awakening with "objective knowledge", and only produces a "*flatus vocis*" (空虚なる言辞 *kûkyo naru genji*), or, as it is rephrased in an addition, a "futile discussion" (空論 *kûron*), such as "thinking the zero of zero". We already emphasized that Nishida is not acting here as a formal logician but a topo-logical philosopher. What is more, he will probe the nature of this "vanity" (*kûkyo*), indifferent to the formal logician. Now, to confound the caveat, one has to argue that a genuine *self-awakening* cannot, *by definition*, "get out of itself". It is rather that "in self-awakening, different levels are conceivable", as phases of the genuine topo-logical knowledge. Hence, the above-mentioned change (*suii*) is a self-transcending one, but only to the extent that "everything is being wrapped in self-awakening".<sup>42</sup> The topo-logical "in" (に;の中に;の内に *ni; no naka ni; no uchi ni*) does not run counter to an "out" (外 *soto*), as in the case of physical, psychological, and phenomenological *spaces*. A non-spatial interiority depends rather on selfhood and expression: *e.g.*: the "will" will be said "in self-awakening" as "one aspect" (一様相 *ichi yôsô*) of it.<sup>43</sup>

*Self-awakening* is thus, broadly defined, as a unifying and encompassing *self-reflection*, at the levels of psychological form, knowledge, and consciousness. Still, we must ask: what is this "self" in "Self-awakening"? Neither a "logical identity" (*jiko dôitsu*), nor a "metaphysical being", such as 1) the "*sum*" of the "*cogito*", in Descartes, as "existing self" (存在的自己 *sonzaiteki jiko*), as "substance" (本体 *hontai*), an idea inspired very early through Hermann Cohen; 2) the "self-awakening spirit of the universe" or "transcendent being", such as the metaphysical God, endowed with "will" and "act".<sup>44</sup> As Nishida clearly distinguishes these metaphysical beings from other

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42 "S.H.K.," pp. 480-482, 487.

43 "S.H.K.," p. 484.

44 "S.H.K.," pp. 481, 483, 486, 493, 495-496, 498. See p. 503. "Cohen, endlessly trying to keep the position of Kant, regards self-awakening by Fichte as metaphysical, and sees it as



forms of subjectivity in Western philosophy, first of all we will see that he intends to rethink not only the "substrate" (基底 *kitai*/τὸ ὑποκείμενον) in Aristotle, but also the Fichtean *Ich* as well as the Hegelian *Geist*.

Kant's position is ambiguous. On one side, certainly, the "position of consciousness in general" ("pure apperception"), wherein "subject (主観 *shukan*), when pushed to its extremity (極限 *kyokugen*)", yields a "purification" (純化 *junka*) of self-awakening. Though this is not topo-logical "escape" (脱する *dassuru*), given the subjective weight, according to which: "The signification of the subject must subsist" (残る *nokoru*), as "[seeing] subject" (*shukan*) facing, opposing a "[seen] object" (客観 *kyakkan*). From a topo-logical perspective, the idea of subsistence (substantive, substance) is narrow: it keeps and fills the place, without any possibility of "trans-localization".<sup>45</sup> Even the glyph speaks by itself, for the Chinese 残 *cán* means, at the same time: rest, leftover, surplus, extra, and default, imperfection, wound, deterioration, bad; in sum, the very idea of subsisting would be limiting. However, on the other side, one can hardly limit the "critical philosophy of Kant" to this supreme consciousness, given the primacy of the practical.<sup>46</sup>

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something that has reversed from the position of Kant to the one of Descartes (*Kants Theorie der Erfahrung*, zweite Aufl. S. 581. 590)," Nishida Kitarô, *Jikaku ni okeru hansei to chokkan* [Intuition and Reflection in Self-Awakening] (1917), *N.K.Z.*, II, pp. 1-271, here p. 83, *Intuition and Reflection in Self-consciousness*, translated by Valdo H. Viglielmo with Takeuchi Toshinori and Joseph S. O'Leary (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), p. 54 (modified). About this translation, see *A.U.*, pp. 145 ff. However, Nishida reconsiders and refuses this interpretation in our essay, "S.H.K.," p. 494. See also "The 'I' is neither originally a metaphysical reality, thought of as outside of consciousness, or at its bottom, neither a kind of phenomenon like those of the psychologist," Nishida Kitarô, "Iwayuru ninshiki taishô kai no ronriteki kôzô" ["The Logical Structure of What is called the World of the Objects of Knowledge"] (1928), *Ippansha no jikakuteki taikai* [*The Self-Awakening System of Universal*] (1930), *N.K.Z.*, IV, pp. 5-47, here p. 29.

45 *A.U.*, pp. 423 ff.

46 "S.H.K.," pp. 483-484, 485, 488. See p. 498.

What we have is rather a "corporeal self" (自身 *jishin*), translated by "itself" in the first definition of *jikaku*. There are two main features to it.

- Its corporeity (身) appears to be neither physical, nor biological nor phenomenological; instead, self-awakening realizes the very self-vision which was impossible for the corporeal eye; it indicates rather interiority, depth, integrity.

- Its selfhood (自) is closer to "identity-ipse" than "identity-idem", in the terms of RICŒUR.<sup>47</sup> For "all knowledge", confined to formal logic, "cannot but become identity" (同一になつてしまう *dôitsu ni natte shimau*), whereas the "new knowledge", self-awakening, endlessly deepens and elevates itself, as a narrative.<sup>48</sup>

Expressed in a different manner: "To speak of self-awakening is to say that the knower and known are one" (*second definition of jikaku*), a "union" (結合 *ketsugô*) erasing the distance of objective knowledge. Here "true self-identity" (真の自己同一 *shin no jiko dôitsu*) is no longer the simple "logical identity" (*dôitsu*), nor the "act" (*sayô*) of self-identifying, as in Fichte, but refers to "what acts, works" (働くもの *hataraku mono*), as endless self-predication. The eponymous essay, preceding "The Place" and mentioned three times in the refutation of Sôda, developed this point thoroughly. We will discover that there is "self-intuition" and have to justify this truthfulness.<sup>49</sup>

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47 Paul Ricoeur, "L'identité personnelle et l'identité narrative," *Soi-même comme un autre* (Paris: Seuil, 1990), "Essais", p. 140.

48 "S.H.K.," pp. 480-481.

49 "S.H.K.," pp. 480, 482, 485. See Nishida Kitarô, "Hataraku mono" ["What acts"] (1925), *Hataraku mono kara miru mono e* [*From the Seer to the Seen*] (1927), *N.K.Z.*, III, pp. 389-413, referred in *S.H.K.*, pp. 482, 499-500. See my introduction to my French translation of this essay, "Ce qui agit," in Michel Dalissier, Nagai Shin et Sugimura Yasuhiko (eds.), *Philosophie japonaise, op. cit.*, pp. 246-282.

Concerning this sort of *topo-logical psychology*, or *topo-psycho-logy*, irreducible to other forms of psychology (empirical, pure, doctrine of faculties, pragmatic, and so on), and even from the topological psychology of Kurt Lewin, that Nishida will discuss later,<sup>50</sup> one has to note that he appears suspicious towards the fact of "falling into metaphysics" (形而上学に陥る *keijijôgaku ni ochiiru*); in this essay, directly because of the accusation of Sôda; in others, after, given the threat, so to speak, of a professional distortion of philosophers (*déformation professionnelle*).<sup>51</sup> He strives to buttress the idea that the Rickertian framework of the critique of Sôda is unfaithful and *intolerant*, not only in condemning his own logic as metaphysical, in the sense of the hypostasis of a "suprasensible world without any perceptual data", but also regarding the philosophies of Fichte and Hegel, and "German idealism" (独逸唯心論 *Doitsu yuishinron*) in general. In all this, Nishida, first chair of the history of philosophy at Kyôto University, obviously wanted to play some Post-kantians contra some Neo-kantians of the Bade School. Moreover, through his "topological logic", he endeavored to give Sôda a lesson in the history of philosophy : not to condemn all positions – including the topo-logical –, as metaphysical, but "preserve" (維持する *ijisuru*) them, in the sense of an "enlargement" (一層深く広い立場から出立したい *issô fukaku hiroi tachiba kara shuttatsu shitai*), a thesis still far

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50 See note 2.

51 "S.H.K.," pp. 489, 494, 495-496. "Even those who start with immediate experience think of immediate experience as some form of givenness. We can say this of pure continuity found in Bergson. But since its logical form is not immediately clear, these thinkers are led to speak of it as reality that transcends thought, i.e., *they fall into metaphysics*. My 'determination of the universal' whose fundamental form is found in self-awakening determination, is a form that also determines this [immediate experience], but more than that, it is a form that determines all 'being'. All being is thought of as located in what I call the place of the universal," Nishida Kitarô, "Sôsetsu" ["General Summary"] (1929), *Ippansha no jikakuteki taikai* [*The Self-awakening System of Universal*] (1930), *N.K.Z.*, IV, pp. 333-381, here p. 341, "General Summary," translated by Robert R. Wargo in *The Logic of Nothingness: A Study of Nishida Kitarô* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005), pp. 186-216, here p. 193 (modified, emphasis added). See also *N.K.Z.* IV, pp. 16, 29, 300, X, pp. 125, 239. In the late years, see Nishida Kitarô, "Zettai mujunteki jiko dôitsu" ["Absolute Contradictory Self-Identity"] (1939), *Tetsugaku ronbunshû dai san* [*Philosophical Essays, III*] (1939), *N.K.Z.*, VIII, pp. 367-425, here p. 372.

remote indeed from the perspectivism of Leibniz, the phenomenology of Hegel, or the eclecticism of Victor Cousin. One of his paradigmatic efforts is to try to justify what we might call here "horizontal", so to speak, conceptual transitions in history of philosophy, such as, in this essay, the one from "pure apperception by Kant" to "*Tathandlung* by Fichte" (事行, 事即行 *jikô, ji soku kô*),<sup>52</sup> but also, very early, the one from the "substance" of Descartes to the "monad" of Leibniz.<sup>53</sup> The core of the polemic is reached when he claims: "If the fact of simply getting out from a position such as that of Rickert is considered as metaphysical, then I will make myself a pleasure to profane the celebrated name of metaphysician."<sup>54</sup>

Nevertheless, the sentence is in the conditional. If "topological logic" struggles here for its freedom to refuse any enclosed position, Nishida solely runs counter metaphysics of the suprasensible, not against metaphysics itself. The proof is that in an essay published one month before the Response, he writes:

The true One must be of the kind of the place of absolute nothingness, something that cannot be infinitely determined as being; all being is in it and must be seen because of it. Not only being, but also the kind of nothingness that opposes being is still in it. Metaphysics until now recognized being in the [logical] subjective direction; and metaphysics since Kant do not escape this either. *I think that we might open and begin a different metaphysics, in recognizing what is transcendent in*

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52 "S.H.K.," pp. 481, 494, 496-497. On the notion of "preservation," see pp. 496, 502-503.

53 See Nishida Kitarô, "Ronri no rikai to sûri no rikai" ["Logical Comprehension and Mathematical Comprehension"] (1915), *Shisaku to taiken*, [*Speculation and Lived Experience*] (1915-1938), *N.K.Z.*, I, pp. 202-215, here p. 203. See my treatment in "Compréhension logique et compréhension mathématique," trad. (avec D. Ibaragi), intro. et notes de M. Dalissier, *Ebisu*, 31 (Fall-Winter 2003), pp. 115-159, here p. 134.

54 "S.H.K.," p. 503.

*the direction of the predicate.* This must be acknowledged also at the fundament of epistemology.<sup>55</sup>

It is clear that metaphysics can be taken up from the position of "topological logic", in the two dimensions that will be sketched in steps 2 and 4, relating to *nothingness* and *predication*. Now, one might object that, despite this statement, until this Response, which represents the first text where he treats metaphysics exhaustively, but also after, Nishida mainly considers metaphysics from a historical point of view, in his essays<sup>56</sup> and lectures.<sup>57</sup>

However, the essay "The Intelligible World" represents a turning point. It is no longer only criticizing historical conceptions of metaphysics,<sup>58</sup> but also trying to deduce it from the topo-logical position: "Metaphysical reality is what has integrated [concealed] noesis into [towards] the noema."<sup>59</sup> Metaphysics is not only topological *asphyxia*; it is a *phobia* naturally taking place within topo-logy, a sort of "overtaking", as we call it.<sup>60</sup> The conclusion, still *negative*, is capital:

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55 Nishida Kitarô, "Torinokosareta ishiki no mondai" ["The Problem of Consciousness Left Behind"] (March, 1927), *Zoku shisaku to taiken* [*Speculation and Lived Experience (a continuation)*] (1936), *N.K.Z.*, VII, pp. 215-224, here p. 224 (emphasis added).

56 Cf. Nishida Kitarô, "Gendai no tetsugaku" ["Contemporary Philosophy"] (1916), "Rottze no keijijôgaku" ["The Metaphysics of Lotze"] (1917), *Shisaku to taiken* [*Speculation and Lived Experience*] (1915-1938), *N.K.Z.*, pp. 267-293, 299-315. See also "metaphysical point" (Leibniz), *N.K.Z.*, X, pp. 107. Other occurrences, *N.K.Z.* VII, pp. 280, 293-294, 307, X, 399.

57 Cf. Nishida Kitarô, "Tetsugaku gairon dai yon hen keijijôgaku" ["Introduction to Philosophy. 4. Metaphysics"] (1910-1928), *Kôgi nôto II* [*Lectures Notes II*], *N.K.Z.*, XV, pp. 143-228. In 1924-1925, he lectured "On Aristotle's *Metaphysica*." In 1923-1924 and 1924-1925, he had a seminar on Lotze *Metaphysik*, in 1926-1927 and 1927-1928 on Aristotle *Metaphysica*. See Yusa Michiko, *Zen & Philosophy*, *loc. cit.*, p. 219.

58 Nishida Kitarô, "Eichiteki sekai" ["The Intelligible World"] (1928), *Ippansha no jikakuteki taikei* [*The Self-Awakening System of Universal*] (1930), *N.K.Z.*, IV, pp. 101-149, here pp. 128, 137, 144. See also *N.K.Z.*, V, pp. 93, 322.

59 "Eichiteki sekai" ["The Intelligible World"] (1928), *Ippansha no jikakuteki taikei* [*The Self-Awakening System of Universal*] (1930), *N.K.Z.*, IV, pp. 123-124. See also *N.K.Z.*, V, pp. 21, 92.

60 See my treatment in *A.U.*, pp. 374 *ff.*, and M. Dalissier, "Nishida Kitarô, interprète de Henri Bergson (2). Bergson et le doublage" ["Nishida Kitarô, Interpreter of Henri Bergson (2). Bergson and the Overtaking"], *Bulletin of the Center of Research on Human Sciences* (Tokyo: Gakushuin University, 2009), n 7/2008, pp. 1-44.

"The World of intelligible existence is thought of as above; however, if one objects that it is metaphysics, then I would like to give even metaphysics its ground and right to take form. I think that the point concerning the so-called urge to reject metaphysics, is that different positions of knowledge are not clarified, and different senses of being are confused."<sup>61</sup> Still, this is a question of justification. And topo-logical justification means em-placement.<sup>62</sup>

Another essay thus takes the relay *positively*, arguing: "It is possible to think that what is called metaphysics possesses its own proper signification, as the self-awakening content of the acting self; doing this, it must be confessed that even the so-called fanciful metaphysics has, above science (科学以上に *kagaku ijô ni*), a deep signification for human life."<sup>63</sup> Thus "Meta-physics" (形而上-学 *keijijô-gaku*) does not refer, of course, to the books written by Aristotle after the *Physics*, or to a domain transcending the physical (*metaphysica*). It is the "science" (学) of "what is higher than the forms" (形而上), a topo-logical *elevation*, already sensible in the very Chinese expression of the *Book of Mutations*, used to translate Western metaphysics, and once by Nishida.<sup>64</sup> This circulation is also a *descent* (形而下). For example, it is no more the place to critique self and substance in Descartes as metaphysical entities. What matters now, is to deduce topo-logically not only the horizontal, historical, and

61 Nishida Kitarô, "Eichiteki sekai" ["The Intelligible World"] (1928), *Ippansha no jikakuteki taiki* [*The Self-Awakening System of Universal*] (1930), *N.K.Z.*, IV, pp. 148-149.

62 See my treatment in *A.U.*, Appendice XV (online), pp. 347 ff.

63 Nishida Kitarô, "Watashi no zettai mu no jikakuteki gentei to iu mono" ["What I Call Self-determination of Absolute Nothingness"] (1931), *Mu no jikakuteki gentei* [*Self-Awakening Determination of Nothingness*] (1932), *N.K.Z.*, V, pp. 93-141, here pp. 136-137.

64 "Making, the place where morality originates, above the natural world, discovering the fundament of what is higher than this" (其形而上 *sono keijijô*), Nishida Kitarô, "Gurin shi rinrigaku no taii" ["The Great Meaning of the Ethics of Mr Green"] (1895), *Shôhen* [Short Essays], *N.K.Z.*, XI, pp. 3-22, here p. 3. On the distinction between the "Way" (道 *dào*), i.e. "What is above [upstream to] the form" (形而上 *xíng ér shàng*), and "concrete objects" (器 *qì*), i.e. "what is under [downstream to] the form" (形而下 *xíng ér xià*), see *Xizi* [*Great Commentary on the Book of Changes*], A, 11-12, quoted in Anne Cheng, *Histoire de la pensée chinoise* [*History of Chinese Thought*] (Paris: Seuil, 1997), pp. 283-284.

conceptual transition from one concept to another, but the vertical, metaphysical, and vital reduction of a position to another: "The *sum* in the sense of Descartes is making a metaphysical thing (形而上学化する *keijijôgakka suru*) of Kant's epistemology."<sup>65</sup>

Later, Nishida will reconsider the possibility of a genuine kind of metaphysics, enlightened by topology, writing, after Bergson, but before Heidegger,<sup>66</sup> an "Introduction to Metaphysics", at the beginning of the collection *The Fundamental Problems of Philosophy*. The new turning point is historical here, for he claims: "Our concrete world can be said to be metaphysically social as well as metaphysically historical", and investigates "what I call a metaphysical and historical thing", and in general the nature of "reality" (実在 *jitsuzai*), the first word of the text.<sup>67</sup> It is clear that the shift is from a critique of metaphysical reality in history of philosophy, to metaphysics of historical reality. It is an investigation, one might add, already launched in the second chapter, of his first major work, the *Research about the Good*, that he himself described as the "core" (骨子 *kosshi*) of the book.<sup>68</sup> In the last essay of the same collection, he argues: "I would like to consider how different, in their basis, the forms of culture of East

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65 Nishida Kitarô, "Watashi no zettai mu no jikakuteki genpei toiu mono" ["What I Call Self-Determination of Absolute Nothingness"] (1931), *Mu no jikakuteki genpei* [*Self-Awakening Determination of Nothingness*] (1932), *N.K.Z.*, V, p. 137.

66 Henri Bergson, "Introduction à la métaphysique" (1903), *La pensée et le mouvant* (Paris: PUF, 2009), pp. 177-227, and Martin Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik* (1935) (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1998).

67 Nishida Kitarô, "Keijijôgaku joron" ["Introduction to Metaphysics"] (1933), *Tetsugaku no konpon mondai (kôji no sekai)* [*Fundamental Problems of Philosophy (The World of Action)*] (1933), *N.K.Z.*, VI, pp. 5-65, here pp. 47, 53, "A Preface to Metaphysics," *Fundamental Problems of Philosophy. The World of Action and the Dialectical World*, translated with an introduction by David. D. Dilworth, (Tôkyô: Sophia University, 1970), pp. 1-42, here pp. 29, 34 (modified). See pp. 59 ff., tr., pp. 38 ff. On this translation see John Maraldo, "Translating Nishida," *Philosophy East and West*, no 4 (1989), pp. 465-496. See also, *N.K.Z.*, VII, pp. 190, VIII, p. 8, 257, IX, p. 418.

68 Nishida Kitarô, *Zen no kenkyû* [*Research about the Good*] (1911), *N.K.Z.*, I, pp. 3-200, here pp. 6, 39-82, *An Inquiry into the Good*, translated by ABE Masao and Christopher IVES (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990), here pp. xxx, 35-83.

and West are, from a metaphysical position. From a metaphysical position means: *how did they conceive of the question of reality?*"<sup>69</sup> The account might be original, for in the history of Western metaphysics, we have definitions related rather to the first principles of philosophy, such as the existence of thought and God (Descartes),<sup>70</sup> ontology as science of being (*seiende*), opposed to being itself (Heidegger), as well as the study of "the structure of reality" or ontology of possibility, essence, object, events, according to an approach more orientated towards analytical philosophy.<sup>71</sup>

However, it is still very vague and only becomes consistent later. But we can already stress the dynamic nature of this reality, not to be taken statically (*Realität*), and that it refers more and more to "effectivity" (現実 *genjitsu/Wirklichkeit*), with this emphasis on historicity. The essay "Space" will thus say: "My topological logic is a logic of the self-formation of the historical world proper to infinite creation. For this reason, although inverse to the processing logic of Hegel, it is of the same kind. Both concrete logic, and both [scientific] logical *qua* metaphysical."<sup>72</sup> What does it mean? The

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69 Nishida Kitarô, "Keijijôgakuteki tachiba kara mita tôzai kodai no bunka keitai" ["The Forms of Culture of the Classical periods of East and West seen from a Metaphysical Perspective"] (1934), *Tetsugaku no konpon mondai zokuhen (benshohôteki sekai)* [Fundamental Problems of Philosophy: A Continuation (The Dialectical World)] (1934), *N.K.Z.*, VI, pp. 335-353, here p. 335, "The Forms of Culture of the Classical periods of East and West Seen from a Metaphysical Perspective," *Fundamental Problems of Philosophy. The World of Action and the Dialectical World*, *loc. cit.*, pp. 237-254, here p. 237 (modified, emphasis added). See my treatment of this essay in M. Dalissier, "Nishida Kitarô and Chinese Philosophy. Part 2: Debt and Distance," *Japan Review: Journal of the International Research Center for Japanese Studies*, no. 22 (July 2010), pp. 137-170. See also the first part: M. Dalissier "Nishida Kitarô and Chinese Philosophy," in Lam Wing-Keung, Cheung Ching-yuen (eds.), *Frontiers of Japanese Philosophy 4: Facing the 21st Century* (Nanzan: Nagoya, 2009), pp. 211-250.

70 René Descartes, "Lettre de l'auteur à celui qui a traduit le livre, laquelle peut ici servir de préface," *Principes de la philosophie*, texte français de l'abbé Picot, traduction nouvelle par Denis Moreau, introduction et notes par Xavier Kieft, Paris, Vrin bilingue, "Bibliothèque des textes philosophiques" (2009), p. 257 (*A.T.*, IX, p. 10).

71 See Frédéric Nef, *Qu'est-ce que la métaphysique?* [What is Metaphysics?], *loc. cit.*, pp. 16, 75, 423, 468-473, 481, 504.

72 Nishida Kitarô, "Kûkan" ["Space"] (1944), *Tetsugaku ronbunshû roku* [Philosophical



correspondence with Mutai Risaku, in 1944, will furnish the proof of a late, topological interest, for a "metaphysical" dimension, which cannot be reduced either to "logic" (論理 *ronri*), or "(scientific) logic" or "science of logic" (論理学 *ronrigaku*). This aspect calls for a critical assessment of the idea of a *logic* of place, as we will see in step 5. However, it is not certain that Nishida ever managed to define what is precisely *meta-physical*, in this logic.

## Step 2. A First Sketch of Topo-logization: Place and Nothingness

The second section of the Response to Sôda probes, in its first paragraph, into the levels of knowledge, and takes up, in its second, the metaphysical problem of the nature of the "true self": just as all knowledge cannot be limited to formal logic wherein it "cannot but become identity", the self is not logical, judicative, psychological, or transcendental "self-identity". Here comes a first sketch of topologization.

- 1) By "topologization", I understand the way topologizing logic (defined at the beginning of the present study as the one where the place operates and unifies) incarnates through the mediation of a central concept.

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*Essays, VI*] (1945), *N.K.Z.*, X, pp. 155-188, here pp. 172-173. On Hegel, see Nishida Kitarô, "Watashi no tachiba kara mita Hêgeru no benshōhō" ["The Dialectics of Hegel Considered from my Position"] (1931), *Zoku shisaku to taiken* [*Speculation and Lived Experience (continuation)*] (1936), *N.K.Z.*, VII, pp. 262-278, traduction (avec Ibaragi Daisuké), introduction et commentaire de Michel Dalissier, *Philosophie* (Paris: Minuit Publishers, 2009), no. 103, pp. 51-76. Nishida's argument against Hegel is sometimes reminiscent of the one of Kierkegaard, in *The Repetition. An Essay in Experimental Psychology*, translated, with an introduction and notes by Walter Lowrie, with a bibliographical essay: How Kierkegaard got in English (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946), pp. 33-34: "In our time no explanation is forthcoming as to how mediation comes about."

- 2) By "first", I mean that it is polarized here on the concept of the movement of self-awakening, but we will see in the second part of this study that another sketch will be provided by Nishida.
- 3) By "sketch", I want to highlight the fact that topologization is not a settled structure, but a perpetual re-structuration of itself, already perceptible within the frame of this essay, and until the "last" one, where the expression "topological logic" will reappear.<sup>73</sup>

Let us now make acquaintance with this first sketch:

The consciousness of true self-awakening is to be searched in the fact that the predicative universal becomes nothingness, *i.e. in the place of true nothingness*. [...] As long as the predicative universal can be determined as *oppositional nothingness*, it still belongs to the so-called self-awakening of knowledge; however, when it goes beyond that, and reaches the place of true nothingness, the conscious self is forgotten, and, at the same time, the true self-awakening is reached, as self-intuition (自己自身の直観 *jiko jishin no chokkan*).<sup>74</sup>

I only know what I am, in abandoning the ideas of "I", "knowing", "am", "what" (ipseity, science, existence, essence), and in intuiting ~~my~~ self. *In* and not *as* nothingness (that would be annihilation), I do no more predicate definitely myself as "human", "French", "Japanese", "Chinese", "reflecting", "writing", "substance" (Descartes), "consciousness in general" (Kant), and so on, as if I was reflecting myself (metaphysical being) in opposition to myself (oppositional nothingness). I *truly* cease to make a definite knowable predicate of me, and see

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73 Nishida Kitarô, "Bashoteki ronri to shûkyôteki sekaikan" ["Topological Logic and Religious Worldview"] (posthumous), *Tetsugaku ronbunshû VII [Philosophical Essays, VII]* (1946), *N.K.Z.*, X, pp. 295-367.

74 "S.H.K.," pp. 482-483 (emphasis added).

(觀) directly (直). Truth issues from the purifying power of nothingness, even *purifying, in itself and without rest, the false versions of itself*. These betrayers of nothingness are:

- 1) Pure nihility (*kûkyo*), so pure that it represents nothing, and lets the place stand for the empire of absolute being.
- 2) Opposition to being, for the glyph 無 *wû/mu* originally means "not", "without", "non-being" (as Izutsu Toshihiko translates), and still not absolute nothingness.
- 3) Consciousness in general, carrying along the subjective "rest" already mentioned.

The surprising result is that, within the "place of true nothingness", we disclose "various places of nothingness."<sup>75</sup> With a special reference concerning the third point, the "predicative universal" must be negated, according to the text above, its *universality*, or better, "universalisation",<sup>76</sup> cannot be restrained to the *generality* of "consciousness in general", which was not Kant's last word, given his practical philosophy of will. Once for all 一般者 *ippansha* means "the" universal, but one has to insist on the particle 者 *zhě*, called, in Ancient Chinese, a "void word" (虛詞 *xūcí*).<sup>77</sup> There is an universal neither abstract as in formal logic nor concrete in an Hegelian sense, but topo-logically concrete, referring to anyone or anything able to take and embody this position and *judge* in this way, for *zhě* has a key rôle in sentences of judgments, in classical Chinese, according to Fan Keh-Li.<sup>78</sup> *Ippansha* would mean "The thing that...", "the one who...", "any man or women that...", and so on. It can be rendered by "something or

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75 "S.H.K.," pp. 501-502.

76 *A.U.*, pp. 511 ff.

77 See Fan Keh-Li, *Le mot vide dans la langue chinoise classique* [*The Void Word in Classical Chinese Language*] (Paris: You Feng, 1991), pp. 3, 237 ff.

78 See Fan Keh-Li, *Les modèles de phrases dans la langue chinoise classique* [*Models of Sentences in Chinese Classical Language*] (Paris: You Feng, 2006), pp. 104 ff.

someone (as) universal", the "position of being or operating as the universal" in one's judgment, about truth, goodness, and beauty, to refer to the *universalia* of Scholasticism. Besides, it would be very fruitful to comment also this expression from the grammatical point of view of the *imperfective participle* in Ancient Greek, active, medium, or passive, yielding the idea of an explanation ("the one operating...", "the one, in that he/she/it operates..."), a category ("those who operate"), or a substantive ("the one who operates").

Accordingly, this universality is meaningful, and one has to distinguish "consciousness according to logical standards", or "ethical standards", and topology aspires to retrace and justify the path leading from "pure apperception" to the Fichtean *Tathandlung*.<sup>79</sup> As Merleau-Ponty *perceived* several faces of the philosophers he took up,<sup>80</sup> Nishida meditated on their conceptions through the filter of changing, shifting, and swinging positions. He restores here Kant to favour, against superficial interpretations of "critical philosophy", in Neokantians of the School of Bade, eminently Rickert, as well as "epistemologists of the Rickertian School", that "stop" at the level of this general consciousness, or "narrow" its meaning, as simply "judicative" or "theoretical."<sup>81</sup> It is as though Nishida wanted to give a lesson in philosophical probity to Rickert via Sôda: "If we speak of returning to Kant [*Zurück zu Kant!*], let us return, but I would like rather to return to the Kant of Kant than that of Rickert". To sum up, the place of true nothingness offers the latitude *not* to enclose "*consciousness in general*" within a purely psychological, logical, transcendental or theoretical perspective.

This liberality is expressed by the form たる *taru*, that expresses a qualification, that *proper* of something:<sup>82</sup> "The deepest ground of consciousness

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79 "S.H.K.," pp. 485, 494.

80 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Le visible et l'invisible* (Gallimard: Paris, 1964), pp. 242-252, *The Visible and the Invisible*, translated by Alphonso Lingis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), pp. 188-199.

81 "S.H.K.," pp. 483, 488 *ff.*, 495-496. See p. 492.

82 "S.H.K.," pp. 483, 496. See pp. 486, 488-489.

in general takes place within (*ni aru*) the intuitive self-awakening, which is proper (*taru*) to what I call the place of true nothingness."<sup>83</sup> Interestingly enough, *taru* is homophone with "barrel" (樽) and "to be worthy of" (足る *taru* in the expression するに足る *surunitaru*). It is as though we might make graphically correspond "place" with "barrel", and "truth" with "worthy"; as though, moreover, we could identify, according to a chiasm playing with the genitives, "the place of true nothingness" with this barrel of worth as place of truth, and, in reverse, state that "true nothingness" is worthy to be a place. But this possible interpretation of topology in the field of values, is just our hypothesis, not Nishida's.

Still, the topo-logical election of consciousness in general, which will be in turn limited, determined (限定 *gentei*), as for all topo-logical entity, cannot hide some sublevels, layers, preceding the intuitive, such as those of "perception", "judgment", and "will" that are revealed through a kind of topo-logical magnifying power. There is the theatrical apparition of the will, on the topo-logical scene. The last quote continues:

Yet, at an intermediate level, voluntary self-awakening can be seen. It is deeper than judicative self-awakening and enfolds it from the inside. [Lost] In the direction of objective knowledge it is impossible to recognize will. However, even if consciousness of the will was completely negated, in any case, since you would recognize this, you would not make it in the direction of objective knowledge, but have to do it from the inner depth (奥 *oku*) of self-awakening.<sup>84</sup>

It is clear that the topo-logical argumentation seeks to confound hypocrisy: you cannot possibly say what you say if you stick to the position within which you

83 その最も深い底は私の所謂真の場所たる直覚的自覚にある。"S.H.K.," p. 483.

84 "S.H.K.," p. 483.

actually said it. Negatively, the metaphor by Nishida, closer to the mathematical meaning of topology, is: "You can spread out as far as you want within the same bag, you will not escape from the bag." It means that one has to "remove the thought of an act lying down (横たわる *yokotawaru*) at the root of the knowing act." Positively, we need will to negate, judge, objectively know, objectify, and act. At another level, "You cannot say you can enfold will within perception; but you can enfold perception within will,"<sup>85</sup> even if perception provides, from another aspect, a first image of the dynamics of topological logic, as I demonstrated.<sup>86</sup> We are far from "the primacy of perception" of Merleau-Ponty, especially a primacy on the will, for this philosopher.<sup>87</sup> By contrast, the topological anteriority of the will, in Nishida, means that the objective content is "before the self", though that of the will is "behind", as in the case of "impulsion" (衝動 *shôdô*).<sup>88</sup>

Another crucial point is likened to the presence, at the closing of the last quotation, of the dynamic expression "make it in..." (に於てする *ni oite suru*)[sic], that contrasts with the topo-logical "to be in" (に於てある *ni oite aru*), and is characteristic of Nishida's style. It suggests to highlight, as John Maraldo already did,<sup>89</sup> the notion of "making", or "doing" (する *suru*), what

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85 "S.H.K.," pp. 490-491, 493, 502.

86 Cf. *A.U.*, pp. 380 ff., 483 ff., and another exposition in "De la néontologie chez Nishida Kitarô" ["On Neontology in Nishida Kitarô"], *Revue de philosophie française* (Tokyo: Société franco-japonaise de philosophie, 2006), no. 11, pp. 184-194.

87 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Le primat de la perception et ses conséquences philosophiques" (23 novembre 1946), *Le primat de la perception et ses conséquences philosophiques précédé de Projet de travail sur la nature de la perception 1933, La Nature de la perception, 1934*, édition établie par Jean Prunair, Lagrasse, Verdier, "Philosophie" (1996), "The Primacy of Perception and Its Philosophical Consequences," translated by James M. Edie, in *The Primacy of Perception: And Other Essays on Phenomenological Psychology, the Philosophy of Art, History and Politics*, edited, with an Introduction by James M. Edie (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964).

88 "S.H.K.," pp. 491-492.

89 John C. Maraldo, "Defining Philosophy in the Making," in James W. Heisig (ed.) *Japanese Philosophy Abroad* (Nagoya: Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture, 2004), pp. 220-245, "An Alternative Notion of Practice in the Promise of Japanese Philosophy," in Lam Wing-

might offer the matter of an additional substantial parallel with the metaphysics of "making" (*faire*) in Merleau-Ponty, as I have begun to discuss it in some conferences and papers.<sup>90</sup> I prefer here the concept of *suru* rather than later ones such as 行為する *koi suru*, 行う *okonau*, or 作る *tsukuru*, because this concept refers, on the one hand, to an *origin* of making: *suru* is already at work in the word *koi suru*; on the other hand, it points to a kind of *incompleteness*, if we take it as a suffix that has to be added to a substantive to make a verb in Japanese. Now, such an original character and incompleteness linguistically and logically express absolute nothingness, as I tried to show in another paper,<sup>91</sup> and here is the reason why we should give it full consideration.

How does *suru* works? After all, "making" (*suru*) is the sap of any act of "willing" (意志する *ishi suru*) that is not restrained to a *vow*, of any act of "acting" (作用する *sayô suru*) that is not confounded by the pure *effect*, of any act of "objecti-fying" (対象をする *taishô o suru*, more noetically *active* than the noematic 対象化する *taishôka suru*, in the Nishidean understanding of these

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Keung, Cheung Ching-yuen (eds.) *Frontiers of Japanese Philosophy* 4, *loc. cit.*, pp. 211-250.

90 Preparing a monograph on this topic, I cannot but refer to disseminated materials: M. Dalissier, "Dekaruto ni okeru torikaeshi no gainen" ["The Concept of 'Reprise' According to Descartes"] (In Japanese), *Annual Report of Cultural Studies*, no. 62 (Kyoto: The Doshisha Daigaku Bungakkai, Graduate School of Letters, March 2013), pp. 97-112; M. Dalissier, "Meruro Ponti ni okeru rekishi no chikaku" ["The Perception of History According to Merleau-Ponty"], *Doshisha Annual of Philosophy*, Special Issue in Memory of Prof. Yamagata Yorihiro (March, 2011), pp. 53-88; M. Dalissier, "Merleau-Ponty and the Orient," paper presented at the International Symposium "Modernization of Eastern Sciences" (Huang Kuan-min), National Chengchi University, Taipei, 2011/11/26, collected in *Symposium Papers* (Taipei: National Chengchi University, 2012), pp. 199-211; M. Dalissier, "The Philosophical Method of Maurice Merleau-Ponty," paper presented at the International Conference on "Christianity, Humanity and the Meaning of Life" (Cristal Huang), Fu Jen Catholic University, Taipei, 2013/12/08, collected in *Conference Proceedings* (Taipei: Fu Jen University, 2013), pp. 47-56; M. Dalissier, "Etrangeté et prématuration selon Merleau-Ponty" ["Strangeness and Prematuration according to Merleau-Ponty"], paper presented at the International Congress, "The World: Common Interest for Philosophy Between Europe and Asia" (Huang Kuan-min), National Chengchi University, Taipei, 2013/03/25, collected in the *Conference Proceedings* (Taipei: National Chengchi University, 2013), pp. 85-117.

91 See M. Dalissier, "Unification and Emptiness in Predication...", *loc. cit.*, pp. 22 ff.

terms) that does not reach its goal.<sup>92</sup> In other words, the single subjective "act" of knowing takes place within the "self-awakening of the act" (作用の自覚 *sayô no jikaku*), that is the "act of act" (作用の作用 *sayô no sayô*). But this is precisely because "self-awakening itself" (自覚自身 *jikaku jishin*) is nothing other than "self-awakening" (自覚する *jikaku suru*), neither "act", nor "effect" (作用), even when reflected in itself (作用の作用), nor an "acting" (作用する) eventually to be transcended topo-logically. Self-awakening, in person, is this pure "making" (する), detached from the substantive radical of the verb,<sup>93</sup> as we will encounter later "That what *becomes* predicate and not [logical] subject." The topo-logical symbolization of this elevation towards the making would be: For every  $X$ ,  $X \rightarrow X$ -する  $\rightarrow$  する. Bashô, which Nishida translates in German by "*der Platz*",<sup>94</sup> refers, in this language, to the ideas of "making place" (*Platz machen/schaffen*), "taking place" (*Platz nehmen*). In other words, it would be a making place, more in the sense of *die Lage* than *der Ort*, as when it is said: "*in der Lage etwas zu tun.*"

This reflection on making fosters a more efficient reading of the most significant formula of the essay: "The unificator of subject and object that is in the place of true nothingness," which refers to the double topo-logical context of "transcending" the "act", and "escaping" the simple unity.

1) From the position of *making*, what is the "unificator" (合一者 *gôitsusha*) *doing*, is neither a simple "act", but "action" as it is an "agent" (働くもの *hataraku mono*), an acting person (者), so to speak.

2) From the position of *unification*, it, he or she, is endlessly making a unity, *uni-fying*. Nothingness is the place to refuse any single unity, as in ancient Greek "nobody" (οὐδείς) means "no one" (οὐδ' εἷς). Firstly, the unificator cannot be

92 "S.H.K.," pp. 480, 484, 502.

93 "S.H.K.," pp. 481-482, 484, 489.

94 Cf. Nishida Kitarô, "Vorlesung 1926," *Kôgi nôto II [Lectures Notes II]*, N.K.Z., XV, pp. 239-476. See for example p. 322.



reduced to the subjective one (統一者 *tôitsusha*), still "opposing reciprocally subject and object" in its "synthetic unification" (綜合統一する *sôgô tôitsu suru*), and not wrapping them. Secondly, it cannot be deactivated in the "(closed) union of subject and object" (合一 *gôitsu*, where 合 means "to close", and where even the glyph 者 disappears), corresponding to the still "objective signification" of Schelling's "intellectual intuition".<sup>95</sup> Thirdly, we will see that it cannot be hypostasized as the "transcendent one": the "one" (*ichi*) only becomes possible in "absolute nothingness", as "appearing" ephemeral and undecided, "non-separation for a short while".<sup>96</sup> To sum up, *uni-ficare* must fit the original meaning of the simplest character of all: 一 *yi*, in Chinese, a numeral adjective that can be used as a verb: "one" and "uni-fy".

In the place of true nothingness, Nishida argues, the subject as "point of unity" (統一点 *tôitsuten*) must leave the place to a "plane of tolerance" (包容面 *hōyōmen*), wherein there takes place both enfolding (包む *tsutsumu*) and enclosing (容 *ireru*), two dimensions we will have to probe deeper.<sup>97</sup> Suffice it to mention here that to be *tolerant* can be defined as: to have the latitude to be at the same time higher and yet concerned by a matter, to fly over and yet to incarnate it, borrowing, once again, the words of Merleau-Ponty. Philosophically, tolerance refers to a position, a standing point, an *altitude*, contrasting to the *attitudes* of Rickert and Sôda.

For sure, such an inquiry cannot avoid a discussion of the idea of "transcendental". Kant surveyed the conditions of *possibility* of knowledge and action. A philosophy is critique in investigating those limits. But where does this examination take place? Nishida argues: "Limits only become possible (可能と

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95 "S.H.K.," pp. 497, 499.

96 Nishida Kitarô, "Letter to Nishitani Keiji" (1943/07/08), *Shokan V [Letters, V]* (1942-1945), *N.K.Z.*, XXIII, p. 114. In all the translations of these letters, the punctuation is mine. See note 151.

97 "S.H.K.," p. 504.

なる *kanô to naru*) by recognizing a position of a higher rank."<sup>98</sup> His own concern is rather the topo-logical frame of this possibility: "We can recognize (認識することができる *ninshiki suru koto ga dekiru*) psychological will in the world of objects, by seeing the position of voluntary self-awakening at the bottom of our self-awakening. Objectively knowing the world of psychological phenomena, and the world of history, becomes possible by discovering at the bottom of self-awakening, a deeper position than knowledge of the natural world."<sup>99</sup> Hence, genuine "objectivity" (客観性 *kyakkansei*) does not come from the relation to possible experience (Kant), or even the intersubjectivity (Husserl) or the substrate (Aristotle), but, as we will see, from the idea of an enfolding subjectivity, encompassing both subject and object,<sup>100</sup> at the limit of being and non-being. It is *objective* because by encompassing everything that is or is not, it reveals the pure suchness of the thing, *as such*, and not such as they are or are not.

## Conclusion

To finish this survey of the second part of the essay, and this first sketch of topo-logization, let us clearly distinguish "three" kinds of nothingness, even if nothingness in general, just as being (*Aristotle, Metaphysics*, B, III, 998 b20-25), cannot be a *genre*, except in relation to its second, oppositional, false, mediated form.<sup>101</sup> Now, the question left open is if the very *place* of nothingness can become a topo-logical "genre" for being, in its "containing", "including",

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98 "S.H.K.," p. 485.

99 "S.H.K.," p. 483.

100 "S.H.K.," p. 489. See pp. 490-491.

101 Cf. *A.U.*, pp. 379, 442.

"implying" (含む *fukumu*), as well as "enfolding", "concealing" (包む *tsutsumu*) concomitant operations.<sup>102</sup>

1) We indeed need to point out one more dimension in the topo-logical argumentation above, concerning the use of negation: even complete negation *leaves the place* to a deeper understanding. It is clear that **there is no** absolute negation, as "total negation" is ineffective (全然否定するならばとにかく *zenzen hitei suru naraba tonikaku*), and corresponds as such to "vanity" (*kûkyo*) or "pure and simple nothing" (単なる無 *tan naru mu*).<sup>103</sup> This banning of negation is the message of absolute nothingness, allowing all trans-localisation. It is even the meaning of the last polite words of Nishida to Sôda, at the end of the essay: "not to let your intentions be all for nothing" (博士の志を空しくせざらんことを *hakushi no kokorozashi o munashiku sezarankoto o*).<sup>104</sup>

2) **There is only** "oppositional nothingness" (対立的無 *tairitsuteki mu*), "non-being" (無 *mu*), as object of "mê-ontology",<sup>105</sup> opposed to "being" (有 *yû/û*), object of ontology, in a false alternative, the only way Sôda could think of nothingness, as we will see.<sup>106</sup> Its epistemic expression is the "still objectified act" of "opposition of subject and object" (主客の対立 *shukyaku no tairitsu*) or "reciprocal opposition" (相対立 *sôtairitsu*), as it appears in the "psychological view" (見方 *mikata*) by Rickert.<sup>107</sup> Nishida celebrates Cohen, a Neo-kantian of

102 Cf. *A.U.*, Appendice, pp. 321 ff.

103 "S.H.K.," pp. 483, 504. Cf. *A.U.*, pp. 65 ff. and index, p. 617.

104 "S.H.K.," p. 504.

105 I take the word in a different sense than "*Metontologie*" in Heidegger, *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1978, GA 26), pp. 199-202, 291, "*Meontik*" in Eugen Fink, *VI. Cartesianische Meditation*, Teil 1: *Die Idee einer transzendentalen Methodenlehre* (Dordrecht/Boston/Londres: Kluwer Academic, 1988), pp. 183, "*mê-ontologie*" in Natalie Depraz, *Transcendance et incarnation. Le statut de l'intersubjectivité comme altérité à soi chez HUSSERL* (Paris: Vrin, 1995), pp. 337, and "*mêontologie*" in Frédéric Nef, *Qu'est-ce que la métaphysique? [What is Metaphysics?]*, *loc. cit.*, pp. 226, 269, 306-308, 468, 957.

106 "S.H.K.," pp. 503-504.

107 "S.H.K.," pp. 497-499, 502.

the Marburg School, who ponders the "anticipations of perception". In his *Kants Theorie der Erfahrung*, "as even sensation becomes something requested by thinking, he thought of *mê on*, in opposition to *on*" (オンに対するメー・オン *on ni taisuru mê on*), i.e., "form and matter" (形式と質料との対立 *keishiki to shitsuryô tonô tairitsu*).<sup>108</sup> The Japanese philosopher seems to refer to the opposition of infinitesimal zero and unity in intensive magnitude. The German philosopher wrote: "We must suppose something that becomes a unity, not in the relation to one, but to zero."<sup>109</sup>

Both Chinese and Ancient Greek are useful to disclose the nature of this negation. Firstly, オン *on* is nowadays translated in Japanese as 存在 *sonzai*, and メー・オン *mê on*, as 非-存在 *hisonzai*. Nishida did not use *hisonzai*. However, if we follow Fan Keh-Li, the adverb of negation 非 *fēi*, a void word, signifies originally, in Chinese, "not yet", just as 未 *wèi*,<sup>110</sup> a crucial linguistic fact to understand *mê*-ontology. It is clear that "non-being" (*hisonzai*) refers in Japanese to the pure negation of being. In a *mê*-ontological conceptual context, however, it might also refer to what is still not being, but is waiting for nothing to become being. Secondly, and interestingly enough, in Ancient Greek,  $\mu\eta$  is the negation on the plane of will or thinking, while  $\acute{o}\upsilon$  is that on the plane of reality. Thus,  $\mu\eta \acute{o}\nu$  represents a conditioned non-being, thought or willed: it refers to propositions such as "That which has not to be", "There needs not to be", "That which would not exist if...", "In the case that it does not exist"; a characterization quite close to the nature of oppositional nothingness, non-being purely in idea. This nothingness represents a false image, since all images of nothingness cannot but offer such a deformation.

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108 "S.H.K.," pp. 488, 490. See pp. 498-499.

109 Hermann Cohen, *Kants Theorie der Erfahrung* [Kant's Theory of Experience] (Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1925), p. 393.

110 See Fan Keh-Li, *Le mot vide dans la langue chinoise classique* [*The Void Word in Classical Chinese Language*], *loc. cit.*, p. 201.

3) But if all imagination of nothingness is condemned, it is not because it does not exist or simply acts, running counter to being, but because *there is* "true nothingness" (真の無 *shin no mu*), un-conditioned, that cannot be reduced to being or non-being. There is a "transcendent place" (超越的场所 *chôetsuteki bashô*), not a transcendental One nor Being, "that enfolds everything" (すべてを包むもの *subete o tsutsumu mono*). By "everything" one must understand here to mean as follows:

- A) *Every thing* that exists, all the things (being). The space between "every" and "thing" illustrates here the distance, differentiation, and alienation of all beings.
- B) All things opposing each other, *every-thing*. The hyphen signals the digging of oppositional nothingness (*inter-ficiere*), for: "Opposition of subject and object must be [taking place] here."

*Everything*, including itself, is, in some sense, in an egressive structure. Thus nothingness enfolds everything to the extent that it "has to return infinitely to [its own] deep interior" (無限に奥に還らねばならない *mugen ni oku ni kaeraneba naranai*); otherwise, it will return to what *is* enfolding all things, that is, a metaphysical being.<sup>111</sup> In this sense, there will be no "last place".♦

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111 "S.H.K.," pp. 497-499.

♦ Responsible editor: Hao-yu Chin (金浩瑜)

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