

NOTHINGNESS AND LOVE OF THE EARLY PHILOSOPHY OF NISHIDA

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ABSTRACT. *The philosophy of Kitarō Nishida (1870–1945) began in pure experience, through Absolute Nothingness and the Logic of Place, lately ended into the theory of Self-Identity of Absolute Contradictories. His theory is also explained by my theory of Nothingness and Love that I expounded in “Philosophy of Nothingness and Love”² (Lambert Academic Publishing, Saarbrücken). The pure experience, that is the flow of life in the subject-object no-distincted condition, is an undefined conscious state prior to our judgment. As the pure experience is flow of life in the world, it is adapted to the theory of Biocosmology. Further, it is the conscious experience that is not defined by words. So to speak, it is the intuitive experience of nothingness as reality. This intuition of nothingness was experienced by Lao-tzu, Chuang-tzu in ancient China, Buddha in India, Solomon in Israel who said, “Vanity! Vanity! All is vanity”. Jesus Christ and in Europe Plato, Aristotle, Pascal, Nietzsche, Heidegger and others had similar experiences. Aristotle intuited it and said that philosophy is wonder!³ In the same way Kitarō Nishida, who faced some difficulties, experienced the intuition of nothingness at times. By this intuition, Nishida pursues to nothingness → infinity → eternity → transcendental-being (God) → love. I called Nishida’s infinite extent and opening the ‘Infinite Horizon of Consciousness’ (無限の意識地平) as absolute nothingness. This is the same concept of τόπος (tópos, literally “place”) of Aristotle. Still more Nishida defines the present that realizes absolute nothingness and includes past and future as ‘Eternal Now’.*

KEYWORDS: *Pure experience, Logic of Place (場所 - Basho), reality, pure duration, Absolute Nothingness, Eternal Now, Self-Identity of Absolute Contradictories, Aristotle’s τόπος, Biocosmology – Neo-Aristotelism*

Contents

Introduction

1. Pure experience and Place of Aristotle
2. Nothingness in “An Inquiry into the Good”
3. Reality of Infinity and Eternity
4. God and love of Nishida and God of Aristotle

Conclusion

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² Kiyokazu Nakatomi, *Philosophy of Nothingness and Love* (無と愛の哲学, Hokuju Company, Tokyo, 2002, Japanese version, Lambert Academic Publishing, Saarbrücken, 2016, English version, Biocosmology – Neo - Aristotelism Vol. 5, No. 1, Winter 2015, English condensed version.

³ Kiyokazu Nakatomi, ‘Metaphysics of Aristotle and Asian Philosophy’, *Izvestia*, 2014, Volgograd State University for Education: <http://izvestia.vspu.ru/avtor/5166>.

Introduction

In the first place, in pure experience, man transcends time and space in the same way man transcends time and space in absolute nothingness. Then man intuits eternity and infinity. In this ‘Absolute Nothingness’ and ‘Eternal Now’, Kitarō Nishida experienced transcendental-being (God). He described God as “*An Inquiry into the Good*”⁴. From the mid to the late term of Nishida’s philosophy, God was stressed as absolute nothingness. In “*Philosophical Proceedings*”⁵ of the late-term, it was called as Self-Identity of Absolute Contradictories (Absolutely Contradictory Self-Identity). According to Nishida, the logic of this self-identity of absolute contradictories is very effective to explain the God quality of Jesus Christ. Jesus is a perfect man and God. God is almighty, infinite and eternal. On the other hand, man is limited and a mortal being. Jesus had both contradictory qualities of the unity of man and God. Nishida calls it a Self-Identity of Absolute Contradictories as these contradictory qualities are united. Thus Jesus proved the eternal life through death and resurrection and atoned the original sins of humankind. He realized the love of God. Nishida reaches to love in self-identity of absolute contradictories. It is said that the concept is original to Nishida. But from my perspective, it seems that it depends upon the theory of ontology and generation by Aristotle. It is the change from dynamis to entelecheia and entelecheia to dynamis. A boy is developing to a young man and a young man is developing to an adult. This is continuation and movement. In this change, nothingness as the negative word functions and difference occurs. Well, a young man is neither a perfect boy nor a perfect adult. Therefore he has the two qualities of a boy and an adult. This is double and contradictory. He is a contradiction and identity. Nishida in his thirties (around 1900) read Aristotle’s books. From his fifties, he developed a strong interest for Aristotle. Though he sometimes criticized Aristotle, he accepted the theory of Aristotle positively. The evidence is an acceptance of ontology and generation by Aristotle. Further the following description of Nishida “We always depend upon the theory of Aristotle when we think abstractly” is the symbolic appreciation for Aristotle⁶.

These notions of absolute nothingness, self-identity of absolute contradictories and love are induced by pure experience in “*An Inquiry into the Good*”. As pure experience is internal flow and changing, the world is also changing and developing. It is adapted to the world of Bio-cosmology. If man contemplates this change, development and movement, instantaneously man finds always opposites, contradictions and conflicts. The world is the development of countless conflicts and contradictions. It is opposite to united quality of reality. Nishida called these conflicts and contradictions Self-Identity of Absolute Contradictories. It is reality as pure experience that unites the world, and the reality becomes God, the fundamental of infinite activity. The unity of God and the Great Universe is love. Pure experience is

⁴ Kitarō Nishida, *An Inquiry into the Good* (善の研究), Iwanami Shoten, Nishida Kitarō Complete Works, old version, 19 volumes (1978), volume 1. I sketched it “*Good*”. Translated by Masao Abe & Christopher Ives, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1990, English version.

⁵ Nishida Kitarō, Complete Works, old version, 19 volumes (1978), 8-11 volumes.

⁶ Nishida Kitarō, Complete Works, old version, volume 10, p. 459.

α to ω (beginning to end), further it is adequate to my principle of nothingness and love and Biocosmology.

1. Pure experience and Place of Aristotle

Pure experience (junsuikēiken: Japanese 純粹經驗) is the direct conscious experience that is not analyzed by notion prior to subject-object judgment. It is adequate to my theory of ‘nothingness (mu: Japanese 無) as reality’ expounded in “*Philosophy of Nothingness and Love*”. The meaning of pureness is just the state of experience itself without judgment of thought⁷. For instance, as soon as man sees a color or hears a sound, it is the state before man judges what color it is or what sound it is. That is the state without judgment. Man can say that pure experience makes no sense, but this experience may transcend the meaning of the sense. And man can say that this experience has possibilities of all senses. It is only the present consciousness of the fact and one simple reality. Sometimes one criticizes pure experience as only just looking, static meditation and does nothing. The meaning is very passive. This is a misunderstanding. Pure experience is a behavior such as to play music and to climb a mountain. Meditation of Zen is one of these actions and conducts. Pure experience is positive and creative activity. Further man can say that pure experience is just similar to the flow of life as reality that is impossible to define by words and notion as said in my above mentioned book. From the view point of Bergson, pure experience is pure duration itself. It is like the conscious concentration such as a man who climbs a cliff and a musician who plays his skill melody. But this pure experience is not a set of simple sensations, stone, tree, forest and earth. If pure experience is perceptive activity, it needs an ‘unconscious integration power’ behind perceptive activity⁸. This integration power is pure experience. At a glance, it seems chaos and indiscrimination. In ancient Greece, Hesiod, Plato and Aristotle intuited nothingness as chaos. I treated on the intuition of nothingness of Plato in my paper ‘Cosmology of Plato’⁹ and I treated on the intuition of nothingness of Aristotle in the paper ‘Metaphysics of Aristotle and Asian philosophy’. Now, I refer to Aristotle and his reasoning on the meaning of τόπος (place):

One might well conclude from all that there must be such a thing as ‘place’ independent of all bodies, and that all bodies cognizable by the senses occupy their several distinction places. And this would justify Hesiod in giving primacy to *Chaos* [= the ‘Gap’] where he says: “First of all things was Chaos, and next broad-bosomed Earth”; since before there could be anything else ‘room’ must be provided for it to occupy. For he accepted the general opinion that everything must be somewhere and must have a place.

And if such a thing should really exist well might we contemplate it with wonder-

⁷ *Good*, Japanese version, p. 9; English translation, p. 3.

⁸ *Good*, Japanese version, p. 13; English translation, p. 7.

⁹ Kiyokazu Nakatomi, ‘Cosmology of Plato’, *Ars Est Philosophia vitae* 2011, University of Chełm, Poland, English version, *Ad augusta per angusta* 2011, University of Chełm, French version, *Filozoficzne I Kulturowe Aspect* 2013, University of Finance and Management in Warsaw, German version, <https://www.google.co.jp/#q=kosmologie+von+platon+kiyokazu+nakatomi>

capable as it must be of existing without anything else, whereas nothing else could exist without it, since 'place' is not destroyed when its contents vanish." [Aristotle, *The Physics*. Book IV, chapter I, 1957, p. 281]¹⁰

Aristotle intuited the extent of undefined conscious state as chaos. As it is beyond words, it is nothingness and wonder. After his wonder, he explained the universe and place by the theory in *The Physics*. In the second chapter, he defined place as "place is a limiting determinant" (ibid. p.287). An easy example to understand is the horizon, a line that divides the earth and the sky. But through the horizon, we can recognize the extent of the world. That is the place of Nishida and my notion of 'Infinite Horizon of Consciousness' (無限の意識地平). On this idea, the paper¹¹ of Dr. Felipe Ferrai Gonçalves (Nagoya University) inspired me. Here I return to Nishida, though he accepted the idea of Plato's chora, he reached to Place of Aristotle through pure experience. In this pure experience, intellect, emotion and will are united and integrated. When the unity and the integration break out, then thought and judgment occur. The birth of thought, sense and judgment is owing to combine the present consciousness with the past consciousness. That is memory working.

In contrast to pure experiences that reveal themselves to us directly, the consciousness of the past has now become activated and connects with one part of present consciousness while conflicting with another. The state of pure experience thus breaks apart and crumbles away. Such things as meanings and judgments are states of this disunity." [*Good*, Japanese version, p. 16; English translation, p. 9]

Here, the organized process of notion and thought is described after the destruction of pure experience. The judgment needs the recognition of notion and things. According to Nishida, the definition of recognition and notion is owing to the comparative working of memory. In our thought, the combination and conflicts between present consciousness and past consciousness depend on the discrimination and difference by memory. In the discrimination and difference by memory, nothingness as negative word functions¹². Nishida discriminated consciousness and memory. Well, is it the discrimination between present consciousness and past consciousness? I believe that present consciousness contains past consciousness. That is present consciousness is united with memory. In Bergson, as consciousness contains the past, consciousness is memory.

When Nishida began to write "*An Inquiry into the Good*", he had not inferred about Bergson. The difference between such consciousness and memory corresponds with the difference between pure experience and pure duration. For example, man can recognize quality difference and mutual penetration in pure duration of Bergson that

¹⁰ See, Aristotle. *The Physics*. Trans. by Philip H. Wicksteed and Francis M. Cornford. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957.

¹¹ 'Development of Topos - Around Plato, Aristotle, Bergson and Nishida', *Research of philosophy* (哲学の探求) No.45, The Japan Forum for Young Philosophers, 2015.

¹² Kiyokazu Nakatomi, *Philosophy of Nothingness and Love*, chapter 2.

is the deep surge and conscious flow of life. But pure experience, the difference of consciousness becomes division and conflict. Bergson and Nishida both insist on the flow of consciousness. This is the commonality of their theories. But Bergson preached relaxation and descent as qualification and space reduction for the interruption of pure duration. On the other hand, Nishida expressed division and conflict for the interruption of pure experience. In here, we can appreciate the difference between Bergson and Nishida.

Commonality is flow and unit of consciousness. For instance, it is a melody. When man hears a melody, he unites with it. Man and melody form a whole. When man smells a rose, he would unite with the smell. Like these, there are some examples. Bergson preached relaxation and descent, Nishida expressed division and conflict. The flow of experiences is the same for both of them. But in the interruption of experience, Bergson preached relaxation and descent of quantification and space reduction. On the other hand, Nishida preached division and conflict. In his late age, Nishida aimed to establish a logic of this division and conflict. That is a difficult logic, 'Self-Identity of Absolute Contradictories'. In pure experience, the sprouting was induced. Nishida argued with Bergson favorably in "*Intuition and Reflection in Self-consciousness*"¹³ from his point of view. But in later, he criticized and negated the pure duration of Bergson because of the lack of eternal now as Bergson persisted in past-conservation. The eternal now contains past and future simultaneously. There are some similarities and differences between Bergson and Nishida. In one time, these would be important and in another time they would be minor and complicated.

Bergson departed from dualism like two railways cross smoothly then advance in different direction. That is a fusion and harmony theory of dualism. On the other hand, Nishida insists on monism, a phenomenon of consciousness as reality. This difference is large. But in experience itself and the flow of consciousness as reality their theories are common.

This is summarized in the next famous part of "*An Inquiry into the Good*".

In pure experience, our thinking, feeling, and willing are still undivided; there is a single activity, with no opposition between subject and object. Such opposition arises from the demands of thinking, so it is not a fact of direct experience. In direct experience there is only an independent, self-sufficient event, with neither a subject that sees nor an object that is seen. Just like when we become enraptured by exquisite music, forget ourselves and everything around us, and experience the universe as one melodious sound, true reality presents itself in the moment of direct experience. Should the thought arise that the music is the vibration of air or that one is listening to music, at that point one has already separated oneself from true reality because that thought derives from reflection and thinking divorced from the true state of the reality of the music. [*Good*, Japanese version, pp. 59-60; English translation, p.48]

¹³ Nishida Kitarō, *Complete Works*, old version, volume 2.

This description “Just like when we become enraptured by exquisite music, forget ourselves and everything around us, and experience the universe as one melodious sound, true reality presents itself in the moment of direct experience.” is an emotional expression that we enrapture by the symphony No. 5 ‘Destiny’ of Beethoven. This state is pure experience and reality.

Similarly, Bergson described that melody (tune) as pure duration in “*Time and Free Will*” and ‘The perception of change’.

Pure duration is the form which the succession of our conscious state assumes when our ego lets itself *live*, when it refrains from separating its present state from its former states. For this purpose it needs not be entirely absorbed in the passing sensation or idea; for then, on the contrary, it would no longer *endure*. Nor need it forget its former states: it is enough that, in recalling these states, it does not set them alongside its actual state as one point alongside another, but forms both the past and the present states into an organic whole, as happens when we recall the notes of a tune, melting, so to speak, into one another.” [*Time and Free will: An essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, translated by Frank Lubecki Pogson, London George Allen & Unwin, LTD, New York, Humanities Press Inc. 1910, p.100]

French version:

La durée toute pure est la forme que prend la succession de nos états de conscience quand notre moi se laisse vivre, quand il s’abstient d’établir une séparation entre l’état présent et les états antérieur. Il n’a pas besoin, pour cela, de s’absorber tout entier dans la sensation ou l’idée qui passe, car alors, au contraire, il cesserait de durer. Il n’a pas besoin non plus d’oublier les états antérieurs: il suffit qu’en se rappelant ces états, il ne les juxtapose pas à l’état actuel comme un point à un autre point, mais les organise avec lui, comme il arrive quand nous nous rappelons, fondues pour ainsi dire ensemble, les notes d’une mélodie. [*Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience*, 144^e édition, Press Universitaire de France [PUF], 1888, pp. 74-75].

There is simply the continuous melody of our inner life, - a melody which is going on and will go on, indivisible, from the beginning to the end of our conscious existence. Our personality is precisely that. [The perception of change, *The Creative Mind An introduction to metaphysics*, translated by Mabelle L. Andison, Dover Publications, Inc. Mineola, New York, 2007, p. 124]

French version:

Il y a simplement la mélodie continue de notre vie intérieure, - mélodie qui se poursuit et se poursuivra, indivisible, du commencement à la fin de notre existence consciente. Notre personnalité est cela même. [La perception du changement, *La pensée et le mouvant*, 91^e édition, PUF,

1938, p. 166]

Bergson treated the melody that we enrapture as the typical pure duration. Still pure duration becomes reality in “*Matter and Memory*” and “*Creative Evolution*”.

It is interesting that melody is reality and ‘eternal now (perpetual present)’ in ‘The perception of change’:

Consequently nothing prevents us from carrying back as far as possible the line of separation between our present and our past. An attention to life, sufficiently powerful and sufficiently separated from all practical interest, would thus include in an undivided present the entire past history of the conscious person, - not as instantaneity, not like a cluster of simultaneous parts, but as something continually present which would also be something continually moving: such, I repeat, is the melody which one perceives as indivisible, and which constitutes, from one end to the other – if we wish to extend the meaning of the word – a perpetual present, although this perpetuity has nothing in common with immutability, or this indivisibility with instantaneity. What we have is a present which endures. [The perception of change, *The Creative Mind An introduction to metaphysics*, p. 127]

French version:

Dès lors, rien ne nous empêche de reporter aussi loin que possible, en arrière, la ligne de séparation entre notre présent et notre passé. Une attention à la vie qui serait suffisamment puissant, et suffisamment dégagée de tout intérêt pratique, embrasserait ainsi dans un présent indivisé l’histoire passée tout entière de la personne consciente, - non pas comme de l’instantané, non pas comme un ensemble de parties simultanées, mais comme du continuellement présent qui serait aussi du continuellement mouvant : tell, je le répète, la mélodie qu’on perçoit indivisible, et qui constitue d’un bout à l’autre, si l’on veut étendre le sens du mot, un perpétuel présent, quoique cette perpétuité n’ait rien de commun avec l’immuabilité, ni cette indivisibilité avec l’instantanéité. Il s’agit d’un présent qui dure. [La perception du changement, *La pensée et le mouvant*, PUF, pp 169-170]

First I introduced the understanding of Bergson by Nishida. In the early stage, Nishida agreed with the notion of pure duration of Bergson. But from mid-term, he criticized Bergson, because the theory of Bergson about time persisted in traditional time theory. As Bergson thought the preservation of past memory in consciousness, he supposed that the flow of time passes from the past, present to future. On the other hand, Nishida thought that pure experience transcends time. Therefore it is eternal. From the point of view of pure experience, the flow of time is not contained by the traditional time flow, past → present → future. From the influence of time theory by Augustinus, Nishida preached the reverse theory of time flow. That is to say, future → present → past like Martin Heidegger. According to Nishida, in our time flow, we

go ahead, past → present → future, and at the same time we receive future → present → past. In two reverse and contradictory time flows, we (us in the present time) are self-identity of absolute contradictories as eternal now. As in the time theory, Nishida preached eternal now and denied the theory of Bergson that is a lack of eternal now and that it contains the past.

But now I want to show the limitation of the understanding of Bergson by Nishida. As a matter of fact, Bergson described about the eternal now (perpetual present) in ‘The perception of change’. His paper was written for the lecture at Oxford University 1911 May 26, just the same year “*An Inquiry into the Good*” was published. (At that time Nishida was forty one years old). Bergson also thought of eternal now.

One concrete sample is memory recall in “*Matter and Memory*” and ‘Perception of change’. It is the sudden remembrance (exaltation of the memory)¹⁴ or “Flash back” before the crisis of death, for instance like the fall of a climber from the cliff drawing him into a sudden hanging. Such remembrance conducts to the future then suddenly is interrupted. At that moment one remembers life histories such as a moving panorama. That is ‘present’ and ‘eternal now’ conducting to the future and all history of past occurring together. This is self-identity of absolute contradictories that contains future and past by Nishida. Therefore it is necessary to correct the understanding of Bergson by Nishida.

Further, I can demonstrate the sample of “schème moteur”¹⁵ (motor schema, motor diagram) of Bergson as time comes from the future. It is a physiologic notion and includes the attitude and intention for the future. In detail, it is a function and a frame work that potentially determines directions of body exercise, language and thought. It is not only a function of continuation of body exercise but also an exercise trend, motor control and preparation attitude of language and memory. When we exercise our body, we do not think of the movement of the body parts one by one. In unconsciousness, we stand ready and prepare for the next movement by that function. By a function of motor schema, our body moves smoothly like a melody. If we do not have a motor schema, we move stiffly like a robot. We receive movement and memory of the past, continuing them and anticipating and preparing to the future. In a sense, we go ahead and take the future in advance. This idea was extended to “Body Schema” by Merleau Ponty¹⁶.

As far as I am concerned, I cannot find this motor schema in Nishida. Instead of it, Nishida aimed for self-identity of absolute contradictories and tried Zen exercise for the body. But in the late-term of his life, from the biology of Aristotle, Nishida treated of the common sense that integrates the five senses and the notion of social existence. Then he established the theory of historical body that creates art works and culture. He excluded the physical body outlook. Body is related to spirit, intelligence

¹⁴ Henri Bergson, *Matière et Mémoire*, PUF, 92^e édition, 1896, p.172 *Matter and Memory*, translated by Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer, Solis Press, England, 2014, p. 90.

¹⁵ Henri Bergson, *ibid.*, p. 135, *Matter and Memory*, p. 61, motor diagram.

¹⁶ Kiyokazu Nakatomi, ‘On Body Schema of Merleau Ponty’, *Tojō(透上)* No.22, Thought and Research Association of Christianity, 1993, Tokyo.

and environmental world. For instance, referring to the theory of Aristotle, hand is not only an instrument to catch foods like an ape but also an instrument that develops intelligence to grasp, synthesize and extend, analyze world things. Then man creates art works and culture for the world. If man compares Nishida and Bergson, man can raise various questions.

As Bergson started at dualism, he supposed two phases of self. One is the fundamental self (*moi fondamental*) and another is the surface self (*moi superficiel*). Fundamental self is the state of pure duration and unity with reality. On the other hand surface self is the state of loss of pure duration and ordinary self in practical life. This corresponds with pure duration and relaxation and quantification. But Nishida does not suppose these phases of self. He defined real self in pure duration and he never mentions surface self or uses non-authentic self like Heidegger. This discrimination is dualism. As Nishida aims for monism, he does not need such discrimination as dualism. Instead of it, he makes the degree, depth and difference of strength by pure duration. That is the intellectual intuition. Man can say that it is deeper and bigger than pure duration and it is the appearance of great integration that a conscious system develops. For instance, this is the intuition of idea by Plato, pure intuition without will by Schopenhauer and Identity by Schelling. The acquisition of a new thought by a scholar, a new theory by a moralist, a new idea by an artist and a new enlightenment of a religious person depend upon appearance of integration and intellectual intuition.

Just as ordinary perception is considered merely passive, so is intellectual intuition considered a state of passive contemplation; however, a true intellectual intuition is the unifying activity in pure experience. It is a grasp of life, like having the knack of an art or, more profoundly, the aesthetic spirit. For example, when inspiration arises in a painter and the brush moves spontaneously, a unifying reality is operating behind this complex activity. Its transitions are not unconscious, for they are the development and completion of a single thing.

Intellectual intuition, the discernment of this single reality, can be found not only in the fine arts but in all of our disciplined behavior; it is an extremely ordinary phenomenon. Mainstream psychologists may argue that it is only a habit or an organic activity, but from the standpoint of pure experience it is actually the state of oneness of subject and object, a fusion of knowing and willing. In the mutual forgetting of the self and the object, the object does not move the self and the self does not move the object. There is simply one world, one scene. [*Good*, Japanese version p. 43, English translation p.32]

As intellectual intuition is the depth and development of pure experience, it lies on the basis of thought and will. The thought is one part of a system. It needs to integrate intuition on the basis of a system. On the background of Plato and Spinoza, great intuition does work. In thought, there is no quality difference but degree difference between a genius's intuition and an ordinary intuition. On the basis of all

relations there is intuition. All relations are established from intuition. Well, what is the ultimate of intuition?

Thought cannot be explained exhaustively, for at its base exists an unexplainable intuiting upon which all proof is constructed. A certain mystical reality is always hidden at the base of thought, and this pertains even to the axioms of geometry. It is often said that thought can be explained but intuition cannot. The word “explanation” simply indicates the ability to return to the fundamental intuition. The intuiting that lies at the foundation of thought becomes the basis of explanation and is at the same time the power of thinking, not simply a static form of thought. [Good, Japanese version, p.44; English translation, p. 33]

In the ultimate of intuition, Nishida faced ‘nothingness’. The thought is formed on intuition, man cannot explain this intuition endlessly. As it cannot be explained by words, it is nothingness. The thought of Nishida is adequate for my theory ‘Principle of Nothingness and Love’. The meaning of nothingness is not non-existence of all things. Nothingness is something dynamic which is the basis of explanation and Nishida called it as ‘mystic someone’. In ancient China, Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu called it as ‘Tao, the Way’ and ‘Nothingness’. Nishida also admitted intuition of nothingness in the basis of pure experience. I am convinced that this nothingness and ‘mystic someone’ reached to ‘dynamic universals’ that form mathematics and ‘dialectic universals’ that include natural and conscious world. It is said that the notions of ‘dynamic universals’ and ‘dialectic universals’ were inspired by the philosophy of Hegel. But from my perspective, I think that the notions were influenced by the dynamic development of Aristotle. Finally it becomes ‘Absolute Nothingness’. Further I consider the descriptions of nothingness.

2. Nothingness in “*An Inquiry into the Good*”

Nishida expounded about nothingness with the law of causality in Chapter 6 in “*An Inquiry into the Good*”. To consider Nishida’s understanding about the law of causality is interesting.

The law of causality is thus a habit of thinking that derives from changes in our phenomena of consciousness. This is evident when we try to explain the universe as a whole by means of this law and fall into self-contradiction. For example, the law of causality demands a beginning to the world. And if we decide upon a certain point as the beginning, the law of causality then calls for the cause of that point, and in this it reveals its own imperfection. The third and final issue concerning phenomena of consciousness as the sole reality is the claim of the law of causality that being does not emerge from nothingness. When we assert that “there are no things”- from the perspective of intuition that transcends the distinction between subject and object- a consciousness of nothingness lies behind our assertion. Nothingness is not merely a word: its concrete meaning indicates the lack

of certain qualities and also the possession of certain positive qualities (just as psychologically, the color black is, like other colors, one type of sensation). When our being is regarded as arising from nothingness in the physical world, the nothingness, as a fact of consciousness, is not true nothingness but a particular moment in the development of consciousness. In consciousness, how can we being arise from nothingness? Consciousness is not affected by the quantitative limitations of time, place, and force, thus it is not controlled by the mechanical law of causality. In fact, such forms as time, place, and force are established upon the unity of consciousness. Consciousness is entirely qualitative, and in it a concealed "one" develops itself. Consciousness is what Hegel calls *das Unendliche*¹⁷. [*Good*, Japanese version, pp. 56-57; English translation, pp. 45-46].

In this text, Nishida described the negation of perfection of the law of causality. That is the anti-thesis against the scientism. Generally, almost all scientists think that all things are explained by sciences owing to the law of causality. But the law of causality is not almighty. Nishida denied the absolutism of the law of causality. If man researches the cause of things, man reaches to the beginning of the universe. Nevertheless man faces new questions: 'What is the cause of beginning of the universe?' What is the cause of the cause? The questions are endless. The law of causality faces the endless questions, infinite questions "Nothingness" and reveals its imperfection. The law of causality is not the explanation of the ultimate cause but only the custom of thought that depends upon our conscious phenomenon. In fact, there are so many things to be not explained by the law of causality. If anything, the things to be explained are limited. Scientists say that though they have limited knowledge they can reach unlimited knowledge. We know that an apple falls on the ground by the law of gravitation. But why is there gravitation? Why big entities pull small entities? Now can we find the function of the Higgs boson that produced the mass. Bergson predicted the function of Higgs boson resisting reality, energy of the universe in "*Creative Evolution*", 1907. But why are there Higgs bosons and why did they have such quality? Science cannot answer such questions, now. The arrangement of DNA is made clear by computer analysis. But how is the arrangement of DNA decided? Man cannot explain it well. Further, about the beginning of the universe, in the age of Nishida, the theory of the Big Bang from nothingness was not formulated yet. But the theory of relativity by Einstein was proposed. In "*Intuition and Reflection in Self-consciousness*" (1913-17), Nishida knew the theory of relativity and argued it. In that book, Nishida denied the theory of creation from nothingness from the view point of the theory of relativity and he proposed that the beginning of the universe was 'the center of inner creation' that is personal inner point. Therefore Nishida denied nothingness as the non-existence theory of all things. Nishida's nothingness is "nothingness" of consciousness, moment of conscious development and origin of extent of the world. I called this 'Conscious Horizon of Nothingness'. As the

¹⁷ This term indicates that finite human consciousness is a part of the dialectical process of Absolute Spirit, which is infinite and eternal. This note was added by the translators.

consciousness is not limited by time, place, quantity or power, it transcends the mechanics causality, time and space. Conversely, the world is established by the integration of consciousness of nothingness. Further, as the consciousness of nothingness transcends the form of time and space, it is infinite and eternal. Here, we can recognize the sprouting of absolute nothingness.

True reality, like the true meaning of art, is not something that can be transmitted from one person to another. All we can transmit is an abstract shell. We may think that by means of the same language we understand the same thing, but to some extent the content necessarily differs. [*Good*, Japanese version, p.63; English translation, pp. 51-52]

Supra the relation between reality and language is described. True reality cannot be expressed by words in the fashion as art intuition. Language is an abstract shell. The relation between reality and language is similar with Bergson's thought. Language is only a shell or husk of reality. How man expresses reality by words? He cannot reach reality itself. It is the same as how man expresses the beauty of the landscape of Paris, he cannot reach the landscape of Paris itself. True reality is living fully and the extent and infinite horizon of consciousness.

Next Nishida described unconsciousness and infinity.

We next need to examine the distinction between the unconscious and consciousness. The aforementioned subjective unifying activity is always unconscious, and the object of that unification comes forth as the content of consciousness. In both thinking and willing, the true unifying activity is always unconscious. Only when we reflect on it does it appear in consciousness as a conception; at this time it is no longer a unifying activity, but the object of unification. As I said before, because the unifying activity is always subjective, it must always be unconscious. Hartman¹⁸ has claimed that the unconscious is an activity; in the like manner, when we stand in the position of subjectivity in a state of activity, the unifying activity is always unconscious. In contrast, when we become conscious of a certain consciousness as an objective entity, that consciousness has already lost its activity. For example, while training in a certain art, as long as we are conscious of every movement we have yet to embody a truly living art, but when we arrive at a state of unconsciousness, the art comes alive in us for the first time.

From the standpoint of psychology, all mental phenomena are phenomena of consciousness, so we might make the criticism that unconscious mental phenomena do not exist. But our mental phenomena are not merely series of ideas- there is, of necessity, an unconscious activity that links and unites

¹⁸ Eduard von Hartmann (1842-1906), a German philosopher, focused on the relationship between the unconscious and consciousness in such works as *Philosophy of the Unconscious* and *Phenomenology of the Moral Consciousness*. This note was added by the translators.

them, and only then do they come into being.” [*Good*, Japanese version pp. 80-81, English translation p. 66]

In ordinary life, as we appreciate conscious life as the first meaning, we experience unconscious life that is the state of self-loss and the sleeping state as the second meaning. But from Nishida’s point of view, the fact is the opposite. The state of notion analysis and of objective thought by consciousness is special. For instance, that is a state of working and thinking by incidental task. When one does notion analysis and thinks practically, one loses and destructs pure experience. When one sees nature and feels the energy of the great world in unconsciousness, just one realizes pure experience and the state is true reality. In the dream of the sleeping state that is the unconscious state, the occurrence of free and creative idea is possible, liberated from ordinary and objective life. Sometimes the historical invention and creation occurred while sleeping. For instance, the prophecy by Ezekiel in the Old Testament was realized through the dream. The conscious state in which one does objective and analytic thinking is special and limited. On the contrary, unconsciousness unites the limited consciousness. As it is not limited by anything, it is infinite consciousness. In Buddhism, the layer of deep and potential unconsciousness is called *ālaya* recognition. It seems that Nishida insisted on the unconsciousness including *ālaya* recognition.

On the same subject, Bergson described such large work of unconsciousness. According to Bergson, deep consciousness was sketched as a whole of a converse cone in “*Matter and Memory*” [French version, p.169; English version, p. 89]. Our real body and consciousness are only the summit of the converse cone and the point of a plan. Unconsciousness is the whole and consciousness is a part. Bergson also recognized nothingness as unconsciousness. The notion of ‘Conscious Horizon of Nothingness’ includes unconsciousness and opens the infinite possibility, then it becomes reality.

Next we consider infinite and eternal reality.

3. Reality of Infinity and Eternity

According to Nishida, behind pure experience and reality, there is a function of unifying reality (nothingness). For instance, from the materialist point of view the atom is the fundamental reality. But this notion of atom is only abstract. If man supposes one atom, man finds some works or qualities. Something that does not have works or qualities is equivalent to nothingness. Well, what is something which determines the works and qualities? Red color is not being as it is not independent. Red color is in the spectrum of infinite colors. The integration of infinite colors is made by a certain unifying reality (nothingness). The atom is built upon an atomic core and electrons. There, various building powers are working. Well, what is something which integrates the various or infinite powers? That is a certain unifying reality and becomes dialectic universal later. The next quotation is the description of a certain unifying reality.

In the case of material phenomena, this unifying reality is a physical power in the external world; in the case of mental phenomena, it is the unifying power of consciousness. As I stated before, since material phenomena and mental phenomena are identical in pure experience, these two types of unifying activity are fundamentally one: the unifying power at the base of our thinking and willing and the unifying power at the base of the phenomena of the universe are one and the same. The laws of logic and mathematics, for example, are the fundamental principles by which the phenomena of the universe come into being.

In the establishment of reality, then, both a unity at the base of reality and mutual opposition or contradiction are necessary. Heraclitus said that strife is the father of all things - reality is established by contradictions. Red things come into being in opposition to things that are not red, and things that function are established in opposition to things that function reciprocally. When these contradictions disappear, reality disappears as well. On a fundamental level, contradiction and unity are simply two views of one and the same thing. Because there is unity, there is contradiction, and because there is contradiction there is unity. [*Good*, Japanese version pp. 68-69, English translation p.56]

In this text, the base of reality is described. Physical phenomena and mental phenomena are the same in pure experience. On the contrary, if man emphasizes the aspect of consciousness in experience, man can say the mental phenomena. If man emphasizes the aspect of matter, man can say the material phenomena. Spirit does not exist without body and matter and body do not exist without spirit.

The material phenomena without spirit, that natural science deals with, is matter as abstract thought. Pure experience is the basis of the material phenomena and the mental phenomena. It unifies the integration of thought and universal phenomena. Our logic and laws of mathematics are established on the reality intuition. Integration and division are united.

When a certain state of affairs is established through unity, an opposing state of affairs is necessarily established at the same time. If a unity comes into being a disunity immediately arises and breaks it up. True reality emerges through such infinite opposition. [*Good*, Japanese version, p.70; English translation, p.57]

There is integration, there is division. Reality includes both and develops infinitely.

At the same time that reality is a unified whole, it must include opposition. If there is a real entity here, then there is necessarily another that opposes it. In such mutual opposition, the two entities are not totally independent realities, for they must be unified; they must be part of the development of one reality through differentiation. When they are unified and emerge as one reality, another opposition then emerges. At the same time, another

unity must also be functioning behind this further opposition. In this way reality develops into an unlimited unity. From the opposite angle, we can say that an unlimited, single reality develops itself through differentiation from the small to the large, from the shallow to the deep. This process is the mode of the manifestation of reality, and the phenomena of the universe come into being and advance in accordance with it. [*Good*, Japanese version, p. 77; English translation, pp. 63-64]

Reality is the co-existence of integration and division. Therefore, the world is moving and never stops. There is no ultimate equilibrium point of stability in the universe. When man researches the micro-world in the quantum theory, he can recognize the function of the uncertainty principle. It is the principle that one recognizes the blur or uncertainty (nothingness) of the velocity and position of a particle (electron). If one defines the velocity of a particle, he cannot determine the position of a particle. Or if one defines the position of a particle, he cannot determine the velocity of a particle. Heisenberg called it the uncertainty principle and Niels Bohr called it complementarity. In the case of Nishida, in the mid-term, he lost his way by the phenomenology of Husserl. Through the logic of place, he faced absolute nothingness. In late-term, he named it self-identity of absolute contradictories. In my book, I explained and expounded that quantum mechanics faced nothingness of uncertainty. Further, the Big Bang from nothingness and the theory of the expansion of the universe support my theory. The origin of the question is not being but intuition of infinite nothingness. From my point of view, self-identity of absolute contradictories, that is very difficult to apprehend, is solved. The use of this concept is not necessary. But Nishida could grasp the reality that is beyond the words, he aimed to explain the fact by forcible logic and lost his way in his mid-term. After the long wandering, he found the logic that is absolute nothingness and self-identity of absolute contradictories. The sprouting was in the division and development of reality. Then he named the basis of the activity of reality God.

4. God and Love of Nishida and God of Aristotle

According to Nishida, if man understands nature deeper, he will recognize the mental integration on the basis of nature. Further perfect true spirit is the unity with nature. This integration spirit is reality. On the other hand, it is infinite opposition and conflict. This infinite activity is God.

We call the base of this infinite activity God. God is not something that transcends reality, God is the base of reality. God is that which dissolves the distinction between subjectivity and objectivity and unites spirit and nature...As previously stated, there is a fundamental spiritual principle at the base of reality, and this principle is God. This idea accords with the fundamental truth of Indian religion: Ātman and Brahman are identical. God is the great spirit of the universe. [*Good*, Japanese version, pp. 96-97; English translation, pp. 79-80]

The God of Nishida is the basis of reality and the great spirit of the universe.

From the standpoint of life and spirit of God, the God of Nishida is similar with the God of Aristotle. The definition of God of Aristotle is as follows:

For the actuality of thought is life, and God is that actuality; and the essential actuality of God is life most good and eternal. We hold, then, that God is a living being, eternal, most good; and therefore life and a continuous eternal existence belong to God; for that is what God is. [Aristotle. *Metaphysics*. Book XII, chapter 7, 1935, p. 151]¹⁹

From the perspective of eternal life of God, Nishida's God is similar with the God of Aristotle. But Nishida's God is not the God of Christianity. In traditional Christianity, God is defined as follows.

- (1) God as the creator of the universe
Owing to the law of causality, the cause of the universe is God.
- (2) God as the director who made the order and aim of the world
God controls the order and the harmony in the world.
- (3) God as moral request
If there is no standard of good and bad, humans lose the meaning of morality. One needs God as the basement of morality. This is the moral theory of Kant.

Nishida denied the definitions (1)~(3).

Against (1)

If man recognizes the God as the cause of the world, further what is the cause of the God? Man cannot answer it.

Against (2)

From the view point of fitting for the purpose, man must prove the fitting for the purpose of the world. But there are uncountable, unreasonable things. For instance, there are many poverties, wars and natural disasters. It is impossible to explain the fitting for the purpose of the world.

Against (3)

We need the God to establish the foundation of our moral. That is only our convenience for our interest and condition. It does not prove the need of the God. It is only the expedient.

From these reasons, we have to say that Nishida's God is different from the God of Christianity. Well, how can we seek for the existence of the God on the fact of our

¹⁹ See, Aristotle. *Metaphysics X-XIV*. Trans. by Hugh Tredennick & G. Cyril Armstrong. Loeb Classical Library, 1935.

experience?

How can we verify the existence of God in facts of our direct experience? An infinite power is hidden even in our small chests that are restricted by time and space; the infinite unifying power of reality is latent in us. Possessing this power, we can search for the truth of the universe in learning, we can express the true meaning of reality in art, and we can know the foundation of reality that forms the universe in the depth of our hearts - we can grasp the true face of God. The infinity free activity of the human heart proves God directly. As Jakob Boehme said, we see God with a “reversed eye” (*umgewandtes Auge*)²⁰. [*Good*, Japanese version, pp. 98-99; English translation, p. 81]

Nishida’s God is not the creator of the universe and the personal God but our inner and intuitive God as Ātman and Brahman in India. What is the form of the existence of God? Therefore, man can only say nothingness ultimately as Nicolas Cuzanus said and that it is only expressed by negative words. If God is defined by words, the infinite God is limited and not the true God. Therefore God is nothingness in words [*Good*, Japanese version p.99, English translation p.82]. Nishida denied the definition of the God of Christianity, but he used the definition of Nothingness by Nicolas Cuzanus.

Conclusion

Well, is God perfect non-existence? No it is not. God is the unmoving integrated work that establishes the reality. For instance, about the truth of mathematics, the sum of the angles of a triangle is always 180 degrees. Where to find this reason? Though we can prove it by geometry, we cannot see and hear the reason itself. The truth exists in fact. Further when we see a famous picture, for instance Mona Lisa, we feel a profound emotion and the mysterious spirit. If we search the reason, we cannot find the reason. In such meaning, the impossibility of expression is nothingness as the ‘Nothingness as Reality’ in my principle of ‘Nothingness and Love’. In Nishida’s philosophy, God is the integrator of sciences and arts in the universe. Still more, as the God works in our inner spirit, the God needs larger integration. When we reach the integration, we feel joy. Generally, self-love is the needs for this integration. The desire is infinite. It needs further integration. As we ourselves are formed by the contacts and mutual understanding with others, we express sympathy for others and seek for integration and unity with them.

Our love for others is the demand for such a supra-individual unity with them. Accordingly, we feel greater peace and joy in love for others than in love for ourselves. God, the unity of the universe, is the base of this

²⁰ Jakob Boehme (1575-1624), a German mystic and philosopher, had numerous mystical experiences, on the basis of which he described God as an Ungrund – a bottomless abyss from which the Trinity and the universe emerge. This note was added by the translators.

unifying activity, the foundation of our love, the source of our joy. God is infinite love, infinite joy, and peace. [*Good*, Japanese version, p. 101; English translation, pp. 82-83]

Supra is the definition of God by Nishida, the pure experience of Nishida adequates to nothingness as reality and nothingness → infinity → eternity → transcendental-being (God) → love, the principle of nothingness and love. In his mid-term, he introduced and spread the phenomenology of Husserl in Japan. That is one of his achievement. But by using the words of phenomenology of 'Noesis' and 'Noema', he lost his own way in the long term until he found the theory of place that is the place of Aristotle and the 'Infinite Horizon of Consciousness' as absolute nothingness. Therefore his mid-term philosophy is very intricate and difficult. But the mid and late-term philosophy of Nishida can be explained by my principle of nothingness and love. Strictly speaking, my principle completes the philosophy of Nishida.

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