Nishida Kitarō and Chinese Philosophy

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The Twenty-Second World Congress of Philosophy held in 2008 may be said to represent a kind of "internationalization" of philosophy taking place at the beginning of the twenty-first century. It demonstrates not only the recent growing interest abroad in Japanese philosophy and the improvement of philosophical relations within East Asia, but it also addresses the very possibility of "world culture" and "world philosophy" (Nishida 1933, 254; Heisig 2001, 7–11). It will not have escaped notice that, having already transcended the limits of Europe and the Near East in 2003 (Istanbul), the World Congress was taking place at the edge of East Asia, not in what we might call the philosophical "middle" of China nor the "abyss" of Japan, but in the "in-betweenness" of Korea.

It is precisely between these two empires of the "Middle" and the "Sun"

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that we would like to introduce the figure of Nishida Kitarō (1870–1945). He is rightly considered as a philosopher mainly influenced by Western philosophy[1] and Buddhism (see DALISSIER 2006A, 2009). If we consider, for example, the debate opposing Daoism to Buddhism reported by Huilin (慧林, fifth century), Nishida's views might also appear to have been influenced at least as much by Daoism:

> Chinese saints do not lighten the dark way (the beyond); they never speak about transformations of future life. If they exalt the void of the heart, they do not realize the void of phenomena. Their penetration never reaches that of [the saints] of the West.… For Śākyamuni, things themselves are emptiness, emptiness and things meet. For Laozi, being (*you*) and non-being (*mu*) are two distinct realities.[2]

In general the Japanese philosopher's debt to Daoism and Confucianism, and beyond that to Chinese "philosophy,"[3] remains relatively unexplored. As a non-specialist in this domain, I would like to try to shed some light on significant parallels, without ignoring their limitations, basing my remarks principally on the rich material provided by Anne Cheng in her *History of Chinese Thought*. Even so, the task is by no means an easy one since Nishida hardly quotes any Chinese thinkers the way he cites Western philosophers or even Zen masters.[4]

1. I will focus on Chinese Confucianism in this paper, but it is also possible to consider Japanese Confucianism in relation to Nishida's philosophy. See DALISSIER 2009, 36, 79, 93, 286, 287, 322, 390, 403 and 538. The connections between Nishida's philosophy and Korean philosophy and culture have not been studied thus far. Suffice it to mention the two works on Korean thought listed in the References (C. 207/234, 308/201, 278/199).

2. *Baihei lun*, cited in CHENG 1997, 377. The word "realize" will be taken here in the twofold meaning pointed out by NISHITANI Keiji (1982, 5).

3. We need to distinguish several meanings of the word *philosophy* in this essay. By "Western philosophy" we will refer especially to "continental" philosophy as rational and conceptual thought born in Greece. "Japanese philosophy" refers to the post-Meiji Westernized form of thought that began with Nishi Amane. "Chinese philosophy" refers to Chinese thought in general, both ancient and modern. Concerning the problem of using the word "philosophy" in the expression "Chinese philosophy," see the studies collected in YPC. For a parallel with the expression "Korean philosophy," see Lee 2004, 10.

4. In Nishida's first work, *An Inquiry into the Good*, the Chinese philosophers who

INQUIRIES INTO *AN INQUIRY INTO THE GOOD*

Unification

Elsewhere I have tried to show how "unification" (*tōitsu* 統一) is the key to the "feel" (骨) for Nishida's philosophical intuition (DALISSIER 2009, 565). He first proposed this idea of a philosophical "knack" in referring to Western philosophers, but its mention readily calls to mind

are quoted in the third part devoted to "the good" include Wang Yangming (王陽明 1472–1529), Xunzi (荀子 298–338), Confucius (孔子 551–479), and Zisi (子思 485–420). For other references, see C, no. 440–9/310. Sengzhao (僧肇/肇法師, 374–414) is quoted in NISHIDA 1973, 78. Maybe the most important essay concerning Nishida's interpretation of Chinese philosophy is NISHIDA 1933, where the *Book of Rites*, the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, the *Book of History,* the *Book of Songs*, the *Commentary of Zuo*, the *Analects*, the *Doctrine of the Mean*, *Zhuangzi,* and *Daodejing*, as well as Confucius, Mencius, Zisi, Mozi, the legalist philosophers, Xunzi, and the Gong Yang scholars are quoted. In addition, Nanquan Puyuan (南泉普願 748–835), Baoji (盤山寶積), Linji (臨濟), Zhao Zhou (趙州 778–897), Pan Gui (盤珪 1622–1693), Bunan (至道無難 603–676), Huineng, and other Zen thinkers are quoted in the posthumous essay, "The Logic of Place and Religious Worldview" (NKZ II: 424, 454–5, 430, 449).

I have studied Nishida's personal collection of Chinese books, approximately 886 volumes preserved in Unoke, a number even greater than that of his Japanese books (561). On Nishida's early training in classical Chinese and the Chinese classics, see YUSA 2002, 10, 15. In these books, we find annotations in at least two kinds of writing styles. A specialized graphological inquiry might be able to distinguish and identify them. In order to try to "identify" the marginalia, we need to see if the book has the words "borrowed from [my] grandfather… written by Kitarō" (祖父遺書幾多郎記) or "inherited from ancestors… written by Kitarō" (自祖父の代所傳幾多郎記). If such is the case, as in volumes I–III of the work by Neo-Confucian thinker Minagawa Kien (1734–1807)『助字詳解』[Research on propositional particles], C. no. 281/200, then the signs in red ink (point, circle, underlining with or without the reproduction of the underlined part in the margin), the tiny pieces of colored paper attached to show an important word or passage (a usual technique for readers of the Chinese classics in China and Japan), and the annotations of transcription and commentary could be those of his grandfather (西田新登 Nishida Aranori, circa 1850), "a highly accomplished man of letters, especially conversant with the Chinese classics" (YUSA 2002, 5). If not, the annotations might be Nishida's work. Obviously, if the date of the edition of a book is after 1850, it cannot belong to his grandfather or other ancestors. There are also some books that contain reading marks in a writing style that could be Nishida's, to judge from my studies of his marginalia in other books. This is especially the case in his copy of STIC, vol. I, C. no 78/188, in which we find the *Mean* is annotated throughout in lead pencil as well as with an ink pen or brush. See 2–6, and

the words of Confucius and Zhuangzi.[5] If Western philosophers have conceived of unification as a pure and simple union, many have made an essential use of it (Plato, Lotze); others have at times been critical of it (Aristotle, Bergson); and still others, though more rarely, have sought its philosophical potential (Cohen, Heidegger). It is difficult, on the one hand, to appreciate how Nishida could really have simply extracted his own conception of unification from a Buddhist framework, where the very idea of a unity of the "I" is conceived to be "illusory," and where, at the same time, the "feeling of unity" seems to have been rejected.[6] On the other hand, it is impossible to ignore the fact that the idea of unification has a deep intellectual history in Chinese thought, where it is characterized by an "attraction for syncretism" (Granet 1934, 15).

What is unification? To begin with, it represents an organic unity of consciousness and reality, a conception that could be said to have issued from "Nishida's medieval bent" (see Heisig 2004, 15). In his very first

in particular chapters 9 to 13, pages 32–7. There is a light lead pencil mark on page 8, at the level of the passage of the *Mean* which is quoted first in Nishida 1933: "The heavenly mandate is called human nature; that which rules human nature is called the Way; cultivating the Way is called the true teaching" (241). However, we find no mark on page 95, corresponding to the second citation (243). We find the same kind of annotations throughout the *Analects*, in particular chapters 1, 3, 9, and 20, pages 16–21, 28, 58, 160–1, 372–3, and 390. Apart from this, only a few other books are so richly annotated. Concerning Chinese thought and literature, except for those which will be quoted in the present study, consult the following references c., no. 201/195, 216/196, 241, 242, 245/197, 252/198, 281, 284, 288, 292/200, 299/201, 422/208. Concerning Japanese classics, see c., no. 316/201, 332, 337/203. Concerning Buddhism, especially Zen, see c., no. 354, 358, 368, 375/205, 380, 381, 389, 390/206, 411/207.

5. "A unique principle enables me to grasp everything," *Analects*, cited in Granet 1934, 15. "Between strength and smoothness, the hand finds and the spirit answers. There is a trick I cannot explain by words" (*Zhuangzi* 13, quoted in Billeter 2004, 21). We can find many materials concerning the *Zhuangzi* in Nishida's library, see stic, vol. 9; c., no. 79, 243–5, 436, 437/188, 249, 208.

6. Cheng 1997, 351–2, 385–6. "We do not find behind all emotional and psychic states, thoughts, and actions any immutable federating or unifying principle that we could qualify as an I" (Faure 1998, 352–3). Thus, if Nishida rethinks the Buddhist, Daoist, and Confucian theme of "forgetting the I," in order to realize the "true self," at the same time, beginning with his first book, he also meditates on a cosmological and psychological "ruling unity" or "master unity (統一)."

work, he highlights the "identity" (*dōitsu* 同一) of *ātman* and *brahman* in "Indian religion and philosophy," though without giving any references.[7] He argues further:

> The more we discard the self and become objective or selfless, the greater and deeper our love becomes. We advance from love between parent and child or husband and wife to love between friends, and from there to love of humankind. Buddha's love extended to birds, beasts, grasses, and trees. (NISHIDA 1911, 174)

Such a conception does not refer only to Buddhism. We find clear parallels in Zengzi (曾子 504–436 BCE),[8] and especially Hui Shi (惠施 380–305 BCE): "Let your love extend to [embrace] the thousand beings; Heaven and Earth are *a single body*."[9] More generally, it refers to "the ancient tradition of *unity* of man and cosmos" in Chinese thought (CHENG 1997, 450; emphasis added).

Viewed in terms of pure naturalism or brute technique, man and nature are neither unified nor polarized; men and God do not coincide in a temporal "alliance." They do not represent "two separate reigns

7. NISHIDA 1911, 38, 80. Cf. DALISSIER 2009, 125.

8. These are well known words, coming from the opening of *The Great Learning* (大學), quoted in CHENG 1997, 73. Yet the paradigm is not so much religious as moral and political:

> The ancients who wished to illustrate illustrious virtue throughout the kingdom, first ordered (治) their own states. Wishing to order well their states, they first regulated their families. Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated their persons. Wishing to cultivate their persons, they first rectified their hearts. Wishing to rectify their hearts, they first sought to be sincere in their thoughts. Wishing to be sincere (誠) in their thoughts, they first extended to the utmost their knowledge. Such extension of knowledge (到知) lay in the investigation of things. Things being investigated, knowledge became complete [unification makes sincerity]. Their knowledge being complete, their thoughts were sincere. Their thoughts being sincere, their hearts were then rectified. Their heart being rectified, their persons were cultivated. Their persons being cultivated, their families were regulated. Their families being regulated, their states were rightly governed. Their states being rightly governed, the whole kingdom was made tranquil and happy." (358–9)

A few reading marks made with a black lead pencil appear in his 1912 edition, STIC, vol. I, 10–14.

9. *Zhuangzi*, 33; WATSON 1968, 375; emphasis added.

but a unique society" (Granet, 1934, 24). This dynamic unity is symbolically expressed in the Chinese language[10] and ritually celebrated in "rhythms" of "time and space" and during festivals.[11] Mencius emphasizes this point.[12]

In addition, when "consciousness" joins the very place of such a unity, unification refers to an endless organic operation (*sōsa* 操作) in the making, a conception that the "logic of place" will justify and that a later theory of *poiesis* will apply (see Dalissier 2005, Parts iii–iv). Here again, even if Nishida appears to be indebted mainly to Western thought, a genealogy of his approach cannot exclude certain Chinese philosophical materials. Can we not see it at work in the sort of "evolutionism," "cosmopolitanism," and "universalism" that characterizes the period around the composition of his first work, and that we find in such thinkers as Yan Fu (嚴復 1853–1921), Liang Qichao (梁啟超 1873–1929), Tan Sitong (譚嗣同 1865–1898) and Kang You-wei (康有爲 1858–1927)?[13] Our minds are drawn to the unending, organic creation of the universe, as well as to other ideas coming from ancient and modern Chinese thought, which I will detail in the course of this essay.

Pure Experience and the Fall

These two meanings of "unification" unite in "pure experience," wherein we "become one" with reality, or "become objective" (nkz 12: 285, 302–3, 337–8, 375–9). But a core argument of the *Inquiry* is that we "fall" (堕落) at each moment from this encompassing "state." Besides the explicit

10. "When a Chinese author speaks of 'nature,' he thinks of the written character 性, composed of the element 生, that refers to what is birthing or living, and of the radical element for the heart/spirit, which orients his reflection on nature, human nature in particular, in a vitalistic sense. According to the specificity of its writing, Chinese thought can imagine itself taking place within the real rather than being simply superposed on it" (Cheng 1997, 35).

11. Where human beings appear as "*united* by the desire to obey together an order for everyone" (Granet 1934, 24, 60, 97, 112; emphasis added).

12. Cheng 1997, 455. A copy can be found in Nishida's library, stic, vol. 2. The annotations are most probably Nishida's.

13. Cheng 1997, 619–28, 637–8. It would be helpful to compare in this context Tan Sitong's *Renxue* and Kang Youwei's *Da tongshu* to Nishida (1911).

reference to the Christian myth, there may be an implicit allusion to Mencius' statement: "the *Dao* of study and experience (學問) is nothing else but simply to quest [seek] for the original spirit lost from sight" (*Mencius* VI.A.11) Obviously, the *Inquiry* is structured along the lines of a "dialectical" fourth-stage Hegelian logical process[14] associated with a Trinitarian Christian history of fall and salvation (see DALISSIER 2009, 85–138). At the same time it refers to a primary Daoist source: the *Dao* as a lost origin, as is apparent in *the very image Nishida uses to illustrate pure experience*: a baby sucking at its mother's breast (NISHIDA 1911, 120; cf. DALISSIER 2009, 38, 131), the image of a saint who knows how to draw directly from the *Dao* as from a spring (*Laozi* 20).[15]

A second source evoked by this threefold structure is an ethical account that appears in the writings of a Neo-Confucian author quoted in the *Inquiry*, Wang Yangming (王陽明 1472–1529):

> In the beginning, the spirit of all men in the world differs in no way from the spirit of the saint.
>
> But when egoism comes to interpose, and material desires come to obstruct, what was high becomes small and what was freely flowing becomes blocked through its own action. Everyone begins to have personal concerns, to the extent that some finally consider [even] father, son, and brother as enemies.
>
> This is the great worry of the saint, urged to transmit and teach everywhere the sense of humanity, which brings together into one

14. *Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences*, Addition §171 (HEGEL 1975, 236; MARQUET 2001, 193). Regarding the question of whether it is possible to apply this fourth-stage dialectic to the earlier account of the "logic of place" in 1926, see DALISSIER 2008. On Nishida's later critique of Hegel, see NKZ XII: 64–85 (French translation, NISHIDA 1931).

15. We can find considerable material on the *Laozi* in Nishida's library, including three editions that appeared after his grandfather's death: STIC, vol. 9; C., no. 79, 201/188, 195. Two other editions are much older: C., no. 239–40/197. Anne Cheng explains: "The loss of the origin can be actually felt in contact with small babies: while we know that we have ourselves been in this state, we have the feeling that everything has been deleted, hence the difficulty of restoring this original state" (CHENG 1997, 202. In *Zhuangzi* V, the notion of a "fall" into the inferior and "exhausting" intentional "scheme" (regime) of activity is opposed to the recovery of the "calm" corporeal scheme of necessary activity (see BILLETER 2004, 43–53, 63, 78, 87, 113).

> body the Earth, the Sky [heaven] and the thousand beings (天地萬物一體). Acting in this way, we will dominate our egoism, get rid of what obstructs, and recover what we have in common: the original constitution of our spirit.[16]

This much can be said of the Daoist and Neo-Confucian heritage in Nishida's early "dialectics." In *Inquiry into the Good* he himself criticized, from a topological position, the general idea of an "obstruction" (蔽, 塞) of the flow of reality taking the form of an "I" (cf. Dalissier 2009, 526ff), but his critique of "egoism" is nonetheless oriented towards an affirmation of "personality" and "desires."

Forget Yourself

This paradox recalls the repudiation in Mahāyāna Buddhism of the Hīnayāna circle of an "I" trying to escape the "I" (Cheng 1997, 355). In the attempt to resolve this contradiction, Nishida grounds his "psychological" theory of "forgetting the self" topologically, that is, on an idea of the self as a "place" for the realization of the finite and ontological nature of the "I" (Dalissier 2009, 85–138).

Although a kind of forgetting of selfhood is found in certain Western philosophers (Eckhart, Bergson, Heidegger),[17] it is central in Confucianism: "To subdue oneself and return to the rite, is the *ren*" (克己復禮爲仁, *Analects* XII.1). Ritually, to forget oneself is to relate to the universe and to others. However, if "the thousand beings are in totality present in me" (Mencius), if "I, insignificant being" (Zhang Zai 張載 1020–1078), have to take place between sky and earth, between men as friends and brothers, there is a kind of necessity for the persistence of the I, at least as a practical agent, respecting and loving others.[18] Thus, to forget one's "consciousness" is to attain perfection of action, according to the famous images of the *Zhuangzi*.[19]

16. *Chuanxi lu* II. The book is in Nishida's library, C., no. 260/198, a work he refers to in his diary in 1898, C., no. 441, 449/310. See no. 1054/339.

17. See Dalissier 2009, 93. On the relations between Nishida and Eckhart, see Heisig 2004, 57–67.

18. *Mencius* VII.A.4; and『正蒙』[Right initiation], 17, in *Zhangzaiji* 62–3.

19. The good cook Ding and the swimmer at the falls of Lüliang. *Zhuangzi* III.6.

"Forgetting the self," we unite with the working of reality and "become objective." In the Daoist and Buddhist metaphor of the "mirror," which was so important for Nishida (cf. DALISSIER 2006A, 99–142), such forgetfulness compels us to act as a "mirror that reflects without passion the things such as they are."[20] In Shao Yong (邵雍 1012–1077), this conception takes a new expression in the idea of "reversed observation" (反觀):

> Not to observe things from the point of view of the I, but from their thing-like point of view.… Because we can use the eyes of the world as our own eyes there is nothing that our eyes cannot observe.[21]

Shao is influenced by another Buddhist and Daoist conception, also mentioned by Nishida (1940, 357–8, 377), the "inverse reflect" (反照). Last but not least, in this connection Zhang Zai emphasizes a kind of "illumination of spirit,"[22] which is most suggestive in relationship to Nishida's optical theory of "self-awakening" (自覚).

See also: "an ego too cumbersome to enter into the fluidity of the *Dao*" (CHENG 1997, 136) and "In the spontaneity (*ziran* 自然) which consists in harmonizing with things, there is no place for the 'I'" (*Zuangzi*, cited in CHENG 1997, 130; cf. also 208, 326). Again, in *Zhuangzi* XII we read: "The man who has forgotten the self (忘己) may be said to have entered Heaven." This topic appears in the *Liezi* I.6, II.1 (all who refer to this work must keep in mind its composite and artifical nature, see CHENG, 114).

Nishida's library contains three editions of the *Liezi*: STIC, vol. 9; C., no. 241–2/197. These last two editions, dated respectively 1660 and 1748 (henceforth referred to as A and B), are covered with reading marks, including punctuation, isolation of sentences, underlining (with a continuous stroke, simple or double, or with *bōten*), transcriptions, and translations from the Chinese, comments in Japanese with black and red ink, in particular around the references given above; chapters are distinguished with paper marks in A, and there are written papers with annotations in B. While these books are old, these marks may be Nishida's because there is nothing to indicate an inheritance from his ancestors. Both books contain circles in red to indicate important terms and chapters (for instance A, chapters 2, 3, 6–8), as well as other signs that Nishida used frequently, as I have demonstrated (DALISSIER 2005 and 2009).

20. CHENG 1997, 130. TANG Junyi explains: "Let our spirit empty itself. Then it becomes purely receptive and is ready to fully accept things, and all things become transparent to us. Thus illumination and forgetting of the self happens." (1967, 272)

21. Shao Yong, VI.26B; cited in CHENG 1997, 439–40.

22. "It is by getting accustomed to the letting-go [abandonment] of one's own self (脫去己) that light will come by itself" (*Zhangzaiji*, 285).

Sincerity

This dimension of enlightenment brings us closer to the ethical account of the *Inquiry into the Good*, where Nishida stresses the importance of being "serious" and "earnest" (真摯):

> Goodness is actualization of personality. Viewed internally, this is the satisfaction of *a solemn [sincere] demand*—that is, the unification of consciousness—and its ultimate form is achieved in the mutual forgetting of self and other and the merging of subject and object.[23]

This *integrity* with oneself and others is also described as the uppermost "sincerity," "honesty," and "loyalty" (至誠).[24] Sincerity does not refer to a psychological dimension of the "individual," but to a "mutual forgetting of self and other, and to a merging of subject and object" whereby "pure experience" is realized through an ethical position.

Apart from the Christian meaning pointed out by Nishida, we may unearth other important roots to this way of thinking. For Confucius, what is needed to accomplish the rites is precisely a "sincerity" of intention.[25] What is more, the *ethical dimension* of sincerity present in Nishida's account ("Goodness… is the satisfaction of a sincere demand")

23. Nishida 1911, 163–4, 166–7; emphasis added. See also 37, 134, 144, 152, and Takeuchi 1996, 211.

24. "Christ said that only those who are like an innocent child can enter heaven. Sincerity is good not because of the results arising from it, but because it is good in itself.… To deceive another is to deceive oneself and to negate one's own personality.… The internal necessity of personality—that is sincerity—is a demand based on the union of knowledge, feeling, and volition. It does not indicate simply following blind impulse in opposition to judgment made by the intellect and the demand of human feeling. It is only when we exhaust the intellect and feeling that the true demand of personality—sincerity—arises in us.… When the motive is good but the actual conduct is not necessarily good, people often say that individual sincerity and the supreme good of all humankind sometimes conflict. I believe, however, that those who say this lack a correct understanding of sincerity—what such people say is not true if we use "sincerity" in the sense of the truly deepest demands of the spirit as a whole. Our true demands are not artificially created by us; they are facts of nature." (Nishida 1911, 133–4, 144)

25. *Analects* III.4. "In festive ceremonies, it is better to be sparing (儉) than extravagant. In the ceremonies of mourning, it is better that there be deep [sincere] sorrow (戚) than a minute attention to observances."

might indicate the fact of choosing the good and thus "realize the celestial part in each human being," as we find it expressed in the *Mean*.[26]

In later Confucianism, we may refer directly to the core notion of "authenticity" (誠). The *experimental dimension* in Nishida's account ("actualization of personality") may be borrowed from the idea in Mencius that "authenticity" belongs to the "one who realizes fully his humanity, having realized his existence as engaged in a close interdependence and interaction with all the others" (CHENG 1997, 183). Such a "return to a fundamental nature" (復性) was described by Li Ao (李翱 772–836) and offered as a Confucian equivalent to Buddhist and Daoist enlightenment (CHENG 1997, 417). This may, in turn, be related directly to the tradition of the *Changes* and the idea of "what is without extreme," "without top," or "boundless" (無極) by Zhou Dunyi (周敦頤 1017–1073) (CHENG 1997, 443–4).

But here again the thinker closest to Nishida is Zhang Zai: "The union of human nature with the celestial *Dao* lies in authenticity. The *Dao* through which the sky endures infinitely is called authenticity" (*Zhangzaiji*, 20–1; CHENG 1997, 457). This unifying authenticity is not likened to the unity of being as in Heideggerian *Eingentlichkeit*; it is described as "full," that is, full of "void" (*xu* 虛). The void represents the vanishing place that enables an authentic union, a core intuition of the *Zhuangzi* (4; see BILLETER 2004, 96–99). Thus *Inquiry into the Good* is a search for the void, as for Zhang Zai "the highest point of the good is the void."[27] These provide a sound basis for developing from Nishida's arguments what I call a "neontology" of unification: *emptiness unifies*.[28]

26. CHENG 1997, 182. A treatise repeatedly quoted by Nishida (1933), and perhaps annotated by him. Notice that a kind of *epistemic dimension* of "sincerity" (誠) of thoughts is present at the core articulation in the above quotation of the opening of *The Great Learning* (note 8 above).

27. 至善者虛. *Zhangziyulu* 324–6; CHENG 1997, 457.

28. DALISSIER 2009, 319–565. We might interpret NAKAGAWA's comments on Doi Takeo's *Reverse and Surface* in this way (2005, 49–50). In Japanese culture, "reverse" (裏, 本音) is a kind of emptiness unifying things that opposes "facially" (面, 建前). Nakagawa gives the examples of administrative negotiations and the "double structure of Japanese consciousness." We might also refer to the "retired emperor" or the respected old man who retains a strong influence (元老) in the Japanese political tradition. See HÉRAIL 1986, 58, 77, 411, 421. In this sense, *ura* (裏) unifies where *omote*

Moreover, insofar as Nishidean "pure experience" represents realization of the "facts as such," authenticity can be said to correspond to a sort of realization of the nature of the thing, as when we say: "This is it, no doubt"; or when we treat, for instance, the authenticity of a testimony and aver, "She is obviously telling the truth and cannot be lying." One is authentic when one "participates in the creative process of the Sky … everything is here, there is no reason to search elsewhere for a truth whatever it could be" (Cheng 1997, 184).

Nishida's originality seems to lie in the meaning of the unification process. In authenticity, a unity is not only something realized or to be realized; it actually realizes itself. He was certainly influenced here by Wang Yangming, who is cited to this effect in the *Inquiry*.[29] Wang believed that our spirits can sympathize with other beings and the whole universe in virtue of a a "corporeal unity" (一體) like that previously emphasized by Zhuangzi.[30] Recovering "Mencius's ancient intuition: spirit is prior because it is unity" (Cheng 1997, 533), Nishida runs counter to Zhu Xi's

(面) repulses. From a metaphysical point of view, it is just as if a groundless reality, hollowing out and emptying itself, was grounding all existing appearances. In Nishidean terms, the "place of absolute nothingness" unifies "things," finding themselves "isolated" from within the "place of determinate being," and unifies "forces," "acts," and "persons" finding themselves still opposing each other from within the "place of oppositional nothingness." At this point, Nishida's ideas might contrast with the ideal of "isolation" of the omniscient Daoist saint, for whom the void does not unify but makes language disappear and hinders familial and social relations, as stated in the *Liezi* IV.5, 8. This passage is underlined with comments in red ink in Nishida's B edition of the *Liezi*.

29. "As in Wang Yangming's emphasis on identity of knowledge and action (知行同一), real knowledge [or knowledge of reality] must always be accompanied by the performance of the will" (Nishida 1911, 106, translation modified).

30. "The great man regards Heaven and Earth and the thousand beings *as a single body*. (The reference is to Hui Shi and *Zhuangzi*, as indicated above.) He regards the world as *one single family* and the country as *one single person*. As to those who make a *cleavage* between objects and *distinguish* between the self and others, they are small men.… Therefore when he sees a child about to fall in a well, he cannot help a feeling of alarm and commiseration. This shows that his [sense of] humanity (*ren*) *forms one body* with the child.… This means that even the mind [heart] of the small man necessarily has the humanity that forms one body with all [cannot escape all these feelings]." Wang Yangming, *Inquiry on the Great Learning* as cited in Chan 1963, 659–66.

(朱熹 1130–1200)[31] "distinction" between "principle" (*ri*) and "energy" (*qi*), arguing for the "unity of knowledge and action." Thus, to be "authentic in one's intention" (誠意) means to obey this very nature of spirit: to unify (CHENG 1997, 534). Here we find a "resolution to be authentic" (立誠), defining spirit as a "will" to unify with oneself, the others, and the world, in contrast to a differentiating thinking, considered to be a deceiving operation.[32]

Needless to say, these ideas are central in the *Inquiry*, the Hegelian dialectical structure of which begins from "pure experience," only to break apart in its fallacious "aspect" of "thinking," then to recover its true nature in the effective aspect of "will," before finally returning to pure experience from within "intellectual intuition" (知的直観). Nishida will always claim such a priority of the "will" over "thinking." To know is to act, to act is to know, and this conception will certainly have a deep influence on his late theory of "intuition in action" (行為的直観).

However, the Japanese philosopher seems to give a more general face to this intuition of unity than we find in Wang Yangming. For the latter, "The world looks like one single family, and the country one single person" (*Da xue wen*, 26, 968; CHAN 1963, 659), an already existing unity, an identity we need to recover. But the former's conception of unification[33] cannot be reduced either to Zhu Xi's dual unity of "one in two, two in one" (一而二二而一), or to Wang's "unity of knowledge and action" (知行合一) which realizes a "perfect and total fusion in a single, sole reality" (CHENG 1997, 540). In Nishidean words, unification is neither simply a "final unity" nor a "reciprocal" or "contradictory"

31. Nishida's library contains several works of Zhu Xi in rather old editions, C., no. 215, 217, 256, 295/196, 198, 200, especially C., no. 216/196 (including reading marks and clues such as papers).

32. This is an idea also found in the *Laozi* 18: "From the emergence of intellect and discrimination the great deception was born." IZUTSU translates: "Only when cleverness and sagacity make their appearance do wiles and intrigues arise" (2001, 58).

33. "Curiously, such a dichotomy of contemplative and passive [Aristotle] can be found in China in Zhu Xi's philosophy (end of the eleventh century to the beginning of the twelfth century). But Wang Yangming (end of the fifteenth century to the beginning of the sixteenth century) had unified these two notions in a key concept of his philosophical doctrine according to which knowledge and praxis are simply one, just as Hegel had tried to reunify contemplation and action in his dialectics. Nishida,

unity (cf. Dalissier 2009 and 2005, 1372). What is more, the Nishidean unity is "corporeal" to the extent that it is essentially *creative*, and is not merely given as "one single body," "family," or "person," as seems to be the case in Wang. At the same time, it is true that Wang is only quoted in the third part of the book, referring to a "moral" level that comes "before" religion, and corresponds, for Nishida, to the essential middle that represents "Chinese culture."[34] (I will develop this point further in the second part of this study.)

Summing up, we can recognize an important influence of Chinese thought on Nishida's early philosophy, particularly as shown in *Inquiry into the Good*. The question we still need to ask is whether this influence carries on or recedes from his later thought. Is this not a question of a delay in the maturation of his own thought? Can we not say that references to Chinese thought will disappear as quickly as those to Buddhist thought do? Does Nishida's first philosophical systematization as a "logic of place" have anything more to do with this prior continental heritage?

Chinese philosophy in the "logic of place"?

Before entering into these ontological and post-ontological considerations, we need to take into consideration the following warning:

> Ancient Chinese thought is not interested in the absolute of being. It searches not for what grounds being—a metaphysical problem—but for what can explain how the extraordinary diversified multiplicity of the "thousand beings" operate in a sole movement, the movement of the universe—a cosmological problem. (Vandermeersch 1988, 28–9; cf. Kamenarovic 2005, 202–4)

To avoid what the Korean philosopher Lee Seung-hwan calls "out-of-context comparative philosophy" (Lee 2004, 18), we should not speak

who had practiced Hegelian philosophy as well as Wang Yangming's teachings, created his system under the double influence of these philosophical traditions, the Chinese and the Western" (Nakagawa 2005, 61).

34. "Chinese culture has been a moral culture, seeing in the social organization of the Chinese people the development of an eternal human nature" (nkz 12: 357–8).

of "metaphysics" and "absolute ontology," at least not where ancient and modern Chinese philosophy are concerned. We may, however, refer to a multiplicity of "beings" (有) and "things" (物) as simply "ontological," and to the *Dao* as the "source of being."[35]

As we shall see later, from early on, thinkers in China were divided on this question, some of them—whatever their differences—granting a kind of "priority" to non-being over being.[36] Of course, the use of these terms borrowed from Western philosophy remains problematic (Zheng 2005, 133–5). At the same time, recalling Nishida's warning, should we deprive Chinese thought of the meanings it conveys?[37] He remarks in this regard:

> By metaphysical standpoint, I mean how each culture considered the question of reality. It may be said, of course, that in China, and especially in Japan, the question of reality was not considered scientifically; metaphysics may even be said not to have been especially developed. But the fact that there was no [distinctive science of] metaphysics does not necessarily mean that there was no metaphysical thought. Inasmuch a specific culture has developed itself, it can be conceived in metaphysical terms. Where a culture is, there must be a vision of life (人生観). At the roots of a vision of life must be included some kind of metaphysical thought, even though it is not consciously realized. (Nishida 1933, 237)

35. Cheng 1997, 289. As we will see below, Izutsu (2001) translates 有 literally as "Being" and 物 as "Non-Being."

36. Nishida will particularly emphasize this aspect for Laozi and Zhuangzi (1933, 242, 250). On Confucius and Zhuangzi, see Billeter 2004, 144. See also *Liezi* II.1.4, II.1; IV. 13–15. Wang Bi and others such as Mozi, Guo Xiang, Pei Wei, and Ruan Ji seem to come closer to an "ontological" vision.

37. If the "theoretical results of modern Chinese philosophers appear mostly in the domains of cultural philosophy and metaphysics… and ontology" (Zheng 2005, 133), is it only the result of a historical contingency, or is it a reaction against Kant and Hegel? For Zheng himself it is because it "gives an ontological or realistic turn to concepts of traditional thought (135)." But in response, we might ask: Is it not also because modern *and* ancient Chinese philosophers deal in a certain way with at least the fundamental questions or problems of metaphysics and ontology? In other words, is not the "language" of ontology and metaphysics much more in question than its "objects" (134–5)?

Place and Logic

It is well known that Nishida's metaphysics of "place" (場所 *basho*) issued from a critique of notions such as χώρα (Plato), τόπος (Aristotle), and *Gebietskategorie* (Emil Lask). From the very start, however, the general methodological moorings of his "logic of place"—which may be interpreted to mean "understanding comes with localization" (Dalissier 2009, Appendix xv, 347ff)—recalls a Daoist idea present in the great synthesis of ancient thought orchestrated under the Han, the *Huainanzi* (Cheng 1997, 298). This is the "induction through categories" (推類) and analogy from within a network: "to explain and infer is to locate within the pattern" (Graham 1989, 320) of the "production-transformation (造化) of beings," as given in the model: "*Dao* → *qi* → clear/unclear → Sky/Earth → Yang/Yin → hot/cold → fire/water → sun/moon, and so on." Cheng consequently adds:

> In such a network of correlations, no distance and critiques are possible: everything is foreseen, already given. It is the networking of the network itself that takes the place of an explanation, its adherence to real being is at no time tested. (1997, 299)

We may also recall that in *Inquiry* Nishida is quick to criticize empirical and logical "inference" (推論, 推理), and to define reality itself as a kind of self-unifying "inference" (推す) through analogy (Dalissier 2009, 105). On the other hand, if his philosophical topology may also be said to deal with the above-mentioned problem of "adherence" to the real, his topology does not in turn completely follow the kind of limited "ontological" explanation given in the 1911 book. In fact, what he called "the place of absolute nothingness" shows not only a structural and ordering "depth" entailing the "dissemination" (散乱) of beings into determinate places that might correspond to the scheme of induction, but also and above all, an endless opening to an increasing depth in the "retreat," allowing the very localization of the Western tradition and thus a more profound understanding of its philosophers and their concepts (see NKZ 3: 283 and Dalissier 2009, 503–73).

So much for some clues dealing with methodological and epistemic stakes. More directly to the point, the logic of place itself focuses on an

operation of "embodiment" (包む) as opposed to the logics of Aristotle and Spinoza.[38] In this regard, it is difficult not to acknowledge parallels with the Chinese logician of the Warring Kingdoms dynasty (third and fourth centuries BCE), Gongsun Long (公孫龍 3rd century BCE):

> Contrary to Aristotelian logic, which conceives the definition of a particular thing from what this thing is not or from what it excludes, Chinese logic proposes a mode of identification by inclusion: a thing is a whole that include parts, parts being not identical to the whole. This conception can be found in Gongsun Long as well as in the Mozi canon.[39]

For his part, Nishida distinguishes simple "inclusion" (含む) from the "embodiment" alluded to earlier, in order to think of "place" not merely as a "combination" of "parts" but also as a "unification" of "parts as images." According to Cheng:

> Gongsun Long starts from the presupposition that the Whole is not one of its parts; its logical formulation is given in the Mozi canon: "'ox and horse' is not 'ox.'" (1997, 153)

In contrast, Nishida argues:

> The whole is not the union of the parts, but instead the part can be conceived as a determination of the whole. (NISHIDA 1917, 163–4)

As his "first" paradigm in *Intuition and Reflection in Self-Realization*, Nishida took Royce's paradox of a person trying to draw a perfect map of England that will have to include himself drawn within the picture, inspired by Dedekind's definition of infinity, according to which the whole becomes one of his parts (NISHIDA, 1917, 83–4). Yet nine years later he would write:

> [The universal does not contain the particular as] space contains

38. DALISSIER 2009, 481ff. The translation "encompassing" (J. Tremblay) is more neutral. "Embodiment" insists on a "bodily" dimension that will be developed by Nishida in notions such as "position" or, later, "historical body."

39. CHENG 1997, 152. We can find three versions of the *Mozi* in Nishida's library, C, no. 78, 246–247/188, 249. We might surmise from the content of his quotation from the Mozi that he had read it rather intensively (see NISHIDA 1933, 244).

> things or things are in space. [The universal and the particular] do not differ from each other as space and things do. Particulars are parts of the universal and moreover constitute its images. (NKZ 4: 227)

This gives us his "second" paradigm, the topological notion of a "self-enlightening mirror."[40] I have shown this to be the reason why his philosophy of unification differs in the *Inquiry* from Leibniz's mereology of union, as well as how it differs in 1917 from Heinrich Rickert's theory of transcendental "totality" (*Allheit*) based on the Kantian category of quantity, and comes closer to Hermann Cohen's idea of an "intensive unity."[41]

This shift from the logic of inclusion (Gong) to a reflective and mirroring embodiment theory (Nishida) already illustrates a recurring theme of the present study: a first proximity between Nishidean philosophy and Chinese thought may be significant, as it is likely to eventually reveal a rather fundamental distance that will have to be questioned as phenomenologically and philosophically significant.[42]

Let us take another example. Despite this first shift, at another time Nishida's reflexive and secular embodiment theory seems closer to an expression of the Chinese logic of unification in terms of parts, images, and the whole that we find in a thinker of the Northern Song dynasty (eleventh century), Cheng Yi (程頤 1033–1107). Anne Cheng argues:

> Between particular principles of individual things and the Principle, there is a relation not of reality to ideal, but of part to whole: *all part*s *being the image of the whole*… to make one with the world, to participate in its great unity is to act morally. (1997, 479, 485–6)

But this relation of parts and the whole and mirroring is eventually explained according to a paradigm of reciprocity and "opposition" (睽). To quote Cheng Yi's words:

> *Community implies unity, individuality, and multiplicity.* Ultimately everything returns to the one; the essential meaning cannot be two-

40. For example, Nishida writes: " To progress forward is to retreat one foot behind; to move is to intuit" (NKZ 3: 283). See Dalissier 2009, 33, 203–73.

41. See Dalissier 2006a, 100–22, especially 110. See also Maraldo 2006.

42. For this latter question, the reader is referred to the second part of this study.

> fold. If the spirits of men are as different as their faces, this is only because of their individuality.… Expand what is common in the principles of things to illustrate the proper use of *opposition*; this is the *Dao* in which the saint *reunites oppositions*.… [and] brings back the whole universe to the same thing in the thousand categories. [Oppositions between] Sky and Earth, masculine and feminine, and the thousand beings illustrate this point. (*Er Cheng ji* 144, 889)

But this paradigm, while included as an element in Nishida's logic, is in no way identical to it. Therefore, once again, we are obliged to oppose two models of mirroring logic, that of Cheng Yi and that of Nishida: a vertical and reciprocal "finite" unification of parts and whole, in a place of "oppositions," and a topological and transitive infinite unification of universal and particulars in a place of absolute nothingness.

Attraction, Waiting, and Retreat

We cannot neglect to note here that the salient dimension of the logic of place, the noetic self-determination of absolute nothingness, hollowing itself out indefinitely (DALISSIER 2009, 526ff), offers some further suggestive parallels.

First, *Intuition and Reflection in Self-Realization* approaches nothingness as a kind of "snapping out" (躍入), tracking a Bergsonian-type ontological *élan* of life (NISHIDA 1917, 83–4), a notion explicitly borrowed from the philosophical psychology of Theodor Lipps (1851–1914) (DALISSIER 2006a, 118; 2007b; 2009, 215). Such "attraction" can direct us back to a number of notions in Daoism, though not only there. Already in Confucius, we find this image: the one "who rules [exercises government] by means of his own moral power (德) may be compared to the polestar, immutable on its axis, yet the *center of attraction* for all planets."[43]

43. *Analects* II.1; see also XV.4; emphasis added. During the Han period, in Huang-Lao's (黃老) thinking, we find the idea that,

> the sovereign has nothing else to do than "do nothing and stay quiet." His role does not extend farther than to guarantee the fact that "forms" and "names" should be in perfect accord, and to oversee the good march of this ideal political order. It is as though he is in the guise of a Daoist wise man, who, as the

The very notion of the "middle" already refers generally to the idea of an "attraction" towards the good,[44] reminding us of the title of Nishida's *Inquiry*. In the *Laozi*, the ideal of "non-acting" (無為) refers specifically to the overcoming of violent action through no-action, to a retreat from the stage of action in order to neutralize the aggressive substance of action. "No-action" emerges as the "feminine" aspect responding to the "masculine" aspect of Confucian ordering. The agent lets the other act, just as avoiding violence is not to oppose or to seek revenge against the aggressor but to lower oneself in order to defuse violence, as "water" escapes any form, as "the way of suppleness" (柔道) that became Judo in Japan, is the art of using the strength of the opponent. "In sum, no acting takes the advantage over acting, through *attraction* more than constraint, through the way of being rather than of having or doing" (Cheng 1997, 191–3, 196; emphasis added).

Second, such a dynamics recalls the words of the great treatise of political philosophy by the legal scholar, Han Fei 韓非: "The Sage holds the source, and the four quarters come to serve him. In emptiness he *awaits* (*dai* 待) them, and they spontaneously do what is needed."[45] As Nishida himself remarks, here is a form of "practical nothingness" (Nishida 1933, 250) in this very fact of waiting for action (Cheng 1997, 246–7). In the *Yijing* or *Book of Changes*, of such a plasticity it is said that "waiting is not to be understood as resignation, but as the strong expectation of a resolution not to hurry too hastily towards an anticipated result."[46] As the Korean philosopher Pak Tong-kwan has shown, in Chinese cul-

Dao, is the "empty" and, at the same time, the generating center of the infinite mutations of the universe. (Cheng 1997, 296)

The Japanese term 天皇 refers to a Chinese expression naming a celestial divinity compared to the pole-star, as the emperor could be compared to "the one who, without moving, defines a fixed direction and allows the universe to give itself its order" (Hérail 1986, 67, 77).

44. "The middle is not an equidistant point between two terms, but rather this pole *whose attraction draws us higher*, creating and maintaining in all life situations a tension that makes us aspire always more to the best part of what is born between us" (Cheng 1997, 42; emphasis added).

45. 虛而待之,彼自以之. *Han Feizi* 8, reference in zzjc, 30; see Watson 1964, 35. There are three editions of the work in Nishida's library, c, no. 78, 250–251/188, 198.

46. Cheng 1997, 277. We can find six different editions of the *Yijing* (『易經』) in

ture the natural lies in the fact of "waiting," while science tries to force and manipulate nature, for instance in prediction and synthesis of new events.[47]

Third, as we have seen, Nishida's topology defines absolute nothingness as the endlessly operating "withdrawal," allowing the place for something to be or not to be. In this sense, we might articulate the concepts of attraction, waiting, and retreat, that are mentioned above, in this way: to *attract* is to *wait* for what is attracted in a kind of *retreat*. This receding is perceptible in the *Zhuangzi*: "*the saint puts his person in retreat*. [While] his person takes the first rank, he puts it outside; this is how it is preserved."[48]

Being and One

Apart from the noetic self-withdrawal of the "retreat," if we probe symmetrically into the other "depth" that Nishida calls "dissemination," and if we follow the opening, blossoming path of the "noematic determination of absolute nothingness," we cannot but find compelling new comparisons. "Absolute nothingness" (絶対無) represents the vanishing

Nishida's library, STIC, volumes 3 and 4 and more ancient editions, C, no. 210, 212, 214 and 220/195–196. The most important is an impressively annotated version, no. 422/208, full of comments and drawings of the Hexagrams, that requires a special graphological and analytical exegesis. Nishida refers to the *Yijing* in a diary entry for July 1943, C, no. 751/323; see also 1061/340.

47. "Through thousands of years of farming experience, the Chinese could confirm the cyclic principle of Nature which would have satisfied them. Farming is not done by man's artificial manipulation of nature but by *waiting* till the crops grow for themselves. Nature undergoes its cyclic changes for itself without borrowing any force other than nature itself" (PAK 2004, 35–6; emphasis added).

48. "The Sky remains, the Earth persists. What makes them persist and remain? It is the fact that they do not live for themselves. Here we encounter what makes them live for eternity. *In the same way the saint puts his person in retreat*. [While] his person takes the first rank, he puts it outside. This is how it is preserved. Is he not left without his own I? In this his I accomplishes itself" (*Zhuangzi*, quoted in CHENG 1997, 208, emphasis added). This "retreat" of the saint in Hu Qiu, *Liezi*, and Confucius is conceived of as a "return" to oneself in order to recover the renewing taking place within oneself (BILLETER 2004, 117–22). Rather than a return to a source (*Laozi*), the retreat conforms to the sliding movement of reality without any source (*Zhuangzi*; BILLETER 2004, 124–5, 136).

and polishing place in which *being* and *unity* are shaped, and topology, the place required for ontology and henology. In a similar vein, Nishida remarks that *Laozi* defines the *Dao* as this never overflowing void that produces planes, cleanses being, and dissipates differentiation to produce unity (Nishida 1933, 242, 250).

> *Dao* is void. Should we fill it, it never overflows.
> From this ungrounded [place] the thousand beings take their origin.
> It blunts all cutting edges. It disentangles all knots. It harmonizes all lights. It brings to unity all [particles of] dust. (*Laozi* 4)[49]

Let us begin with the idea of the "creation" of being. On the one hand, the *Dao*, as "beginning" or "germ," is "without name." It is constantly "determining itself" in its "simplicity" and vacuity. In Chinese cosmological thinking, this refers to the everlasting self-creation of the universe in a constant organic evolution through "primordial energy" (元氣) as "expiration," "dissolution," and "dispersion" in death, an "extinction" identified as the "return" to "non-existence."[50] This might be likened in some sense to the "noetic determination of nothingness," as highlighted in the last section.

On the other hand, as "mother of the ten thousand beings" or "term," the *Dao* receives a name (*Laozi* 1 and 37). Cosmologically, it corresponds to a "condensation" of the "primordial energy" in the inspiration of life and birth (Cheng 1997, 206, 252, 298, 378–9). In topological terms, such an "ontologization," magnified in the Nishidean analysis of the "condensation" (Dalissier 2009, 526–36), leads us to the "place of determinate being," and calls to mind the "noematic determination of absolute nothingness."

49. Izutsu translates: "The Way is an empty vessel, yet use will never fill it up. Unfathomably deep, it is like the ancestor of the ten thousand beings. It blunts the sharpness of all things. It untangles their entanglements. It softens their glare. And itself remains concealed in the dust of things" (2001, 34).

50. Nishida will particularly stress this "return to non-being" (復歸無物) in *Laozi* and "return to nature" (自然に復帰する) or "return to the mysterious sources of heaven and earth by negation of all things" (すべてを否定して幽玄なる天地の根源に復帰する) in Daoism (Nishida 1911, 242).

Moreover, Nishida claims that if modern European science "negates the actual world in the direction of *noema* [object of knowledge], conversely, "the teachings of Laozi and Zhuangzi deny the actual world in the direction of *noesis* [act of knowledge] (NISHIDA 1933, 244). As a matter of fact, the noetic aspect seems prior to the noematic in Chinese thought. According to the *Huainanzi*,[51] ethereal "concentration" or "convergence" (合) of the Sky precedes heavy "coagulation" or "congealment" (凝滞) of the earth, so that "what there is, is born from what there is not."[52] This priority was rediscovered by the Buddhist monk Huiyuan (慧遠 334–416) in the idea of an "immutable spirit," maintaining and transforming itself through mutation: "life is a hindrance for man, while death is the return to the origin."[53]

Now if we keep in mind that the "*Dao* is constant, without name and at the same time *includes* all expressible reality" (CHENG 1997, 204), we might say that the first aspect unfolds the second and gets closer to Nishida's topological account of a "wrapping" (つつむ). In this regard, we may ask if this Daoist "inclusion" (含む) is be conceived as enclosed and completed within the frame of a "final" circle, if it is identical to the infinite "superposition" (重なり合う) according to the depth of the place (DALISSIER 2009, 491ff) in which it is located. (I will provide a general answer to these questions in the second part of this study.)

What can be said about a creation of unity that seems prior to the creation of being?

> The *Dao* produces the one.
> One produces the two.
> Two produces the three.
> Three produces the thousand beings.[54]

51. *Huainanzi*, 3; ZZJC, 35–6; English in MAJOR 1993. See SK 14: 131. See also the notion of "coagulation" in Zhu Xi (CHENG 1997, 502).

52. *Laozi*, 40. IZUTSU translates: "Being is born out of Non-Being" (2001, 104).

53. Huiyuan: "Corporal form exhausts itself but spirit is indestructible" (*Xing jin shen bu mie*), quoted in CHENG 1997, 378–9. On the notion of "return," see also *Liezi*, I.6, IV.9. In Nishida's A and B editions, the relevant term (鬼歸) is marked with a red circle, and written in the margin in A.

54. 道生一 一生二 二生三 三生萬物. *Laozi*, 42 and CHENG 1997, 205. IZUTSU: "The Way begets one. One begets two. Two begets three. And three begets the ten thou-

Unity appears before diversity and being. To quote Anne Cheng, interpreting Shao Yong's[55] words in this account, "One is not a [simple] number," and in this sense, "henology," as it were, precedes "ontology." But diversity is at the same time a return to the one:

> The one is not monolithic and fixed in its unity and uniformity; it diversifies in the duality of breaths of Yin/Yang or Sky-Earth. But duality is not an end in itself: it would be locked in an unproductive face-to-face encounter if it were not animated by a tertiary relation introducing the possibility of mutation and transformation. Thus, the dynamics of the duality of breaths, Yin/Yang, issues from the void.… This aspiration of a return to a lost unity can be found in other cultures, but what is specific to Chinese thought is the continuity provided by the constant coming-and-going between there-is-not and there-is, between the invisible and the visible.[56]

As Nishida explains, absolute nothingness is the birthplace of a "formless unity" (Nishida 1933, 249–50), it stands before unity crystallizes in ontological form. Unity, as born from the void, has to be conceived of as an eternal unification operation. Whereas in Chinese thought this will take the non-dual form of an effective alternative process, for Nishida it will rather take place as a transitive striving for unity.

Phenomenological contrasts: wang bi, go xiang, and nishida

Introduction: Moving or/and Not Moving in Zhou Dunyi

The unifying actuality of nothingness offers further parallels and points of discord between Chinese and Japanese philosophy. In Nishida, we find a dialectical conception of moving and immobility that seems to be at least partly grounded in Brahmanism[57] and Chinese concep-

sand things" (2001, 108).

55. *Huangji jingshi shu*, 8b, 23a, cited and commented on in Cheng 1997, 435.

56. Cheng 1997, 206. Interestingly, the term "monolithic" in Nishida's topology refers precisely to the place of determinate being (see Dalissier 2009, 431–5).

57. Basing himself on Monier-Williams (1919), Nishida argues, that "He [the

tions like those found in *Zhuangzi* XIII: "Void, it is stillness; quiet, it moves; moving, it accomplishes itself." This proximity emerges more clearly in the thought of Zhou Dunyi: "Moving while not still, still while not moving—so it is with things. Moving while not moving, quiet while not quiet—so it is with spiritual power (神)" (*Tongshu*, 16; *Zhou Dunyi ji*, 26).[58] Hence "authenticity" is for the saint the capability to recover stillness in one's very ritual and ordering activity. At the same time Zhou stresses a concern with unification that is essential for Chinese thought before and after the introduction of Buddhism:[59]

> To concentrate on the One is the golden rule. To concentrate on the One is to be without desire. To be without desire is *to be empty in quietude, and to go straight in movement*."[60]

This last phrase reminds us of Nishida, who highlights the dynamic unity of the operation consisting in eternally (immobility) unifying itself (movement):

> Unity of consciousness in its entirety transcends change and must be the constant overflowing immobility from whence change arises, that is, *something which moves while not moving*. (NISHIDA 1911, 186)

The place for this contradictory unity is nothingness:

> The flow of consciousness, considered in one direction, is considered as progressing through each moment in time and as not being able to return even for a moment to the past; but, at the same time, what

God of the Brahmanic religion] moves and does not move," and that "the unique reality of the religion of India" is said to be "both rest and motion" (動にして靜、靜にして動; NISHIDA 1933, 240, 251). This work cannot be found in Nishida's personal library, but has the reference C., no. 207/234.

58. We can find the other great book of Zhou Dunyi,『太極圖說』[Explanations of the diagram of the Great Ultimate] in Nishida's library, in a 1673 edition, C, 257/198.

59. "Like Shao Yong, Zhou Dunyi questions himself regarding the relations of the one and the many, a theme already approached by Wang Bi in the third century, then elaborated in Tiantai and Huayan Buddhism before being revived in the Chan: 'the multiple returns to the One and the One differentiates itself in the multiple'" (CHENG 1997, 447).

60. 一爲要。一者無欲也、無欲則靜虛、動直。*Da tongshu*, 20; *Zhou Dunyi ji*, 29–30; emphasis added. See CHENG 1997, 445.

> is eternally unchanging must be its foundation. Because this eternally unchanging thing is nothingness, consciousness is considered incapable of going backwards. (NKZ 4:237–8; cf. DALISSIER 2009, 399)

NISHIDA'S "CHINESE MASTER"?

Such an account of the unity of stillness and movement represents the first conceptual crossroad at which Nishida's arguments encounter those of Wang Bi (王弼 226–249), to whom he seems so close that we may even call him Nishida's "Chinese master."[61] In this sense, Wang Bi, like Nishida, rejects the view that "moving" by itself can provide the ultimate ruling element of reality (see DALISSIER 2007B), and both search for a *unity* of the moving:

> The many cannot govern the many; that which governs the many is the most solitary [the One]. Activity [the moving] cannot govern actuality; that which controls all activity that occurs in the world, thanks to constancy, is the One. Therefore, for all the many who manage to exist, their controlling principle must reach back to the One [Cheng: what enables the multiple to maintain itself in its cohesion is the fact that it has a master realizing its unity], and for all activities to manage to function, their source cannot but be the One. No thing ever behaves haphazardly, but necessarily follows its own principle. To unite things, there is a fundamental regulator; to integrate them, there is a primordial generator. Therefore, things are complex but not chaotic, multitudinous but not confused.[62]

As is the case with Nishida, "the central intuition of Wang Bi's thought dwells in the unity that underlies all that exists" (CHENG 1997, 329), not simply the search for a "final unity" but a concern with unity. Similarly, he "rejects straightaway the idea of an irreducible multiplicity that would exclude all connection between things (CHENG 1997, 329). Multiplicity

61. This can be said even if historically the link remains uncertain. We can only find the second volume (§38–81) of Wang Bi's *Commentary on the Laozi* in Nishida's library, in a 1771 edition, C, no. 238/197, but the first one is missing.

62. *Zhou yi lüeli,* chapter on "Clarifying the Judgments," 591. See LYNN 1994, 25.

needs a *leading* unity (統一) to be itself, as a multiplicity of unities.[63] As multiplicity has a master realizing its unity, all beings have a master realizing them: the "undifferentiating" (*wu*). In Nishidean terms, absolute nothingness realizes the place where unity is made.

What is more, "being" springs from non-differentiation and means "possession."

> As the negation of *you* 有 that means "to have," "having," or "there-is," *wu* indicates "there-is-not," not in the sense of nothingness or nothing, but because it "has not" the determinations and finitude of the "there-is".… As non-differentiation is not negatively conceived in terms of nothingness or the absence of all existence, silence is not conceived in terms of muteness or absence of speech, but instead as something beyond speech.[64]

In Nishidean terminology, "determinate" and "finite" being (限定せられ

63. "The centralization of the Han world actually takes place under the reign of the emperor Wu (140–87 BCE). The "Supreme One" (太一) then becomes the object of an imperial cult whose clearly political impact appears in the "great unification" (大一統) so exalted during the first part of the dynasty. The glyph 統 refers etymologically to the extremity of a silk cocoon thread, whence comes the idea of continuous succession and unifying power." CHENG 1997, 302–3.

64. CHENG 1997, 329, 333. The *finitude* and mortality of being (in Nishida's terms, the "place of determinate being") is stressed in the *Liezi*, I.4: "Those whose nature is fixed have no escape" (宜定者不出所位, marked and commented on in Nishida's B edition) as well as in I.6 and IV.9: "To be useful and die is also called the Way," a passage which is crucial for a Nishida-inspired reading (if we consider in particular the expression 無用而生謂之道: "Produce" [or "being" (存), as someone has written here in the text of the B edition to indicate the meaning of the character 生] from nothingness is the Way"). We find here a piece of paper, explaining in Japanese the various expressions involved in this analysis of finitude (由生而生, 由生而亾, 由死而死, and 由死而生). Moreover, Claude Romano, "Un étrange oubli" in YPC, 165–6, shows how we can see in the *Zhuangzi* the idea that only a real "forgetting" leads to a real depth of action. If, for Aristotle, virtue comes with possession of something in the actualization of a disposition, in *Zhuangzi*, "virtues in general are precisely what we do possess only when we are not possessing them and what we do not possess if we possess [them as something]: they are never acquired." The forgetting of possession leads to virtue. Oblivion becomes the source of actualization, in Nishidean terms, nothingness the operation of reality. See also *Liezi* III.8 (in the B edition, this passage is marked with red ink, and the verb 忘 is consistently marked with a red circle).

た有, 有限) are born from "absolute nothingness," and "being" (有) means "possession (有つ)." Nothingness is not "negation" of being but what *stands* beyond being, a kind of dis-possession.[65] Thus even in terms of a "logic of place," Wang's and Nishida's positions partially coincide: "there-is" can be implicitly expressed as "there-is-here." Wang Bi argues:

> We would like to say that it is not here (*wu*), however it accomplishes all things. We would like to say that it is here (*you*); however we do not see its form.[66]

Anne Cheng adds:

> Beings in their infinite multiplicity cannot be here by themselves, they necessarily proceed from a unique fund. Thus, the undifferentiating cannot be an entity opposing the manifest; it is the "reason why" (所以) the there-is [takes place] here.[67]

For Nishida's terms, "being" is not a "thing" opposing and negating non-being, an "oppositional nothingness." It *is* because of the retreat of absolute nothingness in and through itself. But this is not all; we might underline a "phenomenological"[68] proximity as well. As Cheng argues:

65. Dalissier 2009, 334ff. On the equivalence of "being" and "possession," see Sakabe 2007, 56–8.

66. *Commentary on the Laozi*, 14 (1: 32). The topological dimension tends to disappear in this translation: "You might wish to say that it does not exist, but everything achieves existence because of it, and then you might wish to say that it does exist, but we do not see its form" (Lynn 1999, 73). But it appears in this one: "If we speak of its non-being, everything comes *from it*. If we speak of its being, its shape cannot be seen" (Lin 1977, 25; emphasis added).

67. Cheng 1997, 329. On the topological meaning of所以 in Nishida as the "place" (所) providing the "reason why" (以), see Dalissier 2009, Appendix xv, 444, 449.

68. It might be criticized that such a term, borrowed from Western thinking, is no more applicable to Chinese thought than it is to Nishida's philosophy. Hence it will be employed here in a very general meaning, the description of the contrast according to which phenomena are given to human consciousness. Incidentally, Nishida's critique of Husserl and Heidegger's phenomenology could be rooted in some readings in Chinese philosophy, if we keep in mind, for example, the critique of the "intentional" (故), what comes before the act, as destroying the "necessary" (命) inner bodily experience that J. F. Billeter highlights in the *Zhuangzi* (2004, 41–2, 48–9, 78, 82, 108, and 113). The hierarchy introduced—"The human, the conscious and intentional

> *Wu* indicates "there-is-not"… in the sense of *still being not manifested*; it lacks the contours of visible reality. (CHENG 1997, 329; emphasis added)

In Wang Bi's view:

> What is still not, cannot manifest itself through what there-is-not, but must do so through what is already here.[69]
>
> The thousand beings, in all their nobleness, find their efficiency (*yong*) in the undifferentiating, without which they could not give themselves a constitution (*ti*). If they leave the undifferentiating to reach manifestation (*ti*), they lose then what makes their greatness.[70]

To some extent, we see a "phenomenology" of the "still not" in Wang Bi. First of all, to use our own words, because speaking of the "absolute" is losing it, letting it go: "language is both what tells something and what refers to another thing" (CHENG 1997, 332–3). Second, according to an ontological dimension, we may distinguish a five-step process:

1. "What is still not," the invisible, unspeakable, and essential "root" (*ben* 本) is at the same time to the saint's eyes the "constitutive foundation" (*ti* 體/*benti* 本體) of the world as *li* 理 (CHENG 1997, 336–7, 362, 435). Accordingly, "the reason why" all beings come to manifest themselves, is the "function/operation" (*yong* 用/*fayong* 發用) of the non-differentiating, the "paradoxical actuality of there-is-not" in its unity, exposed in the *Laozi*.[71] This actuality of unity

activity is inferior; the Sky, the necessary and spontaneous activity, unconscious in some sense, is superior"—might be expressed topologically as a priority of the place of absolute nothingness unfolding the plane of oppositional nothingness in which Nishida localizes the realms of the whole phenomenological "adventure."

69. Wang Bi, quoted by Han Kangbo, in the margins of the *Great Commentary on the Changes*; see CHENG 1997, 330.

70. *Commentary on the Laozi* 38 (1: 94). "Although the myriad things are noble, their function is based on nothing, and they cannot reject having nothingness as their embodiment. If one were to reject nothingness as his embodiment, he would lose his power to be great" (translation from LYNN 1999, 121–2). "Though all things are valuable, they must employ non-being and cannot cease to embody non-being. Not being able to cease to embody non-being, they cannot be great" (LIN 1977, 71).

71. "Thirty spokes converge at the hub. But it is precisely where there is nothing that the utility of the chariot is. One kneads clay to make a vessel. But it is where there

allows for the "greatness" of a genuine multiplicity of (material, human, divine) beings, which is not to be confused with an "irreducible multiplicity."

2. "What is already here," the "manifestation," as the visible and unessential "branch" (*mo* 末) of the three, corresponds to the produced "constitution" (*ti*) and "accumulation" of the thousand beings in their "determinations and finitude," their "multiplicity" of "forms," "delimitation," or "separation" (*fen* 分), their "designations" (*cheng* 稱) in our speech.[72]
3. While preferring the latter, we take the branch for the root, fall into error, reverse the right order of reality and impose substantiation, concealing and disguising the real poverty of the origin.[73]
4. To "learn" is to leave the accessory for the essential, "return" (*fu* 復) to the root, make action "decrease" until there is no acting, "return" (*fan* 反) from "movement" to "stillness," condense multiplicity into "unity," that is, the "great ultimate" (*taiji* 太極), the *wu*.[74]

is nothing that the utility of the container is. We open doors and windows to make a room. But it is where nothing is that the utility of the room is. Thus the there-is shows some convenience that there-is-not transforms into utilities." *Laozi* 11. Izutsu: "Thus, if Being profits us, it is due to the working of Non-Being" (2001, 45).

72. *Commentary on the Laozi*, 25, 38; Lynn 1999, 95, 119–24; Lin 1977, 46, 70–3.

73. "The spontaneous *Dao* is as a tree. The more it accumulates *some substance*, the more it moves away from the root. The less it accumulates [some substance 轉], the more it gets close to the foundation. To accumulate is to get away from its *truth*… to be satisfied with a few is to grasp the foundation" Wang Bi, *Commentary on the Laozi*, 22 (1: 54, emphasis added). "This is the Dao of Nature [*ziran*], just like a tree. The more a tree has, the farther it is from its roots. The more one has, the farther he is from his authenticity.… The less one has, the better the access to its roots" (from Lynn 1999, 89). "The Dao of nature is like a tree. Turning too much will make it go far away from its roots. Turning less will make it obtain its roots. Turning too much is far from its truth" (from Lin 1977, 22, but incomplete). On this substantiating "inversion" of root and branch in Chinese thought, see Dalissier 2009, 287.

74. Cheng 1997, 330–33. *Zhou yi lüeli a*nd "Clarifying the Judgments," Hexagram 24 復 (1: 336–7). For instance, to leave "speech" to "quietness" is to "ponder" the "words" (言: names, forms of speech) that "explain" images, to "forget" them and "observe" the "images" (象: figures); and then, to ponder images that "express" and "fix" meaning, forget them and observe "meaning" (意: ideas). This kind of "yielding" or "deepening" issues from oblivion: to return is to return to the *wu* (*Zhou yi lüeli,* chapter on "Clarifying the Images"). To understand the logic of absolute noth-

Nishida had emphasized both aspects in Daoism.[75] Wang eventually identifies *Dao*, One, and "great ultimate" with *mu*; whereas in *Laozi* the one was born from the *wu*. Thus the One disappears in non-differentiation, the non-differentiating is the One (CHENG 1997, 331).

5. Here the saint recovers the intelligible structure and foundation (*ti*) of the world (*li*), apart from the false (3) and manifest structure (2), and realizes "the reason why everything is such as it is."[76] The *Dao* as undifferentiated "takes itself as a model,"[77] "is just as it is," "as such."[78] Non-differentiation makes the suchness of things.

Correspondingly, according to a topological phenomenology of "absolute nothingness," we may distinguish five levels:

1. Absolute nothingness, the place at which being can be what it is, represents a noetic self-constitution as the "operation" of "hollowing itself out," disappearing in itself within the realizing depth of reality, an endless retreat. Actuality of nothingness always refreshes and plunges unity into an endless striving for unification, while making the "richness" of a real "differentiation" irreducible to "pure and simple nothingness" (DALISSIER 2009, 346–9).
2. "Determinate beings" are noematic determinations in absolute

ingness in Nishida, it is useful to forget the word "nothingness" and return to the glyph 無, recalling its original meaning as a dancer 舞. From words to representations to ideas, the infinity of meaning is liberated from concentration and condensation. See DALISSIER 2009, 502.

75. Not only the "return" (復, 復歸) to being or nature in *Laozi* and Daoism, but also the "return" (反) of the *Dao* itself, as "going off into the distance means that it will return" (遠曰反, NISHIDA 1933, 243).

76. 所以然, from Wang Bi, cited in CHENG 1997, 336.

77. Nishida twice recalls the *Laozi* teaching: "*Dao* models itself after nature" (道法自然), in order to insist on the idea of imprisonment in rituality: "The Chinese, to the very end never went beyond a concept of ritual. Laozi's statement: 'man models himself after earth, earth after heaven, heaven after *Dao*, and *Dao* after nature' (人法地、地法天、天法道,道法自然), probably pressed such an idea of nature to its highest point" (NISHIDA 1933, 243).

78. *Laozi* 25. IZUTSU: "The Way models itself on (its own) spontaneity" (2001, 73).

nothingness, a structuring and "dissemination" from within the constitutive depth of reality.

3. To "invert the root and the branch" (本末転倒) is to take nothingness as non-being, "substantialize" things, words and ideas, and thus to fall into "error."[79]
4. "Self-awakening" (自覚) is the inner liberation of the self, in consciousness of nothingness as the secret unifying power of the self and others.
5. Within "pure experience," and then in its purifying vanishing place identified as absolute nothingness, we find the "thing as such," liberated from the approximation of being. Absolute nothingness reveals things not *as they are*, but *as such* (そのままに) (Dalissier 2009, 148, 396).

Of course, if we insist on finding potentiality and temporality within the expression "what is still not," we may suppose that Wang Bi is considering a kind of indeterminate being, in retreat and ready to become. If this is true, we may go further and speak of something like the "rest" of being as lying in nothingness, and point to the topological articulations that Nishida exposes at work in phenomenology and especially in Husserl (Dalissier 2009, 461; 2006b). Here a phenomenology of the "still not" and a phenomenology of "absolute nothingness" will diverge. This is all very well, but it can be criticized as going too far, or claimed that such a vocabulary is imported from Western and Japanese philosophy and does not respect the great originality of Wang Bi's thought.

79. See, for example, NKZ 3: 370. Compare the analysis in Dalissier 2009, 286ff and 374ff. We find in the *Liezi* a remarkable expression of this logic of "doubling" (*doublage* in French):

> While beings *oppose* the Way, the Way *does not oppose* beings.… Trying to excel precisely as the Way does, by using vision, hearing, body, and intelligence, leads to defeat: that is *like looking forward [to see] what is behind* (瞻之在前、忽焉在後).… How could the one who succeeds in *not being able* [reaches non-potentiality] still *act*?"(IV.15)

This passage can be found in SK 24: 207–8, where the beginning of the passage is marked in red in the B edition. In Nishidean terms, the "opposition" of being at the level of "action" and "potentiality" (oppositional nothingness) conceals and disguises the "operation" of absolute nothingness.

The important thing is to recall the remarkable proximity of the two authors.

Immanentism of Being?

This proximity is further strengthened when we focus in particular on the great distance between Wang Bi's position and that of the tenets of a "pure immanentism" such as Guo Xiang (郭象 252–312), a distance later stereotyped in Southern Han Buddhism in the conflict setting "adepts of the *wu*" against "adepts of the *you*"(CHENG 1997, 362).

For the latter, things proceed from themselves without any other explanatory principle; they just exist. Something like a "void" would entail an obstruction of the infinite mutations. The autonomy of the principle becomes the "spontaneous creation" of things, in line with a Daoist fundamental concept: all being "creates itself by itself (自造), is born of itself (自生), and obtains itself by itself (自得; see CHENG 1997, 338). Being is "naturally" (天然) as it *is*: "spontaneous is what is by itself as such, without action."[80] From a sociopolitical point of view, we may speak of a transition from "an ideal society that would be without classes and remind us of the egalitarian utopia of great peace" (Wang Bi) to "the perfect government [that] allows the hierarchical distinction existing as a part of the natural order to function" (Guo Xiang) (ROBINET 1983, 102).

Thus, the *wu*, understood as "pure and simple contrary of the there-is (*you*)," is precisely the there-is-not, conceived as not-existing. Up to a point, if Wang's position recalls Nishida's, Guo's position recalls Bergson's as well as Nishida's critique (see DALISSIER 2007B). Guo argues:

80. 自然為正自然不為. Guo Xiang, in ZZJC 3: 10, cited in CHENG 1997, 338–9. This work is in Nishida's library, in a 1662 edition, C, no. 245/197. Chapters 1 and 2, to which we will mostly refer, are richly annotated with black, brown, and red ink (we can also find some traces of a kind of "correction fluid"), perhaps by Nishida himself. The book is probably not his grandfather's. The same words of Guo, as well as the whole passage of *Zhuangzi* and Guo's commentary on it, are noted with brown marks of transcription and annotation. Similarly, the beginning and end of Guo's commentary are set off in the text with red marks, 8–9 in Nishida's edition. We may add that in Nishida's commented B edition of *Liezi* II, the expression "Guo Xiang said" is very often underlined in red.

> What *Laozi* and *Zhuangzi* call *wu*, what can it be? It means simply that what brings life to beings is not a being (無物) and that those beings live by themselves. (Guo Xiang 11, in ZZJC 3: 173)

> There-is-not (*wu*) cannot transform itself into there-is, any more than there-is can transform itself into there-is-not. Beings can transform themselves in infinite ways but they will never be able not to exist. Thus, there has never been a time when nothing existed, and there has always been something (故自古無末有之時而常存也). (Guo Xiang 22, in ZZJC 3: 332)

Guo Xiang paradoxically empties emptiness of all "substance and actuality" (CHENG 1997, 337), believing that only substance effectively exists, without any "shadow" of nothingness, and does not see the point of considering the void as precisely void.[81] Whereas for Laozi and Wang Bi, *wu* is "ungrounded" (淵) in the sense of being non-differentiating, for Guo Xiang, *you* is substantially "ungrounded" in the sense of not having any other ground than itself (*Laozi*, 4).[82]

In Nishida's terms, being as "possession" becomes "'being' as existence" (存在としての「ある」) (DALISSIER 2009, 339). As nothingness is conceived as secondary to "being" (*on*), that is, as "non-being" (*mē on*), it does not really exist; "absolute nothingness" is an intellectual construct (Bergson) and then being returns, in what we call a *réontologisation* (212f, 334–77). The realm of being, the empire of manifestation without foundation, does not house the faintest "shadow" of nothingness, while actual being is nothing but an "image" emerging within a transparent nothingness as a "self-enlightening mirror," with nothingness being the real "shadow" (490). Being, without any other ground or any other depth, takes the place of absolute nothingness which represents an ungrounded depth.

81. The term "shadow" comes from the translation of the sequence "everything, even a shadow, transforms by itself in a mysterious darkness." See Guo Xiang 2, in ZZJC 3: 24–6, 53. Pages 22 and below in Nishida's edition are richly annotated.

82. Up to a point, we can recall here that in Cartesian metaphysics the meaning of the word "substance" is autonomy. See, for instance, the definition of substance in Descartes: "A thing that exists in such a way that it needs only itself to exist," *Principles of Philosophy*, §51.

But self-creation follows an "individualization principle" (分命), imposing a destiny to which each individual must conform.[83] Self-creation becomes self-regulation according to the *li*. Guo Xiang argues:

> There is no being that has not its principle; it simply has to conform to it (當順之). (Guo Xiang 22, in ZZJC 3: 325)

> All beings exist by themselves; that is all: *they do not mutually make themselves exist* (非相為). If we let them operate in this way, the principle will take place by itself.[84]

> Wherever he goes [the accomplished man] is in peace and thus feels comfortable everywhere.[85]

In my view of the "logic of place," what we find here is the typical dialectical relation between ontology and "meontology" (DALISSIER 2009, 331; 2006). Being is spontaneously self-creating beings (bodies, forces, particulars, phenomena) opposing each other in the space of an oppositional nothingness. But as an "absolute nothingness" is masked and sidestepped from this perspective, we take our place on a plane of purely determinate being in which the hegemony of being (being "everywhere") find its "security" and "stability" ("peace" and "easiness") (see DALISSIER 2008, 646). Accordingly, we follow a path of the determination of all beings, not orchestrated by a perfect God, as in Leibniz, but according to the very nature of being itself: meontology returns to ontology, and the path to neontology that had been opened by Wang Bi is closed.

83. Guo Xiang, 1, 2 (annotated in Nishida's edition) and 22, in ZZJC 17, 24, 27, 325. Here again, we may construct certain parallels to Cartesian ethics in the *Passions of the Soul*.

84.Guo Xiang 2, in ZZJC 3: 27, emphasis added. This passage is annotated in brown ink in Nishida's edition, 16.

85. Guo Xiang 1, in ZZJC 3: 17, quoted in CHENG 1997, 340. This passage is annotated in brown and black ink Nishida's edition, 14.

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NKZ『西田幾多郎全集』[Complete works of Nishida Kitarō] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1988), 20 vols.

SK『新訳漢文大系』[A New Compendium of Translations of Kanbun] (Meiji Shoin, 1979).

STIC『先哲遺著漢籍国字解全集』[Collected works of the writings of the great ancient philosophers, with transliteration and comments in Japanese] (Tokyo: Waseda University, 1912).

YPC "Y a-t-il une philosophie chinoise? Un état de la question Extrême-Orient," *Extrême Occident* 27 (Saint Denis: Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, 2005).

ZZJC『諸子集成』*Zhuzi jicheng* (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju, 1978).

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