

# The Shift in Nishida's Logic of Place

HUANG Wen-hong

Logic can be seen as a way of thinking. In his essay “The Logic of Place and the Religious Worldview,” Nishida Kitarō uses a “logic of place” to express his way of thinking. The notion is no doubt central to his philosophy. Although the word “place” appears often in the development of his thought, its meaning and focus changes to some extent along the way. Only once, in 1926, does he use the term to entitle an essay. There he indicates that the term signals a shift away from a view of the world from the standpoint of the self to a view of the world from the standpoint of the world itself. My primary concern in this essay is to clarify this turn in his logic and to consider what it entails.

To understand the logic of place, we need to place it in the context of the main concern of Nishida's philosophy. In his 1911 book *An Inquiry into the Good*, he wrote: “Before we discuss the problem of how to act and how to settle down in this world, to clarify true reality we must first clarify the truth of our lives and the cosmos” (NKZ I: 39). Nishida connects this problem with an analysis of pure experience. The attempt to explain reality in terms of pure experience is consistent in his thinking. Pure experience is not a break from ordinary experience; rather, it must be understood from these ordinary experiences as our “direct experiences before language is involved” (FUJITA 2007, 54). As we have seen in *An*

*Inquiry into the Good*, Nishida regards pure experience as a pure activity and maintains “being-*qua*-activity.” This is the starting point of his philosophy, prior to the subject-object dichotomy. The idea that the world is constituted from an opposition between subjects and objects places one outside the world in order to see the world. This is not the world that we live in. In Nishida’s words, it is an intellectual construct, not our immediate experiences themselves. *An Inquiry into the Good* begins with this rejection of dualism in order to return to primordial experience and from there explain all phenomena. Moving neither toward the world itself nor toward the world that exists behind experience, Nishida’s philosophy includes an inquiry into the origins of our experiences and their structure. In this sense, it may be called a kind of “radical empiricism” (HUANG 2007). Pure experience, as primordial, is a consciousness prior to the subject-object dichotomy; it is the pure, present consciousness. This consciousness is the origin of all realities but is itself without meaning, an immediate direct experience that cannot be grasped in object-oriented language.

By associating conscious experience with pure experience Nishida not only relates it to the original indivisibility of subject and object, he also describes it as spontaneous and self-developing. Distinct states of consciousness belong to a reflexive stage of pure experience. Unified and non-unified consciousness is only a problem of degree: that is, the reflexive states of consciousness are also regarded as pure experience and basically take the same form. Takahashi Satomi has pointed out this inconsistency in pure experience by presenting it in slightly different form (ISHIGAMI 2001, 37ff). If we follow Nishida, however, we find that the unified and non-unified states of pure experience are not two different experiences but two internal moments of one and the same total experience. In other words, strictly speaking, we do not have a developmental progression from one pure experience to another, but a single experience that is spontaneous and self-developing (NKZ I: 52). Thus, the inconsistency of pure experience is only apparent and in fact merely demonstrates the structure of pure experience itself. Unified and non-unified experiences are two particular aspects of a single, total experience, to whose internal structure they belong. Pure experience is particular and universal; Nishida labels this the “concrete universal” or “dynamic universal.” By

“concrete universal” he refers to the contradictory unity of the particular and the universal in which pure experience is comprehended in the concrete. If we emphasize the concrete universal, then the unifying side (intuition) and the separating side (reflection) that are included in pure experience will clearly come out.

Nishida employs “self-consciousness” in *Intuition and Reflection in Self-Consciousness* to combine intuition and reflection. This may be seen as a response to the criticism posed by Takahashi. Self-consciousness means to “reflect oneself within oneself.” Intuition and reflection are two inevitable moments of a self-developing unity, namely the unified side and the separated side of pure experience. Though pure experience is the experience that unifies subject and object, the separation of subject and object is at some point inevitable within pure experience. Nishida has indicated that the emergence of reflection is not accidental, but an “inevitable quality” of consciousness (NKZ 2: 13). All reality is regarded as the inherent development of a concrete universal.

In *Intuition and Reflection* Nishida regards meaning and values as the development of the self-consciousness. In self-consciousness, self-reflection is at the same time self-creation. In order to grasp the internal structure of self-consciousness, Nishida introduces Fichte’s *Tathandlung* by giving it a new meaning. “Being and Ought should be two sides of a single *Tathandlung*. Self-consciousness is the expression of their concrete truth” (NKZ 2: 83). Nishida’s expressed goal in the work is to combine value and being, meaning and fact into a common system (3). Because of the freedom and dynamic of the will, ultimate reality is interpreted as a kind of will in *An Inquiry into the Good*. Will, as the basic form of pure experience, is not an object-oriented will that presupposes the separation of subject and object, but an original free will that is connected with the concept of creativity. In *Intuition and Reflection* Nishida further interprets this as a kind of creative “absolute free will,” or *creatio ex nihilo*. “True direct reality is the creative will; because of his creation it is absolutely free” (NKZ 2: 223). Creative will is pure creativity, the creative nothingness. Its self-development is also a return to the origins. This constitutes Nishida’s “system of self-consciousness.”

In *Intuition and Reflection*, then, Nishida’s task is to explain everything according to this system of self-consciousness (FUJITA 2000,

43–57). But when he ponders this strategy, he admits that we have finally to acknowledge that “there must be absolute free will behind the system of self-consciousness” (NKZ 2: 220). The absolute free will does not simply transcend reflection; it is also the source of our reflection. Because it transcends reflection, Nishida claims that it is similar to the *Ungrund* of Jacob Böhme. This seems to entail a kind of mysticism. Nishida seems to be unable to grasp the meaning of absolute free will: on the one hand, he affirms ultimate reality as a creative nothingness, an infinite creative activity; on the other, he acknowledges that it has a kind of mystical character that transcends our traditional way of thinking, that ultimate reality is mystified in traditional logic.

As indicated above, the general nature of Nishida's early philosophy is basically introspective. He probes deep into consciousness to discover the absolute free will or creative nothingness that transcends subjective consciousness. The aim of his introspective philosophizing is to clarify the “real self,” “the concrete universal,” or “the consciousness of consciousness.” On the one hand, such a way of thinking must avoid the criticism of subjectivism; on the other, it inevitably comes up against the question of how to understand “the real self” or “the concrete universal.” The origin of consciousness is the concrete universal as ultimate reality, transcending all conscious activities; strictly speaking, it is the real subject of the system of self-consciousness.

In the development of Nishida's philosophy, the idea of being-*qua*-activity is not abandoned, but he does not stop at this kind of metaphysical statement, nor can mysticism satisfy him. Instead, he tries to understand the logical structure of the creative nothingness. In other words, a logic of pure experience is essential to meet the challenge posed by mysticism. Nishida believed that in his logic of place he had replaced Ficht's voluntarism with a kind of intuitionism (NKZ 3: 255). The transformation from voluntarism to intuitionism is not a change of standpoint, but rather shows Nishida's response to the epistemological question of ultimate reality. This process is shown in *From Acting to Seeing* (FUJITA 2000, 43–57), in which Nishida puts forward a logic of place that was later developed into a systematic philosophy of place. In this sense, his attempts to preserve the irrational in a rational logic may be said to be

the focal point of his logic of place. The logic of place is primarily a kind of epistemology.

With this preliminary understanding of the general progression from Nishida's early philosophy to his proposal of a logic of place, we can see him struggling for a logic to grasp reality. His logic of place is not only a logic of self-consciousness but also a logic of the historical world. But how is such an expansion into the historical world possible? Here I will focus on the discussion of his 1926 essay "Place" and attempt to clarify the basic ideas of his logic. Although this essay can only be considered a preliminary stage in his logic, it contains the seeds of further development, especially with regard to the question of rationalizing the irrational, a point at which it can prove fruitful for Neo-Confucian epistemology (HUANG 2008).

In the following pages I shall first clarify some basic conceptions of Nishida's logic of place, in particular the path he follows to the place of absolute nothingness. I will then highlight some of the key aspects of his philosophy. We know that the logic of place is a logic of reality. In the construction of this logic, the concrete universal plays an important role. I will then clarify the need for a shift from a predicative logic to a logic of location. The emphasis on the mediating perspective of place is a key to his later philosophy. It is my view that the need for this shift lies in the identity of self-contradiction that is inherent in the concrete universal. In order to break away from subjectivism, as we shall see, Nishida has to begin from a totality that includes both self and environment.

### NISHIDA'S IDEA OF PLACE

In "Place," Nishida notes that "Being must exist somewhere; otherwise there is no difference between being and nothingness" (NKZ 3: 415). In my opinion this is the cardinal feature of place. There are two senses of the meaning of existence implied in this sentence. First, "being" means being located in a place; this is the meaning of being as being. The meaning of being is bound up with *being "located in" a place*. As the place changes, so does the meaning of existence. "Being" only has meaning with reference to its place. Second, the earlier place of spe-

cific “being” is located in a more inclusive place. “Absolute nothingness” is the most inclusive and final place that is able to include everything without itself being included in any more encompassing place. Place is therefore nothingness in respect to that which is located within. Ultimate reality must therefore be the final place. The problem that remains is to show absolute nothingness to be a true nothingness and not a relative nothingness that positions non-being in relation to being.

Nishida begins with a reflection on the Neo-Kantian epistemology. He observes that in considering the meaning of knowledge, epistemology usually assumes a dichotomy between subject and object, whereas in the case of Neo-Kantianism the dichotomy is between form and content. In this view, knowledge is a constitution of form and matter wrought on an objective given (NKZ 3: 426). In other words, the object of experience is constituted by the knowing subject. From the perspective of pure experience, this kind of explanation is not original enough. An epistemology of pure experience is committed to abandoning subject-object dualism to return to an earlier stage from which the distinction is generated. In order for subject and object to keep their independence, to relate to each other, and to form a system, there must be a prior nothingness to ground the system and allow this to happen (NKZ 3: 415). In other words, before there is being, there must be a nothingness that brings “being” into existence. Here, Nishida borrows from Plato’s *Timaeus* to speak of “place” (NKZ 3: 415). This place includes a subject and object, allowing them to come to be and allowing a relationship to be established between them. “Place,” as the ultimate reality, must therefore include the principle of self-differentiation, and in this sense it may be called the concrete universal. As indicated above, the logic of place attempts to establish an epistemology of ultimate reality in a logical way. This leads Nishida to a thorough review of Aristotelian and Kantian logic.

Nishida accepts the general view that knowledge first takes the form of judgment. Logically, judgment is the inclusion of a subject in a predicate. Logic reflects an inclusive relationship between subject and predicate from which understanding arises. In judgment, however, a logical subject is set up in opposition to a predicate; a logical predicate is universal. Ontologically, a judgment means the inclusion of the particular in the universal. Therefore, as Nishida argues, judgment is an inclusion

whereby the universal includes the particular, or the particular exists in the universal; it is not a linking of two independent things. The inclusive relation between subject and predicate reflects the relation of place and being, which is “located in” the place. The logic of place has at the same time a logical and an ontological meaning. In other words, judgment as judgment means to include the subject through a predicate; particular as particular means to exist in the universal.

Along with Aristotle, Nishida accepts primary substance or the individual (*tode ti*) as that which can be a subject but can never be a predicate. This is the ultimate reality or being in the most fundamental sense. Although the individual transcends all concepts, as a being it must exist in a place. Such a place cannot be an abstract universal, which is merely conceptual and does not contain a principle of differentiation. Rather, the individual is considered to be that which transcends rationality. It is irrational, but in the sense of transcending the subjective logic, not in the sense of transcending our understanding. Therefore, along with Aristotle, Nishida thinks that the individual cannot be grasped by way of a concept, but only through “intuition.” In other words, it belongs to the level of transcendental subject. Our direct, intuitive acquaintance with the individual does not come by way of a concept, and yet it is a kind of knowledge. From the viewpoint of the universal, understanding means “inclusion”; from the viewpoint of the particular, it means “being ‘located in.’” Nishida has thus expanded the meaning of knowledge through “inclusion.”

At this point we can see that what concerns Nishida is not formal judgment, but judgment that truly includes the individual. Formal judgment extracts the differences and lacks ontological character. Its predicate is an abstract universal, and to exist in an abstract universal can only produce abstract understanding. On the contrary, Nishida’s inclusive judgment means being “located in” a particular universal. When we think of the particular, it is already in relation to some universal. To exist means to be located in a place.

Here, we can see that Nishida agrees with Aristotle in seeing ultimate reality as transcending the logical subject, that is, as a unity of infinite predicates. In his essay “Acting” of 1924, Nishida discusses the relationship between pure experience and judgment. He demonstrates that judg-

ment comes from the rationalization of the content of pure experience. In other words, judgment is that pure experience or concrete universal that has its own predicate in self-determination. Thus the real subject of judgment is not the logical subject, but pure experience. Pure experience determines itself in itself and establishes judgment (NKZ 3: 397).

For Nishida, Aristotelian logic cannot grasp reality, which belongs to the level of the transcendental subject. The logic that Aristotle offers determines reality as a kind of “being.” His logic is a logic established along with “being” or “determinate being” (限定せられた有). Ultimate reality thus becomes a kind of object. Accordingly, Aristotle establishes an objective logic that determines reality as an identity of objectivity. This is not to say that objective logic is altogether mistaken, but only that it simply expresses one side of reality, namely the side of being. While objective logic expresses the “being side” of ultimate reality, it also intuitively its own deficiency.

Thus, ultimate reality cannot be found in Aristotle's form and matter and *entelecheia*. These are determinate beings that are acquired through Aristotelian objective logic. Nishida's pure experience, which he also calls “pure quality,” is prior to any categorical thought, and as a kind of pure activity, is unable to be fixed as an object. The establishment of objective judgment is to seek a fixed entity in the world of pure activity or in the transitory world. The world of pure experience is not the world of fixed entities, but a world of pure sensation, and as such is far more abundant than the world of judgment. Reality must be universal, and here again Nishida breaks with Aristotle to claim that in order to grasp reality, we must begin not from the direction of a logical subject but from the direction of the predicate. Thus, in contrast to Aristotle's claims that ultimate reality is something that “can be a subject but never a predicate,” Nishida proposes that ultimate reality is the place that “can be a predicate but never a subject.” This is a kind of predicative logic in which “place” functions as a kind of universal. In order to clarify his logic, Nishida undertakes a thorough review of Kant's transcendental logic.

According to Nishida, Kant's transcendental logic is a logic that regards consciousness as a predicate. Natural phenomena are constituted through the exertion of pure concepts or categories onto the given material; for Nishida, this includes natural phenomena within conscious activity. Con-



scious activity is grounded on “consciousness in general” (*Bewußtsein überhaupt*), “apperception,” or “transcendental ego.” Therefore consciousness in general is grounded in the natural world; in Kant’s theoretical philosophy it is the ultimate reality. Conscious activity encompasses natural phenomena and the natural world exists in the “field of consciousness.” Since for Nishida activity belongs to a predicate, Kant’s transcendental logic is regarded as a logic that follows the direction of the predicate. The kind of process proposed by Neo-Kantianism can only account for the structure of objective experience; it cannot account for the meaning of the constituting “I.” In other words, consciousness in general cannot be included in any activity. It is this inadequacy in Kantian thought that allows Nishida to maintain that Kantian consciousness in general is only a pure reflecting mirror, that is, “it totally emptied itself in order to mirror all things” (全然己を空うして、すべてのものを映す, NKZ 3: 419). A “pure reflecting mirror” (単に映す鏡) can only reflect something outside itself; it is unable to reflect itself in itself (432–3). It cannot see itself in itself, and this means that consciousness in general cannot be ultimate reality.

In his essay “Place,” Nishida’s discussion of consciousness concentrates on judging consciousness and willing consciousness. He accepts Fichte’s viewpoint regarding the volitional self as the foundation of the cognitive self, so that on the field of consciousness the ultimate reality is free will. Free will “creates being out of nothing” and is the ground of our knowledge (NKZ 3: 438). In the world of pure will, being attains validity. This is the standpoint to which Kant’s critical philosophy arrives. But according to Nishida the volitional self is still a kind of being, and is not consciousness in the truest sense. Consciousness in general is only the gateway to true nothingness. Nishida argues that when we transcend consciousness and enter the place of absolute nothingness, even free will is eliminated, all meaning of self-existence disappears, and a “pure state of intuition” comes about (446–7). In other words, the purest state of intuition occurs in a place where even free will eliminates itself. This does not mean that there is no free will, but that the will must negate itself in order to become true free will (ŌHASHI 1995, 80).

The true self is more profound than the volitional self. It is the self that is discovered through transcending objectification in all its forms. In the

ultimate depths of the self lies the place of absolute nothingness, which is essentially religious in character. According to Nishida, “knowing” and “willing” are modifications of the place of nothingness (446). Knowing and willing are thus also ultimately religious in character. To reach the depth of the self does not mean that one must cut oneself off from the level of judging and willing, but only view them from a more primordial perspective. From the perspective of absolute nothingness, reality lies beyond all objectification and without any fixed nature. To employ the metaphor of a mirror, absolute nothingness will be a “reflecting without a reflector,” an “acting without an actor” (NKZ 3: 451). The structure of absolute nothingness differs from that of knowing and willing. Real consciousness is one that has transcended concepts altogether; real consciousness only becomes visible when all concepts have broken down (NKZ 3: 424). Real consciousness belongs to the “level of the transcendental predicate” and it can be said to be the “universal of universals,” and hence not a universal in the ordinary sense.

The transition from relative nothingness to absolute nothingness needs to transcend all kinds of universals. Seen from this perspective, Kant’s predicative logic may be regarded as a negation of Aristotle’s subjective logic. If we regard the Aristotelian position as a position of “determinate being,” is the Kantian position then a position of “relative nothingness”? Although relative nothingness includes or encompasses the position of the determinate being, it is still not absolute nothingness. Similar to Aristotelian logic, Kantian logic grasps only one side of ultimate reality.

The logic of determinate being and relative nothingness cannot grasp ultimate reality; they belong to a logic of being. Nevertheless, in “Place,” Nishida still thinks that in order to grasp reality, we need to follow the direction of the predicate, that is to say, we need to go deeper into consciousness and inquire into the “consciousness of consciousness.” As we transcend relative nothingness, we enter into a position of absolute nothingness. While being located in absolute nothingness, everything exists as it is and becomes the “image” of absolute nothingness (NKZ 3: 445). The concrete universal is a mirror that reflects itself in itself; it is not a predicate, but transcends all predicates and belongs to the level of a transcendental predicate. This is the universal in the truest sense. Unlike Kantian consciousness, which can only reflect other things, the mirror of

absolute nothingness is a mirror that reflects itself in itself. It does not have any content nor any meaning of being, but produces in itself the meaning of being. It does not distort the thing, but lets the thing be established as it is. “Reflecting” means not to distort, but to let a thing be established as it is.” Absolute nothingness is the viewer and the real subject of judgment. When absolute nothingness becomes the subject of judgment, “being” comes to be viewed as a modification of it and loses its self-nature. It intuits “the world of pure activity,” the world “without *noumena*” (NKZ 3: 429–30).

Seen from the logical relation of judgment, the basic meaning of place is originally a predicate. It is a universal and should not be interpreted merely as a concrete universal. The subject as encompassed in a predicate means that the subject is reflected in it. In penetrating deeper into the consciousness, Nishida finds that real place belongs to the level of the transcendental predicate. It is the place where the individual is located. Consciousness develops and determines itself within itself. Seen from this perspective, judgment is not the combination of a logical subject and object, but is rather the self-determination of the concrete universal. The concrete universal is the real subject of judgment. When the concrete universal is treated as the subject of judgment, it functions as a self-determiner and not as something being determined. Therefore, Nishida thinks that the concrete universal is the real meaning of Aristotle’s philosophy of what “can be a subject but never a predicate.” And so “We can say that the concrete universal is the true reality” (436).

From the discussion above, we know that in Nishida’s early years the concepts of pure experience and absolute free will lacked adequate epistemological foundations and led him into a kind of mysticism. His logic of place, which attempts to rationalize the irrational, is thus primarily an epistemology that attempts to grasp the ground of experience. Nishida’s way of thinking moves logically from predicate to transcendental predicate, and ontologically from consciousness to “consciousness of consciousness.” Though this line of thinking can be treated as a kind of “internalism,” it has a meaning all its own. During this period Nishida emphasized the priority of the world of interiority. In a 1926 essay on “Questions Remaining Concerning Consciousness,” Nishida claimed that contemporary epistemology did not really touch on the problem

of the consciousness of consciousness, which he took to be the place of absolute nothingness (NKZ 7: 222). In “Answering Dr. Sōda” (1927), he states his intention to discuss knowing in the direction of self-consciousness, which is different from the tack followed by Neo-Kantianism (NKZ 3: 482). In “Place” he begins from the judging consciousness, goes on to self-consciousness, and finally arrives at the pure self-intuition of absolute nothingness. This, we may say, was his way of deepening in a subjective direction.

Nishida expanded our understanding of knowledge by penetrating deeper into the self-consciousness. Knowledge is not something constructed by an acting subject. This way of thinking is based on a form-matter dualism. For Nishida the knowledge has to do originally with “reflecting itself in itself” or “self-consciousness,” and it is this form of knowing that he holds to be primary (NKZ 3: 420). In this way, he transforms the epistemology of Neo-Kantianism into a kind of epistemology of self-consciousness, supplying Kant’s consciousness with a more general view of self-consciousness. While a knowing consciousness points to the object, it also points necessarily to itself; it is self-consciousness. In other words, knowledge itself includes the knowledge of the knower. In Nishida’s view, self-consciousness is more basic. What interests him is not so much the relationship between subject and object, but the consciousness that does the judging. Consciousness encompasses a logical subject and predicate. From judging consciousness to willing consciousness and finally to absolute nothingness, Nishida considers absolute nothingness to be the real subject of knowledge. When absolute nothingness becomes the subject, knowledge becomes the “self-determination” of absolute nothingness: it is the self-intuiting of the concrete universal or self-predicating of the true self. Consciousness develops, determines itself within itself, and acquires a meaning of being; it is the real subject of the judgment, the real self. The real self is the “identity in predicate” (NKZ 3: 469).

Nishida’s logic of place seeks to grasp the structure of *Ereignis* or the occurrence of reality, unlike Western philosophy, which attempts to grasp the world in the form of judgment. His philosophy of self-consciousness includes its own philosophy of identity. The concrete universal as a real subject includes in itself a principle of self-differentiation. As a real subject

it is the particular of particulars, and encompasses within itself an infinity of predicates. It offers its own content and intuits itself within itself, and is self-differentiating and self-intuiting; absolute nothingness expresses its own content within itself. In expressing itself, general concepts must be employed, since general concepts are the self-objectification of absolute nothingness. “The self-determination or self-objectification of place is the so-called universal” (NKZ 3: 427). Knowing is, in its most complete form, the self-determination of absolute nothingness.

Comparing this to Western logic, which concentrates on the object, Nishida’s is a logic that deepens subjectivity. His intention is not to reduce *noema* to *noesis*, but to show that the entire distinction between subject and object is based on a misunderstanding of experience. Though his philosophy of self-consciousness might not be solipsistic, he nevertheless needs to clarify the relationship between subjective experience and objective reality. Nishida’s solution is to insist that logic and reality display a common structure. The logic of place is not only the logic of pure experience, self-consciousness, and absolute nothingness; it is also the logic of creation through self-determination. It is the “creativity of the universe” (NKZ 2: 228). In his work *Logic and Life* (1937), Nishida describes his logic of place as “a forming activity” (一種の形成作用; NKZ 8: 9). In other words, Nishida tries to unify self-consciousness and the historical world. By unifying the subjective consciousness and objective reality in a common logical foundation, he attempts to apply his logic to the understanding of historical phenomena.

The claim that self-consciousness is active or even historically formative is particularly evident in Nishida’s later philosophy. But how can a philosophy of self-consciousness, which is basically self-directed, become an ontology of the historical world? If we consider a standpoint of subjectivism to be one that views the world from the vantage point of the self, then in order to overcome this position of subjectivism we need a more inclusive perspective that encompasses self and non-self. Or, as Nishida says, we need to see the world from the world. By his own admission, it is not until his essay on “The World as Dialectical Universal” that Nishida really overcomes this difficulty (NKZ 6: 159). In other words, the logic of place required a “turn” away from its basically inwardly-oriented way of thinking.

We know that Aristotelian “substance” plays an important role in Nishida’s transition from self-consciousness to the logic of place (FUJITA 2000). Nishida transforms substance to relate it to the transcendental level of the predicate. This introverted way of thinking finally comes to concentrate on the problem of the true self. The self is not only already known, but can only see itself within itself. The self is nothingness but encompasses infinite beings and produces within itself the antithesis of subject and object. From our analysis, we have seen that Nishida agrees that knowledge is always knowledge of the universal, and that the universal in the truest sense is the concrete universal. The concrete universal is the true subject of judgment; it is the particular of the particulars, and belongs to the level of the transcendental subject. On the level of the transcendental predicate, it is the universal of universals. Alternatively, we might say that the concrete universal is neither a particular nor a universal but the identity of the particular and the universal. Such an identity is not a simple identity, but a contradictory unity. The concrete universal that can be a subject but never a predicate is “the final irrationality” (NKZ 3: 443). In other words, the self as the identity of the universal and particular is the final irrationality. “The rationalization of the irrational” is the basic aim of Nishida’s logic of place (NITTA 2003, 258ff).

Although Nishida regards place as a nothingness that encompasses subject and object, his discussion of place remains an introverted approach to the subject-predicate relationship. By delving deeper into the depths of subjectivity, Nishida encounters the absolute nothingness that encompasses both subject and object. He puts forward a predicate that transcends the previous predicate, and finally reaches the level of transcendental predicate. Such a way of thinking is no doubt introverted, but does that make it a simple “internalism”? Here again, we need to pay strict attention to the problem of the concrete universal.

We know that the concrete universal, as ultimate reality, does not belong to judgment but is rather the source of judgment. The logical subject and predicate are contained within it and related to one another within it. On this matter Nishida noted in his 1927 essay “Knowing” that “the most perfect form of the concrete universal can be regarded as the syllogistic universal” (NKZ 3: 535). We know that a typical syllogism is constituted by major, minor, and middle terms. The middle term functions

as a mediator that does not manifest itself in the conclusion, but lets the major and minor terms be combined to constitute the conclusion. The opposition between the major and minor terms must be related through a medium that seems to have the function of place. Though it is not clear how far this analogy can be taken, an internal turn from predicate to medium in his logic of place seems clear (TANAKA 2000, 53–4). In his later philosophy, Nishida emphasizes the mediating function of place and introduces the concept of an intermediary or “dialectical world.” When the position of place passes from the predicate to the medium, at the same time it is labeled an internal “turn” in Nishida’s line of thinking. When such a “turn” occurs, the main line of his thinking should be reoriented. Nishida begins from a world that includes both humans and the environment, and probes the creative structure of the historical world. He does not begin from the antithesis of self and environment, but takes a position that includes both; his is actually a philosophy of totality. The logic of place means the “self-determination of the whole” (NKZ 10: 168). According to Sueki, the problem of wholeness is one of the cardinal features of Nishida’s later thinking (SUEKI 1987, 162).

I would argue that, whereas Nishida’s line of thinking is basically oriented inwardly, it is not a simple internalism that can be opposed to an externalism. He tried to expand the forms of self-consciousness in order to uncover true reality, but in doing so encountered the deeper problem of the concrete universal, which is not a simple identity but a contradictory identity. It is the contradictory identity that is implied in reality that causes an internal turn in Nishida’s logic of place. Near the end of “Place” Nishida writes:

It is regrettable that after numerous repetitions the above-mentioned still cannot fully express my thoughts, especially concerning the problem of intuition. Regarding “knowing,” my view is that, in lieu of the usual view that begins from an antithesis of knower and known, I would rather go more deeply and try to think from the inclusive relation of judgment. (NKZ 3: 477)

Starting from the position of self-consciousness to understand “intuition,” “encompass,” or “inclusion” is the focal point of Nishida’s transformation of Neo-Kantian epistemology. But this does not express the

fullness of what he was about. “Thought that is not fully expressed” needs ultimately to be acknowledged as a contradictory identity that is unavoidable in the philosophy of self-consciousness. According to traditional logic, this is an irrational existence. As Nishida expressed in the preface of *The Determination of the Self-Consciousness of Nothingness*, as long as the irrational can be brought into thought, then it must be shown *how* it can be thought (NKZ 5: 3). The purpose of Nishida’s logic of place is an attempt to grasp such an irrational. The internal “turn” in logic of place is not a change of position, but a more radical or thoroughgoing development of his philosophy of self-consciousness. Such a “turn” enabled Nishida to expand his logic to the historical world.

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HUANG Wen-hong 黃文宏

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