

John C. Maraldo: *Japanese Philosophy in the Making 1: Crossing Paths with Nishida*, ed. Takeshi Morisato, Nagoya: Chisokudō, 2017.

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Crossing Paths with Nishida is the first of two volumes of collected essays by John C. Maraldo, one of the most prominent figures in Western scholarship on the philosophy of Nishida Kitarō and Japanese philosophy in general. The collection covers essays from three decades, most of which have already been published but are slightly revised for the present volume, with some new additions published for the first time. The prologue as well as new introductory passages provide useful framings, giving background information on the contexts in which the texts were first conceived and providing an overall structure to connect the stream of thought between the essays. As the title suggests, Maraldo is not simply aiming at giving an exegetic analysis of Japanese philosophy and Nishida's oeuvre, but goes a step further by critically assessing the theories and notions he finds in these fields, showing their potentials as well as limits and creatively connecting them to a broader context informed by current debates in philosophy. It is a pleasure to follow Maraldo in his engagement with Japanese Philosophy "as an ongoing, creative endeavor — as *philosophy in the making*" (10) that illuminates how a global mode of philosophy including non-Western sources is possible as a creative enterprise and how a pluralistic, decentralized awareness of intercultural, multilingual thought challenges the Western hegemony in philosophy. The consistent quality of Maraldo's essays and the creative potentials of his research make this volume a highly valuable resource for any scholar interested in Japanese thought, Nishida Kitarō, and global, intercultural philosophy in general.

The introductory prologue deals with essential questions pertaining to the field of Japanese philosophy in a broad sense, including possible definitions of "philosophy", the controversy about the existence (or non-existence) of (premodern) "Japanese philosophy" and the different uses of the term. Maraldo also argues for the importance of a multiplicity of languages for philosophy in general, and the need for translation between them to draw out the full potential of the philosophies articulated in them. The following essays are divided into two main sections. While the first

section, "Pathways to Nishida", is concerned with the general context of Japanese philosophy as a whole, its importance as a non-Western perspective on Greco-European thought and the historical background of Nishida's philosophy, the second section, "Pathways through Nishida", focuses more directly on different aspects of Nishida's writings and their importance for current debates.

The first essay, "Japanese Philosophy as a Lens on Greco-European Thought", reverses the standard perspective of intercultural and comparative philosophy that evaluates non-Western traditions through the lens of Western philosophy, and instead rethinks Western traditions from the perspective of Japanese philosophy. By taking a stance outside of Western philosophy to get a fresh view on it, Maraldo aims at restoring "a definition of philosophy broad enough to describe both Greco-European and Asian philosophical pathways" (22). He first takes a critical look at the commonplace assumption that philosophy is of essentially Greek origin by showing the hermeneutical circle involved in this thought: "To locate the origins of philosophy, one must know what philosophy is; yet only its origins and history can tell us what philosophy is" (23). The essay proceeds by showing internal differences in the European definition of philosophy, taking the Greek concept of philosophy as a way of life as a possible alternative to modern, purely theoretical philosophy. Additionally, Maraldo refers to Pierre Hadot to show that argumentative discourse is only one theoretical method found in Greek and Latin philosophy besides dialogical, exegetic and systematic approaches. This broader definition of philosophy as a way of life including multiple discursive as well as non-discursive methods provides us with a shared framework for approaching both Western and East Asian philosophy, but this common background also helps us to understand major differences, as in the way both traditions understand the relation between mind and body. Maraldo analyzes the concepts of a way of life in Buddhist as well as Confucian Japanese thinkers to show how their standpoints of philosophy as a bodily engaged, social and – in the case of Confucianism – political practice can serve as a point of reference to critically evaluate the overly speculative and disengaged nature of some Greco-European traditions.

The second essay, "How Meiji-Era Japan Appropriated Philosophy from Europe", provides an overview of the assimilation of Western philosophy

into the Japanese intellectual landscape by giving short summaries of different thinkers from the Meiji-Era (1868-1912) who translated the Western philosophical idiom into Japanese and reframed it according to their respective interpretations. The essay gives concise accounts of the respective thinkers while providing enough references to secondary literature for interested readers to delve into a more in-depth study. The following essay, “Framing the place and Significance of Nishida’s Philosophy in Europe and North America”, proposes five frames employed by Western interpreters to attempt a categorization of Nishida as a philosopher: “Japan’s first (modern) philosopher”, “Philosopher of the East”, “Zen philosopher”, “Founder of the Kyoto School and leading philosopher of Nothingness” and “Nationalist ideologue”. In his assessment of the last mentioned framing, Maraldo deals with the difficult question of Nishida’s involvement in the political situation of his time, a recurring topic that Maraldo tries to tackle with by taking a middle stance between onesided condemnation and uncritical justification.⁽³⁾ The essay concludes with an outlook on how Nishida himself might provide frameworks for reevaluating our own philosophical standpoints, a topic that is only briefly raised but elaborated on in the following section.

Section two, “Pathways to Nishida”, provides more detailed accounts of how Nishida’s work might contribute to current debates in philosophy worldwide. In the first essay of this section, “How Nishida Individualized Religion”, Maraldo shows the limits of a widespread interpretation of Nishida’s philosophy of religion as a mainly Zen-Buddhist approach while placing it in the overall context of the creation of a modern concept of “religion” (宗教) in the Meiji-era. Nishida’s attempt to individualize religion is covered mainly in connection to his concept of death in contrast to other thinkers like Martin Heidegger, showing how “knowledge of death for Nishida means the realization of the self through continual self-negation” (153). The essay ends with a critical view on Nishida’s concept of an individualized religion, showing how such an approach misses the importance of religion’s “concrete *social* manifestations in history, its particular institutions, scriptural traditions, ritual and other practices” (155).

“The Problem of World Culture: Appropriating Nishida’s Philosophy of Nation and Culture” examines criticisms of Nishida’s approach to culture and his use of nationalist frameworks, including the critique by Marxist philosopher Tosaka Jun, trying to show that despite its all too

close connection to the nation state, Nishida’s concept of “culture” (文化) can still be used to re-examine current topics like multiculturalism and globalization. While a good part of the essay takes a critical stance and shows how Nishida’s assessment of Japan as a leading nation in Asia’s defense against Western imperialism and Eurocentrism leads him to an equally mislead Japanism that suggests the existence of a homogenous Japanese people (民族) with the Emperor at its center, Maraldo nevertheless discerns a positive level in Nishida’s approach which presents the world as a multicultural sphere in which different nations and cultures interact as equals and mutually determine and mediate each other, even though he failed to conceive of the possibility of multiethnic or multicultural nations. The essay closes with an evaluation of Nishida’s statement that certain countries have to assume a central position in forming “regional worlds” or — by substitution — multicultural nations.

The essay “Self, World, and the Nothingness Underlying Distinctions” asks if it is possible to embrace the concept of an “ultimate context” which would allow us to conceptualize both the world at large as well as every being therein, proposing Nishida’s “place of absolute nothingness” as a possible candidate for such a notion. Maraldo shows how Nishida’s concept of nothingness “points to the positive role that an obscure context plays in making distinctions” (181) and provides an alternative to the conflicting theories of “internalism” and “externalism” in the current philosophy of mind. Comparing and contrasting Nishida’s approach with Robert Sokolowski’s theory of distinctions, Maraldo interprets Nishida’s nothingness as an “obscurity that gives rise to — and by contrast makes evident — all possible distinctions” (193) by negating its own non-duality and determining itself. Maraldo uses Sokolowski’s notion of “urgency” (in the sense of a fundamental urge to distinguish or identify that precedes both distinction and identification) to clarify Nishida’s concept of the self-determination of nothingness, while showing how Nishida’s approach calls for a double shift, first to a *me*-ontological standpoint and secondly to a positive evaluation of obscurity as something that does not have to be eliminated but can be positively appreciated as an important aspect of making distinctions, citing the Chinese Daoist philosopher Zhuangzi and Zen-Buddhist dialogues as examples for such an appreciation in East Asian philosophy.

“Enaction in Cognitive Science and Nishida’s Turn of Intuition into Action” centers on the notion of *kōi-teki chokkan* (行為の直観) in Nishida’s later writings. Comparing this notion to enactivist concepts in cognitive science, Maraldo proposes a reconsideration of the standard translation of this term as “action-intuition”, “active intuition” or “acting intuition”, experimenting with alternatives such as “action-oriented intuition”, “performative intuition” and “enactive intuition”. Based on Matteo Cestari’s account of Nishida’s notion of embodiment, Maraldo contextualizes Nishida’s philosophy of action with the enactivist theory of Francisco J. Varela, Evan Thompson and Eleanor Rosch. By tracing possibilities of mutual critique which can help to clarify both approaches, Maraldo not only gives valuable hints at how to further develop Nishida’s account of embodiment, but also shows its relevance for contemporary thought.

“Nishida’s Ontology of History” reconstructs Nishida’s attempt to formulate an alternative to a linear account of time by drawing on philosophers like Augustine, Hegel, and Leopold Ranke, as well as Nishida’s colleagues Tosaka Jun, Tanabe Hajime and Miki Kiyoshi. Nishida’s alternative model of time focuses on the “eternal now” or “absolute present” as a field that encompasses past and future as aspects of its own process of self-determination. Especially illuminating in this context is Maraldo’s comparison of Nishida’s approach with the Marxist account of Tosaka Jun, showing how both share a common interest in the present and the everyday, with a crucial point of difference in Nishida’s rejection of materiality as underlying both nature and history. Nishida insists that “historical reality, as the eternal generation of distinct moments, is self-determining” (251) and that this self-determination is mediated by embodied subjects who act in “an absolute present that encompasses a virtual infinity of pasts and futures” (264), thereby enabling the realization of individual freedom. Maraldo interprets the “absolute present” in Nishida’s late work as a place, space, or field that allows events to occur within it and that has its center in each and every moment it encompasses. This “de-centering view” opens up time to a mediating field that allows for the projection of “innumerable timelines” (259) and the enfolding of possible worlds in the concrete self-determination of the historical world. In this way, Nishida’s account provides a “counterpoint both to a theological, transcendent foundation of history and to the historical determinism he read in Marxism” (261f.). According to

Nishida, self and world are part of a process of co-creation in which “the self as historical body is the expression of the sphere of the historical world” (266) while the historical world is enacted by the embodied subjects that inhabit it. The concluding section of the essay shows how Hisamatsu Shin’ichi, Abe Masao and Nishitani Keiji fail to measure up to Nishida’s account of time by dehistoricizing his notion of “absolute present”, and how Nishida’s ontology itself lacks the possibility to go beyond an abstract notion of “historicity” towards a concrete practice of “historiography” that would enable the integration of actual historical narratives.

“Self-Mirroring and Self-Awareness: Dedekind, Royce and Nishida” provides an illuminating insight into the influence of mathematical models on Nishida’s notion of “self awareness” (自覚) and his “logic of place” (場所の論理), showing how it is possible with Nishida to speak of “self-aware generalities”, such as a “self-aware world” or a “self-aware system”. Maraldo demonstrates that the notion of infinite systems forms the background of Nishida’s theory of self-awareness. Starting with Richard Dedekind’s contention that “a system is infinite when it is similar to a proper part of itself” and his proposal of “my own realm of thoughts” as a prime example for such a system, Maraldo shows how Josiah Royce modifies Dedekind’s theory by taking “the ordered structure of reflective thought as the origin, and not merely a typical instance, of the idea of numerical infinity” (281). Nishida adopts Royce’s notion of the infinite self-imaging quality of reflective thought as origin of the notion of infinity. Especially influential for Nishida’s theory is Royce’s example of a “perfect map of England” that represents not only its surrounding environment but also its own existence in it, leading to an infinite multitude of self-representations. A central problem of this concept is that this map can never be complete because the “map-maker”, i.e. the “thinker, or the activity of thinking is never included in the realm of thoughts; and so that realm may be infinite but it is not all-inclusive” (286). Maraldo mentions a possible solution to this problem proposed by Ueda Shizuteru: If we take out the map-maker or subject as a necessary constituent of the process (“England depicting England”), we may arrive at the concept of an all-inclusive system of self-determination, which is exactly what Nishida is aiming at with his concept of a self-aware or self-determining world (or place of nothingness). Nevertheless, Maraldo contents, some sort of subjective awareness seems to be necessary

for anything to appear at all, and this “suggests a sense in which self-mirroring is not descriptive of [...] absolute nothingness”. Moreover, the fact that Nishida speaks of a “seeing without a seer” or a state of no-self (無我) implies that the ordinary concept of an individual (centered) subject of awareness is less emphasized in his writings. Maraldo shows an affinity of Nishida’s approach to Fichte’s theory of self-consciousness. Self-awareness or self-knowing is conceived of by both thinkers to be not merely constative, but constructive of the self. Central to this train of thought is the question of how knowing self and known self relate to each other in self-awareness. Maraldo suggests that Nishida solves this issue by introducing different levels of self-mirroring in which “the more concrete level includes the difference between itself and the more abstract level, and that difference corresponds to the difference between elements of the more abstract level” (290f.). He illustrates this structural approach by showing how, in Nishida, the abstract level of judgements is included in the more concrete level of intentional consciousness which in turn is part of the field of the “pure act”. In this way, Nishida tries to think the whole of reality as a field of nothingness that encompasses a multitude of self-structuring fields (both concrete and abstract) as expressions of itself. Maraldo concludes the essay by indicating challenges to Nishida’s concept of self-awareness found in recent debates between the German philosophers Hans Radermacher, Ernst Tugendhat and Dieter Henrich.

“What Phenomenologists Can Learn from Nishida about Self-Awareness” analyzes Nishida’s (mistaken) critique of Husserl’s phenomenological method which pivots on Nishida’s conviction that “intentionality splits consciousness into subject and object and cannot account for the prior consciousness *in act*, that is, for [...] ‘consciousizing consciousness’ or ‘consciousness that is now conscious’” (308). Maraldo shows how Husserl’s concepts of “lived experience”, “living present”, “*Erlebnis*” and “primal I” serve as solutions to the problem raised by Nishida. But apart from the shortcomings of Nishida’s critique of phenomenology, Maraldo sees five potential contributions of his philosophy to the phenomenology of self-awareness, the main dispute of which he locates in the question “whether self-awareness is an outcome of reflection, i.e., a result of a secondary act of thinking about experience” (319f.). Maraldo refers to Shaun Gallagher and Dan Zahavi to summarize the standard response to this question by phenomenologists which proposes

the existence of a “pre-reflective self-awareness” as a “(minimal) form of self-consciousness” that grants “immediate and non-observational access to myself” and my experiences without the need for an explicit reflection on this experience. The first contribution by Nishida to this debate, according to Maraldo, is his assumption of an “inherent reflexivity” of self-awareness that is neither “a prior stage like the pre-reflective, nor [...] a subsequent stage” (324). According to this account, self-awareness does not need a further motivating force to generate reflection as a secondary act. It “encompasses both pre-reflective consciousness and acts of reflection” and ties self and world “to an undifferentiated awareness to form a greater, unified whole” (325). The second contribution mentioned by Maraldo is Nishida’s concept of a field-like awareness that moves self-awareness beyond the self and places it in a self-determining world that mirrors itself in us, elevating the importance of the world to a central factor in the constitution of self-awareness. This shift of self-awareness from a centered self to a decentered world allows for the third contribution discussed by Maraldo, which shows how the distinction between phenomenal and phenomenological consciousness can be interpreted as a distinction between “the felt sense of how things appear to us, on the one hand, and the general power to let things appear that encompasses all of us, on the other” (329f.). According to Nishida – and this is the fourth contribution – “losing explicit consciousness of ‘oneself’ is essential to a fuller experiencing of interactions” (331), a phenomenon which is captured by Nishida in expressions like “becoming the thing” and which points to a “unitary mode of self-awareness”. The fifth contribution described by Maraldo lies in Nishida’s observation that self-awareness is in fact something that has to be embodied and even bodily cultivated.

Because of the limited space available for this review, I will cover the concluding essays in a very short manner and hope that the interested reader will take the book in her hand for further study. “Heidegger and Nishida: Nothingness, God, and Onto-Theology” explores the concept of “nothingness” as a juncture for comparing the thought of both philosophers. “Nothing Gives: Marion and Nishida on Gift-giving and God” analyzes Jean-Luc Marion’s de-substantialist notion of God as loving by contrasting it with Nishida’s philosophy of religion. The last essay, “The Many Senses of the One World: Reflections on Nishida’s and Heidegger’s Thought in the

1930s and the Environmental Crisis of Today” focuses on the concept of the “world” in Nishida and Heidegger, showing how both develop alternatives to a naturalist account by emphasizing the “capacity of the world in its creative opposition to human individuality” (434).

注

- (1) Maraldo’s major contributions to this field of research — apart from his numerous essays — include his work as a co-editor of *Rude Awakenings: Zen, the Kyoto School, and the Question of Nationalism*, Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1995, as well the massive *Japanese Philosophy. A Sourcebook*, Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2011 (which has meanwhile been translated into Spanish).
- (2) As Maraldo puts it: “No longer does the description ‘Western philosophy’ count as a tautology; no longer is the qualification ‘Western’ an excuse that relieves philosophers of the need to know something about the thinking relegated to traditions outside Europe as philosophy’s claimed home territory.” (18)
- (3) Maraldo proposes a shift in our hermeneutical approach towards texts that could be perceived as nationalist from our current perspective informed by a relatively liberal environment of philosophy: “What we need, in the case of Nishida and ‘Kyoto School’ philosophers is a hermeneutics for reading texts composed under threat of punishment for non-compliance with state ideologies”. Otherwise, framings that portrait Nishida and his colleagues as nationalist thinkers might themselves become ideological and convict Nishida “of a crime by false evidence” (119).

の論理」を展開していく田辺の思想を三木が意識していなかったとは考えにくい。また、レーヴィットの立場と最も類縁性を持つと思われる和辻の人間学が第一章での部分的な論述にとどまったことも惜しまれる。

評者が最も気になったのは、本書の中心概念である「交渉」についての氏の両義的な態度である。氏は三木の『哲学的人間学』における「パトスの自覚の論理」に人間中心主義的な「倨傲」の危うさを見ている。そのような観点から、三木の『構想力の論理』における立場の転回や、西田の実在の論理、さらにはそれらに影響を受けた梯の全自然史の思想に高い評価が与えられている。しかし、このようないわば脱人間化的発想への共感はこの書で主張される「交渉」概念の意義とは直ちには折り合いが付かないのではないだろうか。というのも、自然や他者あるいは自己自身のあり方を「交渉」関係において理解するその立場自身も一つの人間中心主義と考えられるからである。なるほど、「交渉」は近代哲学の「自己中心主義」(二五八頁)を根底的に批判する概念として機能しよう。しかし、それがレーヴィットの言うところの「人間的現存在」の学である以上、直ちには人間の立場そのものの超出までは意味しえないのではないか。

こうした疑問が生ずるのは、氏のフォイエルバッハ論と

の関係を十分に視野に収めきれない本書評の制限のためであるかもしれない。仮に評者の見立てがそれなりの妥当性を持ったとしても、そのことは本書の思想の豊かさを少しも減ずるものではない。これまで明らかにしてきた意義に加えて、松山論で指摘される「感受する存在としての身体的自我」というフォイエルバッハの思想的射程は広いものであるし、自然と歴史を包んだところから世界そのものの展開のあり方を示す〈西田―三木―梯〉の系譜は、従来の宗教哲学的な「京都学派」理解とは別の可能性を内包したものとと言えるだろう。

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