



Place and Dream
Japan and the Virtual

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Preface

I should perhaps dedicate this book to the numerous referees that have been reviewing my articles over the past ten years, some of which do now appear in the present volume. Still, since I do not know even the names of these ladies and gentlemen, I dedicate the book to my wife Mari whose name signifies “truth”. Further I would like to thank the Japan Foundation, the Nichibunken Center in Kyoto, and the JSPS for having enabled me to pursue research in Japan for all together three years.

I would also like to thank the following journals for having granted the permission to reprint revised versions of their articles: *Philosophy East and West* for Chapters 2 and 3 that have initially been published in their 1997 and 2000 issues (47:4 and 50:40) respectively; *Asian Philosophy* for Chapter 7 that has been published in 2003 in its number 13:1; the Japan Review for Chapter 4 that has been published in its number 16 in 2004; and *The Philosophical Forum* for the “Appendix” that has been published in 2002 in its number 33:2 under the title ‘Khora or Idyll: The Space of the Dream’.

Introduction

Space and the Virtual: An East-West Comparison

This book deals with the subject of space. On a first level, the line of arguments appears as straightforward as it reflects a traditional Japanese idea of space crystallized especially in Nishida Kitarô's notion of "place" (that he calls *basho*), against various "items" of Western culture. Among these items are Bakhtin's "dialogicity", Wittgenstein's *Lebensform*, and "virtual space" or "globalized" space as representatives of the latest development of an "alienated", modern spatial experience. Some of the Western concepts of space appear as negative counter examples to "*basho*-like", Japanese places; others turn out to be compatible with the Japanese idea of space.

There is, however, in the present book, a second theoretical level developed in parallel with the first one. This book attempts to synthesize, by constantly transgressing the limits of a purely comparative activity, a quantity which the author believes to be existent in Japanese culture that is called "the virtual". Be it Kuki Shûzô's hermeneutics of non-foundation or his ontology of dream, Nishida Kitarô's virtual definition of the body of state, or Kimura Bin's notion of "in-between" (*aida*) that is so closely associated with the "virtual space" of Noh plays: what all these conceptions have in common is that they aim to transcend a flat notion of "reality" by developing "the virtual" as a complex ontological unity.

We believe that these approaches appear today, at the age of globalization and the consistent penetration of virtual reality into everyday life, in a light entirely different from what they did thirty years ago. It becomes clear that the traditional "Japanese virtual" is entirely different from what in contemporary culture is commonly named "Virtual Reality". As a consequence, when talking in this book about space, I intend to oppose not only a certain "Japanese concept of space" to a technologically based, "Western" one, but also a certain Japanese concept of "the virtual" to a computerized, banal, and uni-dimensional concept of the virtual as it has become established during the most recent etape of modern, technocratic culture.

This is what the present book is trying to demonstrate. Though it carries its reflections at times through prolonged serpentine intellectual structures, the main idea of the book is that a “Western” idea of the virtual as something stable and unchanging can be opposed to the traditional Eastern idea of the virtual that aims at retrieving the ephemeral character of reality itself. In some chapters this idea is obvious, in others, the “virtual input” needs to be pointed out. When elaborating for example parallels between Bakhtin’s and Nishida’s philosophies of “The ‘I’ and the ‘Thou’”, the primary objective is to show that both thinkers’ output can be considered as a metaphysical “existentialist” philosophy on the one hand, and at the same time as a full-fledged theory of socio-cultural space on the other. On a second level, however, both philosophies can be understood as working against the mechanical form of communication current in modern (computerized) society. In our modern world the ‘Other’ is too often represented by “information”. As a consequence, “communication” is bound to take place within an “abstract space” provided by (increasingly computerized) media. Nishida’s and Bakhtin’s philosophies show that only a living, “answering” sort of communication is able to create a “place” of communicative interaction. Only within such a place, be it called *basho* or ideological environment, man becomes autonomous by freely acting in front of an ‘Other’. The “liberty” provided by computerized “virtual reality”, on the other hand, appears to be a liberty lacking this answerability towards the Other. Any “virtual” liberty as it is offered on the internet, though it is constantly claiming to work in the service of “intercultural communication”, has no real liberating effect on the (cultural) self. The reason for this is that the abstract distance established between the ‘I’ and the ‘Thou’ is bound to foil any attempt to establish the ‘Other’ as the ‘Other’, i.e. to establish the Other as a ‘Thou’ that the ‘I’ needs to respond to.

1. The Gamelike and Dreamlike Structures of Nishida Kitarô's Pure Experience

1. Pure Experience and the Consciousness of Play: Nishida, Huizinga, James

In his first book *Zen no kenkyû (An Inquiry into the Good)*¹ Nishida Kitarô develops the idea of “*pure experience*”. This reflection represents the point of departure of Nishida's thought which was later to deal with the phenomena of “self-consciousness” and “self-awakening”, and which culminated in the elaboration of a “logic of place” (*basho no ronri*). *Pure experience* is an immediate experience in the sense of a “pre-reflexive experience”. It is an experience made at the moment when subject and object are not yet separated, i.e. at the moment when man's intellect is not yet present to recognize the subject as a subject experiencing an object. From the point of view of *pure experience*, “subjectivity” and “objectivity” are intellectual abstractions. Instead of looking for these abstractions, Nishida recommends seeking at the basis of every human action a “pure experience” which does not yet have a sense (an objective sense which could be known by a subject) but which represents a sense only for itself. This sense can be experienced in the form of *pure experience*.

Pure experience implies thus the total negation of any subjective point of view (be it Cartesian, empathic, or scientific). Nishida observes this experience especially in artistic activities. Artistic experiences are often “pre-conceptual” in the sense that they are not mastered by a conceptualizing intellect. In a way, these experiences give the impression of unfolding themselves “all alone”, that is of taking place without any conscious effort from the part of a subject.

Playing a piece of music, for example, can be seen as such a *pure experience*, provided that the act of “playing” unfolds with virtuosity and perfection, giving the impression that the musician has become the piece of music. However, *pure experience* can also be located in children's games. Rolf Elberfeld notes that pure experience takes place where the child is completely absorbed by his game, a pedagogical

phenomenon systematically studied by Maria Montessori (Elberfeld 1994). Arisaka and Feenberg liken *pure experience* to “group actions” which are shared not only in music but also in sports (1990: 181). Apart from this, the links between pre-logical thinking and children’s play have not gone unnoticed by child psychologists. Jean Piaget, in his analysis of the psychic value of play in the development of children, recognizes “particular symbolisms created by the child as a phenomenon parallel to the intuitive and pre-logical thinking of the child” (Piaget 1978: 226).²

It is thus not surprising that in the examples of *pure experience* given by different authors working on Nishida, a certain amount of ludism is almost obligatory. Concerning Nishida’s “active intuition”, which takes place during *pure experience*, Yûjirô Nakamura (1983: 45) points to a “theatrical knowledge” that permit us to “understand things with the body”. It is essential to recognize the ludic element as constitutive for a certain paradoxical psychic state on which *pure experience* is based and which is also essential for every game. In games/play more than anywhere else, we tend to react “without consciousness”, and yet still produce an action that is far from being simply “consciousless”. There is a paradox in play, namely that every game that is well played gives the impression of taking place in an “atmosphere” or in a “place” which requires a heightened conscious-ness despite the fact that the player obviously does not control his action by means of his consciousness.

Huizinga and Kereny, in their classical studies on play, have crystallized these aspects of games. They speak of an atmosphere of “solemnity”, which produces an ambiguous and mysterious “seriousness” in games. Huizinga attempts to explain this quality first of all by referring to the phenomenon of irony. However, Nishida’s play of *pure experience* looks, especially when seen from a philosophical and not only an anthropological point of view, even more fundamental than the cultural games that interest Huizinga. The idea of a *pure experience* transcends the mere possibility of “irony” which is linked to the consciousness of every player. A “playful consciousness” seen from a philosophical point of view fully settles on the side of *reality*, thus leaving no place for irony at all.

Karl Kereny equates of play with education in the first pages of his article on “the feast” (the article on which Huizinga bases important passages in his *Homo Ludens*). This conclusion Kereny borrowed from William James, an author who has been important for the formation of

Nishida's early philosophy to the point that he provided Nishida the idea of "pure experience". Kerény quotes James from *The Variety of Religious Experience*:

It is as if there were in the human consciousness a sense of reality, a feeling of objective presence, a perception of what we may call 'something there,' more deep and more general than any of the particular 'sense' by which current psychology supposes existent realities to be originally revealed (Kerény 1938: 59).³

On the one hand, games can appear "without consciousness", because the player's consciousness does not interfere in order to decide "here and now" what should be done in the next moment. On the other hand, games do not appear to be "consciousless" either, because all "consciousless" play would end up as pure automatism. One has the impression that in play the lack of individual and subjective consciousness of the player has the precise effect of augmenting the intensity of the play's consciousness. The real game is more than the mechanical and "unconscious" reproduction of movements or rules learned beforehand. Games impress us through their creativity and originality, which require the presence of a "general" consciousness. However, games also impress through the absence of any individual consciousness. Of course, the terms "general" and "individual" are not really justified here, because it is precisely the distinction between the two that the game intends to transcend. The same thing can be said about Nishida's *pure experience*.

Let us suppose that the activity of play be based upon *pure experience*. Play is consciousness, but it does not demand a particular consciousness of certain things that could be provided by thought. In games, all conscious subjectivity of the player is cancelled, though "the game as consciousness" continues to exist. This means that, in order to attain "non-subjective" consciousness, the game must become consciousness without first passing through the player. In other words, games renounce objective elements of consciousness that have been objectified by a subject beforehand, in order to find its own consciousness directly. And this is what permits play to overcome the mechanic stage and to become playful in the proper sense, i.e. to find its real way of being, or simply its "style".

Play as presented so far is a close fit to the Zen experience dear to Nishida. Zen experience is a state in which there is no 'I' and no 'self'

but only the ‘it’ which plays (cf. Toshimitsu 1973: 53). In this way, play represents a “consciousness” which accords very well with Nishida’s *pure experience*. Still, when he was writing *Zen no kenkyū*, Nishida was tempted by William James’s “radical empiricism”. In general, Nishida’s interpreters have recognized that Nishida’s idea, despite the sympathies he manifests towards James’ book, goes beyond Western empiricism (Cf. Dilworth 1969; Noda 1955; Nishitani 1991: 81ff). This “empiricism” is also present in Bergson’s philosophy. William James writes in *Essays in Radical Empiricism* that experience in general has no “inner duplicity”, and that the separation of experience into “consciousness” and “content” is “added” by human reason (James 1912: 9). James criticizes the “naive” and “immediate” manner in which Münsterberg establishes the “place” of dreams or of fantastic images “outside the subject”, as if a separation between interior and exterior were possible in the domain of experience (James 1912: 20). Instead James underlines the conception of an “instantaneous field of present” in which all experience is “pure” (James 1912: 23-24). Empiricism, the antithesis of rationalism, becomes the theory of *pure experience*, an experience with individual elements, which becomes possible through the rejection of all reflexes of abstraction.

Despite these resemblances it needs to be said that Nishida’s *pure experience*, colored as it is by religious and moral ambitions, make it finally incompatible with James’ thoughts on the same subject. But let us first have a closer look at the parallels. For James, the exclusion of the intellect and of prejudices typical of the adult is an attempt to make the perception of the world “as it really is” possible.⁴ Accordingly, the first example given by Nishida in *Zen no kenkyū* of *pure experience* is that of the perception of the world by a new-born child, an idea which stems indeed from James’s article “The Thing and its Relations” (contained in *Essays...*). James, in this article, states that newborn babies, or men in semi-coma from sleeps, drugs, etc., might have “pure experiences” (James 1912: 93). I believe that the difference between Nishida and James becomes very clear here. The latter gives the childlike experience the status of *objectivity*, which becomes possible only because he establishes the neutral state of the child as absolute (though fluent) subjectivity. Nishida’s idea of a “childlike state of mind”, on the other hand, is fundamentally different. It comes closer not only to the subject-less state of mind of the Zen practitioner, but also to the pure “spiritual naivete” which permits, for example, the creation of the sober beauty which Zeami calls *yūgen*, and remains, in Noh plays, the

privilege of the “child player”. In these experiences, only the state of mind of the “child player” is seen to be “freed of all conscious faculties” (Izutsu 1981: 38) without producing any sense of subjectivity or any criterion for a scientific neutrality.

Despite James’s ambitions to maintain the “fluency” of experience, his remark on the childlike state of mind does not much differ from the positivist ideology of the impressionists. Therefore Nishida’s remarks on Impressionism illustrate very clearly the difference between the two philosophers. In a later article entitled “Problems of Consciousness”, Nishida says that “by attaining a new kind of objective purity, modern Impressionism has revealed a new subjectivity” (Nishida 1978: 230). Impressionism, the artistic inheritor of Positivism and of a philosophical tradition that can be traced back to Berkeley, obtains an “immediacy” of expression that does not satisfy Nishida’s aspirations towards an “*Aktualität*”, a reality, or a “pure presence”. The point is that for Impressionism (as was already the case for Berkeley), “impressions” are static elements forming combinations within a phenomenal (temporal or local) space, and which are therefore similar to the material particulars of the exterior world. The reality or the *Aktualität*, on the other hand, that Nishida is looking for must *from the beginning* be qualified as a “spiritual” reality. The impressions are not *inserted into* a space, but rather create a “spiritual place”.

In Positivism or Impressionism, the child, as a subjective being, and on the grounds of her lack of reason, gives in to a “feeling” that can be interpreted, according to one’s philosophical taste, as a “sentimental” feeling in the true sense of the term, or as an abstraction.⁵ Though in the Western tradition, the combination of intellectual and “sentimental” components has always been permitted (positivism rationalized empathy, Neo-Kantianism transformed the *Ein-fühlung* into an “Ein-denken”), the opposition of both remained rigid. Also James’ philosophy of perception of the “felt transition”, supposed to grant perception its utmost immediacy by remaining as fluent and non-static as reality itself, does not overcome the binary opposition of feeling and thinking. Nishida’s *pure experience*, on the other hand, takes place not only before reasoning, but also before feeling. For Nishida (as for Zeami), the child is totally without subjectivity, which means that it represents a being to which no subjectivity can be attached, not even by using abstract reflections that would establish a “fluency” of perception.

2. Pure Experience and the “Consciousness of Dreams”: Dreams as a Unified System

It is thus absolutely consistent to turn, as Nishida does, towards a psychic state which transgresses not only reasoning (as it is the case with the psychic state of the newborn child), but also “feeling”. In *Zen no kenkyû*, the three examples which follow to illustrate *pure experience* concern dream. This led David Dilworth to say that in *Zen no kenkyû* at a certain junction “‘dreams’ but not ‘meanings’ have been chosen to exemplify the doctrine of *pure experience*...” (Dilworth 1969: 97). First of all, this idea is indebted to a Buddhist vision of the opposition of dream and reality. Yoshinori Takeuchi writes that the “dependent origination” in Buddhism is “like a dream”:

When we dream, we live in correlatedness with the world of the dream and, through the phenomenal identity of dreamer and dream, keep the dream alive; but as soon as we become aware of its correlatedness, we have already awoken (Takeuchi 1983: 81).⁶

Here the dream is also represented as a *pure experience* that makes it impossible to distinguish the subject who undergoes this experience and the experience itself. For Nishida, *pure experience* was related to dreams from the beginning, though the indications concerning this relationship remained vague to begin with. In the preface to *Zen no kenkyû* Nishida writes:

I have had the idea that true reality must be actuality as it is, and that the so-called material world is something conceptualized and abstracted out of it. I can still remember a time in high school when I walked along the streets of Kanazawa absorbed in this idea as if I were dreaming (Nishida 1911: 7).

Here, it is not yet *pure experience* which is a dream, but the idea of such an experience of an “actuality” is associated with a dream. Later, in the same text, Nishida provides an example of a *pure experience* by referring not to artistic creation in simple terms, but to an artistic creation made while dreaming. *Pure experience* would be “Goethe’s intuitive composition of a poem while dreaming” (Nishida 1911: 13). Dreams thus represent the unified experiential system to which *pure experience* also aspires.

In general, this thought is far removed from Western models of the dream, for which the idea of the dream as the “producer of reason” re-

mains extremely marginal. There are a few examples, which seem to affirm Nishida's approach, and it is certainly not by coincidence that one of these comes from Bergson. In his lecture "The Dream", Bergson mentions the composer-violinist Tartini who "saw in dream the devil playing for him the desired sonata" (Bergson 1901: 110), and also R.S. Stevenson, who managed to compose his novels in a dream. Other authors have noted that Descartes and even Poincaré are said to have resolved difficult problems in dreams (Cf. Descartes 1961; Schönberger 1939; Wisdom 1947; Poincaré 1908). However, looking more closely, it turns out that in all these examples the thinker's or artist's act of genius is not really contained in the dream experience itself, but rather in the way in which he was able to use some of the dreamt elements once he had awoken. In general one can say that, even if a certain recognition of dreams as a "mode of thinking" has been familiar itself since its acknowledgement by Locke in certain passages of his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*,⁷ "dream thinking" in Western thought remains unordered and incoherent. There is not enough space here to go into details on these matters, but it can be taken for granted that a certain Western philosophical tradition, starting with Locke and passing through Condillac and LaMettrie, reduced "dream thinking" to a mechanism that needed to be mastered by reason.⁸

Nishida's conception of "dream thought" is far removed from Western models because he not only avoids all romanticism, but also all rationalization of dreams in a way elaborated on by Freud. In Nishida's eyes, what is important for dreams – as well as for *pure experience* – is not its genre but its unity, and this introduces dream as a kind of thought system. In the experience of writing a poem "in dream" as Goethe does, the unity of the experience is more assured than it would be in real experiences: in these "perceptual experiences" (non-dreamt experiences) the attention is diverted, because here, perception must consider objects. "Ordinary" experience or "perceptual" experience always represents an experience of *something*, which often produces the *illusion* of coherence. *Pure experience*, on the other hand, does not depend on the experience of a concrete 'what', but is coherent in itself.

For Freud, a phenomenon like the one described by Nishida could only be assessed through the distinction between two kinds of dreams. In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud distinguishes between "the dream itself" and the dream as reported by the dreamer.⁹ Concerning this last type of dream, he underlines the importance of *Kittgedanken* (linking thoughts) which the dreamer establishes himself after the

dream. The first type, however, which represents the experience of dreaming at the very moment the dream is dreamt, is lost (forgotten) or simply wiped out by the second type, i.e. by the report of the dream. It is clear that what distinguishes the dream report from the dream is that the report always appears to be more “reasonable” and more comprehensible than the dream itself. This is why one is so often tempted to accept the dream report as an experience, which is also *present*. However, no report can do more than try to establish a presence by using either reason or feeling. In both cases, the presence will be a re-constructed presence. The experience of dream itself, i.e. the experience as an action which is not told and not even seen but simply “done” (dreamt), is lost.¹⁰

The parallel between “dream experience” and Nishida’s *pure experience* is clear. Those who are interested in *pure experience* are interested in the “dream itself”, because it is an experience that presents itself to the dreamer before any objectification by a discourse on the dream. When Masao Abe writes that “Western philosophy has only considered consciousness that has been objectified” (Abe 1988: 357), we understand that this also concerns the interpretation of consciousness as well as that of dreams.

3. Dreams, Consciousness and the “Purity” of Experience

Shûzô Kuki, a pupil of Nishida, writes in the *Structure of Iki* that “the causal-mechanical vision of the world recognizes only one sort of necessity – the causal one – as the only necessity that dominates reality, and considers the contingent as a mere subjective category” (Kuki 1930a: 21). There is a main difference between the Western view of consciousness and the Eastern one that Kuki and Nishida want to establish. In the West, not only the “dream as an experience”, but all reality of consciousness tends to be objectified by a) neutralizing all elements of contingency it contains or b) declaring that all contingency is “strange”, because it is irreconcilable with “normal” logic (i.e. with the logic of waking life). A “logic of dreams” or a “logic of consciousness”, which includes contingency in all its strangeness, would come closest to the “non-objectified logic” developed by Nishida. In the West, such a logic has been neglected in regard to dream as well as in regard to consciousness. More precisely, it is the ludic character of dreams that parallels the ludic structure of consciousness that has been neglected. The problem is that this attribute of dreams cannot be resumed through scientific objectifications intrinsic to a subjective idealism (which has

dominated psychology perhaps at least since Münsterberg). The “complex character of being”, present in dreams as well as in consciousness, demands an enrichment of the sense of necessity itself which pushes it, through the integration of contingent elements, towards ludic models of the formation of consciousness. Any subjective idealism, which, in the worst case, might have taken the form of logocentrism and scientism, can only prevent psychology from developing something like a “logic of dreams” or a “logic of consciousness” founded on a non-subjective, and therefore non-objectifiable, point of view.

The Japanese psychologist Kimura Bin, in his book *Symptomatology of Schizophrenia* (Kimura 1975a), evaluates Nishida’s *pure experience* as it applies to psychoanalytic theory and adopts a similar kind of criticism. For Kimura, “the ‘word salad’ or ‘incoherent thinking’ of schizophrenia is nothing but a form of thinking and speech, unified by the predicative aspect of foreign dimension, according to Nishida’s ‘logic of place’” (Jankélévitch 1959: 99).¹¹ Kimura recognizes that for Western schools of psychotherapy psychic experience represents a verbalizable experience and “even non-verbal phenomena like dreams [and] transfers [...] can be entered into the field of psychotherapy, to the extent that they can be translated into words either by the patient himself or by the therapist” (Kimura 1991: 191). Finally, the patient is obliged to *make his consciousness an object* (Kimura 1991: 200) in order to construct psychic life and dreams. Kimura opposes *pure experience* to this process as an existential condition of man which forms itself before the use of verbal logic.

For Kimura, the problem of objectification is crystallized in the notions of *koto* and *mono*, the first of which describes a current experience which is not yet materialized, the second signifying the “thing”, i.e. the verbalized concept of an event which would otherwise be ungraspable for intentional consciousness. In reality, even the ‘I’ should be seen as a non-substantial entity that exists only by “reporting itself to itself” (Kimura 1982: 7). Self-perception (*jikaku*, 自覚) is thus declared the original place of human existence, because through self-perception man resists all “objectification” of psychic life in order to perceive the Being of things “immediately” (Kimura 1992: 40).

However, instead of observing a psychic phenomenon as a certain “game” of psychic life, Western psychoanalysis prefers to transform it into objective elements of consciousness as “will”, “judgement”, and “value”, which exist only with regard to individual points of view. In

this way one “objectifies” psychic life by reproducing it in the form of “feelings”, “images”, and “phantasms”: objective facts that are valuable only so long as they are linked to an individual, subjective, and well-delimited vision. However, Jankélévitch’s (Bergsonian) idea is valid not only in regards to dream but also in regards to consciousness in general: “We can multiply the dream by itself as much as we want to, we will never obtain the state of non-dream. These two worlds are not of the same order, they belong to different schedules”.¹¹ Adhering to Nishida’s concept, this would mean that consciousness and dreams, seen as a manifestations of *pure experience*, can never be redescribed from a point of view which is itself different from *pure experience*.

I hope to have shown that there is a resemblance between dreams as a place where actions playfully unfold, and Nishida’s *pure experience*. The individual of *pure experience*, like the individual of the *basho*, is an “individual in action” who “comes into play” (one can think here of Ohashi’s beautiful formulation of the *basho* as an “Ort der Gelassenheit” (Ohashi 1994: 26). This game can be considered “consciousness” developing within the *basho*. Finally, for Nishida, *basho* also means “consciousness”. It is a place where a certain game determines itself “all alone” without referring to subjective or objective foundations because for the game there is nothing but the place itself. In this place singularities form themselves like “selves”. A “self” formed in a place is not formed by rules borrowed from a sphere outside the game – instead the self shapes itself by simply “playing” the game of the place.

Because the *basho* negates formal and substantial Aristotelian rules, Nishida also calls it “form without form”. This expression, which suggests a strongly paradoxical structure, becomes understandable when one considers that the game is no “substantial force” either. A game is not “something” that one can see or measure. A game is only an action which creates its sense all alone whilst acting. The game’s sense exists, its actions are not arbitrary; but it exists only inside a place that the game itself creates.

Second, it remains to be said that dreams, when analyzed from the same angle, are encrypted in the same logic. Of course, this is true only for the dream as an experience undergone at the very moment it is dreamt; it is not true for the dream as a narration told by the dreamer. In order to avoid the foundation of the dream on a substantial logic, dreams can be seen as not being dreamt by anybody, but as experiences which are “dreamt all alone”. Huizinga and Gadamer were fascinated by the

fact that a “*Spiel* is *ge-spielt*”. It fascinated them because, in German at least, the noun needs to be repeated within the adjective if one wants to express the action of what is played. In the same tautological way, also a “dream is dreamt”; and at the moment it is dreamt it appears as a place of “absolute nothingness” in which no rules (created from a point of view outside the dream), but only action, exists.¹²

Hermeneutics has not had a decisive influence on psychoanalysis, and Dilthey’s idea of putting a “concrete *Erlebnis*” at the center of the psychic experience (which certainly resembles Nishida’s approach) did not divert psychology from subjectivism. It can only be hoped that a new confrontation of psychology and the theory of “*pure experience*” will have a chance to leave deeper traces in the field of consciousness studies, as well as that of psychoanalysis.

Notes

1. The page numbers indicated refer to the translation by Abe and Ives.
2. “Quant au ‘doublets’ (deux images distincts pour le même signifié), aux contradictions logiques et aux ‘lacunes,’ ces aspects du symbolisme montrent assurément son influence formelle, comparée à la cohérence et la synthèse de la pensée conceptuelle, mais cela est aussi vrai de la pensée intuitive et prélogique de l’enfant”.
3. Kerényi quotes from the German translation of William James’s book *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (James 1985: 55). German: *Die religiöse Erfahrung in ihrer Mannigfaltigkeit* (Leipzig 1914: 46).
4. Bergson was fascinated by a certain “existential” surplus in James’s *pure experience*. In his essay on James’s pragmatism, Bergson points to James’s “integrality” of experience, which would annul the mutilation of feelings through intellectualist hypotheses (Bergson: ‘Sur le pragmatisme de William James: Vérité et réalité’ in Bergson 1938). James appears here “bergsonized” because he is supposed to overcome the logical form of thinking by means of intuition. This idea is rather part of Bergson’s own project, since all pragmatism confines itself to opposing abstract concepts to concrete experience.
5. One can call to mind the German notion of *Einfühlung* for example, which has gone through almost all stages made possible by this interpretation, beginning as a practice-theoretical tool of romanticist aesthetics, and finishing as positivism’s abstract empathy, cleared of all contents.
6. It needs to be said that the notion of dreams in Eastern philosophy is different from that in Western philosophy. Heine points to the particular aspect of dreams in Asian philosophy that uses “dream, like dew and mist among other images, is a classic metaphor for unceasing evanescence that at once highlights and relativizes the gap between illusion and reality” (Heine 1991: ix). Dreams can appear as a “heightening of normal experience” and in this sense they do not represent the softened, dark and night version of reality. Heine points to the famous Kokinshû lovers’ verse by Narihara in which one “plays[s] upon an inability to distinguish [appearance from reality] when the world of appearance is, for some reason, suddenly truer or more forcibly felt than the world of reality” (Brower and Miner 1961: 61). In Asian thought in general, dreams represents a third realm of existence. This means that it appears “in addition to the two opposites of illusion and reality, or falsity and truth, [as] the relativity of the fragile borderline between realms”.

Certainly, Hindu and Buddhist approaches to dream and illusion are complex and diversified. Heine quotes J. Obeyesekere who has summed up the meaning of dreams in Eastern thought as follows: "Hinduism seeks transcendence in terms of the 'final dreamer, brahman, whereas Buddhism recognizes only the metaphysical void, *sunyata*. [...] for Chuang Tzu, however, the issue seems to seek not a final dreamer but relativity as an end in itself. [...] Kuang-Min Wu says: Buddhists awaken out of dreaming, Chuan Tzu wakes up to dreaming.'" (Heine 1991: 36) Still, the status of dreams as an alternative that exists beyond both reality and illusion represents an extremely interesting topic of research. An intriguing aspect of dream in Eastern philosophy also is provided by the development of a certain "hierarchy of dreams" within which each level is characterized by a different relationship to reality. The first level of dreams is the stage in which the illusive appearance of dream is defined only negatively in regard to non-dream. This negative definition of dream is, as R.S. Ellwood says (1988: 227), "an utterly self-made, self-confined world, a dark cave of reflecting mirrors, where nothing exists but what is fabricated by one's own fears, illusions, and self-conscious self-pity" (quoted from Heine 1991: 34). However, dreams can rise to a second level: "Since dream is illusory precisely because it appears to be so real, this experience causes the boundary lines of conventional dichotomies to break down. [Sometimes], when Buddhist philosophical understanding reduces the 'real world' (which is actually the world of appearance) to the level of dream, the contrasting result is the elevation of the value of dreams to a 'real' state" (Heine 1991: 34-35). Heine concludes that on this second level "thus, dream does not refer to a 'dreamy state' or 'night-time dream' but a primordial and perpetually self-surpassing process" (Heine 1991: 30). Here, dreams parallel the fundamental Buddhist ideas of transience. There is the "negative dream" in opposition to the "positive dream," in the same way in which there is a negative transience as a confirmation of harmful illusions and a positive transience, which represents a dream that is more than a dream.

7. "You find the mind in sleep, retired as it were from the sense, and out of reach of those motions made on the organs of sense, which at other times produce very vivid and sensible ideas. But in retirement of the mind from the sense, it often retains a yet more loose and incoherent manner of thinking, which we call dreaming; and last of all, sound sleep closes the scene quite, and puts an end to all appearances" (Locke 1964: 158-59).
8. There is some irony in the fact that when Rousseau finally dealt with dream in his last work *Rêveries d'un promeneur solitaire* by opposing it to the "rational spirit", he could be classified as pre-Romantic.
9. Cf. Freud on the difference between hallucination and dream: "Die Verwandlung der Vorstellung in Halluzination ist nicht die einzige Abweichung des Traumes von einem etwa ihm entsprechenden Wachgedanken. Aus diesen Bildern gestaltet der Traum eine Situation, er stellt sich etwas gegenwärtig dar, er dramatisiert eine Idee [...]. Die Charakteristik dieser Seite des Traumlebens wird aber erst vollständig, wenn man hinzunimmt, daß man beim Träumen [...] nicht zu denken, sondern zu erleben vermeint, die Halluzination also mit vollem Glauben aufnimmt" (1945: 35).
10. As a matter of fact, psychoanalysis did not break with this model until the relatively recent works of Bion and Meltzer, whose compatibility with Nishida's ideas is amazing. U.R. Bion (1963) and Donald Meltzer (1984) develop a vision of dream as "creative action" in search of solutions for problems establishes dream as a form of thought, thus distancing it considerably from the Freudian model.
11. Mention should be made here also of Bergson himself, who, as so often, comes close, at least in a superficial way, to Nishida's ideal. Bergson characterizes the dreamer as a person who "reasons too much" ("*raisonne trop*") because his aim is to "establish a link between incoherent images" (1922b: 107). For Bergson, this "reasoning" of the dreamer is only a "parody of reason", but at the same time, concerning the coherence of the dream logic, it is clear that the result of this "par-

ody” is more perfect than any experience “lived” through by a “real” reason as happens in waking life (cf. 1901). Nishida was attracted to Bergson to the point of saying that his pure experience and Bergson’s *durée pure* were practically identical (Nishida 1913-17: 220. Engl.: 111). Kuki Shūzō later equated Bergson’s *durée* with the image of “flowing water” as used by Buddhism (Kuki 1981b). In *Gūzensei no mondai* (1981c) Kuki refers to a passage from Bergson’s *L’Énergie spirituelle* concerning dream, and “invents” a dream experience which is “pure”, by showing how this experience can be made “impure” through the intellectual “arrangement” of a reporter (1981c: 51). What fascinates Kuki in dream is a “sense of the present” which is not founded on the presence of a reasonable individual (who, in the example provided, obviously uses *Kittgedanken* in the Freudian sense). For Kuki, the particular character of a dream as it is dreamt (and not as it is narrated) is due to its contingency.

12. Looking for Western approaches which use an identical strategy concerning the experience of dream, one discovers that as well as the aforementioned methods of Bion and Meltzer, aestheticians of cinema are well aware of the problems we are analyzing here. The root of their reflections on a kind of “field of consciousness” resides in psychoanalysis. In psychoanalysis of the 50s, it was discovered that certain dreams take place on a white screen, a fact that inspired new methods of dream interpretations. B.D. Lewin resumes this discovery by speaking of a “special structure, the dream screen, [which] was distinguished from the rest of the dream and defined as the blank background upon which the dream picture appears to be projected” (Lewin 1950: 104). It is a medical phenomenon that is in question; certain dreams, as reported by the dreamers, are preceded by visions of a white screen. There are even what one can call “white dreams”, dreams which show nothing but a white screen during the whole duration of the dream. Cinema theory enthusiastically exploited this discovery because critics believed they had found something like a “place of dream”, a place in which cinematic “dreams” take place. By and by aesthetics of cinema became aware of the fact that the sophisticated dreamlike narrations presented by modern cinema can no longer be summed up as “subjective dreams”, i.e. as dreams dreamt by a certain subject (Cf. Kawin 1978: 3; and Eberwein 1984). Rather, it was stated that the dreams produced by modern cinematic narrations seem to tell themselves “all alone”, meaning they unfold within a certain place (which is a non-place) that could be identified as a “white screen” of what one could call “pure consciousness”. Through the efforts of a pointed cinematographic discourse, film was considered more and more as a “self-conscious work” (Kawin 1978: 51) which, inside itself, permitted no localization of a “who” as a dreamer. Bergman’s *Persona*, for example, was interpreted as a cinematic self-consciousness having its origin in nothing but itself (Kawin 1978: 114). In this way, film became “an expressive limited system whose dreaming mind [...] narrates itself” (Kawin 1978: 127). The parallels with Nishida’s *basho* are obvious: Feenberg and Arisaka compare the *basho* to a “movie screen” that must be blank, a visual nothingness relative to the luminous images cast upon it” (Arisaka & Feenberg 1990: 189). The dream film is thus a “pure seeing” which speaks a non-personalized language, and which appears like a “voice without voice”.

2. Iki, Style, Trace:

Kuki Shūzō and the Spirit of Hermeneutics

1. Heidegger and Kuki

The comparative discourse that will be developed in this study is meant not only to compare some Eastern and Western thinkers but also, and even more so, to develop rather autonomously an idea of style that will be of interest for both Eastern and Western philosophy. This idea is also not unrelated to certain issues discussed in so-called “postmodern” aesthetics in both the East and the West. My aim is to point out parallels between the Japanese philosopher Shūzō Kuki and the European philosophers Heidegger and Derrida with regard to their philosophical discourses on the idea of style and their respective elaborations of this notion as a playful quantity that needs to be seized by equally playful philosophical approaches. I will mainly consider some thoughts that have been brought forward by these philosophers themselves. Of course, in the cases of Heidegger and Kuki, it will be necessary to refer also to certain aspects of their backgrounds especially to the German hermeneutic tradition and to some ideas that have been produced by philosophers of the Kyoto School.

Given the relatively broad scope of this chapter, it should be pointed out at the beginning that I will try to avoid drawing links between different philosophical traditions by choosing a too generalizing perspective. Instead I will stick to concrete ideas that I see centered on a certain attitude toward the phenomena of style and play and show that the notion of style in the respective traditions can represent an important starting point for comparative analysis.

Shūzō Kuki’s idea of *iki* is such a point of departure; but one must resist the temptation use this notion as a tool to formulate concrete statements about existing cultural links. To design an intercultural discourse on *iki* is a difficult task – and this also because of the bulk of ideological ballast that clings to the subject. Luckily for comparative discourse, but perhaps unluckily for *iki* itself, *iki* has been chosen by Heidegger as a subject for his only exhaustive comment on an Eastern

philosophical idea. In his essay “Aus einem Gespräch von der Sprache” (Heidegger 1959), Heidegger involves Kuki together with *iki* and some general thoughts on Japanese culture in his own philosophical reflections by giving an account of what he presents as a conversation between himself and a Japanese scholar.

The conversation itself is problematic. We know that it really did take place, between Heidegger and a partner who can easily be identified as the Japanese Germanist Tomio Tezuka (who would later write his own resume of the conversation). However, the account of the meeting has been changed in an essential way by Heidegger. As some scholars have shown, the points that are made about *iki* seem to stem mainly from Heidegger’s own remembrances of earlier conversations with Kuki on the one hand and from readings of books on Japanese culture on the other. An ideological burden clings to the subject. Anybody who intends to deal with *iki* and starts via Heidegger’s essay, will automatically assume that, since an important philosopher like Heidegger has chosen *iki* as a unique subject of contemplation, there must be an important link between the Japanese *iki* and Heidegger’s philosophy. This is a precipitant conclusion (as it would be to assume that Heidegger’s analysis points to some essential insights about *iki* itself).

With regard to Kuki, we are confronted with a similar problem. Though no Western person would try to understand “hermeneutics” through Kuki (whereas Heidegger’s words on *iki* are more likely to be taken for granted), we run the risk of being overimpressed by Kuki’s decision to give in his book *Iki no Kōzō* such a privileged position to the hermeneutic approach (Kuki 1930a). It is known that Kuki had a very broad background in Western culture, and he could have chosen other Western philosophical currents for his exposition of *iki*.

The gap between what philosophers did and what they could have done often represents a more interesting subject of inquiry than what they actually did. Especially with regard to *iki* and hermeneutics, as long as we choose to deal with these as cross-cultural phenomena, we should concentrate more on the philosophers’ intentions with regard to them rather than try to produce (even through a historical consideration) statements about the phenomena themselves (or links between them).

In this sense, the fact that Heidegger wrote about Kuki and *iki* will be seen as an important event, but the impact of this event enters into the overall argumentation in a very indirect way. To lead the argumentation of this chapter in the right direction from the beginning, it will be useful

to note some basic discrepancies that arise with regard to Heidegger and Kuki and their common concern, namely *iki*. Reinhard May has shown how comparisons of the “Gespräch von der Sprache” with the “real” conversation make it obvious that Heidegger’s “conversation” with a Japanese needs to be seen as Heidegger’s personal invention”.¹ The first consequence of this is that even those statements that Heidegger attributes in his essay to the “Japanese” have no absolute authority in terms of scholarship about Japanese culture. Heidegger is not dealing with arguments about *iki* as they could have been provided by his “real” partner, Tomio Tezuka; on the contrary, in the real conversation the partner did not even talk about *iki*. Heidegger seems to derive his main ideas about *iki*, as May has noted, from Oscar Benl’s book *Seami Motokiyo und der Geist des Nô-Schauspiels* (1953). This text, however, is inappropriate for an elucidation of Kuki’s understanding of *iki* (cf. Heidegger 1959: 34).

Among the different reflections that have been offered by scholars in order to point to discrepancies between Heidegger’s idea of *iki* and *iki* as it really exists in Japanese culture, Kojin Karatani’s statement that Heidegger is “in total ignorance of what *iki* is” (Karatani 1983: 621) represents the most radical one. Michiko Yoneda finds that Heidegger’s definition of *iki* as “das Wehen der Stille des leuchtenden Entzückens” does not at all correspond to the term itself (Yoneda 1984: 93-94). Still, Karatani sees the necessity of discussing *iki*’s character of distanced play, which fascinated Kuki, and its resemblance to a Heideggerian “playing with the Abgrund” (Karatani 1983: 622), and Yoneda continues her discussion by speculating whether Heidegger’s “definition” of *iki* does not correspond more with Basho’s notion of *fûga* (Yoneda 1984: 93-94).

It seems that in this discussion even misunderstandings assume a sophisticated character. Heidegger, albeit without having been fully aware of the inappropriateness of the texts on the Nô play, must also have recognized the danger inherent in a strategy that takes elements of his own philosophy and reflects them against Eastern ideas that have themselves been understood only within the context provided by none other than his own philosophy.²

A further point needs to be mentioned. An immense discrepancy between Heidegger and Kuki is constituted not only by different intellectual presuppositions with regard to the very subject but also by the incompatibility of the personalities of the two men, formed by cultural environments that were so different. Different evaluations of certain

aspects of human civilization, in particular those aspects that determine different approaches to the phenomenon of style as a part of human civilization, are, as has been noted by some scholars, important for the comparative discourse in question here. It is certain that Heidegger's provincial mentality did not provide him with the most desirable intuitive equipment for the project of seizing *iki* in the way that the Tokyo-born Kuki, who was, so to speak, leavened with *iki*, understood and felt it. Ohashi alludes to Kuki's slightly condescending amusement when hearing of Heidegger's "astonishment" upon his first contact with urban life as a young man in Berlin (Ohashi 1989a: 99).

However, one should not go as far as Steven Heine and draw conclusions from general points that cannot be justified with regard to certain individual examinations. Heine states that the "basic ambiance" of *iki* "is a far cry from Heidegger the Schwarzwälder whose later writings increasingly reflect a fascination with naturalism and a disinterest in human relations as an access to truth (Heine 1991: 170). I would not say that Heine's judgment of Heidegger is wrong but rather that he neglects a more profound aspect of all manifestations of "style" of which *iki* is but one. The essential point is that "*iki* or the man of *iki*", just like "style for the dandy", is as natural as nature. *Iki* strives, as Michiko Yoneda also says, "naturgemäß zu sein". In other words, at a certain point in the discussion of this matter, the distinction between "naturalism" and "civilization" becomes irrelevant³ and through this fact (which is so important in Japanese culture) one can again get hold of a point of contact between Kuki and Heidegger.

Peter Dale has called Kuki's work "one of disguised transposition, of discovering a Japanese counterpart to the occidental coxcomb" (Dale 1986: 72), claiming that it derives elements directly from Barbey d'Aurevilly. Dandyist aestheticism is founded on a sophisticated idea of style, and this has been the subject of a number of philosophical examinations (cf. Botz-Bornstein 1995). In this context, we can make an observation parallel to the one we have made about the particular relationship between "naturalism" and "civilizational stylistics". When Stephen Light writes that Kuki's *iki* is not a question of "other-worldliness" or of an "extreme aestheticism of, for instance, Huysman's *Des Esseintes*" (Light 1987: 11) this shows that the more "moderate aestheticism" of Kuki (and of "real" Dandyism, which is different from Huysman's) could be characterized, from the point of view of aestheticism, as no aestheticism at all. It does not represent an aestheticism that could be defined from a non-aesthetic or, let us say,

moral point of view as aesthetical. The reason for this is that in Kuki and in dandyism, morality and aesthetics have fused, leaving no possibility of distinguishing one from the other.

Huysman, as a decadent dandy announcing the decline of his own genre, loses sight of society by turning dandyism into a purely aestheticist movement. This is opposed to original dandyism (as “indifferent” as it might appear to outsiders) as well as to Kuki. Kuki would have been against the aestheticism manifested by Huysman if he was not against aesthetics as a whole. Ohashi’s remark that Heidegger’s interpretation of Kuki’s philosophy as an attempt to seize *iki* with the help of European aesthetics would not have been answered affirmatively by Kuki (Ohashi 1989a: 95). Kuki’s method was European but not aesthetical, at least so long as we define aesthetics as a philosophical discipline that makes sense only as a counterweight to other philosophical disciplines, for example, ethics.

The phenomenon of *iki* needs to be seen exactly within this constellation of philosophical forces. As Kuki himself writes, the ideal of the geisha is “at once moral and aesthetic [...] [and that which] is called ‘*iki*’, is a harmonious union of voluptuousness and nobility (Kuki 1930b: 242). Closely linked to this, then, can be seen another problem concerning *iki*’s relationship with dandyism, one that has been raised by Hosoi and Pigeot in their review of *Iki no Kōzō*. They claim that, because of different historical origins, dandyism would ultimately not be *iki* at all. Quoting from Baudelaire, they state that “le dandy n’est pas ‘*iki*’ dans la mesure où il est ‘riche, oisif, élevé dans le luxe’, où il ‘n’a pas d’autre occupation que de courir à la quête du bonheur’” (Pigeot and Hosoi 1973: 50). However, the authors neglect Baudelaire’s statement about the dandy’s wealthy origin: that it is almost as ironic as his characterization of the dandy’s life as a battle for “happiness”. The reality shows rather that the dandy (exactly like the military and bourgeois classes of Edo) is coming from a non-privileged background striving to obtain not worldly happiness but social recognition. The fact that his strategy avoids so consistently the display of the stubborn ambition that represents the main feature of his enemy, the careerist, gives us no right to place the dandy in the airless domain of either serene stoicism or of aestheticism.

Also, and closely linked to this, one then needs to mention the arguments of those who interpret Kuki’s ambition to design an anthropology of *iki* as a project that has a political dimension. These arguments will purposely not be contested here. However, I hope that Kuki’s

ambitions can be better understood when placed in the very context that I am trying to draw. When Leslie Pincus claims that “the exceptionality of spirit that Kuki claimed in *Iki no kôzô* would soon become a pretext for Japan’s domination of Asia and the spilling of Asian blood” (Pincus 1989), it is difficult to contradict her. However, the fact that there was not a “careerist” but a dandy who was pleading for and believing in a “stylistic superiority” also represents an immensely valuable fact for contemporary philosophy, and this especially at a time when we observe the acts of a cultural colonization of the whole world by exactly those Western elements that Kuki had already found so disquieting. It would be a pity if Kuki’s hint would be submerged in arguments redescribing the philosophical value of *iki* through nothing but political-ideological rules.

It is in this context that I also wish to make a contribution to the development of an “anatomy of style”, a contribution that can, in turn, be helpful for an understanding of Kuki. Lastly, to represent both Kuki and Derrida as urbanizers of Heideggerian thought might provide a supplementary opening to the subject, but, while this representation is perhaps fundamental, it is not in any way intended to be seen as final.

2. Hermeneutics, Style, and the Overcoming of Platonism

We will take as a starting point the most essential passage in the unique record of an encounter with Asian thought by one of the principal Western philosophers of this century. By means of the already mentioned statement that *iki* represents an aesthetic notion that characterizes a “sensible appearance through whose lively delight shines the suprasensible⁴ Heidegger refers to the relationship, very important for Western aesthetics, between the sensible (Greek *aisteton*) and the non-sensible (Greek *noeton*). He then points to the possibility of understanding *iki* by means of Western metaphysics; also, for the Japanese there seems to be no *iro* (color) without *ku* (emptiness). However, a phenomenon like *iki* cannot, as Heidegger concludes rather quickly, be explained by means of our language: Western philosophical language is founded on the metaphysical distinction between the “sensible” and the “non-sensible”, and this is a distinction that does not exist in the same way in Japanese. For Heidegger, *iki* is a quality that transcends metaphysics and that can only be perceived by means of a non-metaphysical philosophy of understanding.

These are the basic conditions established by Heidegger at the beginning of the dialogue. Still, before making any statement about *iki*

itself, he points to Kuki's ambition to elucidate the terms "hermeneutics" and the "hermeneutical". Kuki came across these terms when reading the notes of a lecture Heidegger gave in 1934, titled "Logik". In this lecture, so Heidegger declares, he was looking for a means to describe the "essence (*Wesen*) of language". Heidegger admits that, at that time, he was unable to find a suitable word that could characterize the *Wesen* of language; but even "today" (at the time he wrote this essay), so he says, the right word is still missing (Heidegger 1959: 93).

The context into which all the following arguments are put is thus established by very vague allusions, first to the importance of a philosophical preoccupation with the "hermeneutical" and second to the impossibility of defining the "essence of language". Heidegger posits, then, that Kuki himself, through his preoccupation with the "hermeneutical", has seen *iki* in a "clearer light".⁵ When Heidegger suggests that *iki* is the quality "through which [Japanese] art and poetry receive their essence", this means that *iki* is the interpretative hermeneutic quality that can be revealed through the particular kind of interpretation designed by hermeneutics.

Like Heidegger, Kuki also abstains from a clear definition of *iki* to the extent that it is for him something indefinable in terms of abstract concepts. For Kuki, *iki* is "experiential"; this means that it asks, as Kuki writes in *Iki no Kōzō*, for a "specific 'being comprehension' (特殊な '存在会得') (Kuki 1930a: 13).⁶ He insists that we "must not just handle '*iki*' as a specific concept and seek for the 'essential insight' which looks towards the abstract universal of the generic concept that comprehends it" (ibid.). Instead of concentrating on the "formal", we should concentrate on the "concrete and individual".

It might come as a surprise that Kuki, in spite of the popularity of the term *iki*, refuses to "define" it generally. Instead he refers not only to the necessity of a concrete approach but also, like Heidegger, to the necessity of a hermeneutical understanding of *iki*. The examination of *iki* should not be "eidetical" (形相), he claims, but "hermeneutical" (解釈的). *Iki* cannot be defined grammatically or scientifically but is an individual notion that does not exist as an "essence" in a metaphysical sense. However, when Kuki says that "hermeneutics" is the alternative to metaphysical contemplation looking for "essence", one is inclined to ask what Kuki really understands by "hermeneutics" and in what way his understanding of the term corresponds with Heidegger's understanding of it.

As can be noted from *Iki no kōzō*, “hermeneutics” to Kuki appears as an appropriate approach for an “anthropology of the concrete”. It is interesting that he explains this by means of a model that is also dear to Heidegger: the overturning of Platonism. Kuki writes: “But what we should perceive is not the abstract generality of the generic concept such as so-called Platonic Realism emphasizes [...]. We must, on this point, dare a reverse transformation of Plato’s epistemology” (81).⁷

There are two possible ways of relating this statement to Heidegger: either Kuki is controversial to Heidegger or he is only less radical. There is a big difference between these two possibilities. It is well known that Heidegger, too, wanted to overcome Platonism but that he did not plan to do so by means of its “overturning”. Heidegger planned to overcome Platonism by means of what he called a “twisting out” (*Herausdrehen*) of philosophy from a movement that he saw as an endless chain of overturnings of Platonism. In his first volume on Nietzsche he writes:

What happens when the true world is expunged? Does the apparent world still remain? No. For the apparent world can be what it is only as a counterpart of the true: if the true world collapses, so must the world of appearances. Only then is Platonism overcome, which is to say, inverted in such a way that philosophical thinking twists free of it (Heidegger 1961: 233).⁸

Platonic realism produces a purely general view of the world that deals only with “essences” and abstractions. Heidegger wants to abolish this Platonism but not in order to go for the other extreme, which would be represented by a scientific anthropology that is restricted to the analysis of the concrete and individual.

If we want to see a link between Heidegger and Kuki, it might be useful to evoke the thoughts of another Japanese philosopher, Keiji Nishitani, whose philosophy, as representative of the Kyoto School, is at least indirectly related to Kuki’s. Kuki’s suggestion that we should found an anthropology of the concrete on an “overturned Platonism” reminds us of a reflection that has been brought forward by Nishitani. In fact, Nishitani does not advance an anthropology of the concrete; rather, in an interesting way, he tries to introduce Buddhist thought as exactly that alternative which could fill the gap that arises after the negation of both metaphysics (thus Platonism) and its own “anti-” (Nishitani speaks here of Kantianism instead of Platonism). In *Religion and Nothingness*, he writes: “A substance accessible to reason, such as that found in the old metaphysics, might be thought to signify the objective ‘being’ of

things as they are in themselves [...]”, and he concludes: “The revolution of thought that Kant occasioned, turning the standpoint of the old metaphysics on its head, is, at a more fundamental level, still grounded on the same presupposition. It is, properly speaking, the inverse of the old metaphysics” (Nishitani 1982: 133 and 135).

Nishitani tries to combat the metaphysical splitting of subject and object by revealing the circular interrelatedness of the two notions: “If the idea of substance, as something tied to objective existence, constitutionally presupposes the subject as its counterpart, in the same way the idea of subject presupposes an object as its counterpart” (112).

Nishitani, as a representative of the Kyoto-School, twists philosophy out of its metaphysical framework by pointing to a purely Buddhist alternative. It is very likely that Kuki’s intention of inverting Platonism by substituting it for the Buddhist conception of *iki* shows parallels with Nishitani’s idea of overcoming metaphysics. In this way, we can say also that Kuki’s idea might point to an interesting alternative to a Western-style positivist, anti-metaphysical anthropology of the concrete.

The result of Heidegger’s *Herausdrehen* of philosophy out of two extremes is supposed to be a philosophical hermeneutics. The main characteristic of this hermeneutics is that it adheres neither to a generalist (Platonic) nor to an individualist (empirical) view, but that it arrives at a simultaneous manipulation of the “individual” and the “general”.

Throughout all of Heidegger’s works, this “hermeneutics” is directly related to the hermeneutic circle. The hermeneutic circle, first introduced in *Sein und Zeit*, is mainly understood as a methodological means that constantly holds back any final decision in favor of either a generalist or an individualist method. “Hermeneutics” in Heidegger, and also, as we shall see, in a tradition that had started long before Heidegger, tries to settle on the middle ground within the tension between the individual and the general.

We need to reflect Kuki against this background. Kuki asks to reverse Platonism in order to develop a way of seeing the individual in the form of an “ethnic specificity” (Kuki 1930a: 95). At first sight, the fact that Kuki calls his new approach a “hermeneutics of ethnic being” (民族的存在の解釈学) (78)⁸ suggests that Kuki deeply misunderstood Heidegger’s hermeneutics. However, even an expression like “ethnic being”, which evokes perhaps many undesirable undertones, could

appear in at least a slightly new light. Ohashi points to the heart of the question when he writes:

The European system of concepts that Kuki was after was more the classical metaphysical one, which becomes also obvious through the fact that he applied the conceptual couple “essential-existential” to the phenomenon of ‘*iki*’ and that he then decided to give priority to the question of the existentials of ‘*iki*’. In this way Kuki wanted to invert the Platonic theory of knowledge.⁹

It will be the task of the following analysis to see whether Kuki’s view of a “hermeneutics of popular being” really represents a descriptive anthropology that concentrates only on the individual “existential or whether it does not in some way correspond to what Heidegger understands to be a hermeneutical approach that has been “twisted out” of the endless chains of reversals of generalist Platonism and individualist, empirical contemplation of the world.

It needs to be said that if the first is true, then Kuki understood Heidegger in the wrong way. Somehow Kuki interpreted Heidegger’s thoughts as an “Anthropologie” and in this fact one can perhaps see Kuki’s fundamental misunderstanding of Heidegger. Kuki, with his overturning of Platonism claimed to produce, as he writes, a shift from the *essentia* to the *existentia*, and this certainly contradicts Heidegger’s intentions. The important point is that already for Heidegger the distinction between *essentia* and *existentia* should be abolished as representative of the metaphysical heritage of Platonism.

However, it is still uncertain whether Kuki really understood this *existentia* in the same way that Heidegger understood it. In other words, it is questionable whether Kuki joins his anthropology of *iki* with a position that Heidegger would have characterized as a Platonism that has been overturned.

Several passages in *Iki no Kôzô* cause us to doubt whether Heidegger’s and Kuki’s conceptions of *existentia* really overlap. Kuki insists that the *iki* that will be seized after having overturned Platonism is no “reality” and no “presence” that would be opposed to “concepts”. On the contrary, he makes clear that ‘*iki*’ ignores all the facile suppositions of reality and brackets all real life. Whilst detachedly breathing neutral air, ‘*iki*’ purposelessly and disinterestedly makes self-disciplined play” (12, my italics). In this sense *iki* is an aesthetic notion. It is no “presence” or “reality” in the sense of a metaphysical existentials but is more – as Kuki also says, a “shade” or a “suggestion”. This means that

iki is no really lived experience but only “the negative after-image which accompanies brilliant experience” (華やかな 体験に伴う消極的残像) (36). Kuki makes clear that wherever the aesthetic notion of *iki* appears in art, its “disinterested play” is no incarnation or representation of “something” but is a suggestion of utmost aesthetic subtlety. It can consist, as Kuki says, “simply in a hand gesture” (48).

Kuki’s emphasis on the aesthetic character of *iki* lets us recognize that Kuki’s “anthropology of the concrete” and his “hermeneutics of ethnic being” are as remote as possible from the contemporary heirs of metaphysics. They have no link with either structuralist anthropological methods or positivist ethnology but more with a kind of aesthetic concept of “non-essence” (which has been developed by such post-Heideggerian philosophers as Blanchot and Derrida). *Iki* is an “ethnic” notion but only in the sense of “an ethnically determined taste [that] thus must be appreciated by a ‘sens intime’ in the profoundest sense of the word” (48). We might thus say that the “existence” of *iki* as an aesthetic, “disinterested play” is opposed to both a metaphysics of *essentia* and a metaphysical comprehension of *existentia*.

Apart from this, for Heidegger, too, the consideration of the *existentia* (as Ohashi also states) can lead to an understanding of Being. Thus, one can argue that Kuki’s “existentialist” approach is also in some way inspired by the search for Being in exactly the non-metaphysical way that Heidegger understands it.

In other words, Kuki’s approach is not restricted to the analysis of either the individual or the concrete aspect of *iki* but tries to seize *iki*, as he says, “interpretative[ly]” (解釈的) (78). This “interpretative” procedure is opposed to all kinds of formalism – to metaphysical Platonism as well as to the scientific method – and this was, finally, the reason why Kuki was so attracted to Heidegger’s term “hermeneutics”.

This thought will become clearer when we make plain the character of hermeneutics as a discipline that dwells within the tension between generalist and individualist approaches. First, however, in order to underline the parallelism between Kuki’s and Heidegger’s understanding of hermeneutics, we will, as was announced at the beginning, shed some light on the affinity of *iki* with another Western concept that is related to hermeneutics: style.

We have said that *iki* is a kind of “style”, and this points us to a notion from aesthetic theory, the notion of “stylization”. Ohashi has shown very well in his essay “‘Iki’ und ‘Kire’ als Frage der Kunst im Zeitalter der Moderne” how striking the parallels can be between *iki* and

the Western act of stylization (Ohashi 1992a). We will come to this essay later. In the meantime we will examine the way in which the proximity of *iki* and style can explain both Heidegger's and Kuki's interest in hermeneutics.

Heidegger, in "Aus einem Gespräch über die Sprache", quotes from Schleiermacher's *Hermeneutik und Kritik*. This book represents the foundation of modern hermeneutics as a theory of interpretation. Heidegger's reference to Schleiermacher is interesting because Schleiermacher also saw the notion of style as a central concept of hermeneutic theory. Schleiermacher, in another of his fundamental works, the posthumously edited *Hermeneutik*, analyzes the phenomenon of style and ultimately declares that it should represent the first aim of hermeneutic understanding: "The entire aim of hermeneutics should be seen as the understanding of style" (Schleiermacher 1959: 108).

We notice here a parallel whose detection should certainly not lead us to simplifications but which should stimulate our reflection and direct it toward a particular focus. In some way, as *iki* is for Kuki so for Schleiermacher "style" constitutes the essential quality that should be revealed by hermeneutic understanding; and as for Kuki, so also for Schleiermacher this quality resists definition through abstract notions or concepts. Schleiermacher writes: "Grammatically one cannot subsume an individuality in a concept, but one needs contemplation. Also technically. One cannot produce a concept of a certain style" (Schleiermacher 1959: 115). For the understanding of style a general (grammatical) method is useless; we need an approach that can seize individuality. However, in Schleiermacher too, this individuality is not the scientific, empirical one.

3. *Iki* and the Overcoming of Everyday Rules

Before continuing this examination of the Western rapprochement of *iki* and "style" we need to see that *iki* is founded on some fundamental principles of Buddhist culture. Kuki writes that "'*iki*' has its origin in the 'World of Suffering'. [...] Now, 'resignation', that is the disinterestedness in '*iki*', is an urbane and well formed heart which has gone through the polishing of the hard and heartless floating world" (20). *Iki* is produced through a "resignation to fate and the gaiety based on 'resignation'" (ibid.). This means that *iki* as a kind of "style" asks for the negation of an "everyday world". Kuki calls this world the "conventional" world.¹⁰

In more simple terms we could say that if we resign from the “conventional”, we discover “style”. The decisive point, however, is that through the negation of the “conventional”, *iki* will not be “discovered” as an “essence” that already existed “out there”, outside everyday life. On the contrary, the act of resignation from everyday life reveals a kind of *iki* that always existed within everyday life (and even within ourselves) but that was covered by the conventional. In this sense, Kuki writes: “If we are able to combine the abstract conceptual moments of transformation obtained through analysis, and to constitute the being of ‘*iki*’, that is because we already carry *iki* with us as experiential meaning” (73). And earlier on he says: “you will be chic when the conventional has been rubbed away” (20).

Ohashi’s contribution to the Western understanding of Kuki’s *iki* consists of explaining it exactly as this act of “cutting off” of everyday life. For the person who wants to experience *iki*, the negation of everyday life is not undertaken in order to enter into a sphere of total retreat from the everyday sphere. On the contrary, the “cut” is made in order to “re-enter” life after having obtained *iki*. In his essay “‘Iki’ und ‘Kire’” Ohashi explains the importance of the act of “cutting” (切れ, *kire*) for the experience of *iki* and of style in general: “The everydayness is ‘cut’, but just through this cut is produced a new everyday life in which one is aware of the mortality of everyday life. The renunciation of Buddhism is a decisive ‘kire’”.¹¹

Only through a paradoxical, simultaneous negation and affirmation of the “conventional” can Kuki’s concept of *iki* be understood as a “fusion of coquetry with resignation” (12). It is the “essence” of coquetry and refinement that is no “essence” that would be found in a metasphere outside everyday life, but it is an “existence” that can only exist within everyday life. In this sense, *iki* may be seen, as Kuki writes, “as an intermediate term between refined and unrefined” (p. 16).

The “ground” of *iki* is no essential quality outside *iki* but is *iki* itself as becomes clear when Kuki writes: “To prefer ‘*iki*’, and to choose the conventional, is a difference of taste. Absolute value judgements are not objectively provided for” (31). However, even if we call “taste” the “ground” of *iki*, it is only a taste that is produced within everyday life: “We literally ‘learn taste’. Further, we make a value judgement with learned taste as its basis” (72).

To quit everyday life not in order to enter Nirvana but in order to live everyday life in another way is one of the principles of Zen Buddhism and in this we also recognize Kuki’s main suggestions

concerning *iki*. *Iki* is kindred to the notion of style, at least in the sense that it seems to be a matter of a “taste” that is dependent on both the aesthetical and the social.

It also becomes important here that Japanese Zen Buddhism makes a considerable effort to distinguish itself from an attitude that would be constituted only by a Nirvana-like silence that would become false and “unreal”. The negation of everyday life is not merely its overturning into exclusion from everyday life.

Shinichi Hisamatsu has insisted on the particular constellation between everyday life and its own negation. In *Zen and the Fine Arts* he explains that the detachment from everyday life and, as a consequence, from all rules provided by everyday life, should not simply create new rules of nonattachment. This means that if we negate the “conventional” only to enter into Nirvana, this Nirvana will wear the rules of the “nonconventional”. In this case the concept of the “conventional” has been overturned. Zen Buddhism and, in particular Zen art have found means to negate the rules of the conventional without producing new rules of the nonconventional. Hisamatsu explains the “Rule of No Rule” character of Zen Buddhism:

Non-attachment means not adhering to regulations; not only not adhering to established rules, but also not to future ones. In Japan we speak in a good sense of a person who is beyond conventional regulations as one whom no single coil of rope can bind. Such a person has something transcending rules. This quality is related to asymmetry, for leaving rules as well as perfection to crumble and collapse is part of non-attachment (Hisamatsu 1971: 35).

Hisamatsu’s “Rule of No Rule” represents an absolute freedom from “rules” as far as all rules are conventional (including the rules of the nonconventional) and need to be negated. Accordingly, Hisamatsu writes: “The Zen freedom being described does not mean being free rationally and volitionally according to the rules, but is freedom in the sense of not being under any rules (Hisamatsu 1971: 36).

There is a link between the *Rule of No Rule* and *iki* as a “fusion of coquetry and resignation” that simultaneously negates and affirms everyday life and has its ground in nothing but itself. To obtain *iki*, it is not enough to overturn the rules of everyday life: *iki* is, rather, “formless”.

This, then, is also one reason why Kuki refuses to define *iki* conceptually (by naming its most abstract, constitutive rules). The “ground” of *iki*, like that of the formless Self, does not lie in anything positive, or in rules, or in methods; the “ground” has simply been substituted by a circular movement. We can compare this with a statement by Hisamatsu: “In Zen [...] the true authority is that Self which is itself the authority and does not rely on anything. Zen’s authority consists in the non-duality of ‘that which relies’ and ‘that which is relied upon’ [...]. This true-relying is ‘not-relying’ (Hisamatsu 1965: 27).

It is now important that Kuki also, when referring to “painting and sculpture”, is convinced that it “can express intact as content the natural form of ‘*iki*’s expression” (Kuki 1930a: 32). *Iki*, as it becomes manifest in art, is produced by a negation of (conventional) forms, a negation that does not create new non-forms.

4. *Einfühlung*

Looking at the publications that have been produced on Heidegger and his Asian affinities, I notice that one topic has widely been excluded from consideration: *Einfühlung* (empathy). Only Ohashi, in his essay “‘Iki’ und ‘Kire’” talks about *iki* by thinking about its possible link with *Einfühlung*. This idea could lead us to profounder insights into the pronounced relationship between *iki* and hermeneutics.

Kuki writes that even when not having been awakened to *iki*, “we already carry ‘*iki*’ with us as experiential meaning”, a formulation that corresponds to Hisamatsu’s statement that “‘coming to awake’ [...] means that the one who is originally awakened but at present unawakened comes to awake, and that is the True Self” (Hisamatsu 1975:50). There is a circularity in these thoughts about the awakening and those about the “discovering” of *iki*, since *iki*, which needs to be discovered, also needs to be known beforehand.

It is almost impossible not to be reminded here of what appears as a Western equivalent for this conceptual model, namely the circularity known as the “hermeneutic circle”. As is generally known, the German tradition of hermeneutics understood this circularity as a relational element between the general and the individual: being unable to understand the individual without considering at the same time the general, we as well cannot perceive the general without perceiving the individual elements by which it is constituted.

In the German hermeneutic tradition there have been different ways of dealing with this circularity. Though Friedrich Schleiermacher

generally recognized the importance of the hermeneutic circle, there are several statements in his works that point to ways of surmounting it by establishing a fundamental standard code (Kanon) of the subject that is supposed to be understood hermeneutically. In *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, for example, Schleiermacher writes: “In order to understand the first, one needs to have seized the whole already. Not, of course, in the way that it would be equal to the entirety, but only as a skeleton, as a ground plan”.¹² Though it is not obvious at first, it is arguable that in this as in many other passages, Schleiermacher annuls or at least “softens” the circle by referring to a technical method that would be capable of seizing (*nachbilden*) the creative process of the author himself, who first saw the whole and then went on to an exploration of the details. Schleiermacher writes: “With regard to every larger complex, he also saw first the whole and proceeded from there to the particular”.¹³

Finally, the intention to locate in the first place a “ground plan” (*Grundriß*) or “skeleton” points in the direction of a more structuralist spirit that would always give preference to general considerations. It is true that this remains only one aspect of Schleiermacher’s treatment of the circle. In general, Schleiermacher, like his predecessor Friedrich Ast, holds a view on the hermeneutic circle that is positive, announcing, like this, an attitude that Heidegger would later adopt as an essential argument for a philosophical hermeneutics: the idea that all theoretical solutions (*Lösungen*) for the circle ask for a “going through” it in order to derive a positive output from it.¹⁴

It is interesting at this point to observe in the context of our study that already with Schleiermacher (and still more clearly after him) a new idea for a “solution” of the problem of the hermeneutic circle is put forward: the concept of *Einfühlung*. Schleiermacher’s pupil August Boeckh is very doubtful about a final “solution” (in the sense of an *Auflösung*) of the hermeneutic circle but refuses at the same time to leave it aside as a phenomenon with which a theory of interpretation should not be concerned.

In his *Encyclopädie und Methodentlehre der philologischen Wissenschaften*, Boeckh examines the meaning of the hermeneutic circle with regard to the coordination of grammatical (general) and subjective (individual) interpretation. Though he is obviously rework-ing here one of the older “discoveries” of Schleiermacher, his argument turns in a slightly different direction: “We call grammatical linguistic explanation which is based on an objective, general, point of

view, whereas the one which is based on a subjective point of view will be called the individual interpretation.¹⁵ He then quickly refers to the methodological problems that spring from the shift from the individual to the general: “In that way the different kinds of interpretation presuppose real knowledge; however, they can only be obtained by means of an interpretation of the entire source material”.¹⁶

At first sight a solution to the circle seems to be close: “The grammatical interpretation will produce the sense of the word by seeing it in the context of different individual and real conditions. In this way one obtains a foundation for all the remaining kinds of interpretation”.¹⁷ Here it still seems as if a “ground” for a theory of interpretation has been established by means of grammar. However, what happens if a grammatical phenomenon is general but at the same time individual? Stylistic phenomena, for example, are constituted by such a condition. The style of a work of art is an expression of the general stylistic tendency of an époque and at the same time an expression of an individual, creative mind. Boeckh admits that the circle cannot always be avoided. The reason for this is that, in some cases, “the same object represents the only foundation for the grammatical and, at the same time, the individual [...] interpretation; in this case the task cannot be solved”.¹⁸

There is no solution to the hermeneutic circle, but there is a particular way to use the circle as a “positive possibility of understanding”. Boeckh uses a word that recalls the Romantic *Einfühlung* (which has also been used by Dilthey): a *Gefühl* (feeling). By this Boeckh means “a feeling with the aid of which we can recognize, at once, what the other had recognized beforehand”.¹⁹ With the “feeling”, so Boeckh declares, “imagination obtains, within hermeneutic activity, the position of reason”.²⁰ No theory and no pure technique of interpretation can produce understanding: “Nobody will become a good interpreter and critic only through theory, in the same way as nobody will become a good philosophical thinker only through his knowledge of logic”.²¹

Boeckh is certainly not the first person who has introduced “style” into hermeneutic activity; Schleiermacher did this previously by claiming, for example, that “das ganze Ziel [der Hermeneutik] ist zu bezeichnen als vollkommenes Verstehen des Stils” (Schleiermacher 1977: 168). However, it is remarkable that Boeckh establishes a surprising link between the hermeneutic conception of style and the principle of *Einfühlung*.

With regard to Ohashi's reflections on *Einfühlung*, we now have a reason to come back to the subject of *iki*. Ohashi has described how close *iki*, especially in connection with *kire*, can come to an act of *Einfühlung* that, in turn, has to do with the notion of style. Ohashi does this by pointing to the concept of "Stilisierung" as it has been developed by the foremost theoretician of *Einfühlung*, Theodor Lipps. Ohashi writes: "Within an act of complete empathy the separateness of the one who sees and that which is seen disappears. At this point the stylization that Lipps has in mind becomes possible".²² In this sense, for Ohashi the Lippsian *Stilisierung* becomes a Western sister of *iki*, and with this he certainly provides an interesting insight, an insight that I intended to underline by means of the preceding considerations of *Einfühlung* and hermeneutics.

A point that needs to be added (and which does rather support Ohashi's further elucidations on the subject) is that the Lippsian *Einfühlung* is different from the hermeneutic one; it is even so different that Lipps' philosophy led directly to positivist ideologies. (On the other hand, just this fact makes the whole subject even more interesting, especially with regard to the hesitant fascination that Kuki manifested toward the "liaison between philosophy and positive science" that he admired so much in French philosophy.) For a Lippsian philosophy of *Einfühlung*, human understanding also comes about as Ohashi says, through a direct contact between "Sehendem" and "Gesehenem" and this unity is not obtained through a process of "fusion" as it would be in hermeneutics. On the contrary, it is obtained by means of what Lipps calls a "monarchic subordination" (*Unterordnung*). For Lipps, the image of "Verschmelzung" represents from the very beginning a wrong idea, because within this image, "kann das Verschmolzene innerhalb des Verschmelzungsproduktes gleichwertig nebeneinander stehen" (Lipps: 1902: 372). Lipps, however, wants the contrary: he wants to establish, through a "subordination" of the subject under the object, an immediate empathetic contact between those two; and this is finally done by abstracting from the object.

For Lipps, this means that the "ästhetische Apperzeption" is always the "abstrahierende" (Lipps 1902: 394), a perception that abstracts from all individual elements characterizing our object of understanding. It is obvious that the abstract and scientific character of this intellectual model is greatly removed from all aesthetic ideas of style as a "living notion" in a hermeneutic sense and also in the sense that Kuki would have preferred with regard to *iki*. Lipps' *Einfühlung* as

well as his concept of *Stilisierung* live, unlike Kuki's *iki*, exclusively in the domain of abstraction. This is certainly also the reason why Ohashi concludes that in Lipps, "stylization" happens "on the level of the respective, that is occasional 'feeling' of the contemplator", whereas for a production of *iki* it should happen "on the level of active life" (Ohashi 1992a: 109).

My last claim can be made even stronger by pointing to the fact that Lipps' philosophy of *Einfühlung* led not only to positivism but also to an aesthetic ideological orientation that was, by principle, unacceptable to Kuki: impressionism.²³ In one of the lectures on Japanese art that he gave in Pontigny, Kuki stressed the view that "the word impressionism has too often been thoughtlessly employed". The reason for this is that "man is not a mechanism passively receiving impressions". This means that we should not perceive simply "impressions" but, in Kuki's words, a "fleeting, 'momentary impression', [which] is very often the expression of an eternal and mystic coming from the depth of the soul" (Kuki 1930d: 269) It goes without saying that nothing can be more remote from a positivist conception of *Einfühlung* than an aesthetics that has decided to capture these 'momentary impressions'".

With hermeneutics, on the other hand, we get much further. Through Schleiermacher we have seen to what extent the concept of style represents a central notion for hermeneutics. Schleiermacher's pupil Boeckh makes it quite clear that *Einfühlung* is for hermeneutics an equally basic notion in the sense that it brings about a kind of hermeneutic understanding that flows out of the tension between the general and the individual, and within this tension resides also the notion of style. Finally, through *Einfühlung*, the tension between the general and the individual is not annulled, nor is any decision made in favor of either the individual or the general. Through *Einfühlung*, the hermeneutic circle as a whole is transformed into a positive possibility of understanding, and as its subject of understanding it discovers "style".

5. Heidegger's View of Everyday Life

The preceding considerations on the different aspects of *Einfühlung* can also help us to understand the complex if not paradoxical constellation of German and French elements that Kuki was obviously designing through his Westernizing methodologization of the term *iki*.

In the end it nevertheless becomes clear why Kuki put forward *iki* as a phenomenon that should be treated “hermeneutically”.

This claim can be made still stronger by looking at the treatment of the hermeneutic circle that Heidegger himself suggested. It is known that no other philosopher has reflected more upon the hermeneutic circle as a “positive possibility of understanding” than Heidegger, who introduced these thoughts for the first time in section 32 of *Sein und Zeit*:

But if interpretation must in any case already operate in that which is understood, and if it must draw its nurture from this, how is it to bring any scientific results to maturity without moving in a circle, especially if, moreover, the understanding which is presupposed still operates within our common information about man and the world?²⁴

Heidegger is also convinced that our knowledge of the world always roams in the sphere of everyday life (“gemeine Menschen und Weltkenntnis”) and that only if we understand “knowledge” as a “scientific result” will we claim that it can and should come about only through a total negation of everyday life. In other words, knowledge can become “positive” (in a scientific sense) only through a negation of its everyday environment. Heidegger now asks us to see in the circular movement that constantly refers us back to everyday life a positive possibility of understanding. This does not mean that he would affirm uncritically any condition of everyday life as a “positive” ground of knowledge. On the contrary, Heidegger does not affirm any ground of understanding: he only affirms the circle, which constantly refers us back to everyday life.

Heidegger’s affirmation of the circle does not signify a resignation in the sense of an intellectual fatalism, which would be a belief that knowledge as such is impossible. For Heidegger, we are not eternally condemned to stay in the sphere of “common knowledge of man and the world”. It is the scientist who sees the circle as a *vitiosum* that needs to be avoided; he negates common, everyday life. Also, the person who simply “tolerates” (duldet) the circle has resigned from any possibility of positive understanding and develops an equally indifferent attitude toward everyday life. Heidegger asks for a third approach: an active affirmation of the circle that negates everyday life as a negative condition whose conventional character (be it the “man” or the “durchschnittliche Seinsverständnis”) should be overcome. At the

same time Heidegger affirms everyday life as the provider of a positive possibility of understanding.

In Heidegger's ideas on the hermeneutic circle there is a paradoxical simultaneous affirmation and negation of everyday life that produces an ambiguous attitude in all these phenomena as "pre-comprehension", or "average understanding of life". This ambiguous attitude implies that the everyday condition of life needs to be negated because it does not represent a "final result" of the process of understanding. However, in "coming back" to it we can consider it as a positive moment of understanding.

6. *Iki* and *écriture*

Kuki's paradoxical philosophical position between French rationalism and German hermeneutic historicism can be considered a widely personal one. At the same time, however, it is difficult to resist the temptation to see the aforementioned conceptual shifts that Kuki is involved in, and which sometimes let him appear like someone trying to square a circle, as shifts that are caused by the paradoxical nature of *iki* itself.

An elucidation of this problem is extremely difficult, and, in my opinion, it can be undertaken only by an examination of Kuki's thought that would focus on his links with the French rationalist tradition to the same extent that one is generally inclined to focus on his affinities with Heidegger. This, however, cannot be done within the limits of this chapter, the purpose of which is mainly to crystallize some essential philosophical statements on the notion of style and the possibilities of its development in contemporary philosophy.

This should not therefore be understood as an evasion into a different sphere of argument, but more as the contrary, when I introduce, as I am about to now, a philosopher who has adopted and developed Heidegger's main claims on the subject of play and non-foundedness, all by keeping a clear distance from the German hermeneutic tradition: Derrida. In fact, I believe that an examination of some of Derrida's points in the context of the discussion that has been provided on the preceding pages will rather help us to understand *iki*.

The remarkable thing about Derrida is that, like Heidegger, he reverses Platonism by combating Plato's ideas of substance and essence; however, the nonsubstantial quality that remains after the reversal (which is, in fact, a Heideggerian "twisting-out effect") receives a name: *écriture*. Derrida gets to this position by concentrating

on Plato's concept of language, in which he discovers a central conception that he depicts as representative of a whole metaphysical tradition: spoken language. For Plato, as for metaphysics, written language is seen as a kind of poison that is refused because it runs the risk of falsifying the "substantial" or "authentic" character of language. Derrida interprets Plato's opposition of speech against writing as a disguised version of the metaphysical opposition of a stable "essence" against an unstable "non-essence".

Derrida shows that if we want to overcome Plato's realism ("the truth of the *eidōs* as that which is identical to itself [...]"),²⁵ we should adopt a non-metaphysical conception of understanding that perceives no "authentic", "original", or "essential" speech, but only what he calls "writing". All signs that we perceive when we understand the world should be seen as nothing other than *écriture*.

This "writing" or "script" is no truth in the sense of an essence or an origin but has the self-foundational character of a game. This means that the truth that can be found in this writing is only a "played" truth, a "simulacrum" that "is in its type the mime of memory, of knowledge, of truth [...]" ("mime en son type la mémoire, le savoir, la vérité [...]"). (Derrida 1972: 120/105)

We can now say that "writing", which has no essence and no relationship with any constant source or origin (for example, a *logos*), is "essentially" ruleless, and this establishes a first link with *iki*'s rulelessness, which has been treated earlier. No "rules" about its being can be imposed from outside itself; like the game, it has only "inner" rules. Derrida expresses this by saying that the "being" of writing is constituted only by mimetic gestures, which self-sufficiently imitate only themselves and which are regulated by neither rules nor no-rules. Finally, Derrida compares this with the activity of a mime artist, as it is described in Mallarmé's poem *Mimique*:

The Mime imitates nothing. And to begin with, he does not imitate. There is nothing prior to the writing of his gestures. Nothing is prescribed for him. The Mime follows no preestablished script [...] he does not obey any verbal order (Le Mime n'imité rien. Et d'abord il n'imité pas. Il n'y a rien avant l'écriture de ses gestes. Rien ne lui est prescrit. [...] Le mime ne suit aucun livret préétabli [...] il n'obéit à aucun ordre verbal.) (Derrida 1972: 221/194-95).

This “writing”, which is “groundless” and as self-sufficient as a game, can only take place in the peripheral spheres of both Platonism and anti-Platonism because it has transgressed all conceptions of “truth” as “presence”, “origin”, or “aletheia”. Derrida writes:

The mime produces, that is to say makes appear in *praesentia*, manifests the very meaning of what he is presently writing: of what he performs (Le mime produit, c'est-a-dire fait paraître dans la présence, manifeste le sens même de ce que présentement il écrit: de ce qu'il performe.) (Derrida 1972: 233-234/206).

Writing is a game, since it is neither reality nor simply negated reality: “It plays enjoyment, renders it present and absent”.²⁶ What remains once Derrida has “deconstructed” the *phonè* is a game-like performance comparable to that of the mime artist; and this performance can certainly only be experienced but never conceptualized. In fact, it is not even experienced as a “reality”, a “presence”, or a symbol (of a reality or a presence). It is a “mimetic” gesture, groundless, like a game.

Though this should not be overstated, a certain resemblance with Kuki’s “disinterested play of *iki*”, which can “consist simply in a hand gesture”, is very striking. In the *iki* gesture there is, as in the “mimetic” gesture, neither presence nor an imitation of a “past presence”. *Iki* comes into being when a moment is reproduced that is neither past nor present. Kuki says that *iki* signifies the fact of “having left the near past”.

With regard to Japanese paintings in which we can find *iki*, Kuki writes: “as an *iki* pose there is also that of just *Having Left the Bath*. In carrying the recollection of the nude in its near past and having just casually dressed in a simple robe...” (Kuki 1930a: 43). This means that only by being a representation neither of the past nor of the present but by expressing the state of “having left the near past” does the painting obtain the quality of being *iki*.

The perception of *iki* takes place at the moment when (as Nishitani has written about Japanese aesthetics in general) “the essential impermanence of all things, or sheer being-in-the-world, is aesthetically felt” (Nishitani 1982: 247). With Derrida we could comment on the *iki* fact of *Just Having Left the Bath*: “This imitator having in the last instance no imitated, this signifier having in the last instance no signified...”²⁷ In other words, in an *iki* painting there is no

presentation but only the trace (or the writing) of the nude, which we could easily call the “trace [of] that which does not let itself be summed up in the simplicity of a present” (“trace [de] ce qui ne se laisse pas résumer dans la simplicité d’un présent”, Derrida 1969: 97/66). Derrida reduces the metaphysical dualism of essence and existence to what he calls “trace/” and it seems that Kuki undertakes a similar project with his *iki*.²⁸

7. Conclusion

This chapter has intended to show, among other things, that Kuki’s philosophy of *iki* does not try to undertake what Benjamin called an “aestheticization of the political”. Aestheticization as a stylization of the (political) present is, in my opinion, a much too narrow concept to be brought together with Kuki’s philosophical ambitions. The point about an “aestheticization of the political” is made by Leslie Pincus when he draws links between the German *Volkstum* and the Japanese *minzoku* by relating it to Kuki. Though I admit that there exists a certain ground on which such an argumentation can be based, I would claim that it should be relativized on the basis of my considerations above. Pincus mentions “the aestheticization of the political”, a project that Benjamin (who had the extreme example of the Italian Futurists in mind) identified as the “distinguishing mark of fascism” (Pincus 1989: 235).

First of all, I would try to make this more precise and admit that this kind of aestheticization of the world does certainly exist in proximity with a philosophy of organicism that was, as Pincus remarks, dominant in Europe between the wars. However, it should be noted that the “logic of organicism”, which wants to arrange the whole world (art, politics, religion, and science) into a coherent, harmonious structural network, does not in the first place evoke the kind of atmosphere that the German hermeneutic tradition was trying to distribute. “Organicalness” is more a headword of more scientific branches of thought – for example, analytical philosophy and the extremely aestheticizing movements of later modernity (for example, certain movements within modern architecture in the 1960s). However, what all these movements have in common is that for them the model of an organic (and, together with this, also an aesthetic) structure is nature, and this is decisive in the present context. It means that for them to aestheticize the world means always to make the world more *natural*.

It seems to me that the statement about organicalness that Pincus quotes from Kuki could, but finally does not, suggest such a “naturalist” strategy with regard to an “aestheticization of the world”. The reasons for this should have become clear from what has been explained above. The quoted passage from *Iki no Kôzô* reads like this: “The relation between the two terms [meaning and language on the one hand, and the conscious being of an ethnos on the other] is not a mechanical one in which the parts precede the whole, but an organic one in which the whole determines the parts” (Kuki 1930a: 7).²⁹ However, as Pincus points out, since this has to do with hermeneutics, one should insist more on the tension that exists between the part and the whole, a tension that, for example for Heidegger, would never be sublated. This tension creates more a sphere of “undecidability” within which even “the aesthetic” cannot be defined in an absolute and “logical” way. Kuki’s hermeneutic idea of “organicism” does not so much point to a kind of organicism that relies, in order to exist, on nothing other than the hard logical structure that it lodges, as to a kind of self-sufficient, “nature-like” quantity inside itself. It points to transitory qualities that settle between *existentia* and *essentia*.

Notes

1. “Unter Berücksichtigung von Tezukas Darlegungen im Nachwort zu seiner japanischen Übersetzung des ‘Gesprächs’ wird nach sorgfältigem Vergleich [...] klar [...], daß Heidegger einen stofflich anspruchsvollen Dialog erfunden hat, handelt es sich nicht einmal um eine annähernd großzügige Wiedergabe des tatsächlich geführten Gesprächs mit Tezuka” (May 1989: 27).
2. The problematic character underlying Heidegger’s procedure from the beginning becomes extremely obvious through Tezuka’s own account of the conversation. He clearly states that in his opinion Heidegger had gone a little “over the top” with some points that are most essential for the entire argumentation of Heidegger’s essay, especially his equations of the Japanese word for “Sprache” (*kotoba*) and the word “Ding”. During the conversation, after having listened to the very hesitating explanations of the Japanese on this subject, Heidegger said, according to Tezuka: “Interessant! Dann, Herr Tezuka, ist möglicherweise die Bedeutung des japanischen ‘Sprache’ (*kotoba*) ‘Ding?’” Tezuka comments on this statement as follows: “Es schien mir, daß er diese Auslegung mehr oder weniger überzogen hat, und zwar im Hinblick auf einen vorgefaßten Begriff” (It seemed to me that he had more or less overdone this interpretation, and this with regard to a premeditated notion.) (T. Tezuka, “Eine Stunde bei Heidegger”, in May 1989: 87. Another German translation of the article can be found in Buchner 1989.

3. Yoneda establishes a link between *iki* and *fûga*, all by redescribing *fûga* as “Natur selbst”, as man’s “natural” way of being (1984: 95) “[...] sinnliche[s] Scheinen, durch dessen lebhaftes Entzücken Übersinnliches hindurchscheint” (Heidegger 1959: 101).
4. “[...] durch [...] das Hermeneutische [...] das Iki in ein anderes Licht gelangt sein” (100).
5. ‘いき’を単に種概念として取扱って、それを包括する類概念の抽象的普遍を向観する’本質直観’を求めてはならない。(13)
6. ただし、相起さるべきものはいわゆるプラトンの實在論の主張するがごとき類概念の抽象的一般性ではない。[。。。]この点において、プラトンの認識論の倒逆的転換が敢えてなされなければならぬ。(81)
7. “Was geschieht, wenn die wahre Welt abgeschafft wird? Bleibt dann noch die scheinbare Welt? Nein. Denn die scheinbare Welt kann das, was es ist, nur sein als Gegenstück zur wahren. Wenn diese fällt, muß auch die scheinbare fallen. Erst dann ist der Platonismus überwunden, d.h. so *umgedreht*, daß das philosophische Denken aus ihm *herausgedreht* wird” (Heidegger 1961: 233, my italics).
8. Ohashi speaks of a “Hermeneutik des volkstümlichen Seins” (1989a: 96).
9. “Das ‘europäische Begriffssystem, dem Kuki nachjagte, war vielmehr das klassisch-metaphysische, was auch daraus zu ersehen ist, daß er das Begriffspaar *essentia existentia* auf das Phänomen von *iki* anwandte und der Frage nach der *existentia* des *iki* den Vorrang gab. Kuki wollte dadurch die platonische Erkenntnislehre umdrehen” (Ohashi 1989b: 29).
10. ‘いき’は[。。。]’苦界’にその起原をもっている。そうして’いき’のうちの’諦め’したがって’無関心’は、世智辛い、つれない浮世の洗練を経てすっきりと垢抜した心である。(20)
11. “Die Alltäglichkeit wird dort einmal ‘abgeschnitten’, aber gerade durch das Abschneiden entsteht ein neues Alltagsleben, in der man der Sterblichkeit des Alltags gewahr wird. Die Entsagung des Buddhismus ist ein entscheidendes ‘Kire’” (Ohashi 1992a: 111).
12. “Um das erste genau zu verstehen muß man schon das ganze aufgenommen haben. Natürlich nicht, insofern es der Gesamtheit gleich ist, sondern als Skelett, Grundriß...” (Schleiermacher 1959: 98)
13. “Denn bei jedem größeren Complexus hat dieser auch das ganze eher gesehn, als er zum Einzelnen fortgeschritten” (ibid.).
14. Cf. Ast 1808: “Je weiter ich in der Auffassung des Einzelnen fortschreite, um so offener wird mir der Geist, um so mehr entfaltet sich die Idee des ganzen, die mir

schon in jeder Einzelheit entstanden ist” (The further I advance in the establishment of the particular, the more obviously and authentically can I perceive the spirit and the more the idea of the whole which has been present for me already in every particularity will deploy itself) (quoted from Wach 1926).

15. “Wir nennen die Spracherklärung aus jenem objektiven allgemeinen Standpunkte grammatische Interpretation, die aus dem Standpunkte der Subjektivität individuelle Interpretation” (Boeckh 1877: 84).
16. “So setzen die verschiedenen Arten der Auslegung reale Kenntnissen voraus, und doch können diese erst durch die Auslegung des gesammten Quellenmaterials gewonnen werden” (Boeckh: 84).
17. “Die grammatische Auslegung wird nämlich den Wortsinn ermitteln, indem sie ihn unter verschiedenen individuellen und realen Bedingungen betrachtet. Hierdurch hat man eine Grundlage für die übrigen Arten der Auslegung ...” (Boeckh: 84)
18. “[...] genau derselbe Gegenstand [ist] zugleich die einzige Grundlage der grammatischen und individuellen [...] Interpretation [...] so ist die Aufgabe unlösbar” (Boeckh: 86).
19. “[...] ein Gefühl, vermöge dessen mit einem Schlage wiedererkannt wird, was ein anderer erkannt hat” (Boeckh: 86).
20. “[...] tritt an die Stelle des Verstandes die Phantasie als hermeneutische Tätigkeit” (Boeckh: 86).
21. “Durch die Theorie wird niemand ein guter Exeget und Kritiker werden, so wenig als man durch Kenntnis der Logik ein philosophischer Denker wird” (Schleiermacher 1977: 76).
22. “In einer vollkommenen *Einführung* [...] verschwindet die Zweiheit von Sehendem und Gesehendem. Dort wird die von Lipps gemeinte Stilisierung ermöglicht” (Ohashi1992a: 108).
23. On conceptual links between *Einführung*, positivism, and impressionism, see Oskar Walzel 1968: 58ff.
24. “Wenn aber Auslegung sich je schon im Verstandenen bewegen und aus ihm her sich nahen muß, wie soll sie dann wissenschaftliche Resultaten zeitigen, ohne sich in einem Zirkel zu bewegen, zumal wenn das vorausgesetzte Verstandnis überdies noch in der gemeinen Menschen und Weltkenntnis sich bewegt?” (Heidegger 1986: 152). Engl. trans. from *Being and Time* trans. by J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson. Oxford: Blackwell, 1980: 195.
25. “[...] verite de l’*eidos* comme ce qui est identique a soi” (Derrida 1972: 140). Engl. trans. from *Dissemination*, trans. by B. Johnson. Chicago: University of Chicago

Press, 1981: 123.

26. “Elle joue la jouissance, la rend absente et présente. Elle est le jeu” (Derrida 1969: 440). Engl. trans. *Of Grammatology*, trans. by G. C. Spivak. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974: 312. For further parallels between Derrida and Eastern thought, see Longxi 1985, Yeh 1983, and Fu 1993. In the present book the page number that appears before the virgule (for example 15/17) refers to the original text whereas the number after the virgule refers to the translation.
27. “C’est que cet imitant n’ayant pas d’imité en dernière instance, ce signifiant n’ayant pas de signifié, ce signe n’ayant pas de référent en dernière instance...” (Derrida 1972: 235-236/207)
28. In this context one needs to consider the history of Japanese language: the written script has always been essential to understanding the language. In Japanese culture, understanding can never come about on the basis of a verbal “presence” but only on the basis of written signs to which speakers constantly refer, even when speaking “orally”. Hans Waldenfels has written about the importance of writing in communication among Japanese individuals: “Auf jeden Fall verbinden sich Laut und Bild zu einer solchen Weise des Verstehens, daß Hören und Intuition sich verbinden und die ideale Form nuancierten Verstehens dann erreicht ist, wenn die Gesprächspartner sich in der Niederschrift gleicher Bildzeichen treffen” (Waldenfels 1984: 7)
29. 両者の関係は、部分が全体に先立つ機械的構成関係ではなくて、全体が部分を規定する有機的構成関係を示している。(7)

3. Contingency and the “Time of the Dream”:

Kuki Shūzō and French Prewar Philosophy

1. Kuki and Nishida: Contingency and Pure Experience

The unusual juxtaposition of two Japanese philosophers that this book offers might appear daring. Is there really such an essential link between the Nishida’s philosophy of place and Kuki’s writings on *iki* and contingency? The answer is yes. First, the two notions central to Kuki’s treatment of *iki* as well as of contingency are that of *style* and of *dream*. “Dream” as a philosophical, existential and ontological phenomenon linked to a typically Buddhist philosophy, presents the link justifying the juxtaposition of Nishida’s thoughts on “pure experience” and *basho* on the one hand, and Kuki’s elaborations of original themes like *iki* and contingency on the other. “Style” has a similar function.¹

Still, a more elaborate preliminary explanation for this strategy seems to be necessary, especially since the link between Kuki and the so-called Kyoto School is not a straightforward one. Kuki is not a representative of the Kyoto School (though he was living and working in utmost proximity with his teacher Nishida and his “School”). As mentioned, Kuki’s concept of “style” that speaks through his texts on *iki* as well as on contingency, has a philosophical link with a particularly Buddhist concept of dream. Though this will hopefully become clear through the chapter itself, I would like to push its understanding a little more forcefully in the right direction by elaborating, a fundamental ontological parallel between Kuki and Nishida.

As mentioned, Nishida’s *basho* signifies, as a sort of “negative space”, the “self-determination of a field of consciousness” and comes close to certain aspects of “play”. It is not by coincidence that the idea of *basho* came to Nishida when analyzing the notion of *chōra* as it appears in Plato’s *Timaeus*.² The *basho* presents itself as a new ontological category, which resumes Nishida’s version of Western intuition or perhaps even more of the German *Anschauung* (Knauth 1965: 355). Inside the *basho* there are only singular elements which determine themselves as “pure matters” dependent on no exterior determination. The *basho* is thus a place in which the objective world establishes itself.

Also for Kuki, the opposition of subjectivism and objectivism needs to be overcome, in regard to *iki* as well as generally, and here Kuki joins one of Nishida's main philosophical themes. As a matter of fact, Nishida's thoughts on the importance of contingency for ontology are based on very similar considerations. Masao Matsumoto shows in his essay 'The Absolute, Relatives and Nothingness' how Nishida resolves, with the aid of the notion of *basho*, the aporia of the co-existence of existence and essence, and says that this approach would automatically refer to the problems attached to the notion of contingency. It is "in the beings named contingents that absolute essence can co-exist in numerical, existential relativity" (Matsumoto 1974: 74).³

Within an Aristotelian ontological framework, all beings are composed of essence and existence. A problem appears at the moment one talks about the "absolute existence of God". There, the aggregative totality and the "world" in which exists God and contingent beings, turns out to be founded on an aporia: "How can these two co-exist – the world which is existentially relative while essentially absolute, and God who is absolute existentially as well as essentially?" (Matsumoto 1974: 73) Matsumoto concludes that Nishida has resolved this aporia by referring to the conception of a "place of nothingness" which permits individuals not only to exist numerically by preserving their absolute essentiality, but which serves also as a ground for the co-existence of a necessary God and contingent beings. There obviously is a parallel between Kuki and Nishida with regard to respective formulations of an ontology of contingency.

2. Kuki between Germany and France

However, first there are several other reasons to examine aspects of work that was developed by Shûzô Kuki "in the shade of German philosophy" – an aspect that represents what one could call Kuki's "French side". Kuki's stayed in Europe from 1921 to 1929. He spent the first three years in Heidelberg, went to Paris in the autumn of 1924, then returned to Germany (Freiburg and Marburg) in the spring of 1927. Finally he came back to Paris in June 1928. Kuki thus found himself in the unique situation of being a Japanese philosopher divided "between" a German and French intellectual environment. The impact that Heidegger had on Kuki has been examined extensively by philosophers in both the East and the West. On the other hand, the implications of the French influence on Kuki have not been so extensively analyzed.

This is curious because it is possible to argue that the philosophical enterprise that Kuki encountered in France, although clearly inscribed in a rationalist Western tradition, involved a special, although certainly largely unconscious, relationship with Eastern thought. This fact alone justifies a change in focus by shifting the emphasis in comparative studies from Germany to France. Kuki received direct influence from the philosophers Bergson, Boutroux, Guyau, and Brunschvicg as well as from the writer Alain. It was the twenty-three year old Jean-Paul Sartre who introduced him, in the context of what both called "French conversation lessons", to the world of these philosophers, whose ideas were dominating France (cf. Light 1987). Apart from classical French figures such as Descartes, Pascal, Comte, and Maine de Biran, a particularly French influence was also present in the form of a certain atmosphere that had been spread by French "dandyism" (in literature through Baudelaire and Barbey d'Aurevilly), and which must certainly have been decisive for the development of Kuki's famous work on the phenomenon of *iki*.

In regard to parallels between Kuki and Heidegger, one may be inclined to evoke political motives that were not purely "spiritual" but were, to some extent, due to more "vitalistic" forces. The question imposes itself as to this "Heideggerian side" of Kuki, an aspect which seems, moreover, to fit rather well into the context provided by the political tendencies of the Kyoto School (with which Kuki is sometimes even identified), and to complement Kuki's fascination with French rationalism as well as with a certain French "esprit de finesse" that Kuki admitted to find so attractive in French culture (see Kuki 1981b).

In general, Kuki's "French side" has aroused relatively little interest. This is odd because one of the few works by Kuki that have been translated into European languages is his doctoral thesis on the subject of contingency, the *Gûzensei no mondai* (Kuki 1981c), which Kuki finished in 1932. This thesis was published in Japanese in 1935 and in French translation as *Le Problème de la contingence* in 1953. As the title suggests, *Gûzensei no mondai* is directly influenced by two eminent books by French contemporaries with whom Kuki had become particularly acquainted: Emile Boutroux's *De la Contingence des lois de la nature* (1908) and Emile Borel's *Le Hasard* (1920).

Firstly, it seems that the French treatment of the phenomenon of contingency as well as of the questions of liberty and time has been absorbed by Kuki and elaborated in the context of Asian thought. In *Gûzensei no mondai* Kuki turns out to be a great specialist of French

thought who is able to assimilate certain motives of French "spiritualism" with concepts of contingency as they appear in the Buddhist tradition. Kuki advances a rationalist philosophy for which contingency appears as "reality of the real as real" (現実としての現実の現実) or as "simple reality" (簡なる現実) (Kuki 1981c: 213).

One of Kuki's main points is that this reality can be grasped only by means of philosophy and not by means of science: only the philosopher would be able to develop an analytical approach that is not based on the research of a "necessity of laws" or a on "norm of thought" but on a quantity that can never be reduced to a simple formal law. This quantity is called probability (確率論).

Kuki links contingency to the phenomenon of existence. A philosophy that forces itself to see contingency behind necessity also discovers nothingness behind reality. A philosophy of contingency does not simply see "what there is" but forces itself to be surprised at what it can trace back to nothing other than to contingency.

Kuki is looking, then, for a new concept of time that should be linked to contingency. He believes that reality does not appear to us within a "now of the present" but that it should be conceived as a dynamical development. Reality is no static phenomenon that appears inside a present "actuality": it is dynamized through the negation of time as a necessary consecution of past, present and future elements.

This concept of time, of course, is also founded on ideas that are particularly Buddhist. The Buddhist concept of karma I, as Masao Abe has explained, (Abe 1985: 214) is different from the Hindu concept because it refuses the determinism that is characteristic of the Hindu religion. Maurice Guyau, one of the French philosophers on whom Kuki concentrated, characterizes Indian (Hindu) religion as a spiritual movement that wants to overcome contingency. This religion would be suitable for those who "strive for something better, purer and truer than what they find in the rites, the offices and the sermons where coincidence has thrown them".⁴

Buddhism, on the other hand, does not presuppose the existence of a God who controls the destiny of human beings; as a consequence, moments of possibility as well as of contingency can enter into this religious philosophy. We have the possibility, for example, of being liberated from karma through an act of personal choice. However, this idea of "liberation" is strictly linked to the realization of time and history (thus the karma itself) as a dynamic quantity that is composed of past, present, and future.

We thus have the possibility of being liberated from karma only if, paradoxically, we recognize the interpenetration of past, present, and future as a phenomenon of absolute necessity. Abe writes:

At the very moment we realize the beginninglessness and endlessness of history, we transcend its boundlessness and find the whole process of history from beginningless beginning to endless end intensively concentrated within the here and now (Abe 1985: 214).

This concept of time becomes especially important in Zen-Buddhism, and it has repercussions on the formulation of the idea of contingency. Dôgen explains that time is not a static phenomenon but should be conceived as a "lived time" or as a "being time". For Dôgen, being and time form "only one word" (Toshimitsu 1973: 183). As Steven Heine has said, Dôgen accentuates "the dynamic nature of movement and continuity, which is no longer statically conceived as time-points 'piled up' on one another" (Heine 1985: 54). In this way Dôgen investigates the meaning and structure of "contingent lived-time" (Heine 1985: 4). Time as "lived-time" is based on a structure of contingency instead of on a structure of succession. Consequently, in "lived-time" we cannot make the distinction between past, present, and future.

While Western thought tends to inscribe even the very dynamics that animates the relationship between past and present into a static dialectical concepts (for example Hegel's dialectics), Dôgen rejects all speculative approaches and accepts presence as the only "time" in which the Buddha-nature manifest itself. We see that contingency here does not represent a temporary moment of separation from a world of necessity – that is, from a world that is still controlled by a necessary logic – but that the world itself is declared to be contingent: "Life is a stage of time and death is a stage of time, like, for example, winter and spring. We do not suppose that winter becomes spring, or say that spring becomes summer", says Dôgen in the *Shôbôgenzô* (Dôgen 1972: 103).

For Dôgen, as a representative of Zen Buddhism, any concept of time should try, in a direct way, to grasp the existential condition of the world and of human beings and not attempt to "put it in order" according to abstract criteria. The "fullness of time" (Abe 1985: 64) is manifest at any moment of history and necessitates the concept of a "discontinuity of time" that, in an essential way, is different from continuous time as it is normally conceived. In this way, "radical contin-

gency" (Heine) becomes a concrete phenomenon because it asks questions of existential value.

We have now established Kuki's treatment of contingency at least to some extent within an East Asian religious and intellectual environment. Against this background it might appear amazing that Kuki presents his own notion of time by alluding so extensively to Western authors. However, the French authors to whom Kuki refers occupy a special position within Western thought. The French philosophy of the period that Kuki examined in particular was influenced by thinking on contingency in two ways. First, there was the development of a French criticism that defined itself against a determinism that had so far formulated its ideas in rather abstract terms. One decided to examine the notion of contingency hoping that a philosophy of the *hasard* would relativize scientific determinism in an efficient way. In this way one established a "science of the *hasard*" that would be in the service not of determinism or even of science in the first place, but in the service of life; that is, it would be subordinated to human needs. One of the prominent representatives of this philosophy of the *hasard*, Emile Borel, wrote:

The science of the coincidence (*hasard*) could indeed, not more than any other science, pretend to administer our actions; it could only, according to the role of science, make it easier for human beings to reflect upon their actions before carrying them out (Borel 1938: ii).

While determinism can be realized on an abstract level, a contingency that is supposed to reside in the real world reminds us of the limits of science. The development of a special concept of time, which has been sketched above, of a time that is not at all "determined" by abstract presuppositions, necessarily goes together with these ideas.

Second, for Kuki there was certainly the experience of a cultural notion of contingency that was present in French literature at that time. "Contingency in culture" may remind us of the contingency as it appears in certain Japanese cultural phenomena as *fûga*. It is the "wind" that is contingent that "determines" the essence of art and of humanity, but it still has an absolute power as well. The notion of play here is essential to art as well as to the perception of time.

Kuki found something of this in French literature. Quite significantly, in order to illustrate a timely concept of contingency Kuki produces a passage from Proust. Proust developed a concept of time that is

founded on repetition, and he expresses it in the *Recherche du temps perdu* (II):

A la fois dans le présent et dans le passé, réels sans être actuels, idéaux sans être abstraits [...]. Une minute affranchie de l'ordre du temps a recréé en nous, pour la sentir, l'homme affranchi de l'ordre du temps (From Kuki 1981c: 131).

Kuki wants to extend the philosophical strategy of an ontology until it includes the idea of probability in its definition of Being, in order to bring forth a new concept of aesthetics – and this attempt is certainly spectacular. We could say that there are elements of such a strategy in Aristotle, but they are not as central for the latter as they are for Kuki, for whom they lead directly to a definition of being. Aristotle sees necessity and probability as components of an aesthetics that is essential, for example, to tragedy as a phenomenon in which the rules of the narrative and purely scientific obligations are fused. Within certain aesthetic experiences (and especially those that are determined by the tragic), so Aristotle, we become aware of contingency. This contingency should not be reduced – by science – to a negligible quantity, but should be experienced as a moment of truth about life. There is an analysis by Victor Goldschmidt of this aspect of Aristotle's concept of the tragic:

There is thus coincidence in our life, there is this obscure cause which the first book of the *Physics* explains as much as science is able to explain it, all by forcing itself to conclude that coincidence is caused only "accidentally". Tragedy, however, can make this cause intelligible, it can submit it to criteria that define science and are also pertinent for the development of fables: the necessary or the likely, this is what Aristotle calls the wonderful (Goldschmidt 1982: 404).

The idea of contingency in aesthetics as a quantity that is opposed to the formal method of science, although it is rather old – as we have seen – can be traced out very well within the territory of a certain modern French tradition.

3. The French Philosophy of Contingency

The concept of time that is founded on the idea of contingency can, as we have seen, be likened to Buddhism; still, the parallels that Kuki found so striking when doing his research in France are obvious, especially within an intellectual current that was trying to overcome scien-

tific determinism and that was more or less loosely linked to the person of Bergson.

Maurice Guyau, in his book *La Génèse de l'idée du temps* (1902), develops time as a phenomenon that has a certain "aesthetic potential", and he formulates an "active" concept of time in this way:

Memory, all by itself, alters the objects, transforms them, and this transformation normally gets accomplished in an aesthetic sense. Time is acting on the things most often in the manner of an artist who makes everything more beautiful, all by appearing, through a kind of special magic, to be faithful (Guyau 1902: 124).

Guyau's idea of time might look Proustian, but it is also inscribed in the French philosophical tradition that we have introduced. In a similar way Emile Boutroux, in *De La Contingence des lois de la nature* (1908), attacks a fundamental principle of science that up to that time had been defended in France by determinist philosophers like Hyppolyte Taine: "Man wanted to be able to arrange phenomena not according to the order in which they appear to him but to the order in which they depend on each other" (Boutroux 1908: 2). Boutroux thought that science has the right to establish links between the phenomena that it observes; however, this does not give us the right to think that these phenomena must be subordinated to an order that is based only on abstractions.

In other words, science should stop treating phenomena as "things as such" (*choses en soi*, Boutroux 1902: 32). One way to prevent science from proceeding in an abstracting manner is to help it to "discover the contingency that exists in the world" (36). Relations between things can be established in terms not of static but only of dynamic laws. In this way the "real" for Boutroux becomes something other than a general form that would be "filled" with concrete elements that are derived from reality: what we should look for is the "real itself"; this means the real in all its originality, and it should be seized upon as a "characteristic reality".

Boutroux initiated a philosophical program that Bergson would extend later in an unexpected way. Also, for Bergson the idea of a free, individual, contingent dynamism that is opposed to the categories of a mathematical philosophy for which everything is determined by absolute necessity occupies a central position, and this dynamism also manifests several points of correspondence with Kuki's philosophy.

Boutroux surmounts an idealistic and schematic conception that had been imposed upon science and philosophy in France, especially by Antoine Auguste Cournot. As an alternative he sketches the schemes of what he calls a "positive science". We know that Kuki, in order to explore the problem of contingency, read Cournot as well as Boutroux (and dealt equally with Taine's determinism). The primordial status that positive science claims in Kuki's writings is manifest also in his *Iki no kôzô* (Kuki 1981a). At the same time, the idea of "dynamism" remains another powerful driving force for the development of Kuki's thought, an idea that is nourished mainly by Boutroux and Bergson.

In an essay titled "Bergson in Japan", Kuki reports to a French audience that Bergson would be "highly esteemed in Japan" (Kuki 1981d). Bergson would have appeared there in 1910, at a time when Western philosophical influence was restricted almost to criticism and logic. For this reason the Bergsonian "metaphysical intuition" would have been received by Japanese as a "celestial nourishment": it provided a new means for the development of criticism of the Kantian separation of matter and form, a criticism that, for Kuki, comes together in some points with Heidegger's reflections on "being-in-the-world". Finally, it would have been just that "intuitive tendency of Zen" (which would be opposed to a more "Kantian" Bushidô) that would have helped Japanese to find their way to Bergson. Even Nishida's philosophy itself, affirms Kuki, could be understood as a "synthesis of transcendental philosophy and Bergsonism". In a synthetic way, Kuki concludes that the silence of Bergson's *durée* could be very well likened to the silence of Zen.

F.S.C. Northrop, in his article 'The Relation between Eastern and Western Philosophy' (Northrop 1951: 370ff), distinguishes two kinds of intuition that he attributes to Eastern and Western philosophy, respectively. The aesthetic or existential intuition (whose instances would be identical with Aristotle's prime matter) would be "Oriental", whereas an abstract, logical and formal intuition would be representative of the Western, Platonic type of philosophy. Both intuitions would excel in "immediacy" and tend toward mysticism.

It seems that in regard to the Japanese fascination with Bergson – but also, in the opposite case, in regard to the Western fascination with Zen – people are often attracted by slightly vague ideas, which suggests that the deficiencies of one kind of intuition could be compensated by the contrary movement. Often they might not be aware of the rather symmetrical opposition of these elements and that an adoption of the contrary position can all too easily effect a simple "turnover". Also,

Kuki's idea of a "synthesis of transcendental philosophy and Bergsonism" aims at the reunification of two types of intuition, the empirical and the abstract. Japanese are somehow supposed to feel an "intellectual sympathy" for French rationalism simply through the fact of being Japanese.

It is certainly not wrong to draw parallels between Bergson's idea of *durée* and Buddhism's "ceaseless flight of things" (Kuki) or even "a watery flux" – because, indeed, Bergson also uses the image of flowing water. Still, we might feel that Kuki's ambitions as a pioneer in this area of comparative philosophy go a little "over the top". In spite of formal resemblances that certain streams of Eastern and Western thoughts do display, we cannot but help feel that the gap of cultural differences by which Bergson and Buddhism are separated is too important.

It might also be a major mistake to see Bergson, as some Japanese seem to have done, as a revolutionary reformer of Western philosophical culture, a culture that up to that time, as Kuki says in his essay on Bergson, had been represented in Japan by Anglo-Saxon utilitarianism, Kant, and Neo-Kantianism. For many Westerners Bergson remains inscribed in the movement of scientific Western rationalism, although – and from this might come the Japanese fascination with him – he also reformed something. In fact, the matter is complicated and even paradoxical. Without annulling Northrop's thoughts on the difference between Eastern and Western intuition, one should also consider another kind of Western intuition that existed in Christian religion and that permits the role that Bergson has had in Western culture to appear in a different light.

When Bergson proposed what Kuki calls "metaphysical intuition", this abstract or empty form of intuition replaced also the Christian, mystical and religious form of intuition, which is outspokenly nonabstract and imaginative and which might probably have appeared as strange and only vaguely understandable to Japanese. Recall Heinrich Dumoulin, who criticized Buddhism just because of the one-sidedness of its intellectual intuitionism, because it lacked an "Augustinian heart, the seat and symbol of loving knowledge and knowing love" (Dumoulin 1966: 30).⁵

Now Bergson declares that his aim would be to annul the distinction between idealism and realism, a distinction to which Western civilization had so far been clinging for scientific as well as religious reasons. As a consequence Bergson establishes reality as an "eternal

flux". It seems that Dumoulin could have criticized Bergson by using the selfsame words that he had directed against Zen Buddhism.

3.1. Habit

In comparative philosophy it often appears more promising to examine parallels between philosophical notions that are abstract and rather removed from a concrete cultural background. Contingency is certainly one of these notions. Unfortunately, Kuki, in his paper on Bergson, mentions the phenomenon of contingency only once: he refers to Bergson's teachers or predecessors Boutroux and Ravaisson and also to Maine de Biran. There is one notion that is just as interesting and that cannot be omitted whenever one examines the phenomenon of contingency: the notion of habit. The subject of habit as opposed to contingency had occupied French thought for well over a generation. While in Bergson a proper "philosophy of contingency" cannot be found, the notion of "habit" is essential for all of his philosophy.

Kuki's "reading list" that we can derive from Light's book mentions authors who form an extremely coherent network. We see that Kuki was interested in a certain kind of French philosophy and that he was looking for ideas that corresponded to his personal philosophical research. Within the context of French thought that has been so far evoked, there is a certain line whose beginning can be situated with the philosophy of Maine de Biran or perhaps his contemporary, Julien Offray La Mettrie who announced in the first half of the 18th century (already in a way that is reminiscent of Bergson) that a unity of judgement, reasoning, memory could be contained within a single concept of imagination (La Mettrie 1865: 67).

Pierre Maine de Biran's vast examination of the nature of our consciousness proceeds in a similar way. Maine de Biran's primary subject of interest is the influence that desires can have on our intellectual capacity. Believing that "la mort de nos désirs serait la mort de nos facultés" (Maine de Biran 1920a: 104) he would not side with (although remain attracted to) the Stoics. Maine de Biran is convinced that a certain amount of "feeling" cannot be eliminated from thinking; as a consequence he establishes the notion of habit as a "centre of activity" that can be crystallized within the ever changing states of the world. In his book *Influence de l'habitude sur la faculté de penser*, Maine de Biran advances habit as the primary aim of education and defines habit in not only as a necessary component of seeing, thinking and imagining, but also as an important cultural phenomenon present in physical,

intellectual and moral life. "Good habits", Maine de Biran believes, can be obtained through a sort of "instinct" for a "heureuse habitude" (Maine de Biran 1920b: Preface). He criticizes the metaphysicians because they would have their abstract principles exist outside the concrete context of habits. However, we cannot find an alternative to metaphysics simply by remaining within the social sphere of habits hoping that such an insistence leads us to truth. Habits do represent a limitation – but a limitation that must be overcome and not simply be avoided. The great man of knowledge is capable of being astonished at the very moment he sees the "veils of his habits" disappearing. He is able to recognize nature from a point of view that is detached from his own ego.⁶

These thoughts are, indeed, reminiscent of Bergson on the one hand, but, given the parallels that Kuki is drawing so enthusiastically between Bergson and Zen Buddhism, one could also find some Zen in them that might explain why Kuki read the works of Maine de Biran so extensively.

The philosophical line of French thought continues through a tradition that Emile Bréhier has named "spiritualist positivism" and which is represented by Ravaisson, Lachelier, and Boutroux. Their contemporary Maurice Guyau shows considerable resemblances although he seems to be better known in France for his Nietzschean immoralism and for his studies on the unconscious.

Spiritualist positivism aims to deconstruct the Cartesian notion of spirit by introducing "life" and by deconstructing Cartesian ideas of mechanism and dualism (cf. Bréhier: 1968). Boutroux, especially, equates positivity with spirituality, a spirituality that is scientific without being abstract. Here too, the notion of habit is called for in order to designate a certain notion of "human activity" as a movement that is not mechanical but that appears to be free and unfree at the same time (cf. Bréhier 1968: 871). One could say that the definition of "habit" draws a line of separation between "spiritualist positivism" and the ordinary positivism from which these French philosophers were striving to distinguish themselves. "Habit", says Boutroux, "is no fact but the ability to produce certain facts, and, in this sense, it cannot be formulated through a positive law" (Boutroux 1908: 95). Action is thus always a becoming, and in this sense it is also always contingent. Maurice Blondel, equally well read by Kuki, calls a positive experience "neither absolute rest nor absolute acting: it is what is given as a law of

becoming of every contingent being, of every positive experience" (Blondel 1949: 36).

Finally, even Schelling's idea of contingency (an idea that Schelling put in opposition to Hegelian realism) is introduced in order to describe the notion of habit. The philosopher Felix Ravaisson has had a considerable influence on Bergson and also attracted the interest of Heidegger and Proust (cf. Towarnicki 1997). Ravaisson's specializations were philosophy of nature and philosophy of life, and he wrote a small book for that he is still known today in French academic circles: *De l'Habitude*. In this book Ravaisson attempts to establish habit as a "general way of being" and examines in what way it would be produced within the givens of time and space. Habit, although due to life with all its changes and inconsistencies, can, once it has been acquired, represent a generality or a necessity that subsists beyond the changing world of contingency. In other words, for Ravaisson human existence is determined by permanence and impermanence at the same time and habit is able to resume both components as if they were united.

Kuki must have been struck by the resemblance that these thoughts bear with his own philosophical ambitions of formulating a mode of existence that unites transcendent-intellectualist and immanent-voluntary components. Kuki's project of unifying Bushidô and Buddhism is meant to produce a way of life that is cultural and negates nature but that is at the same time immanent and voluntary in the sense that it engages in a most "natural" activity: in an eternal repetition of the same. Kuki's definition of *iki* that evolves out of a certain "system of taste" to appear as a habit in a way that has been described above, is due to a similar philosophical strategy.

In Ravaisson's philosophy, habit is established as a cultural phenomenon that begins "there where begins nature itself" (Ravaisson 1997: 39). The insistence on the interchangeability of nature and culture in regard to a certain existential phenomenon called habit is reflected by an idea of balance that can be established between action and passion and which, for Ravaisson, is "tact". It is thus an aesthetic component that corresponds to what Kuki announces in *Gûzensei no mondai* as the "beauty" of movement of the repetition, which is decisive also for Ravaisson. In the end, not only aesthetic qualities but also things like "personality" or "identification" are created within this "balance", and they all point to the existential scope of habit: "In pure passion the feeling subject is all in itself through the fact that he does not distinguish

himself, that he does not know himself yet. In pure action he is beyond himself and has ceased to know himself" (Ravaisson 1997: 61-62).

A kind of Bergsonian intuition that fascinated Kuki is reformulated here by Bergson's teacher Ravaisson. When the real and the ideal, being and thinking, are confused we call this *intuition réelle*. Because the ideas that are assimilated by this *intuition réelle* are interiorized in the form of habits, being is represented as a *manière d'être* (79ff) for which nature and culture, necessity and contingency, are one and the same: "Habit approaches perhaps more and more (without reaching it) the necessity, the perfect spontaneity of the instinct" (82).

Léon Brunschvicg was considered by his contemporaries the most important French philosopher after Bergson. Brunschvicg is also against the equation of spirit and intellect and develops a more concrete notion of spirit involving all human actions, especially those of *Homo faber*, the fabricating man. The input that can be traced back to him in Kuki's philosophy will be described below.

There is another French intellectual who seems to have had a principle impact on Kuki. Although marginal for French philosophical discussions, the French writer Alain has entered Kuki's intellectual world in a rather consistent way, a fact that shows that Kuki was not choosing his authors at random – that is, because they were "popular" or only because they were presented to him by Sartre. Kuki must have suspected a certain affinity between these philosophers. Light mentions that Kuki's *Propos sur le temps* was influenced by the form of Alain's *Propos* (Light 1987). Apart from this, in Alain, the subjects of imagination, dream and contingency, appear again and again, and this makes Alain a kind of literary prolongation of the "French line" that we have been following. Sympathizing with Stoicism, Alain brings forward the idea of an all embracing concept of the present within which past and future would be reunited (Alain 1920: 74). Further, by declaring that he prefers betting at horse races to more abstract forms of gambling, he suggests a concept of contingency that is linked to human activity, life, and labor and removed from the abstract, mathematical forms of the *jeu d'hasard* (Alain 1920: 81).

Finally, Bergson's own philosophy is also much centered on ideas like the "mémoire-habitude" – a kind of "bodily memory", a memory that appears as a "closed system" and that attributes an automatic character to all human movements (Bergson: 1939: 84ff) and manifests in this way touching points with Kuki's thoughts on contingency as well as on *iki*. The body preserves habits, and the past is not just remembered

(through images) but it is played. In other words, *matière* and *mémoire* get "confused" through the inscription of images in the body, and this inscription happens through the "playing" of habits. In the end, matter itself is indistinguishable from images – or, as Bergson declares in *La Pensée et le mouvant*, nature (in this context) can no longer be distinguished from culture:

Because habit as a driving force is, once it has been adopted, a mechanism or a series of movements that are interdetermined, habit is that part of us which is inserted into nature and which overlaps with it; it is nature itself (Bergson 1938: 267).

Most of the philosophers who have been presented here (with the exception of Bergson and, to some extent, Ravaisson) are rather forgotten in France today. Still it is possible to indicate a possible continuation of the tradition they have formed. First, one should mention surrealism which has obviously inherited some of the potential that this "philosophy of contingency" has released over almost two centuries in France. André Bréton's confession that for him the strongest of all images would be the one that "présente le degré arbitraire le plus élevé" (*Manifeste surréaliste*) testifies to the existence of a certain "field of ideas" that might be called "typically French" and that Kuki might have appreciated as a counterpoint to the "heavier" Heideggerianism. Second, scientists like Georges Canguilhem and Jean Piaget are worth mentioning here because in their work some of the "spirit of contingency" has survived. Canguilhem's reflections on the normal and the pathological that encircle the difficulty of establishing the physiological or non-physiological character of medical phenomena (because the "*état habituel*" of these phenomena would be so "strong" that we are inclined to characterize them as "almost physiological") echo certain motives that have been described above. The "normal", as Canguilhem recognizes, is always the "habitual" and at the same time the "ideal" (Canguilhem 1966: 82). Conceptions like Brunschvicg's "creative consciousness", which is supposed to be at work in all moral and aesthetic values (Brunschvicg 1927: 744) lurks at the bottom of this epistemology and its approaches towards medical therapy.

A part of the work that Jean Piaget has undertaken in the domain of experimental child psychology is founded on a philosophy of contingency, too. For example, Piaget uses mathematical probability theory for the examination of psychological problems and states that in

culture "every action seems, indeed, to require the notion of coincidence" (Piaget 1951: 7). Piaget feels that coincidence, since it exists neither for the primitive human nor for the child, can be seen as an indicator of a "culturalizing process". This can give the appearance of being influenced by the idea that contingency is a producer of a cultural form of being, an idea that was accepted by Boutroux, who wrote: "In inferior worlds the law occupies such an important place that it almost substitutes [for] being; in higher worlds, however, being makes us almost forget the law" (Boutroux 1908: 139). Nature is thus "like habit": it knows no contingency, and the human being who wants to "overcome" nature in order to be "civilized" needs to recognize being as a phenomenon that is not only natural but that contains contingency. In this sense, the highest state of civilization will be attained when the "nature-like" characteristics of civilization (which appear in the form of habit) are recognized as such. Civilized are those who are able to "perforate the thick layer of habit in order to awaken to and deploy their free will", according to Brunschvicg (Brunschvigh 1927: 161) virtually repeating earlier claims by Maine de Biran. Only by having a "second nature" can man pretend to be no longer a "slave of its own nature" (ibid.).

4. Contingency and the Aristotelian *Existentia*

It is necessary to develop the ethical implications of habit or style, as opposed to physiological norms, to which would belong the norm of "race"—a point for which Kuki (as well the Kyoto School) has often been criticized. Bernhard Stevens has suggested that the principal mistake of the Kyoto School (and also of Heidegger) is that they treated practical questions in a speculative manner by using conceptualizing approaches more suitable for theoretical questions (Stevens 1997: 23). For this reason, I think, we should examine Kuki's conception of existence in greater detail.

Ohashi has explained (Ohashi 1989) how and for what reasons Kuki attempted, in *Iki no kôzô*, to apply the Aristotelian-Platonic couple *existentia-essentia* to the Japanese cultural phenomenon called *iki*. In particular, Kuki develops an analytical method that he calls the "hermeneutics of popular being" (Kuki 1981a: 50). It is possible to interpret Kuki's preference for the "popular being" as a refusal, or even as an inversion, of "essentialist" Platonism. It can be understood as an anti-Platonism aiming to grant a more privileged position to Aristotelian *existentia*, that is, to more "experiential" qualities.

However, if we decide to understand "existentialism" as the result of a shift from Platonic universalism to a more Aristotelian appreciation of the concrete, we are, obviously, confronted with a "philosophy of contingency" in the way it has been introduced above. In Aristotle the discourse about being becomes problematic to the extent that being itself can also be an expression of the "contingency of being". For Aristotle, being is never completely "what it is" (essence, quiddity), and the verb "being" signifies more than a synthesis of essences or concepts. Being is not defined simply as an essence in terms of an identity; it stands also for the "existence" (that is, the diversity) of things, and it is in this sense that Aristotle's ontology becomes also an ontology of contingency.

Moreover, Kuki suggests, in *Iki no kôzô*, that it is necessary to question "the 'quis' before the 'quid' in the face of objective expressions" (1981a: 49). Here, it is useful to examine Kuki's concept of contingency as it has been developed in the *Gûzensei no mondai*, against the background established by Aristotle. Certainly, in some way, the fact that Kuki referred, in *Iki no kôzô*, to "hermeneutics" makes us inclined to push his reflections in the direction of Platonism: in the very end, Meno's paradox, which suggests the existence of the hermeneutic circle, is accepted by Plato but rejected by Aristotle. Aristotle thinks that it is not extra-normal that we know already in advance what we want to know: we only know it in different ways before and after the demonstration. Before the demonstration we have an idea of the "signification of the problem", and after it we are in possession of a necessary truth. In the *Posterior Analytics* Aristotle writes:

Before the induction, or before getting a deduction, you should perhaps be said to understand in a way – but in another way not. For if you did not know if it is *simpliciter*, how did you know that it the triangle has two right angles *simpliciter*? But it is clear that you understand it in this sense – that you understand it universally – but you do not understand it *simpliciter*. Otherwise the puzzle in the *Meno* will result; for you will learn either nothing or what you know (Aristotle 1984a: I 1, 71a, 25-30).⁷

We could say that Kuki's "hermeneutics of popular being" is settled somehow between Aristotelianism and Platonism. Although in the largest part of his study on contingency Kuki interprets contingency as the contrary of necessity, he points also, in the last third of his book, to the importance of examining the relationship between contingency and possibility. Aristotle's classical postulation that the "necessary, in its

first and fundamental sense, is the simple, since the simple cannot be in different modes" is used for an analysis of this very problem (Aristotle 1963b: D, 5, 12).

In the largest sense, Kuki's analysis of Aristotle's being shows a parallel with Heidegger's treatment of the subject in his lecture on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (which Heidegger gave in 1931, two years after Kuki's departure from Europe). Being, Heidegger says, can be understood "als Wahrsein oder als Möglichsein, oder als Vorhandensein oder Zufälligkeit" (Heidegger 1931). Attempting to crystallize the particular role that contingency plays within the phenomenon of being, Kuki decides to deal not only with the real but also with the unreal by attributing two qualities first to the real (existent) and then to the unreal (nonexistent): the real can be either necessary or contingent while the unreal can be either possible or impossible.

This procedure is rather different from the classical Western (Aristotelian) approach towards contingency, which opposes not only the necessary to the contingent but also – and in parallel – the ideal to the real, the rule to the fact, and art to nature. In Kuki a certain sophistication flows out the fact that any ontology of contingency must, strictly speaking, negate itself as an ontology as soon as it accepts the contingent character of being. The French specialist of Aristotle, Pierre Aubenque, has said about this point in Aristotle:

If a theory of signification leads to an ontology of essence, a theory – or better a praxis – of equivocity leads to what first appears as an ontology of accident, but which will soon denounce itself as the negation of any ontology (Aubenque 1963b: 134).

Properly speaking, contingency simply does not make sense in regard to what is nonexistent, and Aristotle has always treated the subject accordingly. Jaakko Hintikka has written about the relationship that Aristotle admits between the possible and the contingent:

Hence 'possible' means that which does not involve any impossibility. In other words, impossibility and possibility are negations of each other. The primary meaning of 'necessary' is for Aristotle that which cannot possibly be otherwise (*Metaphysics*, V5 1015a 33-6). The negation of a necessary proposition therefore expresses the possibility of its contradictory: something is not necessary if and only if it is possible for it to be. Since 'contingent' meant that which is possible but not necessary, something is contingent if and only if it is both possible for it to be and possible for it not to be (Hintikka 1977: 111).

Moreover, Kuki affirms that "possibility" (可能) is "the contingency not to be" (無うことが偶然である) (Kuki 1981c: 155). However, further on, his elaborations point towards ways to encounter contingency not as a scientific but as a metaphysical problem: the being of contingency is constituted not only by existence but also by nonexistence or, to use another word, by "nothingness".

Even more, Kuki classifies contingency with the help of a special epistemological scheme: contingency can be hypothetical (experiential), categorical (logical) or disjunctive (metaphysical), and he declares that his interest in the nonexistent (which is linked to existence) would be restricted to disjunctive contingency. Kuki, then, very importantly, draws a strict limit between contingency (偶然性) and the simple coincidence (偶然, *hasard*, *Zufall*) by saying that mathematics could very well deal with the *hasard* without ever being able to seize the being of contingent phenomena (1981c: 10); these phenomena would be metaphysical.

The particularity of Kuki's idea of contingency – and here we are able to define a parallel between Kuki's approaches to *iki* as an "experiential" and contingency as a metaphysical phenomenon – is thus that it does not remain within the limited field of the experiential but – under Kuki's determined examination, evolves in the direction of the metaphysical. Moreover, the *iki* (or *sui*) is, as George Sansom said, an "expert knowledge of how to behave in all contingencies" (Sansom 1951: 219). For this reason it is difficult to believe that Kuki, although in his study on contingency he drew greatly on Aristotle, really does follow Aristotle to the end. Boutroux provides a useful contrast when he shows that a certain interest in contingency is incompatible with certain Aristotelian "existentialist" tendencies:

Everywhere Aristotle is looking for the idea in the fact, the necessary and the perfect in the contingent and the imperfect; everywhere he is working on the substitution of floating elements that are provided by observation by fixed conceptions and definitions (Boutroux 1897: 108).

Whoever knows Kuki's preferences for "shades", "fragrances", and "after-images which accompany brilliant experience" – preferences that he has displayed so much in *Iki no kôzô* – will doubt that Kuki could really be Aristotelian in the sense described by Boutroux. It is more true to say, once again, that Kuki is looking for a *dynamis* within which

moments will not appear as “lined up” (動的) (like for Aristotle) in the form of purely “present moments”, but in which the past, present, and future interpenetrate. Here reality does not have, as Kuki says, the “stability of an assertion” but a “thickness” (厚み) that makes reality “problematical” (問題的) more than “assertive” (言明的) (1981c: 165). The parallel that exists between this dynamic concept of time and typically Asian models of temporality also gives, in the *Gûzensei no mondai*, a general value to this statement.

4.1. Contingency and *Phronesis*

For all these reasons one might have the right to claim that Kuki, in order to give a “thickness” to a dynamic reality, is looking for contingency (as well as for *iki*) within a dreamlike domain like that of the *phronesis* or the *chôra* – that is, within a domain that by definition “exists” only between being and nonbeing. Hans-Georg Gadamer has written: “For whatever we call ‘not yet’ or ‘possible’ Aristotle has the common notion *dynamēi*” (Gadamer 1985: 213). *Dynamēi* is the “in-determined-general” that always refers to a later determination.

A philosophy of contingency can be examined against the background that is constituted by such a *dynamis* by concentrating on the notions of *chôra* and *phronesis*. The idea of *phronesis* becomes important at the moment we refuse to subsume the particular under the universal: we are confronted, within a paradoxical “in between” or with what Kuki would have called disjunctive contingency. Within such a hermeneutic “in between” we need the “right judgement” or (what amounts to the same thing) prudence in order to find our way in a world in which nothing appears to be predetermined in a necessary way.

Interestingly, we can observe that here, in Aristotle, “right action” is represented as a philosophical and especially moral problem just because there is something like contingency in life. If all human action takes place in a world in which everything is absolutely necessary it becomes absurd to talk about moral questions at all: “Nature does nothing by coincidence” (1984b: 11, 291b, 13) says Aristotle. But, as we all know, practical life cannot be constituted only by nature.

4.2. Aesthetics and Ethics

We should keep in mind that Kuki’s insistence on the fact that “we do not doubt that taste has significance in the domain of morality” (1981a: 48) – should it be influenced at least somehow by an Aristotelian “existentialism” – seems to be based especially on this part of Aristo-

telian philosophy. And it is also in this sense that *iki* as well as Kuki's thoughts on contingency are supposed to teach us one thing above all: that aesthetics is ethical and ethics is aesthetics.

Kuki's philosophy of contingency is complex to the extent that the main objective of his book is to reunite Buddhist and Bushidô moral. As a matter of fact, Aristotle might appear here as a rather inconvenient "partner". While Buddhist ethics is, with all its transcendental atemporality, rather on the side of Stoicism, Aristotelian ethics seems to be located more on the side of Bushidô. Pierre Aubenque has written:

While stoic moral invites us to escape passing time, place of idle regrets and idle expectations, and to look for the equivalent of eternity in the rectitude of a virtuous instant, Aristotelian morality [...] invites us to develop our excellence within this world [...] (Aubenque 1963a: 96).

Against this background it is also possible to make statements in regard to Kuki's much discussed ambition to base *iki* on a ground that is also supposed to be ethnic. It has become clear so far that this ambition needs to be interpreted within the context of a certain fractured relationship with Aristotelian philosophy. In *Iki no kôzô* Kuki declares that "*iki* was, after all, an ethnically determined taste" (1981a: 48). Some commentators have made clear the embarrassing political consequences of such statements. However, we should bear in mind that, in the end, Kuki's fascination with the phenomenon of contingency endows the notion of *ethnos* with a very special connotation.

It is Aristotle who shows us that any practical philosophy that tries to crystallize moral knowledge is always bound to consider two kinds of knowledge at a time. First there is the purely practical knowledge of those things that have to be done, a knowledge that depends on *dianoia*, on thinking. Then there is the ethos as a kind of "gewordenes und schon vorgeformtes Sein" (to use Gadamer's words; Gadamer 1991: 376) of man, and this kind of morality cannot be taught but is rather the privilege of only a few who, in some sense, have always had it.

Aristotle seems to have believed, as D.J. Furley has put it, "in the incorrigibility of wickedness of those who had grown up, through bad habits, into bad dispositions" (Furley 1977: 51) There is a strain in Aristotle that holds that "moral character is determined by birth" and that "behaviour is the outcome of character – i.e. of man's fixed dispositions – and that the character is 'out of our power'" (Furley 1977: 52). On the other hand, the two kinds of virtues, the *dianoia* and the

ethos cannot be separated but they form an entity, and this makes the whole matter so complex.

As a matter of fact, already in Plato, *phronesis* is transmitted from father to son, but it would be too simple to say that a certain idea of "race" has been formulated here as an explanation for the entire phenomenon of *phronesis*. Rather differently here, *phronesis* is always "in between"; it exists, as Aubenque has said, beyond all mediations that are "less transparent than those of the educative discourse but still less obscure than those of hereditament" (Aubenque: 1963a: 60).

The question whether *phronesis* is produced by (or produces) identity or diversity can thus not be decided. It cannot be decided in regard to *iki* either. Since, as is generally believed, Aristotle abandoned Plato's theory of forms (and thus overturned Platonism in a way that Kuki supports in *Iki no kôzô*), Aristotle was left without any point of orientation within a world of pure *hasard*. What was needed was *phronesis* and not a flight into authoritative traditions or into racial excellence (cf. Aubenque, 1963a: 49). "To be intelligent means to 'to find one's way' (se débrouiller), to try, to grope, to be mistaken", said Alain, and Kuki shares this spirit rather than that of a Cartesian mechanism.

Another way of putting the same thing is to state that Kuki's idea of contingency is playful. This means that contingency does not exist, abstractly, as the contrary of necessity but that, in order to exist, it needs to be reflected against a world in which necessity and contingency have been relativized beforehand. Kuki writes:

Real contingency, which lets the heart of the player vibrate, consists more of the fact that this force, which comes, to a certain extent, from a initial drive, in reality does not have the character of an absolute necessity, but that there is also another force to consider. Contingency consists in the fact that there is no contradiction in admitting the existence of that other force (Kuki 1981c: 199).

In fact, it is not only contingency but also necessity that needs to be seen as a metaphysical phenomenon because whenever we come across it we might ask ourselves: "Why is there (necessarily) something instead of nothing?" In this way the "problem of contingency" is also the "problem of necessity" because, as Kuki insists, contingency is conditioned by necessity, and necessity is conditioned by contingency.

Finally we should note (although there is not enough space here for detailed elaboration) that Kuki, with his concept of an

existence-contingency, is not all that far removed from the intellectual environment of the philosophy of the Kyoto School. Nishida's *basho*, the "place" which comes close to the Greek *chôra*, cf. Berque 1997) is, as Ohashi has remarked, diametrically opposed to the Aristotelian substance (*ousia*) (Ohashi 1997: 39). For this reason the "place" could so often be seen as a kind of "intuitionism" that lacks a real logical foundation. We can also note here that Bergson's "metaphysical intuition" (as Western as it is) seems to be an attractive model for a Japanese philosopher.

5. Time and Dream

In the latest "postmodern" development of Western culture, a willingness to experiment with contingency has gained some importance. However, even if in "postmodernity" the *hasard* or contingency has "plunged us into an abnormal incertitude" (Baudrillard), we tend to respond to this incertitude, in a "Western" way, with an "excess of causality and finality" (Baudrillard 1983: 16). This establishes the boundary with the "problem of contingency" discussed above. For Kuki and this particular French philosophical branch, contingency is designed as an "integrable" component interesting for science as much as for philosophy. In modern science or in the modern world in general, the *hasard* is, as Baudrillard has said, rather conceived as an indecent and obscene pariah:

The *hasard* corresponded thus not to science's provisional state of incapacity to explain everything – in that case it would still have a graspable, conceptual existence – but to a passage from a state of causal determinism to another order that is also different from non-*hasard*. The *hasard* has thus no existence at all (Baudrillard 1983: 209).

The difference between the typically modern reception of contingency and the way Kuki understands it becomes manifest through the treatment mainly of three problems:

- 1) The problem of time as it presented itself to French philosophers at the beginning of the century and its reception by Kuki as a Buddhist philosopher.
- 2) The problem of liberty and of existence in the French philosophers in question and for Buddhism.
- 3) The dream as a psychic and aesthetic phenomenon for Kuki and the French philosophers.

5.1. Time

We will come back to what we said at the beginning about a special conception of time. Guyau noticed well before Bergson that, contrary to what the Kantians thought, we do not have a representation of a time that exists as an a priori, abstract form, and through which reality can be perceived. For Guyau the discrimination is "the primordial element of intelligence", and it "does not need the idea of time in order to function: on the contrary, time presupposes this discrimination" (Guyau 1902: 22).

Guyau seems to prepare the way for Bergson's famous claim concerning the relativity of time insisting that "in order to state a change, one always needs a fixed point" (Guyau 1902: 20), and that the time that we encounter in reality does not provide such a point:

The distinction between past and present is so relative that any faraway image provided by memory comes closer as soon as we give it our attention. It will appear as recent and settle in the present.⁸

We have seen that there exists a parallel between this conception and Kuki's and Buddhism's conception of time. Kuki sees "contingency in reality", which refers him to possible realities that are not present although they still do form reality. Time and contingency are thus linked: "The present-value of temporality of contingency is based by the fact itself on the reality of the contingent as simple reality" (Kuki 1981c: 213). Kuki's project to reunite two Asian concepts of time – the Buddhist (Indian) one and that of Japanese Bushidô (the moral code of values of the samurai) – creates the following constellation: while Buddhism strives towards a transcendent or intellectualist liberation from time that is supposed to lead to the intemporal eternity of Nirvâna, Bushidô wants to transgress time by means of the will. Bushidô is ready to join in the eternal repetition of the same (an approach that contains also a great aesthetic potential). By interiorizing contingency as a phenomenon that "contains its own negation", Kuki hopes to found an idea of time that unites Bushidô and Buddhist philosophy.

5.2. Liberty

Kuki recognizes that "Boutroux suggested the concept of contingency as a foundation of a philosophy of liberty that had been promoted by Maine de Biran and Ravaisson" (Kuki 1981c: 105). Inside a contingent

reality, human beings meet their 'I' or their existence. What Kuki calls "interiorization of contingency in the domain of the practical" is constituted by "correlations between an endless number of parts which form a concrete totality" (258).

These points can be well located in the ideas of the French philosophers mentioned. Brunschvicg's opinion that liberty is not a "thing that is given but as a work that is to do", (Brunschvicg 1927: 742) and Bergson's conviction that "the I, absolutely certain within its immediate observations, feels free and declares itself" (Bergson 1909: 5) are statements pointing in the same direction. Kuki remains convinced of the existence of parallels between Eastern and Western thought – and this apparently more in the domain of ethics than anywhere else. Some thoughts expressed by Henri-Frédéric Amiel, whom Kuki read, may perhaps illustrate the proximity of the two spheres. Also Amiel affirms the argument central to Boutroux, Bergson and Guyau: philosophy should be a way of "grasping things, of perceiving reality".⁹ In regard to the question of liberty he evokes an interesting point:

One is free to the extent that one is not mistaken in regard to oneself, about one's pretexts, one's instincts and one's nature. One is only free through critique and energy, this means through the detachment and the control of one's 'I' (Amiel 1905: 3, 288).

It is not without reason that Brunschvicg attributes these thoughts to an Asian influence that Amiel might have received from Schopenhauer. Amiel himself admits that "my Western consciousness, which is penetrated by Christian moralism, has always been persecuted by my Oriental quietism and my Buddhist tendency" (Amiel 1905: 2, 268).

5.3. Dream

As mentioned, Kuki elaborates most importantly the aesthetic component of contingency. This component is represented especially by the phenomenon of the dream. The dream is a metaphor often used in Asian philosophy to express the appearance of a reality founded on a concept of time linked to contingency. From the Buddhist point of view, a first, "banal" contingency that we encounter in dreams – or better, in half-conscious reveries – must be overcome to reach the level of what Buddhism calls the "primordial dream" or the "Great Dream". Dôgen, for example, conceives the dream by establishing a hierarchy of dreams

through which, in the words of Heine, he "contrasts the ontological status of the primordial nature of 'dream within a dream' and the contingency of conventional dreaming and dreams" (Heine 1991: note 26). To obtain knowledge, it is not enough to simply "dream" but to surmount a state of banal reverie holding that everything, even reality itself, is a dream dominated by contingency. Once this banal reverie state is transgressed, we recognize that "roots and stems, branches and leaves, flowers and fruit, lights and colors are all a great dream" (Heine 1991: 39). We go from reverie, which only plays in a superficial way with the motive of contingency (and which sees it even where it is not), to the primordial dream. Having seen the world through this primordial dream makes us understand contingency in a more profound way as an existential condition of the world.

In Asian thought a certain philosophical model of the dream thus occupies a privileged position. The dream represents a phenomenon linked to knowledge, a knowledge thought within a certain "hierarchy of dreams". Heine quotes G. Obeyesekere who has resumed the signification of the dream in Asian thought as follows:

Hinduism seeks transcendence in terms of the "final dreamer", *brahman*, whereas Buddhism recognizes only the metaphysical void, *sunyata*. [...] For Chuang Tzu, however, the issue seems to seek not a final dreamer but relativity as an end in itself. [...] Kuang-ming Wu says: "Buddhists awaken out of dreaming, Chuang Tzu wakes up to dreaming" (Heine 1991: 36).

Similar to the French philosophers in question, the contingency of the dream is seen in relationship with a special concept of time. The primordial dream, which is a negation of the reverie or a sort of "banal" form of dreaming, gives contingency a privileged position; being linked to a certain idea of time, this negation is carried out by affirming that the dream contains a certain "time of the dream".

This complex Asian idea can be rather well explained by referring to the French thinkers. Guyau believed that once the Kantian project of establishing time as an abstract category was overcome duration would no longer exist in the form of a feeling. The representation of time as a "feeling" is due to conceptions of the common sense: time can be "felt" without this feeling leading us to a philosophical knowledge of those things that exist "in" time. In the same way, Bergson insists that "it is without doubt that time fuses for us with the continuity of our inner life" (Bergson 1922: 54). The person of knowledge should pass from this

primary state of the perception of time to a higher or more philosophical vision of time. In this way she can achieve a perspective presenting the world "as it is".

Duration is a matter of consciousness, but the duration that we are conscious of does not necessarily correspond to the consciousness of the "duration itself". Bergson says about the role the consciousness has in the perception of time: "Duration implies [...] consciousness: and we put consciousness to the bottom of all things through the very fact that we attribute to things a time that has duration" (Bergson 1922: 62). One understands why the dream is, as an aesthetic phenomenon and as an element of a philosophy of knowledge, of so much interest for this philosophy: the dream suggests, just because it transgresses the human consciousness of duration, a new concept of time. The dream is interesting as an aesthetic phenomenon as well as as a human experience. Guyau defines the dream as a phenomenon that is concerned with all the qualities that we have analyzed in regard to the transformation of the concept of time:

Every image disappears entirely: the comparison between the present state and the past state becomes impossible; every newly arriving element occupies the scene alone and makes us completely forget all the other actors. They escape consciousness and are not organized within time (Guyau 1902: 18-19).

It is, in fact, contingency that installs itself in the dream, and Kuki brings this out within a similar context, still pointing to the parallel between his thoughts and those of Bergson:

As Bergson says, in our dreams we frequently encounter coincidences. Memory gathers diverse bits of remembrance of from all sides and presents them in an incoherent fashion to the consciousness of the sleeper. Confronted with such a senseless accumulation, one looks for a thread that could establish some meaning (Kuki 1981c: 50).

According to Kuki it is possible to establish a "structure of the dream" (similar to Freud's idea of "*Kittgedanken*") (cf. Freud 1945: 132ff) retrospectively; this means by establishing a plan through which single events will be linked to each other by following a logical order prescribed by an idea of time that is divided into past, present, and future. However, and this is important, such a "reproduction" of the dream will never grasp the dream itself. The reason for this is that the dream does not know such a logic. Kuki describes the dream and its interpretation:

Once one thinks there were men behind the horse who were dressed in black, and then, suddenly, the yellow horse is transforming itself into men who are dressed in black; [then one] ruminates in one's dream: 'Since there was nobody with me, I felt in danger;' because of the danger 'I wanted to fly'. [...] One tries logically to link things in order to eliminate the absurdity, but this is useless because now things are getting still more absurd. There is almost no explanation for the contingent fantasies that deploy themselves in the dream (Kuki 1981c: 51).

The link between the dream and contingency that Kuki emphasizes, a link that is possibly derived from some principal thoughts by both Bergson and Guyau, has also a very "Asian" character. Heine explains that it...

is the very contingency and ephemerality of the dream illustrating the world of appearance that also makes it a key metaphor in the *Prajnaparamita sutras* for the insubstantial and ultimately void or empty nature of reality: "This perfection is like a dream [...] because one cannot apprehend the one who sees the dream".¹⁰

This means that the dream for which everything that happens "inside" itself represents an "absolute truth", it is seen as a knowledge of the world. However, this inside cannot be perceived as an inside; the reason for this is that the person who dreams does not see herself as being "outside". In other words, everything there is represents an "inside as a dream", which means a world of dream. The dream is not a "non-dreamt world" that is seen as a dream; on the contrary, the world itself is a dream and must be perceived directly as such.

Bergson insists on a similar constellation of elements, and he does so at the very moment he establishes the relativity of time as a philosophical phenomenon. In *Durée et simultanéité* Bergson writes:

One has thus to distinguish two kinds of simultaneity, two kinds of succession. The first one is inside the events; it is part of their materiality, it comes from them. The other one is simply put on them by an observer who is outside the system. The first one expresses something about the system itself; it is absolute. The second one is changing, relative, fictitious (Bergson 1922: 125).

In Kuki, at the moment he attempts to interpret the aesthetics of the dream in an ethical way, different branches of philosophy come together. This approach is as obvious in Kuki as it is in Guyau. In the dream,

Guyau discovers images that reside "in the vagueness of an indifferent thought whose époque can in no way be determined" (Guyau 1902: 45). As for Bergson, he describes the dream as "the position in which you find yourself naturally as soon as you abandon yourself, as soon as you stop willing" (Bergson 1909: 110). The problem of the liberty of the I that has been described above is linked to the concept of time, which is based on an aesthetics of the dream. This is true for Guyau and others as well as for Kuki. Guyau writes: "The I escapes our grasp like an illusion, like a dream; it gets dispersed, dissolved into a multitude of floating sensations, and we feel, through a kind of vertigo, how it disappears into the moving abyss of time" (Guyau 1902: 83-84). In the same way Kuki writes that "the ideal of judgement is to identify concretely the exterior 'Thou' within the identity of an interior 'I'" (Kuki 1981c: 256). However, this identification should not consist of a generalization of the 'I' and the 'Thou', which would simply insert the existence of both into a necessary structure. What is important is the necessary-contingent character of the meeting between 'I' and 'Thou'; both of them will subsist only as long as we insist on the contingent-necessary character of the very meeting.

All this represents a radical rationalism. The "identification" of elements of reality can only be made in regard to a fixed point of view. As soon as we negate such a point, as soon as we even deny that the concept of time is founded on an abstract and necessary structure, the 'Thou' and the 'I' start to coexist as if in a dream. It is this transposition of an ethical problem to the domain of aesthetics that must be seen as the principal subject of Kuki's philosophy of contingency.

Conclusion

Kuki's examination of contingency is "Japanese" in the sense that the term is developed in parallel as a metaphysical-religious notion. Kuki's earlier attempts to resume within a Bergsonian "intuition" a certain spiritual quality proper to Zen, but also his elaboration of *iki* as a manifestation of Japanese spirit need to be interpreted within this context.

It is well known that notions like the Taoist *hsin* cannot be translated as "spirit" without – just because of the all-too-intellectualist connotations that this term has in Western philosophy – encountering major problems. In Zen this problem becomes very obvious. While Zen is a matter of intuitive spirit, the manifestations of this spirit are aesthetic in that they manifest themselves as art and poetry. It is for this

reason that, in my opinion, Kuki's ideas about contingency should, despite their apparently Western rationalist basis, be seen as being clearly removed from Western rationalist, empirical statements about the same subject. Conrad Hyers has written that in Zen the Western distinctions between subjective and objective, dramatic and comic, or work and play get dissolved (Hyers 1989: 101). This means that everything that goes through Zen will turn into play, and this strategy is, in spite of its Western disguise, also at work at the foundation of Kuki's philosophy of contingency.

The preceding analysis should have made clear not only the way in which the notion of the dream is supposed to produce such a relativization of the objective and the subjective, but also how much this relativization is dependent on the idea of play. In *Gûzensei no mondai* Kuki writes concerning a "dream play" like Shakespeare's *Midsummernight's Dream* that here the absurdity of contingency does, on the one hand, become manifest in the domain of the abstract, but that, on the other hand, the play also represents the most realistic description of the truth of human existence (Kuki 1981c: 53). We can mention Guyau's sociological study on religion, which brings forward similar positions: on the Brahma he writes that "everything annuls itself like a dream", it is the "great anger like a drawn sword; but it is also the supreme joy for the one who has managed to penetrate it: it is appeasement of desire and of intelligence" (Guyau 1887: 10). In this sense Guyau's (Western) aesthetics of contingency has almost Asian priorities when he writes, in a book entitled *L'Esthétique contemporaine*: "Supreme art takes place when play attains its maximum, where we start playing, so to speak, with the bottom of our being" (Guyau 1904). In the end, not only art but also life, even the most "natural" one, has become play because even for animals "the fight for life is only simulated" (Guyau 1904: 8).

Kuki's intellectual "adventures" in France and Germany should be seen as complementary, especially in regard to the points that have just been mentioned. French culture likes to express itself in the form of rules whereas German culture often prefers the notion of race (in the largest sense). By using a "particularly Western" philosophical discourse, it has been possible for Kuki to define *iki*, habit and style as qualities that exist between both. And this has been all the more efficient since it has been done with the help of an examination of the phenomenon of contingency.

Notes

1. Kōjin Karatani comments Kuki's formulation of *iki* as "the absolutation of possibility as possibility" as the intention to stop "one step prior to reaching a place or to transcending it. In: Marra 1999: 273-74.
2. "Field theory" of modern physics has also been indicated as a reference. Cf. Riepe 1960/61: 392.
3. Cf. p. 73: "In general, all beings are composed of essence (*essentia*), i.e. their way of existing (*modus essendi*), the latter their act of existing (*actus essendi* or *esse ipsum*), so that they exist actually in this or that way of existing".
4. Guyau alludes to the German Indologist Max Müller. All translations from French and German are my translations.
5. My translation. Cf. Spae 1971: "I believe that the Japanese would generally agree with Bergson's view of intuition: it is an experiential event, it is private to the intuiter, and the experience has rarely any observable or communicable consequences; it is an non-intellectual way of knowing prime reality, the existence of nature of that is often obscured and distorted by intellect. [...] One has the impression of listening to a Zen philosopher, particularly when Bergson stresses that, in the ideal world of the future, "pleasure would be eclipsed by joy" (188). Still Spae is convinced that "estheticism may rest in impression; religion needs also expression; it needs what Christians call love" (175).
6. "Dès que le grand homme qui sait s'étonner le premier, porte ses regards hors de lui, le voile de l'habitude tombe, il se trouve en présence de la nature, l'interroge librement, et recueille ses réponses; mais s'il veut concentrer sa vue sur lui-même, il demeure toujours en présence de l'habitude, qui continue à voiler la composition et le nombre de ses produits" (Maine de Biran 1920b: 7).
7. One could also say that here, in Kuki's philosophy of contingency, the influence that hermeneutics has had on Kuki's thought becomes manifest. For Kuki human existence forms itself through "a profound interiorization of the exterior you by the I that happens at every moment where the same and the other meet, here or there, coincidentally" (1981c: 257). This means that the fusion of the individual with its (general) environment does not permit a "structuralization" that would have to be founded on a "necessity of things", but the hermeneutic circle (through which the individual is confronted with the general world) contains an important moment of contingency that cannot be annulled.
8. "Le moi, infaillible dans ses constatations immédiates, se sent libre et se déclare" (Bergson 1909: 5).
9. "Saisir les choses, un mode de perception de la réalité" (Amiel 1905: 1, 98) For Amiel's Buddhist tendencies see Mistry 1981: 33-34. Mistry enlists the following pages from Amiel's Journal intime which contain references to Buddhism: 20, 40, 54, 107, 211, 300, 359.
10. Heine 1991: 33. Quotation from Conze 1975: 313.

4. The 'I' and the 'Thou': A Dialogue between Nishida Kitarô and Mikhail Bakhtin

1. Introduction

In the present chapter I attempt to crystallize Nishida's and Bakhtin's common ideas about the 'I' and the 'Thou' as paradoxical models of self-perception as well as of the perception of the Other. The ideas of the "organic", *stylistic* unity, inter-subjectivity and self-reflection will be examined as phenomena of consciousness presented in similar manners by both philosophers.¹

First, however, it will be necessary to introduce the comparison of such otherwise dissimilar authors very carefully. The Russian literary critic Mikhail M. Bakhtin (1895-1975) and Nishida Kitarô are two authors who come from different hemispheres and even different traditions, apparently linked only through having shared some decades of the same century. Going by the intellectual biographies of both authors, one can easily doubt that these two authors are really comparable: Bakhtin grew up in the milieu of Russian modernism, authored books on Rabelais and Dostoevsky, and a great number of works on literary aesthetics. His critical attitude towards his Russian Formalist contemporaries made him interesting, and his interest in language made him popular in Russia in the Sixties and Seventies, and later also in the West. Nishida developed a Western style philosophy out of early Zen experiences, and during his lifetime manifested a constant interest in Zen Buddhism as well as in philosophical questions concerning religious experience. This establishes a considerable distance. Added to this comes a "formal" problem within studies of comparative *philosophy*. Bakhtin was "officially" not a philosopher but a literary critic who built an aesthetic theory mainly around the novels of Dostoevsky. Nishida relied mainly on Eastern and Western *philosophical* sources and tried to design a Japanese *philosophy* compatible with Western standards.

On the other hand, as the title of the present chapter suggests, both Nishida and Bakhtin have dealt with the subject of the ‘I’ and the ‘Thou’: Nishida wrote a long piece bearing that title, and Bakhtin treats the same subject in principal parts of a well known article. It is also obvious that for both, reflections on the ‘I’ and the ‘Thou’ represented a major theme with regard to the development of the entire body of their thought. Looking more closely, it even turns out that both authors have very similar things to say on the subject.

A further parallel occurs, providing a hint that both authors’ treatment of the ‘I’ and the ‘Thou’ might not only work in parallel with regard to the topic itself, but also take place in a similar philosophical context. A decisive addition occurs when considering that both authors were, when treating the subject of the ‘I’ and the ‘Thou’, concerned with the phenomenon of *space*. Both Bakhtin and Nishida were constantly working against *abstract* concepts of space, replacing them by more “cultural” and concrete ones.

Nishida’s work presents itself “officially” as a philosophy of space. His notion of *basho* is generally translated as *place* and has been considered, together with the notion of *ma*, as a Far Eastern contribution to theories of space in philosophy, architecture, and urbanism as well as a philosophical source of attempts to wrench the modern treatment of space from its Cartesian background.² I will refer to Nishida’s idea of space from here on as “place”; for convenience’s sake, I will do so also with regard to Bakhtin. Bakhtin’s contribution to the philosophy of place is less well known and more difficult to recognize. In spite of the overwhelming amount of Bakhtin criticism, the general tendency is to treat Bakhtin’s ideas of dialogism, *heteroglossia*, (or even of place-related topics like the “chronotope”) in the context of society, literature, and language, and not of urbanism or architecture. Still, it remains a fact that what has later been called Bakhtin’s “anti-idealism” rested on his conviction that any reality should not be transposed in an “extra-social” as well as in a “внепространственный” (extra-spatial) and “вневременный” (extra-temporal) realm (Medvedev 1928: 25/14). For reasons that will hopefully become obvious in this chapter, I believe that Bakhtin’s theoretical suggestions concerning polyphony, carnival and other cultural phenomena, should not be seen *only* as social, institutional, artistic, or language-related devices, but as making concrete suggestions about cultural *space* and the life taking place within it.

Bakhtin insists throughout all of his philosophy that time and space are not physical but that time is historical and space is social. On this point he is indeed comparable with the later Nishida for whom the *basho* is a place in which things do not simply “exist” but in which they are “local”, i.e. in which they “are” in a concrete way. Bakhtin’s and Nishida’s outspokenly “organicist” definitions of “place” or “locality” put both of them into the group of those people who attempt to think place as more than as a Newtonian extension of space. Yûjirô Nakamura has said in regard to Nishida, that from Aristotle’s *chôra* to modern speculations about a Big Bang, the idea of “organicity” has represented a constant challenge. There is a link between Bakhtin’s concern in spatio-temporal “chronotopes” (a term Bakhtin derived from Einstein but which he never defined rigidly) that should constantly be reflected against the “unity of the world”, and Nishida’s philosophy of “place” that deal with very similar questions. Seen like this, both philosophies occupy respective positions within the same twentiethth century current of organicist philosophy particularly interested in the definition of place (Nakamura 2000: 369 and 375).

However, the parallel concerning “place” is twofold, which makes the entire subject even more stimulating. Within their analyses of the relationship between ‘I’ and ‘Thou’, both Bakhtin and Nishida force us to see not only the ‘I’ and the ‘Thou’ within place but also to see *place itself as being constituted* by a relationship between the ‘I’ and the ‘Thou’. This means that both thinkers needed, at a certain moment of their reflections on the non-abstract character of place, to refer to the relationship between humans and were interested, when it came to the topic of “human space”, not just in “subjective humans” and their way of perceiving space. Neither was interested in the relationship between humans as long as it was a relationship between the ‘I’ and the ‘He’ or the ‘He’ and the ‘He’. For both authors, the most interesting aspect of human, cultural place could be revealed through an examination of the relationship between the ‘I’ and the ‘Thou’.

Nishida and Bakhtin aim to define “cultural place” as something non-scientific and “human”, as opposed to abstract and objective definitions of space. At the same time, however, both are not giving in to, but rather combating subjectivist theories by putting forward the *individualist* side of culture as well as of place (or language and literature in the case of Bakhtin). Bakhtin would never give in to unidimensional definitions of a “milieu” (среды), soil (почвы), or earth (земли) (Bakhtin 1979: 35). A priori, this affirmation of non-objective values

combined with the rejection of subjective concreteness, must be seen as a paradox. The choice of the 'I' and the 'Thou' as a common topic can, finally, only be explained by insisting on this paradox. The only way to get "out" of the paradox was not to talk further about abstract, "everybody's" space, nor about individualist, subjective space, but about that space which exists – in a "dialogical" way – *between* humans whose interconnection is neither abstract nor concrete. This is the place marked off by a "strange" relationship, the relationship between the 'I' and the 'Thou'.

The comparison of these authors can show what perhaps all comparative studies are supposed to show: that the one needed what the other had, and vice versa. Nishida needed the existence of the 'Thou' in order to remain close to "concrete" social reality – and he became aware of it very late (only after 1934 when he began transforming *basho* into a place of socio-historical determination). This represents a problem for interpretations of Nishida, and the particular religious, Buddhist connotations of *basho* do not make things easier. This is the more so true since it is especially because of these connotations that his philosophy of place tends, by some people, to be received exclusively as a *religious philosophy* trying to *negatively* overcome rationalist separations of the subjective self and the objective world, or of *noesis* and *noema*.

While for Nishida the 'Thou' was a relatively late discovery, Bakhtin was aware of it from his youth; but *he* needed something else. What it is that he needed is actually difficult to spell out, but let me make some suggestions why this could be called "non-Western".³ My point is that the contradictions between the theoretical positions announced Bakhtin's texts can be resolved, at least to some extent, within a theory of cultural place that is not based on something "positive" but on "nothingness". In other words, instead of looking, for example, for the "positive" side of Dostoevsky's artistic forms, one can approach Bakhtin also by concentrating, from the beginning, on his "negative" side, analogous to the method that has been considered the only appropriate one for the treatment of a "metaphysical" theory of place developed by Nishida.⁴

"Contradictions" are not only present in Bakhtin's arguments themselves, but flow also, as is well known, out of comparisons of his works with each other, even those which chronologically belong close together. I believe that this fact becomes particularly interesting in the context I am trying to create in the present chapter. Already in textbooks one can read that "Dialogic Imagination" contradicts "Dostoevsky's

Poetics".⁵ I want to emphasize this contradictoriness, because I believe that an approach to Bakhtin's dialogical place of 'I' and 'Thou' through Nishida's religio-cultural place of 'I' and 'Thou' can indeed produce a new and useful perspective on Bakhtin.

The contradictoriness becomes manifest through a comparison of three of Bakhtin's earlier texts, "Author and Hero", "Discourse in the Novel" (the latter now contained in *Dialogic Imagination*) and "Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics", works which are, intellectually and historically, immediately related to Bakhtin's reflections on 'I' and 'Thou'.⁶ In the present chapter I concentrate mainly on these three works. The ultimate incompatibility of the positions announced in these three texts from the 1920s or just after can be summarized thus: The "modernity" presented in the latest text, "Discourse in the Novel", leaves un-centralized "chaos" as the last possibility of the development of human culture, spelling out nothing "positive" in regard to a perspective that can easily appear as pessimistic. Bakhtin speaks out against the "great centralizing tendencies of European verbal-ideological life [that] have sought first and foremost for *unity in diversity*", (1975b: 87/274) and criticizes the exclusive "orientation toward unity" (установка на единство) relying on "mono-semantic" (односмысленных) and phonetic evidence. However, where finally a "real ideologically saturated 'language consciousness'" (ibid.) should be found, he never says.

It is difficult to bring this attitude together with the "authorial discourse" argument of the earliest of the three texts, "Author and Hero" (1924-27). It is equally difficult to assume the compatibility of both ideas with the stylistic theory brought forward in the middle text, "Dostoevsky's Poetics", in which an organic, though "supra-personal" and "transcendental" (Bakhtin 1979: 20), *style* seems to be the final offering of a self-sufficient aesthetic theory of civilization.

This constellation of facts, especially within this comparative analysis of Nishida, raises serious doubts as to whether Bakhtin can really be apprehended as a "social philosopher". When I say that Bakhtin needed a "non-Western logic" I mean, in fact, that his philosophy of dialogue needs a metaphysical foundation that cannot be reduced to a "socio-aesthetic theory", shifting between the insistence on the structurally binding character of laws and institutions on the one hand, and the reduction of Bakhtin's arguments to "aesthetics" on the other. Nor does his philosophy require a kind of neo-mysticism conjuring the otherworldly, unifying powers of "dialogue". It must perhaps

be said that, at the point where Bakhtin criticism presently stands, there seem to be relatively few alternatives between these two options, the first one presented, roughly speaking, by an American-liberal (“aesthetic”) and British “anti-capitalist” coalition, and the second one by a new Russian theological-philosophical movement apparently still searching for its intellectual identity.⁷ In both camps, however, nobody has ever thought that Bakhtin’s “dialogism” could be based on something like a “metaphysics of nothingness”.

When we say thus that our comparison is supposed to push Bakhtin towards a “philosophy of place”, we mean that Bakhtin’s ambition, particularly visible in the essay “Discourse in the Novel”, is to do research into dialogue itself, and not only into the positive or “relevant” components of dialogue. The “*absence* of the author” announced (and at the same time not announced) by Bakhtin in this essay, comes close to our supposition of a *negative* place replacing positive dialogical structures. The same can be said of Bakhtin’s avoidance of any positive definition of a *chronotope* as an “idyllic” place of time-place interaction, as well as about other typically Bakhtinian “un-finalized” concepts.

This perspective also permits one to see a coherence between texts that would otherwise be difficult to link to each other. Attempts to establish a “*negative place*” occur not only in the later text but announce themselves, albeit modestly, earlier as well. In “Dostoevsky’s Poetics” Bakhtin without hesitation calls the discovered “multiplicity of styles” also the “absence of style” (Bakhtin 1979: 20).

From a comparative perspective, the interpretative struggle between the “disintegration” and the “progressiveness” of Bakhtin’s dialogical literary work (and the modern world it symbolizes) may well turn out to be irrelevant. While Nishida is known and appreciated for his use of philosophical paradoxes, any paradoxical input traced in Bakhtin’s philosophy – be it only a certain “open-endedness” of a structural framework – runs the risk of being perceived as a drawback. In his book on Bakhtin and democracy, Ken Hirschkop asks: “Does democracy need help from even a reconstructed stylistics, though? Isn’t it a matter of institutions and political structures first, and language, if ever, afterwards?” (Hirschkop: 1999: 26) The “problem” with Bakhtin is that the obvious “lack” of “author-ity” in his purely stylistic world leaves nothing but a vague (aesthetic) intersubjectivity, and this lets him too easily appear to be living “beyond this world”. Hirschkop writes with rhetorical irony: “So enthralled is he with the vivid intercourse of socio-ideological languages and the stylistic acrobatics of the novel that

he hardly pauses to consider what the point of the style is or how he will justify a world so dominated” (Hirschkop 1999: 77). I want to show here that Bakhtin’s, as well as Nishida’s, cure for the modern world is neither naïve aestheticism nor a positive theory of communication. Their philosophies should rather be seen as opposing both positive science describing the self in terms of a purely socio-historical environment *and also* aestheticising descriptions of the world.⁸

2. *Einführung* and Answerability

The gist of Bakhtin’s and Nishida’s common point about the ‘I’ and the ‘Thou’ is that both insist on the paradoxical nature of the perception of the Other. On the one hand, one could presuppose that a fusion of the ‘I’ with the ‘Thou’ could be nothing but beneficial to the ‘I’ at the moment it wants to understand the ‘Thou’. One could think that the ‘Thou’ is well *understood* at the very moment a real assimilation of the ‘I’ to the ‘Thou’ has taken place. However, in that case the ‘I’ will no longer be the ‘I’, and the ‘Thou’ will no longer be the ‘Thou’. The aim must rather be to understand the ‘Thou’ as a ‘Thou’ by maintaining the status of the ‘I’. Only if a clear-cut *distinction* between both is maintained is the perception of the ‘I’ by the ‘Thou’ possible. For Bakhtin, these thoughts, which he pursued with an almost fanatical perseverance, are linked to his lifelong combat against an aesthetics and epistemology of empathy. Bakhtin develops these thoughts in his youthful text “Автор и герой в эстетической деятельности” (“Author and Hero in Aesthetic Action”),⁹ an essay on aesthetics heavily indebted to phenomenology and Neo-Kantianism. The young Bakhtin’s approach towards the problem of perception consists of pointing again and again to the impossibility of an understanding of the ‘Other’ as long as this understanding implies a theorization of any kind. Such a theorization or objectification already takes place at the very moment the ‘I’ attempts to understand the other in the same way in which it understands itself. Bakhtin discovers the essential paradox that the willful negation of differences between the ‘I’ and the ‘Thou’ through an act of abstraction (as it is represented for example by intuition or *Einführung*) does not lead at all to a “concrete” understanding of the other but rather to its antithesis. Intuition, empathy, or any approach substantially implying, as Bakhtin sees it, the idea of a “merging” with the other, will only understand the Other *as the ‘I’*. In a dramatic passage in *Art and Answerability* Bakhtin claims:

Пусть он останется вне меня, ибо в этом своем положении он может видеть и знать, что я со своего места не вижу и не знаю, и может существенно обогатить событие моей жизни. *Только* сливаясь с жизнью другого, я только углубляю ее безысходность и только нумерически ее удваиваю.

Let him rather remain outside of me, for in that position he can see and know what I myself do not see and do not know from my own place, and he can essentially enrich the event of my own life. If *all* I do is merge with the other's life, I only intensify the want of any issue from within itself that characterizes my own life, and I only duplicate his life numerically (Bakhtin 1994a: 157 /87).

In Bakhtin's view, to understand the 'Other' is rather an act of cultural creation and the idea of a simple "merging" with the other contradicts the concept of an "active" understanding. Bakhtin intends to establish the "Otherness" of the 'Thou' as an important component of the 'I's understanding of the 'Thou' as *the 'Thou'*. Expressing it in terms that were current in Russia at the time of formalism, one could say that the negation of an essential strangeness clinging to every 'Thou' as soon as it is perceived by an 'I' will simply turn the 'Thou' into an abstract idea. A concrete 'Thou' cannot be understood through its assimilation to an 'I' but only through an act of *reaction* guarantying the autonomous existence of the 'Thou' as something "strange". In this way Bakhtin writes:

Мы не должны ни воспроизводить – сопереживать, подражать, - не художественно воспринимать, а реагировать ответным поступком.

I must neither reproduce it—imitate or co-experience it—nor apprehend it artistically, but react to it with an answering act (Bakhtin 1994a: 207/148).

The conclusion is that, by *reacting* to the 'Thou', the 'I' understands the 'Thou' better than through an act of self-conscious abstraction from itself, even if this abstraction is meant to provide a "neutral" perception of the other.

Nishida's thoughts about the 'I' and the 'Thou' occupy a special position within the development of his philosophy—a position so distinctive that, at first sight, they appear incompatible with some of his earlier thoughts. If we consider his early definitions of *pure experience* in *Zen no kenkyû*, we recognize *pure experience* as a kind of individual consciousness that is supposed to constitute a "sole reality". Strictly

speaking, nothing seems to contradict here the compatibility of Nishida's philosophy with the "idealism" combated by Bakhtin. Nishida insists on a difference between immediate experience and conceptualizing approaches because conceptual universals fail to embrace "individuals", and his alternative to conceptualism remains linked to attempts to grasp the individual "as such" (Nishida 1926: 218; cf. Abe 1988: 363).

Later, in the text "Basho" from 1925, one sees Nishida designing a theory of "place" in which intuition is still guaranteed through a reflection of the self (*jiko*) in the self. In spite of obvious attempts to grasp the process of intuition contained in *pure experience* with the help of a geographical metaphor, the "place" is not thought of in the sense of a socio-historical reality containing a 'Thou' or an Other. It seems rather that the individual, subjective consciousness has become "interiorized" to the utmost degree by thinking of the subject as being subsumed in the "predicative thing" called *basho*. This is still *pure experience*, though a certain reflective moment has been installed within the act of intuition. It is not a reflection of the 'I' against a 'Thou' but rather of an 'I' within an 'I'. However, even if the Other does not play a role here in "Basho", it is also true that "intuition" stands for more than simply the fusion of a subject with its objective world. Even if the alternative to the "general" is still the "individual", this individual is not thought of as a subsumption of general aspects within one individuality:

我々が主客合一と考えられる直覚的立場に入る時でも、意識は一般概念的なるものを離れるのではない、かえって一般概念的なるものの極致に達するのである。[・・・] 直覚というのが単に主もなく客もないということを意味するならば、それは単なる対象に過ぎない。既に直覚といえ、知るものと知られるものとが区別せられ、しかも 両者が合一するということではなければならぬ。Even if we adopt an intuitive point of view that will be thought as the unity of subject and object, consciousness will not be detached from the general-conceptual; on the contrary, we attain thus the utmost of the general-conceptual. [...] If intuition means nothing more than that there is neither subject nor object, it is no more than an object. As soon as one talks about intuition, one has already distinguished the knower and the known and again reunited both (Nishida 1926: 222).

Let me explain this thought by comparing the *basho* to the notion of play. The individual of *pure experience*, like the individual of the *basho*, is an "individual in action" which does not exist as a substance but

which “comes into play”. For Nishida, the *basho* is a place where a certain game determines itself “all alone”, without referring to subjective or objective foundations, because for the game there is nothing but the place itself. In this place singularities, like “selves” form themselves. A “self” formed in a place is not formed by following rules borrowed from a sphere outside the game but the self shapes itself by simply “playing” what is the game of the place.

This idea, which suggests a strongly paradoxical structure, becomes understandable when one considers that the game is no “substantial force” either. A game is not “something” that one can see or measure. A game is only an action creating its sense all alone while acting. The game’s sense exists—a game is not an arbitrary action— but it exists only inside a place that is created by the game itself.¹⁰

Within this framework, the existence of the ‘Thou’ and the dialogical character of human existence represented a new challenge for Nishida from the early 1930s. It permitted him to depict *basho*, including the ‘I’ and the ‘Thou’, as dialogically determined. This did not topple his already existing ideas about *basho* as an activity linked to self-perception (the integration of the ‘Thou’ into *basho* must probably be seen as an unsolved problem). On the other hand it helped put things differently. In the texts immediately following *I and Thou* (*The World of Action*, 1933 and *The Dialectical World*, 1934, both contained in Nishida 1933-34), the self is no longer conceived of individualistically: On the contrary, the fact of seeing the ‘Thou’ as completely detached from the existence of the ‘I’ gives rise to criticism of contemporary Marxist world-views (Dilworth 1978: 250). As a consequence, in Nishida’s later texts, we can read statements like: “a mere isolated individual is nothing at all” (Nishida 1944: 114). *Basho* appears now like a place in which all living and non-living things come into being: it reflects all individuals and their mutually determining way-of-being within itself (cf. Abe 1988: 371). This means that the place still subsumes individuals, but this time “all” individuals seem to be concerned.

What was it that brought about this change in *I and Thou*? Here Nishida postulates for example, that the ‘I’ and the ‘Thou’, because of their inter-determination, must “flow out of the same environment” (同じ環境から生れ) (348), and that the ‘I’ must always be seen as being determined by a “common consciousness”. But what is in question is not at all the fusion of different individual bits of consciousness. A mere “fusion” would not represent a real socio-historical world. Nishida

insists that any idea of “merging” would neglect an essential component of human understanding. The act of intuition must incorporate the knowledge of the ‘Thou’ *as the ‘Thou’* by the ‘I’:

Intuition – whose model is normally thought as artistic intuition – does not mean that we are immediately united with things. It is rather that at the bottom of ourselves resides the absolute other, so that at the bottom of its self, the self has to become the ‘Other’. ‘I’ and the ‘Other’ do not become one here, but I am asked to see in myself the absolute other. This might be an unthinkable contradiction (Nishida 1932: 390).

The “ground” of intuition is not a subjective interiority contained in the ‘I’ but it is the relationship between the ‘I’ and the Other through which the Other becomes a ‘Thou’. The idea of *place* becomes here a type of intuition that will never become “numerical” or abstract. It will never run out of concrete content as long as the ‘I’ sees itself in the ‘Thou’. One can say that the “place” creates a kind of “play of reflection” in which the ‘I’ and the ‘Thou’ are not really opposed to each other, but are, even *before* any reflection takes place, determining each other.

In Nishida therefore, the ‘I’ does not represent a firm subjective basis into which, within the process of understanding, the ‘Other’ could or should be integrated through assimilation. If the ‘I’ and the ‘Thou’ approach each other, then they do so not in order to merge until the ‘Thou’ becomes the ‘I’, but rather in order to discover the ‘Other-ness’ not only of the ‘Thou’ but also of the ‘I’. I would argue that, for Nishida from the time he wrote the text ‘I’ and ‘Thou’, “self-consciousness”, even in regard to its profoundest psychological layers, is not based on self-perception but on a *social consciousness*.¹¹

Would it now be wrong to say that what Nishida characterized in the passage quoted above from “Basho” as an empty generality whose claim to be “objective” might be justified, but which fails to provide any “knowledge” about the “objective” world that the subject intends to perceive, comes close to Bakhtin’s notion of an empty and “numerical” “duplication” of the other? Nishida criticizes the idea of a “merging” of subject and object as a type of intuition that will lead to abstraction and objectification. We have seen that Bakhtin criticizes the same idea because it will lead to the establishment of a “numerical reality”. Also for Bakhtin, this numerical reality can be avoided the moment we respect the paradoxical relationship between the ‘I’ and the ‘Thou’.

Nishida's ideas not only fully correspond to Bakhtin's concerning the "social character" of psychic life, language, art, and society, but they imply a certain logic of "answerability", i.e. a logic of human understanding that attributes more importance to active *reaction*, than to passive *intellectualization*. David Dilworth has said that in Nishida's later thought "personal action", presupposes "the concrete fusion of the individual and environment, particular and universal, and subject and object in the dialectical field of the social historical world" (Dilworth 1978: 250). This means that "social and historical components of the real world are illustrated in every instance of personal action" (ibid.). This "fusion" is not an empirical fusion in the sense of empathy or of even more abstract scientific theories. The idea of action actually prevents it from becoming such a fusion. "I act therefore I am" is Nishida's way of avoiding the Cartesian *cogito*. In regard to the consciousness of the 'I', one could paraphrase Nishida's sentence as "I *re-act* therefore I am". It is most efficiently expressed in the phrase: "I know you because you answer me, and you know me because I answer you" (私は汝が私に応答することによって汝を知り、汝は私が汝に応答することによって私を知るのである) (Nishida 1932: 392).

The idea, as it stands here, is certainly more than merely reminiscent of Bakhtin. In Nishida's *I and Thou*, the act of "answering each other" or the "echo-like encounter of those who are opposed" (ibid.) is presented as the basis of human existence and contrasts with all concepts of "unification". Even artistic activity is based on this kind of "answerability between persons" (人格と人格との応) (394), because art also exists in the realm of reality in the sense of "actuality"; and such an actuality takes place only within an encounter of 'I' and 'Thou'.

For Bakhtin, in carnival, as he shows in his Dostoevsky book as well as in his revised thesis on Rabelais (Bakhtin 1965: 98/88), the individual person manages to exist, at least for a while, in an "in-between", i.e. in a place "between" persons, and negates in this way its biological body in order to become one with the "people", with mankind, and with the entire cosmos. Here, the body is no longer biological but *historical*. In this sense, also Bakhtin's idea of playacting as a unity of imagination and creation overlaps (as is best shown by his concept of carnival) with a kind of place that is half real and half playacted; and here one finds an obvious element indicating a certain "negativity" in his idea of consciousness.

It is true that Nishida would most probably not have been willing to push the playful fusion of the 'I' with the 'Thou' as far as that. His

philosophy of the ‘I’ and the ‘Thou’ is developed within the limited framework of *metaphysics* concerned with the unification of opposites. Still, Nishida would agree that for example history could be seen not only as something “*real*” but also as a realization of the “*unreal*” (cf. Schinzinger 1958: 60). Do such statements really need to be read as quasi-religious affirmations or can they not also be understood as being concerned with “*real*” human relationships? Any detection of parallel developments and differences with Bakhtin is here supportive of an understanding of Nishida’s thought.

As for Bakhtin, he liked, in his juvenile fervor, to present the world as a stage in which all action is playacting. However, even while conjuring the most extreme forms of confusion about human identities (for example in carnival), Bakhtin always seems to be ready to concede that carnival needs to be seen as a “[...] modus of interrelationship of man with man” (Bakhtin 1979: 141/123; cf. Medvedev 1928: 91/64ff). It would certainly require much more research than could be presented within the limits of this chapter, but perhaps specialists of consciousness studies will some day find similarities between Bakhtin’s “dialogical consciousness” and Nishida’s concept of consciousness as a manifestation of *basho*. Several points could support such a hypothesis: Bakhtin opposes not only laughter to seriousness, dialogue to monologue, coincidence to necessity, but also dream to *logos*. *Logos* is not only “logic” but also language. One needs now to be aware that, in Western philosophy, *logos* is seen as residing “above the contradictions of spatial and temporal existence” (Dilworth 1978: 260). This is exactly the point that Nishida also criticizes. Bakhtin prefers non-materialized psychic life that is not yet molded in language to linguistic expression.¹²

3. Stylistic Unity and Nothingness

Bakhtin’s dynamic unity of style, which appears, especially in “Discourse in the Novel,” as “self-negating”, i.e. simultaneously present and absent, suggests conclusions concerning a parallel development of Bakhtin’s and Nishida’s “place” defined through an ontology of play. Can the idea of the “organic” be seen, at least when it comes to art (but perhaps even elsewhere), as a *stylistic* unity? To this interesting question Bakhtin and Nishida give similar answers. Bakhtin somehow “borrowed” the concept of style to describe the interdependence of language and ethics. Because he wanted to avoid any Kantian formalism, his ideas on cultural dialogicity are based on the rejection of *any stylistic unity* (be it formal, empirical or even spiritual). Still, the idea of a

cultural unity is introduced by recognizing the existence of a “place of play” in which the signs provided by social and historical reality interact. In this way, stylistic unity exists, but it must be “played” so it can be shaped after the ontological conditions provided by a concrete place. Nishida claims that art styles would represent a contradictory “self-identity of subject and environment” when he writes:

芸術の様式は主体と環境との矛盾的自己同一として、民族とその環境とによって異ならなければならない (...art styles, as contradictory self-identity of subject and environment, are, according to the respective people and environment, distinct from each other.) (Nishida 1941: 238).

There is a paradox clinging to style, which incited Bakhtin to develop a methodology (of dialogue) intending to show the insufficiencies of the quasi-structuralist approaches of Wölfflin when it comes to the novels of Dostoevsky. Nishida has a similar idea in mind when writing:

ウエルフリンの様式範疇の如きものの中に、東洋芸術の様式をはめ込めてよいであろうか。私は疑なきを得ない (If Eastern Art could ever be forced into something like Wölfflin's Categories of Style? I very much doubt so.) (Nishida 1941: 241).

Nishida is aware that the price to pay for abstract definitions of “styles” is the transformation of spatial extension into something abstract. There is, in Nishida's philosophy, an essential relationship between style and place. Style appears like a *basho*; it has no geographical extension but is a matter of mirroring self-reflection.

From here we are led to a consideration of Nishida's idea of “mirroring” (*utsusu* 映す), a difficult term essential for the ‘I’-‘Thou’ relationship as well as for all issues related to it, and we are led to a comparison of this notion with corresponding thoughts of the Bakhtin Circle. At the root of the idea of Nishida's mirroring is the Buddhist insight that being can best appear “as it is” in the “Mirror of Emptiness”. *Basho* does not simply contain an ‘I’ “in” itself as if it were a subject surrounded by an objective environment. Nishida uses the Buddhist metaphor of mirroring to *elude* such a directional relatedness between subject and object, as well as the separation of subject and object itself. Nishida's “mirroring” is not a simple “reflection”— rather it needs a certain “negative” surplus since it is supposed to produce an

intersubjective *consciousness*. The above-quoted passage from “Artistic Creation as a Formative Act” continues with a sentence attempting to specify in which way Worringer’s “limitation of space” could nevertheless lead to the creation of a *basho*. What would be needed is an “artistic” input that will be based on the effect of mirroring:

[...]それが芸術的立場であるかぎり、同時に物において自己を映す、物において自己を見るということが含まれていなければならない ([...] as far as this [limitation of space] produces itself artistically, it immediately turns things into a mirror, and simultaneously implies that the Self is seen in things (Nishida 1941: 238).

As a matter of fact, the described complex relationship between ‘I’ and “things” represented such a “mirroring” because the ‘I’ sees itself in “things” and vice versa. The terms of the Russian formalists, “alienation” and “self-alienation”, are suggestive here: would not a “simple”, narcissist reflection of the ‘I’ in the ‘I’, produce an “alienation” or even a “self-alienation” of the subject? What is necessary is a more “open” mirroring which includes in itself an entire environment that is produced through this act of mirroring.

In principle, such a philosophical model of open, or “negative”, “mirroring” in the context of reflections on the formation of consciousness is not limited to the Buddhist sphere but can be found also in the West. One can quote Richard Rorty, who has discussed the problem of consciousness within cognitive processes by using as a methodological guideline the metaphor of the mirror. His main argument, developed in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, suggests that

...it is as if man’s Glassy Essence, the Mirror of Nature, only became visible to itself when slightly clouded. A neutral system can’t have clouds but a mind can. So minds, we conclude, cannot be neutral systems (Rorty 1980: 86).

As a matter of fact, what Rorty calls “clouds” could also be called “distortion” or “refraction”, which is not just a mirroring but which contains a certain negative surplus. In any case, it is during a creative mirroring process that a “place” is produced that involves both the object and the self-conscious subject. The “cloudy” reflection that Rorty speaks of can never be pure.

For Bakhtin, in “Discourse in the Novel”, the process of refraction (*prelomlenie*) as a producer of style represents a central topic. For the Bakhtin Circle in general, the opposition of refraction and reflection represents one of its main theoretical tools when it comes to statements about the formation of consciousness. Voloshinov insists, in an essay that also appeared in the early 1920s (thus at a time when his relationship with Bakhtin was close) that human existence “отраженное в знаке, не просто отражено, но преломлено” (“...reflected in sign is not merely reflected but *refracted*” Voloshinov 1929: 31/23)¹³ This is, of course, because “таким образом, конститутивным моментом для языковой формы, как для знака, является вовсе не ее сигнальная себетождественность, а ее специфическая изменчивость” (“...the constituent factor for the linguistic form, as for the sign, is not at all its self-identity as signal but its specific variability”, Voloshinov 1929: 82/69). “Variability” means here that we have to do with a refraction of the individual through its social environment that is seen as a process of *stylization* through which the individual as well as the environment create a “stylistic existence”. For Bakhtin all essential devices of dialogism and polyphony are embedded within such a “refracting” act of stylization. This process of refraction is polyphonic, which is also the reason why no conventional *stylistics* has ever been able to grapple with this problem. The environment within which the refraction takes place must be *open* because the world itself is a dialogue involving many opposing elements constantly refracting each other. The result of this polyphonic refraction can never be “one style” or “one consciousness”, but it will be an open field of consciousness appearing like a polyphonic stylistic event.

For Bakhtin, this refraction is directly opposed to the idea of *Einfühlung* as it has been presented at the beginning of this chapter. Any “пассивом отображения удвоения переживания другого человека во мне” (“passive mirroring or duplication of another’s experience within myself”, Voloshinov 1929: 170/102), on the other hand, which does not include the active, stylizing act of answering necessary for real understanding, must be likened to positivism or the impressionist aesthetic of an empty play (161/92). Bakhtin’s “theory of culture” is based on this concept of mirroring, as he writes in “Discourse in the Novel”:

Languages of heteroglossia (разноречия), like mirrors that face each other, each of which in its own way reflects (отражает) a little piece, a tiny corner

of the world, force us to guess at and grasp behind their inter-reflecting aspects for a world that is broader, more multi-leveled and multi-horizoned than would be available to one language, one mirror (225-26/414-15).¹⁴

Because a cultural environment can come about only through the dialectical refraction of the self with itself as well as with its environment, the mirroring effect of the *basho* must be active. Only in this way can feelings and will produce themselves within the “self-reflecting mirror” (自己自身を照らす鏡, Nishida 1926: 213).¹⁵

5. Further Perspectives:

5.1. Bakhtin, Zen, and Laughter

In spite of obvious parallels between Bakhtin and Nishida, some people might still have doubts whether Bakhtin, with his adoration of laughter, carnival, and the grotesque, will not always remain a far cry from Nishida. His carnivalesque tendency lets him appear close to Nietzsche but certainly not to a Nishida who is as un-dionysian a philosopher as can be. However, Nishida’s philosophy is directly determined by personal Zen experience; and the subject of laughter, especially when it is given, as in Bakhtin’s philosophy, a religious quality, is not so far removed from Zen culture. Both Bakhtin and Zen use “laughter” as a means of opposing moral abstractions. Bakhtin wanted to challenge the rigid morality of Russian Orthodox religion (for which laughter is impermissible) but also, or even more, the Western rational spirit “controlling” laughter by submitting it to a hierarchy of civilizational values. Neither Bakhtin nor Zen set out to design an alternative abstract ethics. In both, laughter or carnival are supposed to establish a certain “affective feeling” that is supposed to make rational reflections more “earth-bound”. Both Bakhtin and Zen pursue the idea of an “un-materialized” as well as “un-formalized” kind of laughter. Modernity, as Bakhtin explains in his Rabelais book, “formalizes the heritage of carnival themes and symbols” (Bakhtin 1965: 55/47). Finally, “the bourgeois nineteenth century respected only satirical laughter, which was actually not laughter but rhetoric” (59/51). This means also that Bakhtin’s interest in the grotesque and in laughter as typical manifestations of Medieval and early Renaissance cultures is directed towards the *pre-linguistic* expression of these phenomena. In general, Bakhtin preaches the necessary “loss of a feeling for language as myth, that is, as an absolute form of thought” (1975b: 178-79/367). “Truth” is for him “non-linguistic”. It does, as he says in “Discourse in the Novel”,

“not seek words; she is afraid to entangle herself (запутаться) in the word, to soil herself in verbal pathos” (1975b: 123/309). The parallel with Zen Buddhism’s and, in particular, Nishida’s ideas of pre-linguistic or non-linguistic experience is obvious.

5.2. The “Body of People”

Even more interesting is the fact that, linked to these thoughts on the non-materialized perception of the world, Bakhtin manages to establish a certain concept of the *body* that appears particularly non-Western and non-modern. Bakhtin insists that the “exaggeration” of the grotesque is supposed to be understood “as such”, that is as the original experience it represented to the people who experienced and produced it and not as an act of *Verfremdung*. In no case should it be molded into abstract concepts depending on moral categories (designing it as a *caricature*) (Bakhtin 1965: 71/62), or psychology (designing it as the *id* or as an expression of *power*) (56/49). It is out of these considerations for the importance of laughter in premodern Western culture, so closely linked to the bodily grotesque, that Bakhtin develops a concept of the *body* whose resemblance with Nishida’s concept of the body cannot be escaped. In which other Western author could we read that in pre-Renaissance culture the body was no individual entity but prolonged in the form of a “body of the people” (народный тело)? Only since the Renaissance, Bakhtin writes, “the individual body was presented apart from its relation to the ancestral body of the people” (35/29). Bakhtin is convinced that in premodern Europe...

the bodily element is deeply positive. It is presented not in private, egoistic form, severed from the other spheres of life, but as something universal, representing all the people. As such it is opposed to severance from the material and bodily roots of all the people. As such it is opposed to severance from the material bodily roots of the world. [...] We repeat: the body and bodily life have here a cosmic and at the same time an all-people’s character; this is not the body and its physiology in the modern sense of the words, because it is not individualized. The material bodily principle is contained not in the biological individual, not in the bourgeois ego, but in the people, a people who are continually growing and renewed. This is why all that is bodily becomes grandiose, exaggerated, immeasurable (Bakhtin 1965: 24/19).

Rabelais is certainly Western, but Bakhtin is among the few critics who insist that in regard to this writer, modern Western concepts of culture and the body need to be annulled if his ideas are really to be understood. It is remarkable that one of the results of this approach is not only, as mentioned above, a rather Japanese-sounding concept of the human as an “in-between”, but also a non-individualist conception of the “body of people” that remains strangely reminiscent of Nishida’s “historical body” (歴史的身体, see Nishida 1937 and 1938: 91ff), a notion Nishida developed later in his life. The “body of people” is not the biological body but the body seen as a *function* (機能) existing within a certain place. “Bodily existence can be thought of by extending its function all the way to language”, writes Nishida (Nishida 1937: 277). The body is not an object used by individual consciousness but always actively involved in the world.

Conclusion

Like Nishida, Bakhtin does not provide a comprehensive theory of communication, but notions like inter-subjectivity, self-reflection, or multi-linguality are supposed to be accepted as autonomous phenomena of consciousness. There is no elucidation of a technique or formalist device that would make obvious how this consciousness would come about. On the contrary, consciousness is a device itself – and the only one – producing itself autonomously. Like Nishida, Bakhtin does not believe that the potential world (of consciousness, of art, or of culture) would preexist and wait to be uncovered.

In Nishida’s later philosophy the ‘I-‘Thou’ relation has been extended to a relation between the ‘I’ and the World: The immediate, “irrational” experience of the Other through action or an “answering act” leads, for Nishida, to self-realization through action within a dialogically organized stylistic place. Only when this dialogical “place” is philosophically established are we able to also see the world as a world of mutually determining individuals.

I hope to have shown that the particular Buddhist connotations of the *basho* which negates all distinctions between *noesis* and *noema*, do not make Nishida’s philosophy “metaphysical” *in an exclusive way*.¹⁶

Ernest Hocking has said that religion “speaks not primarily to the man-within-the-nation but to the man-within-the-world” (Hocking 1956: 47). However, strictly speaking, there is no reason to say that history and sociology would *not* be part of a “World” but only of a “Nation”. On the contrary, it is precisely within the historical and social

world that reality is so much mixed with imagination that an analysis in terms of “institutions” will probably be unable to grasp the essence of any dialogical-ideological environment. What both Nishida and Bakhtin have in common is that their “dialogical consciousness” includes some of the kind of negativity that neither the “positive” social sciences *or* traditional Western aesthetics have been able to attain.

Notes

1. It will not be possible to elucidate the deeper *historical reasons* for the parallels between Bakhtin and East Asian thought in general. Bakhtin’s insistence that the “unity of *being* in idealism is turned into the principle of unity of *consciousness*” (Bakhtin 1979: 76), is certainly reminiscent not only of East Asian sources but also of Bakhtin’s own, more “mystically-minded” predecessors, the pre-revolutionary, “organicist” thinkers Vladimir Soloviov (1853-1900, Lev Lopatin (1855-1922) and Semën L. Frank (1877-1950). These philosophers were trying to overcome Western metaphysics by their own – Eastern orthodox – means, making parallels between them and non-Western thought often more obvious than in Bakhtin. The Eastern Orthodox Church passed by those Neo-Platonic dichotomies like ‘body’ and ‘mind’ that are, not coincidentally, assumed by the Western Church as well as for Western metaphysics (cf. Lopatin 1913). On proximities between classical Russian ontology and Far Eastern thought see Chari 1952. Chari draws on the medieval mystical heritage of the Eastern Church and encourages research into the Russian *Weltanschauung* that would give easier access to Eastern thought for Westerners. Chari shows much interest in “paranormal or supra-normal phenomena” including parapsychology which already seems to forecast post-perestroika Russian research into this part of Russian thought. However, more interesting, Chari also points to Soloviev’s ‘All-Unity’ as a phenomenon reminiscent of Swami Vivekananda’s *Hymn of Samâdhi* in which “The ‘I’ is paralleled by the ‘Thou’ in me” (231). Further, mention should be made of the general skepticism of traditional Russian thought towards *words* that it tries to replace by a more integral kind of pre-linguistic reason. This certainly creates a parallel with Nishida’s Japanese ideas. Frank’s and Soloviov’s idea of *All-Unity* (*vseyedinstvo*) represents a “unity in multiplicity”; for Lopatin, this All-Unity is a kind of “immediate being” that establishes a “place” which is more than a geographical unity consciously held by ideologies.
2. Cf. Berque and Nys 1997; Berque 2000; and Sauzet and Berque 1999.
3. In general, allusions in critical literature to Bakhtin’s possible links with East Asian theories remain suggestive, if not to say mystifying, typically like the brief footnote in an article by Hwa Yol Jung containing the information that “Bakhtin’s dialogics is most close to the Chinese transformative logic of *yin* and *yang*” (Hwa Yol Jung 1998: note 7). Another example would be a statement by the eminent Bakhtin scholar Viacheslav V. Ivanov who points, when pondering possible parallel

developments to a Bakhtinian 'I'-'Thou' line of thought in the history of philosophy, to a tract by a Buddhist logician entitled "Obosnovanie chuzhoi odushevlenosti" (roughly translatable as: "The Substantiation of the Presence of Soul in the Other") which had been translated into Russian by Fedor Shtcherbatskoi, the famous author of *Buddhist Logic*. Ivanov indicates neither the author of the "tract" nor where it has been published, but insists that it had been translated in the early 1920s, the time when Bakhtin developed his thoughts on the 'I' and the 'Thou' (Ivanov 1993: 5). It should be noted how amazingly close the title of this Buddhist tract comes to topics treated by Russian philosophers at the end of the nineteenth century, for example the Neo-Kantian Alexander Vvedensky.

4. There is enough reason to believe that Bakhtin's refusal of any "either/or", obvious in his philosophy since at least "Discourse in the Novel" (1934-35), is indeed part of a search for a more outspoken "non-Western logic". This becomes clear even through very general considerations. First, Bakhtin is working against the oppositions of subjective-objective, individual-general, and all those binary oppositions that Western metaphysics usually takes for granted. He refuses *both* the linguistics of an "abstract objectivism" represented by Saussure, *and* "individualistic subjectivism" represented by the tradition of Humboldt and Vossler. Furthermore, in texts preceding "Discourse in the Novel", his appreciation of Dostoevsky's non-linear and non-historical way of presenting events within a novel is incompatible with Western metaphysical, scientific, linear, concepts of time. From Dostoevsky's works Bakhtin derived his ideas of ambivalence and polyphony which are essentially subversive in their ambition to make impossible the establishment of a "global" truth, by giving preference to different "local" truths existing next to each other within a single discourse. Also, his related idea of dialogue does not follow the progressive structure of Hegelian dialectics but becomes, as an eternal "dialogicity", an "end in itself" (как самоцель) (Bakhtin 1979: 252 and 338). Finally, this lets dialogue appear as something like a *consciousness*, but not a conceptualized, graspable consciousness designed by Western psychoanalysis, but rather the consciousness of an author whose intentionality is "deep-seated" though not absent (Bakhtin 1975a: 129-30). This is where one can find, once again, the refusal of an either/or. In spite of the "chaotic" character of the Dostoevskian consciousness that Bakhtin seems to adopt as something "positive", he never announces the dissolution of sense in literature whatsoever, thus never giving way to pure avant-garde devices or even "post-modernism" of any sort. Bakhtin continues to believe that "in spite of it all" the "consciousness of the author", determined by an "artistic thinking" (художественный мышление, 360) remains a reliable source of meaning. The poetical character of the work is, and remains, "organic" and "coherent" (9).
5. This is all the more so remarkable because "Dostoevsky's Poetics" is not represented here by the book of 1929 but by the entirely overhauled version from 1963.
6. Ken Hirschkop has crystallized the incompatibility of the three different positions announced in the three texts from the 1920s very well (Hirschkop 1999: 73ff).

7. For the opposition of these two tendencies see Hirschkop 1999: 6-7; and Bazhanov 1999.
8. The German heritage that both authors share needs to be mentioned. Both Nishida and Bakhtin can appear as typical representatives of *scholars* imbued with German hermeneutic and Neo-Kantian philosophy of their time, and were heavily influenced by Dilthey and Rickert. Their German-biased education often becomes obvious even in regard to the bibliographical angle they choose when it comes to art theory. Both philosophers can be expected to quote, for example, Semper, Riegl, Wölfflin, and Worringer as art theorists whose works merit discussion. Another immediate parallel is that Bakhtin's research on the relationship between the 'I' and the 'Thou' was inspired by Martin Buber's book *Ich und Du*. Cf. also the short essay "Zur Geschichte des dialogischen Prinzips", same volume). However, though it is known that Nishida also read this book, it is uncertain whether his own work with the same title was already influenced by it or not. As Ryōsuke Ohashi has pointed out, Nishida mentions Buber's book for the first time in his diary on August 20th 1934, thus two years after the appearance of his own study (cf. R. Ohashi 2000: 342). See also James Heisig who claims in his article on Nishida and Buber that Nishida "had not read Buber's book but did know of it indirectly through the writings of the dialectical theologian, Friedrich Gogarten" (Heisig 2000). In *Ich und Du*, Buber attempts to redefine the value of a personal 'Thou' as an alternative to an alienated, modern environment in which the "Other" is mainly experienced as a numerical accumulation of information. Buber's theory of the 'I' and the 'Thou', which was so essential for Bakhtin, has had considerable influence on alternative formulations of the idea of *place* as opposed to modern concepts of *space* as a geometrical extension in the twentieth century. The authentic experience of "place-like phenomena" dear to Western philosophers of space has been successfully related to Buber's 'I-Thou' experience. Cf. Relph 1976: "An unselfconscious experience of space as an authentic sense of place is rather like the type of relationship characterized by Martin Buber as 'I-Thou', in which the subject and object, person and place, divisions are wholly replaced by the relationship itself" (65). And: "An 'I-Thou' experience of place is a total and unselfconscious involvement in which person and place are indissociable" (78). See also Hase 1998 on the matter.
9. Bakhtin 1994. Fragments or, as Clark and Holquist also say, different unfinished attempts to write the same book, from a period between 1918 and 1924. Another essay contained in the same volume is "Art and Answerability", a piece from 1919 and his first published work. English translations of these essays are contained in Liapunov & Holquist: *Art and Answerability: Early Essays* ed. by M. Holquist & V. Liapunov (Austin: University of Texas Press 1990).
10. Ryōsuke Ohashi has shown in his study of the *basho* and the idea of "play" that Nishida's theory of the place has affinities with existing theories of play/game. When drawing links with Neumann and Morgenstern's game theory, Ohashi is eager to show that any theory of play/game should not reduce social and mental phenomena to *mathematical* phenomena by re-describing the world as a "numeri-

cal reality” (Ohashi 2000: 339ff). In Ohashi’s view, Nishida’s theory could consciously avoid this because the *basho* is designed as a quantity bearing an essentially “negative” character.

11. Nishida’s reflection of the ‘I’ against the ‘Thou’ produces even a certain conception of sociological time: The historical world as a single, eternal presence, is determined by a dialectics of time based on an answering play of ‘I’ and ‘Thou’: “今日の私は 昨日の私を汝と見ることによって、昨日の私は今日の私を汝と見ることによって、私個人的自己の自覚というものが成立するのである、非連続の連続として我々の個人的自覚というものが成立するのである” (Today’s ‘I’ sees yesterday’s ‘I’ as a ‘Thou’, and yesterday’s ‘I’ sees today’s ‘I’ as a ‘Thou’). In this way arises self-consciousness as a discontinuous continuity, Nishida 1932: 415). The ‘I’ is neither general nor natural but *historical*, and the ideas put forth by the Bakhtin Circle about “time as events of social intercourse” (Medvedev 1928: 160/102ff) seem to also apply to this conception of time.

12. An early statement deploring the strategies of “material aesthetics” seems to contain the whole program of the Bakhtin Circle’s anti-Freudian campaign against “materialized”, isolated bits of psyche: “Any feeling, deprived of the object that gives it meaning, reduces to a bare factual (голо-фактического) state of the psyche, and extra-cultural state” (Bakhtin 1975a: 14/264). In another early text, in his Dostoevsky study, Bakhtin says: “When we look at each other, two different worlds are reflected in the pupils of our eyes” (Bakhtin 1979: 168). This idea clearly establishes a self-determining world within which the subject is not opposed to a material world, but in which the true consideration of a socio-historical reality manages to overcome subjective rationalism. In the same book Bakhtin says about Dostoevsky: “It is not the multiplicity of fates and lives in a single objective world as seen by a single authorial consciousness that develops in his work, but precisely *the multiplicity of equal consciousnesses with their worlds* which is combined here, preserving their own integrity in the unity of a certain event” (Bakhtin 1979: 140).

13. The notion of refraction becomes important for the establishment of the human, inter-individual, *sign* in opposition to the “animal” *signal*. Cf. Voloshinov 1929: 81/68. In Voloshinov’s work, the word “reflection” almost never appears alone, but is usually accompanied by the term “refraction” in order to show that what is in question is not a simple reflection of signs but their refraction in society. Cf. Voloshinov 1930: 5. The idea is developed by Bakhtin, especially in “Discourse in the Novel”, but can be seen even in his latest texts.

14. Interestingly, Bakhtin’s previously mentioned idea of “duplication” has also been translated by Emerson and Holquist as “mirroring”. Cf. “Discourse in the Novel: “But even a more concrete *passive* understanding of the meaning of the utterance, an understanding of the speaker’s intention insofar as that understanding remains purely passive, purely receptive, contributes nothing new to the word under consideration, only mirroring (дублирует) it, seeking, at its most ambitious, merely the full reproduction of that which is already given in the world” (1975b: 94/281).

15. The synthesis flowing out of this is that Nishida's mirror effect is not linked to *naturalism* but rather it is grounded on a *cultural stylistics* for which the moment of the refraction of the world is more important than its mere mirroring. We are reminded here of the fact that Nishida's self-reflecting mirror is not a cliché-like pan-Asian quietism, which, on principle, makes no effort to actively refract nature, but accepts the world as it is in order to merely reproduce it. Nobuyuki Yuasa says about the production of *haiku* poems in the foreword to his translation of Issa's *Oraga Haru*, that *haiku* aesthetics of "objectivism" which claims to "learn about the bamboo only from the bamboo", would be no "incitement to simple naturalism but rather for true symbolic expression. The intention of the *haiku* poet is not simply to set the mirror up to nature [...] but to find identity in nature" (Issa 1960: 18). Similarly, when Nishida insists on the *basho*'s function as a self-reflecting play, he does not have in mind an organic environment perfectly reproducing nature, but rather, to use an expression which repeatedly occurs in *Art and Morality*, a "style [that] is self-awareness in action" (Nishida 1921-23: 32).
16. Nakamura Yûjirô is convinced that Nishida's philosophy would, being purely religious and concerned with "transcendental problems", remain incompatible with concrete questions concerning a socio-historical environment. Nishida's "religious metaphysics" would, on principle, be inappropriate for an examination of history and society. These would need to be examined, as Nakamura says, in terms of institutions (Nakamura 2000: 375).

5. *Ma, basho, aida:*
Three Japanese Concepts of Space
at the Age of Globalization

1. Globalization and Virtual Reality

As the title of this chapter suggests, three Japanese concepts will be examined against the background of a relatively recent phenomenon dominating human culture, so-called “globalization”. Globalization often stands for the uniformization of culture through the worldwide standardization of economic, political, and aesthetic conditions. This standardization also concerns the creation of space. When talking about space and globalization, however, it is necessary to include one important aspect. A supplementary component adds itself to the process of globalization at the point a “globalized world” is created not only through the unification of building materials, aesthetic forms, functional modes, and so forth, but when computers allow a curious “virtualization” of human spaces and environments.

This “virtualization” does not even in the first place concern the production of a “virtual reality” by computers. Long before any “computerization” of human communication was possible, locales were already penetrated by social influences not linked to a geographically immediate environment, but stemming from at times very distant sources. In this way, space has historically been, if we use a formulation by Anthony Giddens, “*phantasmagoric*” (Giddens 1990: 18-19). The phantasmagoric character of space increases at the moment computers are not only used for the design and planning of spaces but as a means of “experiencing” spaces. Here the phantasmagoric turns into something virtual. Through simulation of interactive “real spaces”, computer-generated systems (currently called “virtual realities”) create virtual spaces or “cyberspaces” that are not only “imagined” but a “world on their own”.

Virtual reality does not exist as an isolated phenomenon confined to the software of the computer which, itself, would exist in “real space”. Moreover, that the perception of “real” spaces interferes with the perception of virtual space is unavoidable. In regard to the perception of space, this corresponds to a globalization on the cognitive level.

For the creation of virtual space, the relationship between time and space is particularly important. Paul Virilio has noted that in virtual experiences, a “here” is denied in favor of a “now”.¹ Concerning space, one recognizes the paradox of computer space perceived without “spatiality”, meaning that space is entirely dominated by the timely component. This might appear surprising considering modern criticism of space, which has much concentrated on modernity’s forgetfulness of *time* within space. Modern philosophy of space mainly criticized the geometrical character of space in which *time* would only play a subordinate role. Heidegger’s as well as Bergson’s philosophies have helped to develop corresponding critical discourses. While these critiques were meant to push space from (timeless) abstraction towards the (timely) concrete, in the realm of virtual reality space seems to have adopted the most abstract form of all forms that is – a purely timely one.

The Japanese concepts discussed in this chapter suggest their own ideas about space as well as about nature and are thereby relatively well known in the West even to people without a background in Japanology. However, before entering into a discussion about the three terms, the grouping together of the three concepts must be justified. First of all, it is striking that all three concepts have had a considerable influence on the Western intellectual discourse.² The Japanese idea of a non-geometrical space dependent on cultural symbolisms called *ma* (間, generally translated as ‘space’ or ‘interval’) entered into Western architectural theory in the late 1960s. *Basho* (場所), a philosophical term coined by Nishida Kitarô with the ambition to wrench logic from its Western “grammatical” background and to push it towards “place-oriented” considerations, has been adopted by some Western philosophers and geographers as an alternative way of defining space. Finally, the idea of *aida*, (written with the same character as *ma*, 間), is put forward by the psychologist Kimura Bin as an alternative to current Western subjectivist approaches in psychology and attempts to define man as an “in-between” whose foundation is not represented by a subjectivity but flows out of certain spatial conditions.

Though it is clear that the three terms, because of their different origins, are incomparable to some extent, it is nevertheless also obvious that they have more in common than just the fact of being “Japanese”. All three directly refer to the idea of space as it appears in human civilization. *Ma* and *basho* can be translated as “place” and *aida* is a kind of “place” of human self-understanding which, apart from this, also draws greatly upon Nishida’s philosophy of space. Given that in recent years no other Japanese philosophical ideas have attracted Western

scholars more than these three (apart from Doi's *amae* and, perhaps, Kuki's *iki*), it is outstanding that all three of them are related to space.

Though the present chapter attempts to crystallize the points that the three notions have in common, its purpose is not to compile and compare the rhetoric that already exists. My aim is to point to "deficiencies" in Western and Japanese culture that have led to an increasing number of discourses on space. For philosophy, the "virtual turn" of these ideas consists in the fact that today every discussion of space is bound to face the virtual dimension of contemporary human experience.

What does the appearance of the virtual element in human culture imply for *philosophical* discourses on modernity? First, it implies that "authenticity" of space can no longer be sought by opposing "artificiality" to "nature" but that any discourse on authenticity must accept as its basis the opposition of the "virtual" to the "real". At an age where computers are increasingly used for architectural design as well as for "experiences" with environments, "deficiencies" of modern environments can be inscribed even less than before within a dialectics of "civilization" vs. "nature", or "artificial" vs. "wild". In other words, it is no longer possible to oppose to modern, "inhuman" spaces, places that are "as organic as nature". Instead, it has become necessary to rethink the concepts of nature and civilization in the context of those challenges offered by a world in which the perception of reality can no longer be thought of as separated from a certain virtual input. I believe that the traditional Japanese ideas about space are more apt for this purpose than Western ones.

2. Nature and Reality

First of all, it needs to be said that the reason why Japanese notions related to spatial phenomena have attracted Western thinkers is certainly not that in Japan spatial question would be resolved in a better way than elsewhere. The contrary is true. In Japan, even more than elsewhere in the industrialized world, one perceives, on the one hand, a loss of enchantment through the preponderant insistence on aesthetic formalisms and standardizations of all kinds. On the other hand and paradoxically, there exists within this formalized modern world a loss of formal orientation. Modern communication technology has pushed this lack of orientation even further. In modern society of communication, according to David Holmes, individuals are "typically removed from control over the structure of the technology and increasingly lack the means to form relations independent of that structure" (Holmes 1997: 7). It seems rather that at the age of globalization and virtual reality, the simultaneous lack of enchantment and formal orientation should be

resumed not so much as the lack of nature (natural complexity, organic authenticity, etc.) but as the lack of reality as such.

Much has been said about the lack of “enchantment”. By insisting on the *formal* component of this experience of reality, people seem to suffer from a “lack of life style” just when they are free to adopt, at least superficially, any life style, though simultaneously feeling no necessity behind any of their choices. The virtual reality with which people are confronted in their everyday lives increases this feeling, since a world that has become “virtual” avoids necessity by definition. As Alasdair MacIntyre (1981) has shown, it seems that in pre-secular times an inter-subjective notion of “good life” was able to successfully determine everyday lifestyles. In modernity, however, the dependence of the determination of lifestyles on procedural intermediaries has led to a rationalization and instrumentalization of social processes of which the most recent reliance on technology is only the latest consequence.

Having arrived at the latest stage of this development, at a quasi virtualization of a considerable part of social life, it seems that the insistence on a reestablishment of a “contact of man with nature” does not solve the problem. In earlier phases of modernity, nature could appear as a *pure necessity*, and the reintroduction of nature into the life of alienated human beings could be seen as a remedy for states of mental disorientation. Even today, the almost entire body of ecological thought seems to be founded on this presupposition. However, it becomes obvious that through the globalization and the “virtualization” of the human society, “alienation” of man from nature has taken forms much more sophisticated than only twenty years ago. To put it polemically, one could say that the problem of future ecologists will not be the *destruction* of nature by man (a fact against which there are technical remedies) but the fact that nature has disappeared because it will only be *mediated* through technology.

A reflection on non-Western ideas about nature can clarify the particularity of the position of the mentioned Japanese concepts of space within the modern world. Generally speaking, the Western mind sees nature as something essential and necessary whereas non-Western ideas of “nature” tend to avoid the definition of nature in terms of a substance as well as of objectivity, insisting on spontaneity. Graham Parkes has explained that in “East Asia” nature, because of its non-substantial character, cannot appear as being opposed to, or as taking place “in front of or outside human beings” (Parkes 1991: 204). Nature is here a “way of being” rather than a “thing”, and “becoming natural” does not suggest that a piece of “that thing called nature” would have been introduced into a non-natural substance.

To make the point as clear as possible, nature appears more as a matter of aesthetics or even of religion, but certainly not of science. Toshihiko and Toyo Izutsu have written:

When the “field of the genuineness of cosmic creativity” and that of the “genuineness of aesthetic creativity” converge into a perfect unity, forming the existential-aesthetic “field” of the creative Awareness, nature becomes, as it is and by itself, for the poet something of aesthetic value (Izutsu 1981: 69).

Especially in regard to Japan and its Shinto religion, a self-sufficient conception of nature affords the idea of nature as the most divine of all things. Here the contrast with the Western idea of nature becomes very clear. In the West, as Stuart Picken has explained, “the divine was [...] above nature, and nature was an obstacle to divine grace. It could never be a vehicle of the divine” (Picken: 1994: 348). In Japan, natural beauty was able to represent a value which, since nature was only a “way of being” and no substance, did not need to be explicitly moral in order to be recognized *as a value*. In the West, values needed to be moral; and morality, though it had once been seen as being “against nature”, could then also, through an “ecological turnover”, be declared acceptable as a value. In the West, nature can become a value to the extent that it can be seen as being more “moral” than civilization. In the domain of spatial conceptions linked to urbanism and architecture, this logic is important.

It is possible to argue that those who take the Japanese concept of nature as a basis to discuss also the nature of space have definitely better chances to intellectually handle the modern shift of reality from something “substantial” to something “virtual” than those who see nature in a Western way. Joseph Kitagawa has said that “all religions define the nature of reality as well as the meaning of space, time, and history by means of myths, doctrines, symbols, cults, and ecclesiastical structures” (Kitagawa 1980: 20). This implies that reality in general is spiritual but it does not mean that it would therefore also necessarily have to be moral. Nature can be accepted as an integral part of mythical reproductions of space and time because nature is also, at least in Japan, spiritual. In other words, if one accepts the Japanese concept of nature, space *and* time can be considered on a parallel plane as nature since all three are spiritual.

In a world in which human space appears not only increasingly as hidden behind a formalizing grid of “civilization” but is also perceived through a veil of the virtual, the difference between the two attitudes towards nature, is is decisive. The point is that the virtual is defined as a self-sufficient entity “immanent to its own constitution” (Martin 1996).

In this way, the virtual nears the Japanese (or perhaps more generally “Eastern”) concept of nature as well as the Japanese concept of art.

Before explaining the difference between the Japanese concept of the virtual in art and nature and the computerized “Western” idea of the virtual, I will offer two possible logical conclusions in regard to the virtual as a part of modern human reality. These I – speculatively – attribute to the Japan and the West respectively. While the West might be inclined to retrieve nature or natural human life through the discovery of substances, the Japanese mind is more inclined to look for a change of *attitude* bringing nature and man-made space, which are both *already* spiritual, together. This change of attitude implies a shift towards the aesthetic or, if we think of Kitagawa’s statement, towards religion. In any case, aesthetic *can* here only also mean ethic because both aesthetics and ethics are not *opposed* to nature but share its spirituality. According to T.S. Lebra, “Japanese aesthetics is not something that transcends daily life” but “penetrates the ordinary person’s routine” (Lebra 1976: 21). Lebra says this in regard to *iki*, the once stylizing force of Japanese existence in the Edo period. She could have said the same thing in regard to *ma*. Günter Nitschke writes that the Japanese creation of spaces “leads to a sense of beauty dependent on accident and incompleteness, as found in nature. There is no longer an obvious unity of form but a unity of attitude that makes certain [...] structures analogous to those visible in nature” (Nitschke 1966: 131). The problem of formal disorientation *and* the problem of a lack of aesthetic content seem to both be solved through an aesthetic procedure. Through the concept of *ma*, the way in which space is created through a change of attitude and not through the substantial reintroduction of nature into alienated spaces, is well shown.

3. *Ma*

It has been said that the Japanese perceive space according to the dynamism inherent in the non-separation of space and time and that this is expressed by the concept of *ma*. As a matter of fact, in the Shinto tradition, *ma* was a “way of situating the place where *kami* descend”.³ The spiritual character of the place called *ma* is thus almost proverbial. It would be senseless to repeat what several authors have stated about the ontology of *ma*. One of the few points I would like to make here about *ma* concerns the relationship between *ma* and the aesthetic “cut” called *kire*, an aesthetic device, which brings about a “change of attitude”. This is also, as will be shown below, important for the subject of virtual reality.

Ryōsuke Ohashi’s analysis of the phenomenon of *kire* is fundamental. *Kire* is closely linked to another phenomenon mentioned pre-

viously, the *iki*, which became well-known through Kuki Shûzô's attempt to establish this aesthetic quality flourishing in Edo culture as something typically Japanese (Kuki 1981a). Ohashi has shown how *iki* is related to *kire*. *Iki* arises through a "stylizing cut" cutting off the banal average everyday world and in this way creating a new stylistic space (Ohashi 1992a: 113). This reflection on traditional Japanese culture also addresses the problem of globalization. Modernity with its technological approaches eliminates stylistic originality by "uniformizing" everything. *Kire* can be understood as a means to resist the formalizing aspect of the technical world (Ohashi).

It remains to be seen if *kire* is also a means to resist the *virtualization* of space as produced by technology on an advanced level. Here considerations of the *ma* are particularly useful as suggests the role of the *ma* in Noh-plays. Noh is sometimes called the "art of *ma*" because the action of the Noh-actor creates a space of *ma*. The art of Noh consists to a large extent in oppressing the superfluous, since "elegance is born when the ordinary is abbreviated, concentrated and reduced to essentials" (Komparu 1983: 71). The input of *kire* is clear here. What is in question is "more" than Mies van der Rohe's "less is more". Mies' "less" is meant to be a *substance* in the same way in which asceticism represents a way of gaining substantial quality in life. *Kire*, however, creates an entity comparable neither to a Western idea of nature or the "organic", nor to one of its contraries, the modern idea of "purity" or "simplicity". *Kire* cuts off something *from* nature in order to create the spiritual quantity called *ma*. Logically, this *ma* does not appear as a new reality "as real as nature" but, on the contrary, as a non-reality that comes closer to dream than to reality.

The point concerning dream should be extended because it clearly establishes a link between *ma* and virtual reality. In Noh-plays, *yûgen* can create a spatial experience that in some cases approaches dream. Ohashi explains this in regard to the play *Izutsu* in which the narration loses its substantial character through the inter-penetration of reality and dream world (Ohashi 1986: 13ff). The dialogue between a ghost and a man, taking place within the dream of a monk, contributes to the experience of a mystical depth related to *ma*. It is remarkable that here an "ontology" of dream which certainly transgresses the limits fixed by the Western term of "aesthetics", aims, by establishing a non-perspective way of seeing, at the creation of space.

Even for Westerners this strategy must not seem so unusual since the association of a non-perspective way of seeing space with the way of seeing space in dream exists. Kant, for example, writes in his essay "What is Orientation in Thinking":

To orient oneself in the strict sense of the word means to find, from one given part of the world (*Weltgegend*), other parts of the world, especially the way out of this part of the world (Kant 1923: 134). In the dark I orient myself in a familiar room as soon as I can touch a single object whose position I remember. Here nothing helps me except the capacity of determining positions by a subjective ground of distinction. [...] In this way I soon orient myself through the mere feeling of a difference between my right and left sides (135).

Here non-perspective thinking is associated with “orienting oneself in the dark”. If one opposes to *ma*-like perception of space the Western, “perspective-oriented” perception cultivated since the Renaissance, (Nitschke 1995) the pre-Renaissance non-perspective perception of space develops into a “dark and nightly” perception. Accordingly, Jean Gebser has characterized the pre-Renaissance, non-perspective vision of space as a vision where man “hasn’t become conscious of space as such”, saying that the medieval pictures of the un-perspective age would be for him “like painted at night” (Gebser 1985).⁴ In the West, non-perspective visual experiences “blur” geometric lines, but not just in the way in which it would happen through a shift from an “architectural” to a “painterly” style. Gebser’s non-perspective experience appears more as if Wölfflin’s shift from the architectural to the painterly would suffer a supplementary effect of illusionism by plunging the painter together with his painting in darkest night.⁵

From a Japanese perspective, one can argue that within this “night” called *ma*, nature and artificiality have become indistinguishable. It is within the “virtual” sphere of *ma* that the lines cut by the *kire* manage to create a place of “higher naturalness”. In this sense, the loss of a “perspective” consciousness bestows to space a new existential quality. This can also be expressed by saying that a lower, “flat” reality with a “lower style” is “cut” in order to obtain a “higher” reality with a “higher style”. And this reality is “more” than what could be obtained through an experience with substances that can be provided by experience with nature.

Still another aspect must be considered here. Ohashi insists on the playful quality of the *kire*-like act of cutting. As a matter of fact, what has been said about the potential dream-effect of *ma* must be understood in the context of an aesthetics of play. Otherwise, creating a *ma* would signify nothing other than simply dreaming. Generally, what Eugen Fink has said about the relationship between play and dream is true for *ma*. The players of games, Fink says,

are not dreaming a collective dream but retreat [...] into an unreal sphere in which they find commonly and ‘inter-subjectively’ recognized cognitive states of affairs (*Sinnbestände*) that exist according to the overall sense of the game (Fink 1960: 63).

What exists in the play called *ma* and which resembles a dream, is not simply “non-clarity” but rather, a sphere of *orientation* that determines *solely* without the help of calculations derived from outside observations. In this way *ma* as well as play can be seen as alternative spheres providing *formal orientation* in a world in which life-styles are as arbitrarily and industrially produced as are “dreams” (both of which compete within a quasi-virtual sphere). It is clear that *ma* can represent an alternative because its self-sufficient and self-producing character finds a parallel not only in dream and play but also in style.

4. *Basho, aida*

Through its self-sufficient and playful character, *ma* comes closest to Nishida’s *basho* as well as to Kimura Bin’s *aida*. Though corresponding links between Nishida’s *basho* and *ma* have rarely been the subject of a large-scale study (cf. Oosterling 2000), it is clear that resemblances are not restricted to respective identities as “places” but also consist in their self-determining characters. Shizuteru Ueda writes that the idea of *ma* as an “intercultural space” would have been a main parameter for Nishida’s development of a philosophy for Japan “now that the world has become a reality” (S. Ueda 1995: 102). This means that when Nishida perceived the world as being determined by a globalizing aspect, the more individual “place” had to become an absolute present that was not a pre-established reality but something constantly changing. *Ma* served here as one of his points of departure. Finally, this “place” became a “place of nothingness” within which there is not even being, but only a “common style of production”. In this sense the *basho* is a place of “relational” existence in which one perceives, within a Japanese context, the idea of nothingness or emptiness. This idea of *basho* needs to be kept in mind when discussing the concept of *aida*.

The character *ma* (間) also means, when pronounced *aida*, ‘in between’. The Japanese word for ‘human being’ (*ningen*, 人間) is written with the same character that is used for *ma* or *aida*. Man is always a ‘man in between’, and to be human means to have a “relational existence”. The “in-between” does not only concern man’s relationship with other human beings, but also his relationship as a “civilized” human being with nature. The above-mentioned idea of “nature as an attitude” that is neither objective nor substantial also remains important here. Within *aida* the distinction between nature and culture, or the

natural and the subject, does not exist in the same way as it does in the West.

Correspondingly, Kimura's idea goes back to the philosophy of Tetsuro Watsuji. Watsuji has established the concept of "cultural climate" (*fûdo*, 風土) as an "in-between" of civilization and nature (Watsuji 1935). Human civilization cannot be seen as being opposed to nature as much as the soul cannot be seen as being opposed and separate from the body. A familiar "in-between" is seen as a standard of man and culture. One of the results is that the subject will be linked to space.

Kimura has developed Watsuji's thoughts by integrating them into his observations as a psychologist, and also by using central insights from Nishida as well as from Husserl. With regard to the phenomenological tradition, it seems very much as if in Kimura's philosophy Fink's "inter-subjective" character of play would have been extended to the play of the world in general (an idea which Fink himself would not have rejected). Whatever appears between heaven and earth appears as an "in-between", on a spatial as well as on a timely level. As a psychologist, Kimura is interested in the formation of the self or the 'I'. An interpersonal sphere of *aida* (which Kimura always writes in *hiragana*) not only contributes to the perception of reality, but is able to represent reality in an immediate way. This immediacy is supposed to be prior to all "phenomenological-stylistic" aspects of the world. What Husserl called "*personales Ich*" is prior to *lebensweltliche* attributes like *typus*, style, character, *habitus* (Husserl 1950a: 270ff). The "in-between" experience of *aida* constitutes an original and authentic place in which the self forms itself and is comparable to the Husserlian not yet formalized *Lebenswelt* accessible through "immediate intuition" (Cf. Husserl 1950b: 230).

As mentioned, I would like to concentrate on the phenomenon of virtual reality. Kimura has succeeded in attributing mental diseases like schizophrenia not to a lack of *logos* but to troubled interpersonal relationships (Kimura 1975a: 436). In a study on the ego and its relationship to time, Kimura analyzes a syndrome called "depersonalization" (離人症, *rijinshô*) or "loss of personality" (人格喪失体験, *jinkaku sôshitsu taiken*), and traces it to the patient's objectifying way of seeing the world. The "depersonalized" patient does not feel that life is composed of *events* taking place within an *aida* formed by subject and object, but sees the world as constituted of objective facts against which his personality has no chance to develop.⁶ The *lebensweltliche* aspect of the world disappears, and the world is objectified because no inter-subjective moments can be integrated into the subjectivity of the patient. Feelings like joy, sadness, and so forth become impossible and, as a consequence, the patient appears like a robot, which, within an

objectified world, is unable to manipulate even a basic experiential phenomenon like time. More exactly, he is unable to temporally coordinate separate moments, because for him time has also been objectified. The linking power of *aida*, normally existent between two separate moments is absent, and the patient lives within an infinite, incoherent, consecution of separate “nows”. In an article from 1963 Kimura speaks of the depersonalized patient as having fallen victim to a complete “de-aesthetization” of the world which consists, in his opinion, of nothing other than sense stimulations waiting to be “registered”, rather than experienced or lived. Instead of reacting to it, the depersonalized person is dominated by the exterior world.

As mentioned, Kimura’s particularity consists in insisting on the inter-relational nature even of psychic diseases like schizophrenia. However, while *such* diseases are in the West mostly seen as a distortion of the patient’s rationality, *other* psychotic phenomena like autism have also in the West been attributed to inter-relational troubles. Because of this constellation, I want to suggest a comparison of Kimura’s ideas on the *aida* with what Western psychoanalytical method has developed as its discourse on autism. Some of these approaches are no longer valid today from a medical point of view, but they remain interesting for philosophical reasons. At the end, this comparison will be linked to the problem of the virtual, a phenomenon which has often been associated in contemporary literature on the subject with a “cultural” (though not necessarily medical) form of autism. It goes without saying that this is no technical discussion of medical matters but a cultural analysis trying to evaluate the originality of Kimura’s *aida* in the context of modern globalized culture.

Yves Pélicier writes in his essay on Kimura that “primary autism is the way of being of schizophrenia. It is a defensive attitude, a protection in regard to an approach, a contact” (Pélicier 1984: 133). In the present context, this means that when dealing with autism, we have to do more with an attitude or a way of being than with the “disease itself” that can still be hidden behind this attitude (in Pélicier’s case, schizophrenia). Autism, while representing a fundamental cognitive disorder, concerns a mental function that might, as Jacques Hochmann writes, appear like a parody of the mental functions present in schizophrenia (Hochmann 1994). Here appears a link between reflections on *aida* and autism. Kimura is alluding to “depersonalization” in terms of an attitude, and as an attitude or way of being autism presents similarities with the symptoms of depersonalization. Also, autistic children do not experience time and are unable see the world as being inscribed in a progressive dynamics of space and time.⁷ The result is the incapacity to develop links with others, leading to a robotized existence confined to

purely mechanical perceptions and expressions. Also the autistic children's environment is "de-aestheticized", and the children are insensitive to the "poetry of the world" (Hochmann). In this way autism can be seen as being closely linked to the lack of an *aida-ic* perception of the world that has been crystallized by Kimura.

Some authors see in the paradoxical "incommunicability" arising in communicative society an "autistic" behavior due to the mechanization of communication itself as well as to cognitive qualities inherent in virtual space that has generalized abstract approaches towards reality. Philippe Breton is convinced that "the eminently contemporary character of certain forms of autism exists as the limit symptom of a more general phenomenon..." (Breton 1992: 184) A certain "me-for-me" attitude fixes the limits of a self-sufficient cognitive environment. Similarly, Lucien Sfez writes that the individual imprisoned in the cognitivist fiction of the double self of the computer would bear characteristics of an autistic attitude (Sfez 1988).

The "scientific" method of exploring the world (Meltzer 1984) common to autism might indeed be apparent in a more general manner in modern society and at least indirectly linked to mental troubles produced by media and electronic communication. This concerns especially the creation of spaces which, being inscribed within a virtual domain, have given rise to what Alain Roger has called an "autisme du déplacement", meaning an insensitivity towards events inscribed in concrete time and space (Roger 1996: 104). Through an absolute "immanence of succession", the perception of "otherness" is marred on the timely as well as on the spatial level, because the moment of coexistence of different elements is too dense.

The link with Kimura's thought can perhaps best be established by looking at the interest that both Kimura and critics of virtual reality take in Bergson's philosophy. Some authors see as central the resemblance of virtual reality with Bergson's *pure duration*, and it is striking that Kimura also attempts to formulate his ideas about the depersonalized attitude lacking *aida* through Bergson's concept of time. In *Time and I* (時間と自己) Kimura writes in a special sub-chapter on Bergson: "Bergson's pure duration can, only by itself, not yet be called time, because it has no *aida-ic* character. Pure duration as distinguished from space, is not only non-spatial but it cannot be called time either" (Kimura 1982: 55). At the same time, Bergson's *durée pure* resembles virtual reality. While it is clear that the complexity of Bergson's philosophy permits a discussion of virtuality and *durée pure* on several levels, there are also strong reasons to interpret pure duration in the light of a stable accumulation in which mobility is abstract and unreal and thereby nearing virtual reality.

In Kimura's terms, Bergson's concept of "reality" expressed through the idea of *durée pure*, is an *objectified* reality lacking the experiential quality of real life transmitted through *aida*. Kimura shares this criticism of Bergson with Nishida (Nishida 1933-34: 67ff). However, with regard to Kimura as well as to Nishida, it would be completely wrong to interpret this claim as a call for an "authenticity" leading back to *nature* or "real life". This becomes obvious if one remembers that non-objectified phenomena can also be dreams, transfers, etc. or other things which are not "real" but which are still "lived" in some way. Therefore, it should not appear as paradoxical when Yves Pélicier calls the inter-subjective space of *aida* a "virtual" one because in *aida* we "can exercise our personal subjectivity" (Pélicier 1984: 133). Pélicier is perfectly right because, like *ma*, *aida* has a non-positive component, which can be called virtual in the sense of an "atmospheric reality".

Still, the virtual component of *aida* or *ma* is not the same one as that of the "virtual reality" produced by a software. To show the paradoxical character of this constellation one can say that the aforementioned non-positive quality brings *aida* close to reality by *bringing it also close to dream*. The virtual, as it is perceived in *aida*, is an original and not yet objectified reality and for this reason it is *incomparable* to the permanent and abstract "virtual reality" that has become "real" by being transformed into a computerized form of reality. The paradox can even be better expressed by sticking to the opposition of reality and dream and by bringing both in relationship with the virtual. The paradox would thus consist in the fact that the idea of an original and non-objective *aida*-ic virtual comes closer not only to reality but also to dream, and that the second, computerized reality, is lacking the atmospheric quality present in life *as well as* in a "non-real" phenomenon like dream. Therefore, though being "virtual", it is not only removed from reality but also from dream. To make this distinction as clear as possible it can be reformulated with the help of Kimura's distinction between *koto* and *mono* (see note 6). *Dream-experience* (and not the Freudian *dream-narrative*) is virtual in the form of a *koto* and should always be understood as such (even though a certain *mono*-tising distance necessarily separates us from the *dream-koto* of the "dream as it is dreamt"). Computerized virtual reality, however, is from the beginning a *mono*, which perhaps makes efforts to appear as a *koto*, but which by doing so, seems to *mono*-tise itself even more.

All this can also be explained through the phenomenon of *ma*. In *ma*, an inter-subjective *aida*-ic reality is obtained through transferring a non-temporal, non-spatial, "pure" and stylistically stagnant space to a "spiritual place" in which time and space interact. In the case of *ma*, we

have seen that the stylizing act of *kire* can be essential for the creation of a dreamlike space. This space can also be called a *koto-ic* space. Also, similar to *ma*, the “virtuality” contained in *aida* can be called “dream” (keeping in mind that dream as well as the virtual can have two different meanings).

It is in this sense that Kimura’s thoughts about *aida* also express the dreamlike character of space. Ludwig Binswanger, whose influence as a teacher has been essential for Kimura, has given a description of this *aida-ic* space (without calling it such) that summarizes Kimura’s ideas. Binswanger defines “inter-relational” space noting:

[...] the curious problem that just *where* you *are*, “arises” a place (for me). Instead of ceding a position “to the other” within the predetermined spatiality of the *ratio* and the corresponding loss of my own space, what appears is the curious phenomenon of an “unlimited” increase of one’s own space by *giving away* one’s own space! Instead of a predetermined region as such *in* which the one would dispute “the place” or “the position” to the other, one perceives a curiously undetermined [...] depth [and] breadth in which places and positions no longer exist (Binswanger 1953: 31).

The experience of space becoming a personal place while simultaneously losing all geometrical limits indeed comes close to the experience of the virtual as it is made in dream, but not to the experience made within the virtual computerized world. Curiously, the computerized virtual creates a non-geometrical space which, in spite of its pretension to contradict physical laws of space, remains as limited and unspiritual as geometrical space. It is by insisting on an “in-between” between ‘I’ and ‘the Other’ that Binswanger’s experience of inter-relational space approaches a Japanese idea of the virtual. Apart from this, the experience also widely overlaps with that of *ma* and *aida*. Ohashi writes that in Japanese art the world as an “in-between” between appearance and reality would always have had a virtual character. However, the “*kata*” or stylizing form linked to *kire* was the element that was able to create a *place of orientation*.⁸ The purpose of such a place of orientation was to permit people “not to get lost in this virtual reality” (Ohashi 1996: 1005).

I hope to have shown that *ma*, *basho* and *aida* are related because their ways of “mirroring” reality (this means their ways of creating a virtual reality) are similar. The position of “nature” as an ethic phenomenon differs from everything that has been assumed about nature in traditional Western ecological discourses. The virtual aspect of all three Japanese notions is *aida-ic*. And the same thing can be said about the Japanese idea of nature. Instead of recreating an “authentic”

experience with the world based on an ecological idea of nature, the three notions reassure, as non-positive, dreamlike versions of the world, man's natural mental perception of space.

I would like to conclude with a note on Husserl. For Husserl the "personal I" is prior to "phenomenological stylistic" aspects of the world. This idea contradicts the concept of a dynamic *aida* because the "original form of being" to be discovered in *aida*-ic existence (as well as in *basho* and *ma*), is also an "original" and non-formalized *style*. It is important to insist on this, because otherwise Kimura's *aida* which has drawn so much on Husserl could not be associated with *basho* or *ma* or with experiences of Zen practice which Kimura intends to integrate into his reflections. In any case, Kimura himself relies on a *kire*-like act of stylization producing an original stylistic existence as an awareness of the other when writing in *Ningen to Ningen no Aida*: "What is in question in Zen is not a going back to a world in which subject and object are still separated but the *discovery* of the other. Zen wants to *cut off* all *amae*, and to establish the I as the I and the Other as the Other" (Kimura 1972: 156-157. My italics).

Notes

1. Cf. Paul Virilio 1996: 44. Other books that take a critical view of virtual reality are: Holmes 1997; Jolivault 1995; Martin 1996; Granger 1995.
2. Main Western publications on the three notions showing the exceptional attention they have received. **On *ma***: G. Nitschke: 1966; Pilgrim 1986. In order to appreciate the influence of a certain philosophy of *ma* on Western aesthetics one can read comments on Japanese architecture written by Western critics of architecture where allusions to *ma* appear to an almost excessive degree. **On *basho***: Berque 1997b; Berque 2000; Sauzet and Berque 1999; **On *aida*** Pélacier 1984.
3. Cooper-Hewitt Museum 1979. Cf. p. 20: "Most of the methods and elements of spatial composition employed in Japan originated in the ancient ceremony of summoning kami".
4. Quoted from Nitschke 1995.
5. Cf. H. Wölfflin 1966: 30: "Painterliness is based on an illusion of movement. Why movement is painterly, and why it is communicated through painting rather than another art form can only be answered by examining the special character of the art of painting. Because it has no physical reality painting has to depend on effects of illusion".

6. In regard to the phenomenon of “objectification” Kimura distinguishes between *koto* and *mono*, two Japanese words which, though meaning first of all “thing”, are nevertheless slightly different in meaning. *Mono* corresponds to idea of stable objects and *koto* alludes more to dynamic “events” (where “event” would already represent a too “mono-tised”, object). Cf. Kimura 1982.
7. Books on autism: Bettelheim 1967; Rutter and Schopler 1978. Perron and Ribas 1994); Fedida 1990.
8. It is important to note that the physical (bodily) aspect of *kata* helps to get hold of a certain “point of orientation”, and that in modern, computerized virtual such a bodily aspect cannot exist.

6. Nishida Kitarô and the Politics of the “Virtual Body”

I propose in the present chapter that with the help of Nishida’s philosophy it is possible to distinguish two types of the virtual, the private and the public one. For Nishida, in order to become a “historical body”, the body adopts a moment of the virtual that is Buddhist in nature, which I call “private”. Alternatively, Virtual Reality as it is usually understood, offers a version of the virtual which is contrary to Nishida’s and which can be called “public”.

Nishida’s adoption of the notion of *kokutai* (国体) is highly controversial (see Maraldo 1987, 1994). Originally, the *kokutai*, Japan’s main national ideology dominant during all its modernization period up to the end of WWII, synthesizes Confucian and Shintoist ethical elements. In particular, since late Tokugawa it expresses certain political contents focussing communitarian issues. Through its partly Shintoist identity, *kokutai* is tied to the emperor as the patriarch of the national family. Still, this ancient notion was found suitable to represent a “unifying force” during the period of intense modernization. From the 1930s to 1945, *kokutai* is strongly associated with nationalism and thought control.

Nishida uses the notion of *kokutai* especially in three of his last essays written in 1943 and 1944 (1943, 1944a, 1944c). Given the straightforward nationalist meaning that *kokutai* had adopted at that time, Nishida’s decision to use this notion within highly abstract and complex philosophical discussions is initially surprising. However, a careful reading reveals that in these articles Nishida interprets the *kokutai* in an unusual way. He *opposes* the nationalism of the day, and considers the “global community” in a post-imperialist and non-totalitarian fashion. In principle, Nishida does this by emphasizing the metaphysical, religious, cultural character of the *kokutai* community which, by its nature, cannot be grasped with the help of concrete, materialist notions. Through this procedure “positive” values do not get

artificially anchored in a "negative", metaphysical realm (as some critics might hold) but rather appear as "negative as such", that is, as principally non-usable for everyday ideological agendas. The *kokutai* appears as immediately linked to the notion of *basho* but also to a certain idea of the "historical body" (歴史的身体) which Nishida had presented about seven years earlier (1937) in the article "The Historical Body", both of which did not express any political opinion.

In the article "Fundamental Principles of a New World Order" (1943) Nishida makes relatively extensive use of the *kokutai*, drawing a philosophical link between the aforementioned existential idea of the historical body and the "body of state" expressed by the *kokutai*. The result is a conception of *kokutai* that can appear as extremely removed from its official, nationalist version. In the article "The Historical Body", Nishida had claimed that "historical bodily societies" and any "world-consciousness" could be formed only by considering their bodily component. A human self cannot exist without the body (Nishida 1937: 272ff) but always exists in the place where it has a function. A human self therefore always possesses a "bodily function" (276). Through the body our self gets linked to a "place", and since a place is always historical, no self is abstract but bodily-historical.

In "Fundamental Principles..." Nishida seems to attempt an extension of this model of "body-politics" to the "global world order". Just as there is a plurality of bodies interacting within space, there is also a plurality of different *kokutais*. As in the essay "On the *Kokutai*" – which more or less repeats the arguments from "Fundamental Principle..." – the *kokutai* is very much conceptualized in the manner of the *basho* pushing the philosophical reflection in its assertion that the imperial rule refers to "absolute nothingness".

Furthermore, Nishida makes a brief mention of the *kokutai* in the article "Towards a Philosophy of Religion with the Concept of Pre-established Harmony as Guide" (1944). The meaning of *kokutai* remains here remarkably non-integrated into the general flow of the philosophical discussion. After having explained that the "world of the self-determination of the absolute present" should be seen as a kind of "pre-established harmony", Nishida's reference to the *kokutai* on the last page of the article comes rather as a surprise:

The world of the absolute present is always historical and formative as the self-determination of form. This must be called national. *Kokutais* are such forms of individuality. Our selves must be national in the sense of always

being historical and formative as individuals of the world of the absolute present. True obedience to the nation should be derived from the standpoint of true religious self-awareness. Mere seeking one's own peace of mind is selfish. This is a perspective diametrically opposed to religious self-awareness (Nishida 1944a: 144-145).

The passage itself does little more than repeat in concentrated form what had been said elsewhere. More interesting than the reference to the *kokutai* is perhaps Nishida's – also single – reference to the "historical-bodily mode" (Nishida 1944a: 123) that is supposed to be determinative for the creative individual living in an "absolute present". This statement establishes another link between the *kokutai* and the idea of the "historical body".

It is not my intention to engage within the present chapter in a more detailed analysis of these matters as the focus is elsewhere. The most remarkable point remains that for Nishida, "global self-awakening", the "East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere", and Japan's world-historical engagement are depicted in a *negatively* religious manner, including ideas like self-transcendence, self-negation with regard to the development of the "mission of the Asian peoples". Nishida attempts to formulate an idea of "world consciousness" that is definitely more complex than imperialism, but also more complex than multi-culturalism or, as Dilworth and Viglielmo point out, more complex than the idea of a "global village" (Dilworth 1998: 17). The "divine nation" that Nishida opposes to a more idyllic "family-like" idea of the *kokutai* (the latter of which was officially accepted by the government), expresses a metaphysical system of universalism excluding all materialistic explanations.

This is why it becomes necessary, in my opinion, to treat Nishida's thoughts in the context of contemporary "universalism" provided by the emergence of "Virtual Reality". The most interesting of Nishida's points is that in his interpretation of the *kokutai*, the state is linked, in spite of all "transcendentalism", to the theme of the *body*.

Nishida's use of the concept of *kokutai* and the "historical body" represents a unique way of defining the historical and cultural entity of a people. For Nishida, the "ethnic group" exists at a lower level of human civilization. Should the civilization process of this group continue, it is supposed to be transcended in order to become a *state* (Cf. Yusa 1994: 129-30). However, the state is not considered to be the highest form of coherence that a truly civilized people can attain. Once the state is

established, it should not look "inward" towards its ethnic origin for an identity, but should look "outward" to develop its identity by defining its relationship with the outside world. A state receding to over-pronounced ethnic identities will become imperialistic. What is asked for is a complex "mirroring" process unfolding at the state's "interior". This implies that the state negate itself and mirror in itself the outside world.

The contradictory idea of a "self-negating mirroring" flows out of the entirety of Nishida's philosophy and cannot be fully explained within the limits of this chapter.¹ What will be examined in the present chapter is: (1) the interest the notion of *kokutai* can have for reflections on human communities in relation to the idea of the body, and (2) the dynamic that these thoughts can develop within the contemporary world in which Virtual Reality adopts more and more important functional, aesthetic, and political dimensions.

As mentioned, *kokutai* literally means "body of state" suggesting a metaphorical use of the notion of body in order to express an original idea of "community". Apart from this, to view the state in a metaphorical way as a body represents a contrast with those cultural developments that have most recently appeared with the establishment of a Virtual Reality through computers. Among the various subjects presently discussed in regard to Virtual Reality there is also that of the "virtual community". Some of the thoughts appearing in these discussions go back to ideas about the "global village". On the one hand, it proves difficult to establish a "community" within Virtual Reality. However, *if* one manages to do so, it can only be done "in the abstract", through a more or less total alienation of the individual from the *concrete body*. Some critics believe that a "global village" of people linked by nothing other than electronic means of communication will lead to a disintegration of "real communities" in which a "presence" used to be guaranteed by the body.

Nishida's ideas about the "body of state" are particularly interesting in this context. Nishida was equally fascinated with the idea of a "global community in history", an idea that seems to have come to him from the German historian Ranke (Cf. Zavala 1994: 144). It is thus tempting to oppose Nishida's "body-state" to the "body-less state" as it appears in post-modern society. However, the interest of such a confrontation cannot reside in its simplicity but must depend on a certain amount of sophistication inherent in Nishida's notion of *kokutai* on the one hand, and in the notion of the body on the other.

It is wrong to contrast *kokutai* defined as "bodily presence", with a disembodied community exclusively relying on virtual identities for two reasons. The first reason is that the body itself cannot be opposed to "the virtual" because it has too often been defined as a phenomenon transcending the state of objectified presence. Secondly, especially Nishida's idea of the body is not that of a concrete entity guarantying an ethnical coherence. This is of utmost importance for any theory about the "body of state".

Medieval European thinkers like St. Thomas Aquinas or John of Salisbury, liked to refer to the body when attempting to establish the state as a logical system (Sennett 1994: 23 and 156). For them, a "body politics" uniting biological and political philosophies became a scientific synthesis useful for reflections on the foundation of the state. Here the particularity of Nishida's philosophy of state becomes obvious. Nishida's idea of the body is "non-objective" and therefore includes precisely those elements that can be characterized as "virtual". Moreover, similar (and only *similar*) to the treatment of the body in Virtual Reality, is Nishida's idea of the body as a non-objectified body never existing "as such" (biologically) but only within the play of a reality not concrete but "virtual".

However, in spite of what could be named a "virtual input" in Nishida's theory of the "body of state" it is clear that Nishida's "virtual body" is distinct from the virtualized bodies as they appear in Virtual Reality. The reason for this is not only that (as I will show) two different concepts of the "virtual" are in question, but also that the idea of the body itself has changed considerably since Nishida's times.

In 1940 Erwin Schrodinger made public his insights into the body as an "expression of genetic information" (Moser 1996: 5). Since then, undergoing a further process of rationalization, the idea of the body as a *presence* became more and more relative, pushing the body towards the realm of abstraction. In industrialized countries the idea of the body has been modified along the lines of a changing concept of the "reality" within which bodies are supposed to exist. For this reason, the most recent shift of reality towards the virtual especially concerns the body.

Secondly, it is important to crystallize two different ideas of the "virtual body". Contemporary Virtual Reality is disembodied in order to become a "dream world" in which communities can be established abstractly, or without involving "real action". When Plato made clear that he wants "reality" and not images, he condemned images as dreams. By doing so, he certainly gave in to the oppression of certain

"enchanting aspects" of the world in favor of mere rationalization. However, E.H. Gombrich found that

Plato's [...] man-made dreams, produced for those who are awake, are banished from the realm of art, perhaps rightly, because they are almost too effective as dream substitutes, whether we call them pin-ups or comic (Gombrich 1959: 15).

At the time Gombrich was making this statement, he could not imagine the dream-like character that a virtual reality would obtain one day. The decisive point is that if dreams establish a self-sufficient *public* reality entirely cut off from the real world, they are "virtual" in a negative sense, and accordingly they contradict the intentions of human reason.

Therefore, Nishida's idea of a virtual reality must be seen as not *public* but *private*. Let us consider Nishida's "body of state" against reflections on the virtual. In principle, the notion of *kokutai* aims at stressing the insufficiency of timely and spatial approaches to society as long as these approaches remain separate. In some way Nishida's suggestions come close to "post-structuralist" sociological ideas of bringing together the synchronic and the diachronic aspect of social life. Anthony Giddens, for example, admits that he wants to "bring temporality into the heart of social theory"; what he discovers is the "virtual character" of *all* social structures: "Structures exist in time-space only as moments recursively involved in the production and reproduction of social systems. Structures have only 'virtual' existence" (Giddens 1981: 26).

If we distinguish the "virtual" as a kind of "possibility" confined to a limited environment, we might oppose it to the "real". At the same time it appears, however, that the virtual represents a "reality for itself" (and it is in this way that the word is commonly used today). This means that the "reality" of the virtual is characterized by the fact that it can exist beyond any distinction between the "actual" and the "non-actual" (Cf. Granger 1995: 13-14, 17, 33).

Similarly, Nishida's idea of the "body of state" is not inscribed in an ontology of the "actual", potentially close to a certain political or even ethnic presence. On the contrary, what can be derived from all of Nishida's philosophical ideas about the structure of human experience is true for the "body of state". Keiji Nishitani writes:

For Nishida, experience always has its own "structure" and develops systematically. That is, it creates its own structure from within as it unfolds, and this structure in turn always contains a system. (Nishitani 1991: 104)

In regard to *kokutai*, we find that in Nishida "the shift of emphasis away from current social structures to past facts opens the way to a truly religious dimension", as has said Michiko Yusa (1994: 130). Nishida locates social structures like "the sacred" within the landscape he calls *kokutai*.

I believe that only in this sense, through a view of *kokutai* as virtual, is "the social" able to become a body for Nishida. This body is not an ethnic or even a political entity, both of which still strive to overcome the state of "possibility" to become a "necessary reality". The *kokutai* remains a possibility that is not real but virtual in a sense that is never public but always private. It is virtual in the same way in which the "sound of the frog diving onto the water" grants an immediacy of experience to the "real" fact of the "frog diving into the water". The frog diving into the water is a fact. If *everybody* would dream this fact or watch it on a computer screen, it would become a public "Virtual Reality" similar to Plato's dreams. However, this is not what is meant by the experience of the virtual in a transcendent or "private" sense. Here, the element of the virtual is present in the form of a "purity" that can only be obtained when all thoughts about actuality or non-actuality are overcome. The fact itself continues to exist, but being transcended it will be understood as something "virtual", that is, it will be understood in a "better" way.

The same is true for the experience of the body. To perceive the contrast between the dream-like character of Virtual Reality and Nishida's "virtual" *kokutai*, it is sufficient to recognize Nishida's idea of the body as being submitted to a Buddhist view of fundamental impermanence; it is "virtual" only in *this sense*. In other words, the idea of *kokutai* is based on religious ambitions trying to transcend common (stately, ethnic) reality by attaining a "higher" reality able to include a religious dimension. One of the realities to be transcended is also that of an idyllic "family-like" nation for which subjective feeling and objective knowledge are supposed to overlap. An idealized version of an idyllic "global village" inscribed in the abstract domain of a "virtual existence" would be precisely one of the patterns to be transcended. It is known that a Nationalist, popularized version of *kokutai* developed in the direction of the "nation as one family". However, it seems rather that

for Nishida, real communicative engagement based on *kokutai* can take place only in a "real world", which is neither a world of pure materiality nor a dream world. In "The Historical Body" he writes: "A world in which we are not actively involved would be a dream world (夢の世界)" (Nishida 1937: 268). He continues by saying: "The contrary of this is also true: in the material world there is no active involvement of human beings and consequently it is not the real world" (ibid.).

These sentences are interesting for a deeper analysis of the phenomenon of Virtual Reality as it has been demonstrated in the present chapter. Nishida characterizes as the "opposite view" of a dream world without bodies a world in which everything is materialized. This also appears to be true for modern society invaded by existential modes of the virtual. While within the limited domain of a computerized Virtual Reality all ethical impact of "real bodies" is avoided, in domains where bodies *are* still present, they appear as objectified or "materialized". This is due to the curious reduction of the world to *images*, which has brought about visions of the body as an object whose aesthetic aspect can be freely fashioned and modeled according to objective criteria. In this context Nishida's alternative view of the body becomes understandable: "...in the historical world the human body is not reducible to just another physical body" (Nishida 1937: 289), and "[t]he historical body possesses language and tools, and these already implicate its social life. Apart from this there is no human life" (290).

Furthermore, there are reasons to suppose that also the "virtual experience" sought by a computerized society at a post-modern age is led by a desire for "immediacy" and "purity". The body can here only be thought as a hindrance. The fact that ethnical differences can be overcome once we dispose of our bodies is only one of many signs indicating virtual reality's ethical tendency towards the liberation from the body. Alternatively, linked to the first tendency, is the materialization of the body that also occurs. James and Carkeek comment thus on the role of the body in contemporary society:

The body is no longer a natural, reassuring condition from which stable metaphors can grow. Caught in the expectation that it should constantly be modified and reformed through diets, aerobics, plastic surgery and fashion, the body becomes an immediate but abstracted "experience" (James and Carkeek 1997: 117).

Be it virtualizing "body negation" or materializing "body cult": in either case the body is no longer able to offer an "ontological grounding". Through a disembodiment virtual politics imposed on society by governments and computer industries modern body metaphors such as 'the body politic', 'body corporate' or 'body of people' have become shallow or procedural senses of group association (see James and Carkeek 1997: 118). Paradoxically, in modern societies the body is "technocratically rationalized" as "biologically given" (113).

I suggested above that with the help of Nishida's philosophy it is possible to distinguish two types to the virtual: private and public. Nishida's "virtual" is *private* because in it the body recognizes its environment as being bodily and historically present. In other words, the body becomes virtual to become a historical body. Virtual Reality, on the other hand, offers a *public* version of the virtual within which the body shifts somewhere between rationalization and biological objectification. This version of the virtual is completely contrary to Nishida's.

Against the background of our modern or "post-modern" understanding (or misunderstanding) of the body it must appear, at first sight, amazing that Nishida stubbornly insists on the metaphor of the *body* when defining the character of a community attained through the curious self-negation of the state, necessary for the emergence of a *kokutai*. However, the "body" as well as its relationship with the phenomenon of the virtual are, for Nishida, phenomena of a different order. The body is a functional system whose performance is visible only within an *environment* of which the body itself represents a part. In this way, Nishida combats materialistic, mechanic or physiologist concepts of the body without turning, through an idealist gesture, to the simple negation of the body by replacing it by "mental qualities" (a treatment which would come only all too close to the strategy of "virtualization" current in popular computerized reality). Nishida does not simply effectuate a shift from objectivity to subjectivity² but creates a *new objectivity*, which is not material, but which can be called "virtual". In this sense, his "virtualization" of the body is to be understood as a virtual "extension" of the body, similar to what Merleau-Ponty has said about the body as an existential phenomenon which he opposes to a "possible body" existing without any "there is" ("il y a").³

If Nishida's concept of *pure experience* has been reminiscent of the experience of playing music, one can say that his concept of *kokutai*

comes close to that of a musical instrument that has become, virtually and privately, a part of the musician's body.

For Merleau-Ponty the body is also a matter of self-reflection at the moment it intends to recognize itself as a body. A purely materialistic body cannot exist within an environment but is condemned to live within a world of incoherent images. In *Eye and Mind* Merleau-Ponty writes:

A Cartesian does not see himself in the mirror: he sees a dummy, an 'outside' of which he has every reason to think that the others see it in the same way, but which [...] is only flesh. His mirror 'image' is a mechanical effect of things (Merleau Ponty 1964b: 38).³

In Virtual Reality the body is replaced with images. Therefore, its "reconfigured form of embodiment provides no sense of the subject's body *situated* in space", as states Simon Cooper (Cooper 1997: 99). For Nishida as for Merleau-Ponty, the body is a focal point within which the world determines itself through active intuition. In this way the concrete world becomes for Nishida a "contradictory self-identity", (矛盾的自己同一, *mujunteki jiko douitsu*) (Nishida 1938: 100) enabling us to "be acting only because we are bodily" (行為的であるのである、即ち身体的, *kôiteki de aru no de aru, sokuchishintaiteki*, 105). Finally, in Nishida the idea of "historical body" becomes the same as "acting intuition" (行為的直観, *kôiteki chokkan*, 112).

The idea of an "existential body" (一体身体, *ittaishintai*) (Nishida 1937: 273) is one of the qualities that seem to be definitely lost in the culture of Virtual Reality. In Virtual Reality there is no transcendence and everything appears as immanent. Therefore, the foundation of communities remains also illusory because, as writes Michele Wilson, "ethical or political concern for the Other is rendered impotent and unrealizable. 'Community' is [...] produced as an ideal rather than as a reality, or else it is abandoned altogether" (Wilson 1997: 146). The disembodied personalities peopling virtual communities appear like what Nishida called "intellectually constructed personalities" (然らざればかかんがえられた人格, *shikaragireba kangaerareta jinkaku*) (Nishida 1926: 251). The element lacking in Virtual Reality is exactly *that* element of "the virtual" that Nishida is putting forward in his philosophy of the body. It is a virtual element that appears within a world that is not *entirely* virtual itself. The virtual should be only a *moment of the virtual* as it can be recognized in the plunge of the frog: a

moment of the virtual captured when moving from the sensible to the spiritual or from the necessary to the contingent.

Nishida perceives the "community as a virtual body" in a similar fashion. However, in a world constituted by objectifying images, man is bound to perceive even himself as an object instead of as a "body" in Nishida's sense. Society will necessarily appear to him as an abstract structure holding together single individuals.

With increasing "virtualization" of global society, three reasons support the assertion that human actors resemble more and more those psychopathological patients whom Kimura Bin describes as having fallen victim to an inability to coordinate necessary and contingent elements in their lives (Kimura 1994: 198). These people are living in a "virtual world" in which no "imagination" allows them to recognize their historical status and the world, flowing out of a coordination of necessity and contingency. For them, the world is either absolutely necessary (which leaves them surprised whenever they are confronted with the occurrence of contingency) or it is expected to be entirely contingent (which makes them unable to recognize the occurrence of a necessity). This corresponds to what I previously suggested concerning the experience of the "virtual moment" within a reality that remains un-virtual itself. Gilles-Gaston Granger, who has provided such a splendid analysis of the virtual, distinguishes the "imaginary" from the virtual by insisting on the existential input enclosed only in the latter. Imagination permits the introduction of virtual elements into our "real" lives. Nishida expresses a similar view confirming our supposition that "moments of virtuality" within a real world are more important than the virtualization of the world as such. Nishida speaks of the intelligible (叡智, *eichi*) which adopts a similar function as the virtual described in the present context: "It is rather that the intelligible should be inside the sensible and sparkle at its inside" (感学の奥に閃く, *kangaku no oku ni hirameku*) (Nishida 1926: 251).

Kimura's patients have no "body" and no "place" in which they can situate themselves. As a consequence, they are also unable to perceive the "other". Amazingly they resemble those modern people James and Carkeek describe as having difficulties, as a result of the "fragmenting, dichotomizing and partitioning" of their existence, experiencing their body as "a rich an authentic condition of social interrelation" (James and Carkeek 1997: 120). It has been said that through Virtual Reality people will become like "Pavlovian individuals" reacting on social stimuli without really being social (Breton 1992: 15). However true this

may be, it is obvious that the problem of these people would be that they have no body as a "center of action", a formulation coined by Bergson in *Matter and Memory*. The body as a "center of action" is neither a material object nor a center of perception but rather, in the Bergsonian sense, a "center of habits". Finally, this center of habits turns out to be even more stable than the mind. It has much to do with style, and style can certainly only be thought in connection with the body. (To some extent Nishida, like Merleau-Ponty, is anti-Bergsonian because he sees Bergson capturing, through his *pure duration*, immediacy that he is going to objectify soon after. Merleau-Ponty's criticism of Bergson goes into the same direction. Nishida says about Bergson: "Bergson's life is not the life of the body; it can be thought of as flowing temporarily in a straight line without true spatial characteristics" [Nishida 1937: 286]. The body creates human space because it is able to resume both space and time in itself.)

Finally, it is necessary to examine in this context the question of *symbolization*. The fact that the body "exists" by establishing a timely and spatial environment, says nothing about its symbolic quality. This is yet another reason why Nishida's concept of the body is so far removed from the status the body has in our contemporary society. In modern society, the body has been "banalized" by limiting its function to a purely symbolical existence. The *body image*, like the *gesture-image*, has become part of a symbolic language incessantly used by media and Virtual Reality. This is one of the consequences of the thought-forming power of twentieth century Western philosophy that has based its reflections mainly on individualism and subjectivism. It is well known that Nishida was critical of this attitude.

The body "itself" as an entity expressing nothing other than its own Being is lost through the establishment of a virtual environment in which everything is supposed to be a representative image. It is remarkable that the same development has earlier been imposed, by a subject-oriented philosophy, on a part of human *psychic* life, or on that part which is called *dream*. Through the concept-forming power of psychoanalysis the dream is no longer "what it is", that is an existential, stylistic or aesthetic phenomenon, but appears as a materialized accumulation of symbols. Similarly, the concept of the body is now undergoing a reshaping process led by the same civilizational intentions. In this sense, it is not surprising that this procedure turns out to be even more efficient through the transformation of the bodily reality into a virtual dream world.

In media governed societies, bodies, dreams and gestures are bound to express *something*. They are expected to be symbolical labels bearing messages that are easily understandable. This means that bodies, dreams or gestures as "stylistic" phenomena representing nothing but themselves (or nothing but the "style of their Being") cease to exist. Nishida's idea of the body establishes the body itself as a virtual entity transgressing the purely physiological aspect of the body by re-expressing it as a "stylistic" phenomenon. This is, finally, what is contained in Nishida's sentence "seeing things productive bodily means comprehending them according to the style of productivity [...]" (Nishida 1939: 163).

Notes

1. More explanations on Nishida's idea of "mirroring" are provided in Chapter 4.
2. It seems that the Neo-Shintoist movement goes into this direction when evaluating the *kokutai* as a notion being able to turn positivism over into subjectivism. Cf. Fujisawa: 1959: 4ff.
3. Merleau-Ponty, *Eye and Mind* (1964b: 12-13). Misleadingly in the present context, Merleau-Ponty calls the existential body an "actuality" which he opposes to the "possible body". Yasuo Yuasa has given a slightly different account of Nishida's relationship with Merleau-Ponty's philosophy: "In the case of Merleau-Ponty, however, the body occupies a privileged position as 'that which is visible' closest to oneself (one's own body) and 'that which is visible' further away from one's own body (other's bodies and non-human objects). For Nishida, though, such a problem cannot arise: one's own body does not occupy a privileged position, at least in the field of ordinary experience..." (Yuasa 1987: 51). Cf. also Yamaguchi 1997: 127; and Ohashi 1999: 84, whose thoughts on Merleau-Ponty and Nishida come closer to mine.

7. Nishida and Wittgenstein: From “Pure Experience” to Lebensform

Introduction

This chapter compares the philosophies of Nishida Kitarō and Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951). Nishida developed a Western-style Japanese philosophy out of his personal Zen experiences. Since World War II this philosophy has represented a starting point for numerous comparative approaches. Wittgenstein developed, after an initial “logical” phase linking him to the environment of the Vienna Circle, a less “mathematical” philosophy, generally called “philosophy of language”, which has, though remaining mainly influential for English-American analytical philosophy, also attracted the interest of so-called “Continental philosophers”.¹ The present chapter’s focus on “pure experience” in the context of Wittgenstein’s *Lebensform* points to possible challenges for consciousness studies, sociology of lifestyles, multi-culture, and theory of communication. This will become clear through the link I establish between Nishida and German *Lebensphilosophie* that has borrowed much from Wittgenstein and has also been important for Habermas. Seen from a certain perspective, Nishida’s “theory of intercultural action” appears as amazingly close to these German social philosophers, but it is necessary to go through Wittgenstein if one really wants to elaborate this similarity more profoundly. In principle this means: before dealing with “intercultural communication”, one first has to philosophically establish the meaning of “cultural *experience*”. It is certain that a theory of communication looking for a definition of cultural experience before engaging in the theorization of intercultural communication might, until now, have hesitated to borrow ideas from a faraway philosopher as Nishida. To put forward the fact that Wittgenstein was striving towards similar definitions can thus be very beneficial for approaches to culture in general.

The benefit that Wittgenstein studies derive from such a comparative study follows from the aforementioned points but there is also

something else. A study on Wittgenstein and Eastern thought from a continental point of view is more than overdue (see below my account of existing studies in that field). To compare Wittgenstein and Nishida means first to associate Wittgenstein with some Eastern form of thinking, and then to bring him in proximity with the continental tradition that Nishida has naturally been close to. This is certainly not entirely acceptable for everybody. Of course, Wittgenstein has always had “continental” interpreters as much as he has had interpreters who saw something “Eastern” in him. While his Continental affinities might be tolerable to most people, eventual “Eastern affinities”, especially when they are not limited to purely logical considerations but linked to an entire body of continental interpretations, will be looked at with much more criticism. Probably, before even being able to specify which “Eastern affinities” one is opposed to, one will spontaneously fear that they inscribe Wittgenstein into a current of thought critical towards science, trying to overcome rational Western thinking, based on intuition more than on analysis, etc.

Still, or just because of these reasons, I believe that the formula “reading Wittgenstein through Nishida” makes sense. Wittgenstein’s notion of *Lebensform*, hardly understandable to most Wittgenstein specialists, can, as the chapter will hopefully show, get filled with some meaning when being read through “pure experience”. In the end, an intuitive model of *Erlebnis* comparable with Nishida’s “pure experience”, does not more than point to an essential “incommensurability” in Wittgenstein’s thought, a characteristic that has been noted by others.

To say it briefly, I believe that the reflection of Wittgenstein against that particular Buddhist notion of “pure experience” as developed by Nishida, highlights an essential non-Western strain at the bottom of his philosophy setting him apart from the Western metaphysical tradition. All further resemblances between *Lebensform* and *basho* developed in the present chapter aim at strengthening this claim. In Nishida, apparently because he is “Asian”, a strange concept like “*basho*,” which is in a paradoxical way simultaneously closed and open, is accepted. In Wittgenstein, similar ideas, even though they are essential, run the risk of not even being noticed because they do not fit into the general canon of interpretation.

In the first part of this chapter, I concentrate on the resemblance between the philosophy of the later Wittgenstein and Nishida’s Westernizing adaptations of certain Buddhist philosophical concepts. A

parallelism becomes visible through two interrelated facts. First, both philosophers concentrate on a pre-linguistic form of thinking that can be classified as neither conscious nor unconscious. For Wittgenstein, a certain “unsayable” or “non-materializable” quantity, which he tries to describe especially in the *Zettel* and in the *Philosophical Investigations*,² accompanies our speaking and thinking. Similarly, for Nishida, a kind of pure feeling that he calls in his first book, *Zen no kenkyû*, *pure experience*, characterizes a moment of immediacy of understanding, unhampered by subjective or objective conceptualizations.

Out of this I will develop more general observations to be exposed in the second part. In later works, Nishida calls the entirety of these pure experiences “place” (*basho*), out of which individuals and cultures can develop a certain “style of productivity”. As a sort of “negative space”, the *basho* signifies the “self-determination of a field of consciousness” and is meant to be an ontological category resuming Nishida’s Eastern version of Western intuition. Inside the *basho* there are only singular elements determining themselves as “pure matters” and dependent on no exterior determination. The *basho* is a place in which the objective world establishes itself.

Hence the second parallelism. Both philosophers, Nishida and Wittgenstein, decide, after an earlier interest in an “unspeakable”, ungraspable quantity associated with human experience, to describe a “form” of human life whose positive character escapes definition, but which nevertheless remains important for the communication of individuals (or of cultures) with each other. For Nishida, a *form of life* emerges within the *basho*. For Wittgenstein, a *Lebensform* develops out of an “unsayable *Erlebnis*”.

2. Wittgenstein and Eastern Thought

Studies on Wittgenstein and Eastern thought have perhaps, as far as I can see, often have been thought of, but rarely have been undertaken. The Internet shows some hundred entries linking Wittgenstein to Buddhism, at least in some way. However, systematical studies of Wittgenstein and Eastern thought are scarce. Articles on the subject appear regularly but they do not seem to have much impact either on Wittgenstein research or on comparative philosophy. They do also, as far as I can see, mainly concentrate on logic and the early Wittgenstein’s analytic side, and its parallels with Buddhist logic. An exception is David J. Kalupahana’s article in *Philosophy East & West* (see note 3), in which

he analyses Wittgenstein's early idea that "the world is independent of the human will" in the context of the Buddhist notion of suffering, insisting that both projects would *break* logical determinism.

The first of all studies on the Wittgenstein and Eastern thought is Paul Wienpahl's article from 1958 published in the *Chicago Review* entitled "Zen and the Work of Wittgenstein" (Wienpahl 1958). The only book length work is Chris Gudmunsen's *Wittgenstein and Buddhism* from 1977 (Gudmunsen 1977). There are also about a dozen articles mainly contained in *Philosophy East and West* as well as articles by Thomas Tominaga entitled "Ch'an, Taoism, and Wittgenstein" (Tominaga 1983), and Russell Goodman's article "Style, Dialectic, and the Aim of Philosophy in Wittgenstein and the Taoists" (Goodman 1976).³ In almost all these articles the authors report that some of Wittgenstein's disciples found that his way of teaching philosophy came close to that of a Zen master (cf. Barthley 1993: 167).

In the article from 1958, the Wienpahl explains the proximity of Wittgenstein's methods with Zen methods because both engage in

constructing or calling attention to examples of linguistic behavior in such a way as to shock the mind into noticing something which had not been noticed and thereby to free it from what might be called the bind of conceptions.⁴

Furthermore, Wienpahl draws attention to striking parallels between Zen logic and Wittgenstein's "logic, in which the subject-predicate analysis of propositions is abandoned", an analysis that hitherto signified the substance-attribute view typical for Western thought (Wienpahl 1958: 69-70). The Zen Buddhist view of things functions without the ego-orientated principle of attributing substances to things; and because Wittgenstein's view is so similar to this one, both, according to Wienpahl, can be placed outside the Western metaphysical tradition.

Without mentioning Wienpahl, Gudmunsen's book deals first of all with logical problems, working along the lines of Shtcherbatsky's *Buddhist Logic* and Russell's revolutionary logical theories. Gudmunsen criticizes philosophy:

The Truths have a religious flavor; discovering them is a job for sages. Philosophy is constructive, not critical. Just such heavy, elaborate, authoritarian ways of thinking were the prevailing orthodoxies against which early Buddhism and Russell reacted (Gudmunsen 1977: 3).

For Gudmunsen, there is an important parallel present in the fact that for both British and Buddhist analysts, the “idea of a correspondence theory of truth” has been central (Gudmunsen 1977: 8). On the grounds of these examinations, Gudmunsen presents Wittgenstein’s thought as a “religious trend of ‘British philosophy’” that for several reasons is comparable to a “philosophy of religion like the Mādhyamika” (69). Both Wittgenstein and Buddhist logicians “had rejected realism about universals [and] they were led to a similar view about how words relate to each other” (65). For this reason “Wittgenstein offered liberation of a kind which Western philosophers have not normally offered” (70).

3. Pure Experience

Wienpahl’s observations remain general to the extent that they concern “Zen Buddhism” as an entire worldview; also, they do consider only a small number of Wittgenstein’s propositions, mainly from the *Tractatus* and the *Philosophical Investigations*, which according to him, try to retrieve a certain “Zen spirit”. Gudmunsen’s comparative work is both more profound and more precise, but remains entirely limited to the domain of abstract Buddhist and analytical considerations that often appear closer to Russell than to Wittgenstein. To be more concrete and to develop a discussion more linked to social and aesthetic questions, I concentrate here on Nishida Kitarô’s treatment of Zen ideas rather than on Zen Buddhism in general. I also want to provide a more detailed analysis of some of Wittgenstein’s main suggestions contained in his later philosophy and show their typically non-Western character. Though it is clear that both Nishida’s “predicative logic” and Wittgenstein’s philosophy could profit from a deeper analytical search for parallels, I have decided, not being a logician myself, to concentrate on other similarities.

In *Zen no kenkyû* Nishida develops the idea of “*pure experience*”. As has been shown in Chapter 1, *pure experience* is an experience made at the moment when subject and object are not yet separated, i.e. at the moment when man’s intellect is not yet present to recognize the subject as a subject experiencing an object. From the point of view of *pure experience*, “subjectivity” and “objectivity” are intellectual abstractions. Instead of looking for these abstractions, Nishida recommends seeking at the basis of every human action a “*pure experience*” which does not yet have a sense (an objective sense that could be known by a subject)

but which represents a sense only for itself; this sense can be experienced in the form of *pure experience*.

The young Nishida defines a *pureness* of experience through which the world can be perceived “as it is”, i.e. independent of all human perceptive egocentricity. *Pure experience* is a primordial *Ereignis* (event) which takes place at the moment of “seeing a form” or of “hearing a sound”, without either abstraction or substantialization of these events taking place. The events can be experienced in a “pure” way, and are “immediate” because they do not yet have a substantialized “meaning” abstracted from the contents of the experience itself.

This represents a first parallel with Wittgenstein. For Wittgenstein, philosophy is, in general, “a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence (*Verstand*) by means of language” (Wittgenstein 1990: 109). Basing all his reflections on this position, Wittgenstein tries to grasp a process underlying or accompanying human experience that remains essential for these experiences, though at the same time being constantly different from them. This process, which accompanies experiences, cannot be reduced to concepts abstracted *from* these experiences.

Wittgenstein explains this by alluding to all kinds of experiences: experiences from everyday life, aesthetic experiences, especially those related to music (see below), and, above all, the experiences of speaking and of thinking, as well as the relationship between the two. What happens when we are speaking? How is thinking involved in the process of speaking? In *Zettel* 98 Wittgenstein asks: “Do we say that everybody who speaks reasonably is thinking?” (“Sagen wir, es denke jeder, der sinnvoll spricht?”) His point is that any “reasonableness” of speech is never produced by thinking whilst speaking. There is no control of speech itself, but it seems rather that speech, with its internal (not only linguistic) reasonableness, develops all alone: “One is not usually half-astonished to hear oneself say something; and doesn’t follow one’s own talk with attention; for one ordinarily talks voluntarily, not involuntarily” (Wittgenstein 1989: 92). The same is true for reading: “Here I should like to say: ‘The words that I utter *come* in a special way.’ That is, they do not come as they would if I were for example making them up (*ersänne*). – They come of themselves (*von selbst*)” (Wittgenstein 1990: 165). The “special way” in which the words are coming cannot be traced to any *causality*. The experience of “reading” includes the experience of saying words “in a special way”, and this “special way” is the fact that the words come by themselves.

Similar observations can be made concerning certain *ways of speaking*. Is there, for example, a materializable quantity such as “belief” which makes a certain speech “sound more convincing” than another one? Or, put more simply, can the event of “speaking in a convinced way” be reduced to “belief”? “When somebody says something with strong conviction (*mit grosser Überzeugungskraft*), does he at least believe in it *while* he says it? Is belief *such* a state?” (Wittgenstein 1982: 21-22) The answer is no, because “belief” is not a *state*, even less so an *original event* like that of “speaking in a convinced way”.

The parallel I want to put forward here is that Wittgenstein, like Nishida, is interested in an *experience* of speaking that is so “pure” that it cannot even be approached by “thinking”. When talking about “psychic states”, “ways of being”, etc., we attempt to explain their existence by drawing lines of causality between the individual and a general environment. “What is the ‘thought’ contained in, or expressed by a certain sentence?” is a typical question that will come up. It aims at nothing other than possible explanations of an individual phenomenon within a general environment. Here, however, in Wittgenstein’s examples, there is only *one* experience, which is completely individual. In the same way, Nishida is also convinced that “we ordinarily think we know the universal through thinking and the individual through experience. But apart from the individual there is no universal” (Nishida 1911: 26). A sentence from *Zen no kenkyû*, which affirms the purely individual character of experiences, even in mathematics, makes one parallel between Wittgenstein and Nishida very clear. Nishida says that “even in mathematics [...] foundational principles lie in our intuition, in direct experience” (Nishida 1911: 37). In the following I want to concentrate on Wittgensteinian ideas advancing a model of “pure experience” coming close to Nishida’s sense of the word. These will be examined with regard to the following Wittgensteinian terms: a) “the ungraspable experience of speaking”, b) *Bild* and *Erlebnis*, and c) gesture.

3.1. The ungraspable experience of speaking

How close Wittgenstein’s ideas come to the idea of “pure experience” can be shown with the help of some other propositions on reading and speaking. Somebody is reading a text, and:

He reads it to us- but with the sensation of saying something he has learnt by heart [...]. Should we say in such a case that he was not really reading the

passage? Should we here allow his sensation to count as the criterion for his reading or not reading? (Wittgenstein 1990: 160)

The experience of speaking is not dependent on a positive “meaningful intention” (*Meinen*), nor is the experience of reading dependent on a certain “feeling” (*Empfindung*) that could be positively retained.

The same applies to a certain “expression” (*Ausdruck*) presumably contained in a certain speech: “The expression is not an *effect* of the face – on me or on anyone – you could not say that if anything else had this effect, it would have the expression on this face” (Wittgenstein 1966: 30). The experience of seeing a face (just like hearing or speaking a sentence) is not to emit or to receive a certain *Ausdruck* contained, in a substantial or material form, “in” the face or in the sentence. Even the expression of pain is accompanied by such a “something” that cannot be communicated:

“Yes, but there is *something* there all the same accompanying my cry of pain! And it is on account of that that I utter it. And this something is what is important – and frightful”. – Only whom are we informing of this? And on what occasion? (Wittgenstein 1990: 296)

The experience of speaking might be dependent on a “meaningful intention” (*Meinen*), but this *Meinen* resides in the “psychic realm” (*seelischer Bereich*, 358). Still, it exists there not as a Freudian, materialized concept, but as something ungraspable or – which has here the same sense – as absolutely private. When Wittgenstein continues these reflections in PU 358 saying that this *Meinen* is “comparable to consciousness itself” and can even be called the “dream of our language”, Wittgenstein’s idea of consciousness as an “ungraspable dream” accompanying our speaking and our entire existence, turns out to be, in my opinion, more “Eastern” than Western. Like Nishida, Wittgenstein first alludes to those ungraspable facts that take place in a consciousness that is conscious *only now*, i.e. in an experiential consciousness of “absolute presence” as opposed to a consciousness “recreated” by thinking. Second, he does not hesitate to declare thinking itself to be such an ungraspable quantity.⁵ Again, for Nishida, “thought cannot be explained exhaustively, for at its basis exists an unexplainable intuiting upon which all proof is constructed” (Nishida 1911: 51). For Wittgenstein, because speaking is not determined by thinking, the difference between thinking and not thinking is cancelled at the

“moment” of speech. Wittgenstein’s point comes particularly close to Nishida’s but also to that of Zen philosophy in general:

If a normal human (*ein sonst normaler Mensch*) is holding a normal conversation under normal circumstances, and I were asked what distinguishes thinking from non-thinking in such a case, - I should not know what answer to give. And I could *certainly not* say that the difference lay in something or not that goes on (*vor sich ginge*) while he is speaking. (Wittgenstein 1989: 93)

It is difficult not to think here of Yueh-shan Wan-yen’s famous *koan* “How do we think what lies beyond thinking? We do not think it”. The production of intellectual models about the correspondence of thinking and not thinking is only possible as long as thinking and not thinking are not only “thought” to be equal (which would again be seen from the standpoint of thinking) but *are* equal in the sense in which two games are equal (both are games), but can differ through the way in which they are played. Correspondingly, Wittgenstein says the following about the difference between thinking and not thinking:

The boundary-line that is drawn here between “thinking” and “not-thinking” would run between two conditions which are not distinguished by anything in the least resembling a play of images (For the play of images is admittedly the model (*Vorbild*) according to which one would like to think of thinking.) (Wittgenstein 1989: 94)

There are no entities like “representations” as such, but only a general *Sprachspiel*. Thus, Wittgenstein’s “system of representations” (which is for him the model for “thinking”) becomes something “unsayable”, to the point where even “not-thinking” can be represented by this model. The representation, as well as thinking itself, comes about through a play of representations. Wittgenstein mocks the idea that *Vorstellungen* can be “materialized” when asking: “How does one compare representations?” (Wittgenstein 1990: 376) For Nishida, such systems of representation are clearly related to *pure experience*: “When a system of representations develops by itself, the event as a whole is a pure experience” (Nishida 1911: 13).

3.2. *Bild and Erlebnis*

For anti-psychologicist theories of signification like this, what is more important than the representation itself is the “play of representations”, which Wittgenstein also calls an image (*Bild*), which is neither *impression* nor *representation*. In *Zettel* 638 he writes:

“Yes, but the representation (*Vorstellung*) itself, like the visual impression, is surely the inner picture, and *you* are talking only of differences in the production (*Verschiedenheiten der Erzeugung*), the coming to be, and in the treatment of the picture “. The representation is not a *Bild*, nor is the visual impression one. Neither “representation” nor “impression” is the concept of a *Bild* (Bildbegriff), though in both cases there is a tie-up with a picture [...]. (Wittgenstein 1989: 638).

This comes close to certain elements of an Eastern ontological tradition, where the idea of “the world as an image” remains a current expression of a worldview (cf. Ohashi 1997: 105). It is impossible to discuss the details of parallels between the two concepts of *Bild* within the limits of this chapter. I simply want to point here to resemblances between Wittgenstein’s concept of the *Bild* and certain Eastern ideas as far as it concerns philosophical problems related to the term of experience, or, more precisely, to that of the *Erlebnis*. The next example does also concern the *Bild*, but consequently something new is added. Wittgenstein mentions an “image of longing” and asks how “longing” is contained in this image:

“A *Bild* (imagination-picture, memory-picture [Vorstellungsbild, Erinnerungsbild] of longing (*Sehnsucht*)). One thinks one has already done everything by speaking of a “*Bild*”. For longing is a content of consciousness, and a *Bild* of it is something that is (very) like it, even though less clear than the original. And it might well be said to one who plays “longing” on the stage, that he experiences or has a *Bild* of longing: not as an *explanation* of his action, but as a description of it. (Wittgenstein 1989: 655)

What is in question is not the detection of a material “psychic content”, of “resemblances” and all those items useful for comparisons of the image with an “original experience”. Still, Wittgenstein’s idea about what the *Bild* is does not become clear in this aphorism. He seems to ask a question rather than making a proposition. The reflections deployed here even remain entirely incomprehensible if one does not consider Wittgenstein’s concept of *Erlebnis*. For Wittgenstein, even the *Erlebnis* of the *Bild* needs to remain non-materialized. What he means by *Erlebnis* becomes clearer in PU 92, another aphorism about “reading”: “Did you read this sentence when thinking (*denkend*)?” Yes, I did, every word was important”. Wittgenstein concludes: “But this is not the normal experience (*Erlebnis*)”. In Wittgenstein’s typescript, the word “*Erlebnis*” is barred; this seems to show how much Wittgenstein intended to combat the creation of materializing metaphors, even for a

“metaphor” like *Erlebnis* that is supposed to signify an ungraspable experience. The *Erlebnis* of “longing” is as immaterial as the “thinking” which produces itself when speaking.

Let me give another example. The “immateriality” of an *Erlebnis* is felt when we search for a word that “almost” comes to mind but which we cannot “grasp”. Within these fleeting moments in which the playful fluency of speaking is interrupted for a few seconds, we would like to crystallize something like an *Erlebnis*. However, this is not an *Erlebnis*:

“It it on the tip of my tongue” expresses an *Erlebnis* no more than the words “Now I’ve got it!” – we use them in certain situations and are surrounded by behavior of a special kind, even by some characteristic *Erlebnisse* (Wittgenstein 1982: 842).

A solid parallelism between Nishida and Wittgenstein is represented by the fact that both avoid procedures of empathy and that both chose as one of their primordial occupations the philosophical project of “retrieving experiences”. Empathy is too abstract, and both design a sort of intuition that is absolutely *concrete*. In order to better characterize the non-material character of experiences or “experiences that accompany experiences”, Wittgenstein shifts from visual metaphors to those of tasting or smelling. Here the non-*Erlebnis* character of experiences becomes particularly clear:

I remember that sugar tasted like this. The *Erlebnis* returns to consciousness. But, of course: how do I know that this was the earlier *Erlebnis*? Memory is no more use to me here. No, in those words – the *Erlebnis* returns to consciousness [...] – I am only transcribing my memory, not describing it ([...] *sind nur eine Umschreibung, keine Beschreibung des Erinnerns*) (Wittgenstein 1989: 659).

What is important is not the memory reported in the *Erlebnis*, but rather the memory-like quantity attached to the *Erlebnis* (cf. Wittgenstein 1989: 654). Exactly like Nishida’s *pure experience*, this quantity can only be grasped through pure intuition, through *pure experience* or through an *Anschauung* that has an extremely “pure” character.

Wittgenstein’s reflections about this subject are complex, culminating in speculations about how the word “because” can be “experienced” (*erlebt*). All that remains as a possible solution for Wittgenstein is the idea of a pure *Anschauung*.

I want to say: “I experience (*erlebe*) the Because”. But not because I remember this *Erlebnis*; but because I, when thinking about what I experience in such a case, intuitively (*anschau*) this through the medium of [...] the notion “because” (Wittgenstein 1990: 177).⁶

It is indeed possible to comment on this thought by using Nishida’s idea that “nothingness” should be considered as the “negative space” of experiential immediacy (Dilworth 1973). The non-experienceable quantity “because” represents nothing other than a “nothingness” whose experience is so immediate that it cannot even be classified as an *Erlebnis*.

3.3. Gesture

Apart from this, Wittgenstein detects something like a pure experience in music, and this he very obviously shares with Nishida:

What does it consist in: following a musical phrase with understanding (*mit Verständnis*)? Contemplating a face with sensitivity for its expression? (...) Is that really an *Erlebnis*? What I mean is: can this be said to express an *Erlebnis*? (Wittgenstein 1980: 51e)⁷

Like Nishida, Wittgenstein is fascinated by a “movement without effort” as it is represented by the game-like movement of playing a piece of music. For Nishida, such an experience represented a concrete immediacy that made him say that “music is a term for pure feeling” (Nishida 1978: 17). The list of Wittgenstein’s allusions to music highlighting exactly this quality of music is long, and I will present only some of the most representative ones. In general, Wittgenstein aims at representing music as something non-materializable. If somebody says, “I know the melody”, what does this actually mean? He wants to say that, for him, the melody is there; but where is it? (Cf. Wittgenstein 1990: 184) The idea of music as a *Bild*, or, a similar idea in Wittgenstein’s philosophy, as a *gesture*, occupies an important position for identical reasons:

One of the most interesting points which the question of not being able to describe is connected with, [is that] the impression which a certain verse or a bar in music gives you is indescribable. “I don’t know what it is [...] look at this transition...” Very many people have the feeling: “I can make a gesture, but that’s all” (Wittgenstein 1966: 67).

It is worth mentioning that Wittgenstein’s attitude towards music is reflected by another Viennese intellectual, Schönberg, who, in his

musical theory underlines the necessity of understanding music “musically”, i.e. in a “pure” and non-materialized form. Reminiscent of Wittgenstein, Schönberg criticizes the fact that “in music one is trying to recognize procedures and feelings as if they were put into them”. The aim of hearing music must be to understand a piece of music without transforming it into representations, feelings, etc. Schönberg writes:

There are relatively few people who are able to understand purely musically what music has to say. The supposition that a piece of music should evoke representations (*Vorstellungen*) of any kind, and when they don't come, the piece has not been understood or is bad, is so frequent as only falseness and banality can be. Of no other art does one ask similar things, but one is rather satisfied with the effects of its material, though it is true that in the other arts the material quality or the represented object are accessible almost automatically to the limited capacity of perception of the intellectual middle class. (Schönberg 1976: 18)⁸

4. William James

A parallel between Nishida and Wittgenstein that strengthens the aforementioned points becomes obvious through their occupation with William James's “Radical Empiricism”. Nishida adopted James's notion of “pure experience” because of James's ambition to treat experience in terms of an “instantaneous field of present” in which all experience is “pure”. Dilworth insists that Nishida's “world of human-historical existence is precisely the fluent world of consciousness described [...] positively in W. James's *Essays in Radical Empiricism*” (Dilworth 1987: 18). The problem is, as Dilworth also affirms in his fundamental comparative article on Nishida and James (Dilworth 1969: 110), that Nishida's main “interest seems to have been more on the fact of im-mediacy itself, i.e. the “state” or “condition” of non-discriminatory unity, than on James's concern for felt transition”. Wittgenstein, when mentioning James, is intrigued by similar points. The aforementioned case of the word that is “present” (on the tongue) but yet not there, stems from James, and Wittgenstein criticizes precisely the lack of immediacy in James' attempt to grasp an experience so pure that any description transforms it into an *Erlebnis*:

James is really trying to say: “What a remarkable experience! The word is not there yet, and yet in a certain sense is there, or something is there, which *cannot* grow into anything but this word “. – But this is no experience at all. The words “It is on the tip of my tongue” are not the expressions of an

Erlebnis and James merely gives them this strange interpretation (Wittgenstein 1982: 841).

“Experiences” like this are not contained in a temporal duration, just like the “understanding” of a word does not produce itself through its temporally extended use (though it might not be entirely independent of this use). More precisely, the experience of “understanding a word” appears like a “flash”: “But we *understand* the meaning of a word when we hear or say it; we grasp in it a flash [mit einem Schlage]; and what we grasp in this way is surely something different from the ‘use’ which is extended in time!” (Wittgenstein 1990: 138)

Wittgenstein’s decision to refrain from thinking in order to engage in a kind of “pure” seeing (*denk’ nicht sondern schau*) overlaps with Japanese attempts not to see *things* but just to *see*. The experience of reading a *haiku* for example, includes such an avoidance of “seeing things”; we should not imagine the “things” that appear in the *haiku* as if they were an *Erlebnis*. We should not do so, because such a seeing pushes our mind towards the sphere of “thinking”. Similarly, Wittgenstein writes: “The picture of the special atmosphere forced itself upon me; I can see it quite clearly before me – *so long, as I do not look at what my memory tells me really happened*” (my italics) (Wittgenstein 1990: 607).⁹

When the young Wittgenstein speaks, in his war diaries, of the necessity of a “clear seeing”,¹⁰ he seems to strive for a perception of those things which, in Nishida’s terminology, are self-expressive. Nishida writes in “The Logic of Topos and the Religious World View”: “But that which is not self-expressive (自己表現的) in some way is nothing at all” (Nishida 1944b: 389). Wittgenstein notices that within the immediate (and not even *Erlebnis*-like) “flash” functioning like a kind of “pure experience”, seeing and thinking become one and can most probably not even be distinguished: “Can I, when the aspect flashes, separate a visual experience (Seherlebnis) from a *thought experience* (*Denkerlebnis*)? (and what does this mean?)” (Wittgenstein 1982-92: 27).¹¹

5. Lebensform

My intention is to draw a line from “pure experience”, or an ungraspable, unsayable *Erlebnis* (that is actually no *Erlebnis*), to a theory of communication, which I find developed in both Nishida and Wittgenstein. Both philosophers act against the kind of subjectivism

particularly well established in European subjectivism of the 17th and the 18th centuries, through which the 'I' manages to assert itself over an entire world of the non-I. Leibniz, Hume, Kant, and many others subordinated the object to the knowing subject. On the basis of their subjectivist philosophy, the Self, as well as the space in which the individual is embedded, could be defined as "subjective". Nishida's or Wittgenstein's ideas of pure experience, or of an absolutely private *Erlebnis* respectively, are opposed to subjectivism when it comes to definitions of the Self or of the cultural space within which the Self is living. As a consequence, the idea of pure experience, as well as that of an ungraspable un-*Erlebnis*, does not confine the human being within an absolute "private", subjective interiority, but confronts it with its environment, this means in the first place, with the Other. Nishida's idea of "consciousness" might appear monadic, but the space-time character of this monadic being, individual and unique as it is, is not felt as a restriction. Within Nishida's *basho*, the I does not content itself with narcissistic self-contemplation, but "the self sees itself without a self". Finally, the "I is I without an I". This means that the self and the I are not submerged in pure subjectivity, or redescribed through an objective, abstract language, but experience themselves, in pure experience, through self-negation. For this reason, in this kind of non-subjective monad, an opening towards the other appears almost naturally. This is one of Nishida's points that are extremely difficult to explain. Real self-awareness must have gone through self-negation. Without a negation of the self, the self cannot be aware of others. Only through this, the *basho* becomes a place for the self and the other.

One of the reasons why this is possible is that pure experience is an experience made at the moment when subject and object are not yet separated, i.e. at the moment when man's intellect is not yet present to recognize the subject as a subject experiencing an object. From the point of view of pure experience, "subjectivity" and "objectivity" are intellectual abstractions. Instead of looking for these abstractions, Nishida recommends seeking at the basis of every human action a "pure experience" which does not yet have a sense (an objective sense which could be known by a subject) but which represents a sense only for itself; this sense can be experienced in the form of pure experience.

Certainly, Nishida shift from individual, pure experience to an experience of the other within a *basho* is complex and has not been fully illuminated by scholarship until now. But it is clear that he resolves this shift by relying on a non-Western logic, i.e. on a "topological logic" or

on the “logic of the place” that he has developed himself. One can say that all of Nishida’s considerations of the relationship between the I and the Thou are based on this logic, and to go from pure experience to *basho* follows a consistent – though not Western – logic. When I now claim that Wittgenstein’s philosophy takes a similar step from pure *Erlebnis* to *Lebensform* this could imply that Wittgenstein had developed a similar logic. But of course, such an outspoken “logic” cannot be found in Wittgenstein. Still it is possible to trace a certain development of thought that leads from *Erlebnis* through considerations of the Other, to *Lebensform* even if it does not take on the form of a “logic of *Lebensform*”.

Let us say that Wittgenstein has perhaps not developed, but *noted* a developmental line leading from the state of pure experience to the consideration of the other. An aphorism by Wittgenstein on the possibility of grasping the Other’s experience is indeed very reminiscent of Nishida’s considerations of the same subject:

Can one know what happens in the Other in the same way as he knows it? How does he know it? He can express his *Erlebnis*. No inner doubt whether he really has this *Erlebnis* – analogous to the doubt whether he really has this or that disease – enters into the game; and for this reason it is wrong to say that he knows what he experiences (*erlebt*). But the Other can have doubts.... (Wittgenstein 1982-92: 123)

I cannot know the other as he knows himself because this would necessitate a materialization of his experience (by calling it an *Erlebnis*). His experience should remain pure; he should not even *express* it. The amazing point in Wittgenstein’s ideas about the perception of the other’s subjectivity is that he formulates a corresponding pattern with regard to the experiences of the ‘I’. Any materialization through *Erlebnis*-like introspection should also be avoided. Instead, the consideration *of the experience of the other* will help the ‘I’ to maintain the purity of his/her own experience. If we want to recognize “how it happens” that we understand a “musical phrase”, we should not look “into ourselves” but look at “the other” and ask ourselves what happens “in him”:

Once again: what is it to follow a musical phrase with understanding (*Verständnis*), or to play it with understanding? Don’t look inside yourself. Consider rather what makes you say of *someone else* (*der Andere*) that this is what he is doing. (Wittgenstein 1980: 51)

Here it seems indeed that Wittgenstein's paradigm of *Lebensform*, the sense of which is far from clear in his writings, can be understood within the context of the thoughts on "individual experience" and *basho* presented above. Wittgenstein establishes "speaking" as a part of *Lebensform*, because *Lebensform* represents an experience free of meaningful intentions ("Dies ist keine Übereinstimmung der Meinungen, sondern der Lebensform", 1990: 241). A work of art is not a subjective expression but a *Lebensform*: "In order to be clear about aesthetic words you have to describe ways of living" (*Lebensform* in the German translation) (Wittgenstein 1966: 11/32). Though it might sometimes seem so, Wittgenstein's philosophy does not suggest a hermeneutic retracing of links between the individual and the general. Many different interpretations of the notion of *Lebensform* have been suggested, and one of the most simplistic ones is certainly to say that every individual phenomenon must be seen within a general *Lebensform*-context. To me, the most correct approach to *Lebensform* is to consider this notion as a moment of *incommensurability* in the sense of a pure experience that can be individual and at the same time constitutive of a general way of being of a group of persons.¹² In other words, the *Lebensform* is private, but because it is based on a not yet materialized experience (that can also be the experience of a group of people, a state, or a nation), this entirety can never be "split up" into different, uncoordinated language games but is held together by a quantity of pure experience present at the base of their *Lebensform*. When Wittgenstein affirms that the *Lebensform* is somehow "animal-like" (*animalisches*),¹³ he means that this form of human life is absolutely fundamental, but that at the same time it is not mysterious or unclear. Like Nishida's pure experience, *Lebensform* is dependent on an immediacy, which is absolute, and beyond "clear" and "unclear". Even its redescription as an "instinct" would represent an undue materialization.

As a matter of fact, one has tried to explain Wittgenstein's *Lebensform* as a general form of social coherence among individuals whose root goes deeper and is more absolute than the idea of a simple consensus. The German sociological notion of *Gemeinschaft* (community) comes to mind here: it has been used for example by Gianfranco Soldati:

The members of a certain community (*Gemeinschaft*) normally act, with regard to a certain rule, in the same way. According to Wittgenstein, this is *not*

due to a social consensus. It is not the correspondence of our opinions or interpretations of a certain rule, which make us act alike, but the fact that we share the same *Lebensform*. (Soldati 1989: 90)

This is a problem that appears in parallel with a whole body of interpretations of Nishida, and their inadequacy for interpretations of Wittgenstein's *Lebensform* becomes clearer through an analysis of Nishida's parallel case. Of course it is tempting to explain *Lebensform* as a condition caused by a *Gemeinschaft*. However, in my opinion, this over-pronounces the proximity of *Lebensform* with purely chronotopical or "idyllic" definitions of space. What is lacking in a *Gemeinschaft* is the "negativity" inherent, for example, in the term *Weltanschauung*. I will discuss below the resemblance between *Lebensform* and *Weltanschauung*. But let me first elucidate the parallel between Nishida and Wittgenstein. Nishida, like his student Tetsuro Watsuji, was influenced by Tönnies's book on the significance of *Gemeinschaft*. Watsuji, in his *Rinrigaku*, defined cultural, existential space as determined by a *Gemeinschaft* when writing: "As Tönnies has said, family bonds are realized in the home, neighborly unions in the matrices of historical tradition, and in turn they create new historical traditions day by day" (Watsuji 1937: Quoted from Dilworth's trans. 1998: 276). Nishida also uses Tönnies as a reference in his *kokutai* article, which does not make things easier:

A historical society that actually exists does not arise in the manner of "from many to one". It develops in the form of transition from communal society to profit society. To use Tönnies's word, it arises from an essential will, *Wesenswille*. And an actual existing society is always comprised of both *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* dimensions. It begins as a center that is a contradictory identity. (Nishida 1944c: Appendix 2, 425)

As has explained Osamu Kuno (Richter 1996: 1028ff), Japan accepted Tönnies's work on the *Gemeinschaft* as one of the principal references for Japanese social models, because the relatively simple description of social development leading from an agrarian community to a state-like society appeared as suitable for Japan's contemporary needs. When reading Nishida's *kokutai* article, one could sometimes believe that he has given in to Tönnies simple, organicist logic (later refined by Tönnies himself) about the formation of states. At the same time, it remains obvious that these thoughts are not only incompatible with Japanese social reality, but also with all of Nishida's ideas about the *basho* which attempt to think stately cultures as determined by a

“placeless place”. The metaphysical notion of self-negation, linked to the theory of pure experience rooted in Buddhist philosophy, does not and cannot appear in these ideas about the formation of the state through *Gemeinschaft*. However, for Nishida, in the historical world, the individual has a mediating function as s/he represents a people. The “style of productivity” of a nation is a historical style, but it manifests itself in individuals; and it comes about, like pure experience, through action-intuition. In this way, every culture expresses something “absolute” or “religious” (or should we say, in a Wittgensteinian way, “unhinterfragbares”?). Finally, each nation becomes, as Nishida says, “globally aware”, it “embraces holism and at the same time does not deny the individual” (Nishida 1937: 270-71). The *basho* appears here very clearly as a (religious) *Lebensanschauung* or a *Weltanschauung* which “reflects all individuals and their mutually determining way-of-being within itself” (Abe 1988: 371). In this sense “each nation and its people transcend themselves, while remaining true to themselves and construct a single *multi-world* (世界的世界)” (Nishida 1943: 427).

One has also said about Wittgenstein’s *Lebensform* that it is a *Weltanschauung* (cf. Keularz 1995: 116), a fact which probably cannot be properly understood without taking into consideration the developments of Wittgenstein’s notion of *Lebensform* as reflected in the work of the German school of “Philosophical Anthropology”, at least by its later representative, Erich Rothacker. German *Philosophische Anthropologie* is mainly represented by the sociologists and philosophers Max Scheler and Helmuth Plessner, whose work has been continued by Arnold Gehlen and Erich Rothacker, who developed their thoughts into an “Allgemeine vergleichende Menschheitslehre” (General Comparative Science of Mankind). Central to the work of *Philosophical Anthropology* is the idea of “culture as *Lebensstil*”, which represents a major perspective, especially for Rothacker, who contrasted this notion with the more biologically oriented explanations of civilization provided by Gehlen.¹⁴

Rothacker tried to trace back scientific discussions to *weltanschauliche* discussions or to references based on considerations of a *Lebensstil*.¹⁵ It has been recognized that Rothacker was, in this project, guided by Wittgenstein’s idea of *Lebensform*, an influence he indicates himself (Rothacker 1966: 173, and 1973: 29), and which has been further evaluated by Karl-Otto Apel (Apel 1976: 96). Rothacker revises Wittgenstein’s concept of *Lebensform* as a kind of “human condition” which turns out to be not very different from the “animal condition”,

because man, like the animal, “does not notice, when captured in temporary *Stimmungen*, those things which do not appear important for him” (Rothacker 1964: 87). Being constantly submitted to certain *Stimmungen*, *Lebensform* as well as *Lebensstil* appear close to Kuhn’s notion of “paradigm”, which was also developed under Wittgensteinian influence (see Keulartz).

Rothacker’s originality consists in the fact that he uses these ideas for the purpose of reflections on the character and the multiplicity of cultures, a point that makes his development of *Lebensform* interesting for the present chapter. Of course, it needs to be said that Rothacker’s decision to deal with the subject of “cultural differences” pushed him throughout the entire period of World War II right into the camp of fascist ideology (cf. Eßbach 2004). This can be seen as a further remarkable parallel with Nishida, though Rothacker, contrary to Nishida, acted out of determinate convictions when adopting this ideology at least temporarily.¹⁶ Though he has never been “officially” rehabilitated, the continuing occupation of his former Ph.D. students Habermas and Apel with the parts of his work written before and after his Nazi period lets one suppose that some of his ideas remain valuable and relevant.

While for Wittgenstein *Lebensform* appears to be a predominantly individual disposition, Rothacker’s development of *Lebensform* into *Lebensstil* represents the generalization of an individualist *Erlebnis* into something that concerns entire “peoples” (cf. Rothacker 1942). One can say that Rothacker “anthropologizes” the *Erlebnis*, the notion central for Rothacker’s teacher Wilhelm Dilthey, i.e. he dissociates it from the “psychologizing” idea of “lived”, individual experience. Wittgenstein’s influence is obvious here.

Rothacker is anxious not to fall into a “personalizing hypostasia” when considering “life” as a cultural phenomenon (Perpeet 1966: vii). At the same time he is eager not to engage in abstractions from life, but to concentrate on its *content* (Rothacker 1926: 39). In this way, Rothacker replaces Dilthey’s idea of *Weltanschauung* as the expression of individual consciousness with the idea of *Lebensstil*.

It is certainly not exaggerated to say that what Rothacker undertakes is strongly reminiscent of what has been described above as Nishida’s shift from individual pure experience to a local sphere of the “I and diverse Others” that became the *basho*. In spite of the lack of more official points of contact between *Philosophical Anthropology* and Heideggerian philosophy (these appear only later through Habermas),

Rothacker's ideas can be understood, as Rothacker himself stated, as a parallel, anthropological development of Heidegger's thoughts on the *Sein* as opposed to *Seiende* (Rothacker 1973: 23). When Rothacker explains these affinities, he uses an outspokenly Wittgensteinian vocabulary insisting on the image of a *Weltbild* essential to a certain *Lebensform*, which, at the moment we gain insight into this *Lebensform*, suddenly "flashes forth". Rothacker writes:

Heidegger's Being overlaps with the 'meaningful' (*Bedeutsamen*) in our extended sense. The fundamental beam of light of a respectively dominating meaning (*Bedeutsamkeit*) lets a multiple Ontic (as a *Weltbild*) flash forth (*aufleuchten*).¹⁷

It does not seem that Nishida has been aware of the entirety of the work of *Philosophical Anthropology*¹⁸ though it is safe to assume that he knew the works of Scheler, at least superficially. It is nevertheless interesting that Arthur R. Luther has written an intense comparative article on Nishida and Scheler (Luther 1977) in which he insists on parallels with regard to Scheler's idea of "Person" and Nishida's "Active Self". I think that given Scheler's status as one of the few twentieth century philosophers who (together with Bergson and Heidegger) attempted to define *perception* as a not purely theoretical act but as an act involving the entire life of a person, it is perhaps not surprising that Nishida has things in common with Scheler. Unfortunately, Luther does not at all tackle the problem from this side, but deals with apparent parallels in a rather isolated fashion, i.e. without stating Nishida's own allusions to similar Western ideas (for example to Bergson or Heidegger, let alone to Scheler himself). The gist of Luther's analysis is nonetheless interesting for the present examination because it establishes Nishida's and Scheler's view of the person as a "non objectifiable" quantity that exists only through "acts" and not through descriptions.

Given that Rothacker developed Scheler's initial psychologizing attempts to define man into an anthropological theory embracing the definition of human cultures and peoples, Nishida's formulation of a historically formative world of unity of opposites, "where infinite future and infinite past are enclosed and enveloped by the present", and which "has one style of productivity" (生産様式) (Nishida 1939: 161) are indeed strongly reminiscent of Rothacker's vision of a world in which cultures are seen as *Lebensstile*. For Nishida, in a "style of productivity", "different subjects are living together in one world-wide environment,

each of them being for itself spiritually productive, and touching eternity” (ibid.). Both Rothacker’s (Wittgenstein-based) vision and Nishida’s vision of a multi-culture take as a starting point the pure experience of the individual person that is not an object but rather existent through an “ungraspable” *act*. The advantage of this position is that “cultures” that will be later recognized as manifestations of *Lebensstile*, can never appear as “objective” phenomena.

Conclusion

It is certain that these ideas remain particularly interesting today, in the period of globalization, where “cultures” tend to be objectified as “exportable” products and lose their individual, intimate, or “pure” dimension. In this context, Wittgenstein’s idea of *Lebensform* as a “non-objective cultural style” based on the pure experiences of those people who are living in that culture becomes clearer through the hidden interferences between Nishida and Wittgenstein. It remains to be said that a further dialogue between Nishida and Wittgenstein could take place on a level where it is perhaps least expected. Most recently, both Nishida’s and Wittgenstein’s philosophies have been used for reflections on the subject of intercultural communication.¹⁹ An intercultural communication between these two philosophers could indeed bring research in intercultural communication a large step further.

Notes

1. For an outline of this newly arisen interest in Wittgenstein in European countries, see the special issue of the French revue *Critique* “Le nouveau Wittgenstein” Nr. 654, Nov. 2001.
2. When quoting from the English text I am sometimes obliged to modify the translation in order to remain closer to the German text.
3. Publications on Wittgenstein and Eastern thought appear between 1973 and 1985 and do then, curiously, cease. See in particular Thomas Tominaga 1983 and Goodman 1976. Tominaga’s comparison is mainly based on “the inexpressible resort to silence”, that is the fact that “Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu are in agreement with the early Wittgenstein that there are realities that cannot be expressed or described in terms of written or spoken words [...]” (137). Tominaga likens Ch’an’s *wu* (enlightenment experience) to Wittgenstein’s “the mystical” (Tractatus). Goodman’s notes, like all the other authors mentioned, Wittgenstein’s aim of “bumping the reader into a new awareness” (145) by “applying discontinuity and paradox”, (148) which he sees also in Lao Tzu and Chang Tzu.. The articles in *Philosophy East & West* are: Hudson 1973, Rieman 1977, Kalupahana 1977, Waldo 1978, and Thurman 1980, Anderson 1985.

4. Wienpahl concludes, after analyzing some of Wittgenstein's treatments of the problem of linguistic understanding: "Wittgenstein had attained a state of mind resembling that which the Zen master calls *satori* and he had worked out a method of inducing it in others which resembles the methods of the *mondos* and *koans*" (Wienpahl 1958: 69).
5. "'Der Gedanke, dieses seltsame Wesen' – aber er kommt uns nicht seltsam vor, wenn wir denken. Der Gedanke kommt uns nicht geheimnisvoll vor, während wir denken, sondern nur, wenn wir gleichsam retrospektiv sagen: 'Wie war das möglich?' Wie war es möglich, daß der Gedanke von diesem Gegenstand *selbst* handelte" (Wittgenstein 1990: 428).
6. "Ja, wie konnte denn der Vorgang des Verstehens versteckt sein, wenn ich doch sagte, 'Jetzt verstehe ich', *weil* ich verstand?! Und wenn ich sage, er ist versteckt, - wie weiß ich denn, wonach ich zu suchen habe? Ich bin in einem Wirrwarr" (Wittgenstein 1990: 153).
7. Wittgenstein compares in the same aphorism the fact of following a musical phrase with that of drawing a line: "...denk an des Benehmen Eines, der das Gesicht mit Verständnis für seinen Ausdruck zeichnet. An das Gesicht, an die Bewegungen des Zeichenden; - wie drückt es sich aus, daß jeder Strich, den er macht, von dem Gesicht diktiert wird, daß nichts an seiner Zeichnung willkürlich ist...?" (Wittgenstein 1980: Entry of 1948)
8. Schönberg tells also, in a very Wittgensteinian way, of his attempt to compose the music for a poem without reading the poem beforehand (by reading only the first line) in order not to be unduly influenced by the material character of the poem (Schönberg 1976: 5).
9. The interesting continuation of this aphorism is as follows: "Und was das Gefühl der Sicherheit anbelangt: so sage ich mir manchmal: 'Ich bin sicher, es ist ...Uhr', und in mehr oder weniger sicherem Tonfall, etc. Fragst du nach dem *Grund* für diese Sicherheit, so habe ich keinen".
10. "Das klare sehen will sich nicht einstellen" (Wittgenstein 1992: Entry of 13.11.1914).
11. "Ich möchte sagen, daß, was hier aufleuchtet, nur solange stehen bleibt, als eine bestimmte Beschäftigung mit dem betrachteten Objekt dauert. ('Sieh, wie er blickt.') – 'Ich möchte sagen' – und *ist* es so? – Frage dich: "Wie lange fällt mir etwas auf?" – Wie lange ist es mir *neu*?" (Wittgenstein 1990: II, 393).
12. I believe that a large part of the discussion of the public or private character of Wittgenstein's "Sprachspiel" or Wittgenstein's *Lebensform* becomes irrelevant through this reflection.
13. Cf.: Joachim Schulte 1999: [Die] "kämpfende, unruhige Sicherheit versus "beruhigte Sicherheit eben die durch unser gleichsam mythologisches Weltbild vermittelte Sicherheit, in der wir uns im Rahmen unserer Lebensformen wiegen dürfen. "Ich will diese Sicherheit als etwas auffassen, was jenseits von berechtigt und unberechtigt liegt; also gleichsam als etwas animalisches" (§359 *On Certitude*). "Gemeint ist wohl eher das Unmittelbare, Instinktive bestimmter Relationen, ohne die viele unserer Sprachspiele keinen Halt hätten. Instinkt im Sinne des Fundamentalen, aber Unbegründeten, weil es seinerseits unsere Begründungen stützt" (163).
14. Jürgen Habermas, in particular, likes to oppose Rothacker's anthropology to the biologically oriented one by Gehlen. Cf. Habermas 1973.
15. Especially in Rothacker 1926 and Rothacker 1935 Rothacker defines the *Lebensstil* as "man's 'Totalantwort' to his condition" (See Rothacker 1935: 55ff).
16. Rothacker's temporary proximity with Nazism is one of the reasons why he is no longer read today in Germany.
17. Rothacker 1954 quoted from Keulartz 1995: 132.

18. I rely here, in principle, on the indications of Prof. Michiko Yusa (Washington) and Dr. Mayuko Uehara (Paris).
19. Elberfeld 1999 as well as several contributions in Lütterfelds and Roser 1999.

Postface

“Predicative Logic” and Virtual Stylistics

Has the concept of *pure experience*, through which the world is immediately and pre-reflexively perceived, not also been developed in certain currents of Western culture? As has been shown in Chapter 1, in Europe and especially at the beginning of this century, philosophical methods of positivism and impressionism which were supposed to enable a “direct understanding” of the world were elaborated in various ways. What distinguishes the Japanese approaches from these European ones is their “aestheticism”, their “cultural” character, or their “virtual” input that can, on several levels, be opposed to a scientific, materialistic one.

To know a table as “what it is”, one must first of all not know that this object is a table; otherwise one can only subsume the particular object under the general concept of “the table”. The true “experience” of the table is felt by children, insofar as they do not yet know what a table is. Civilization imposes a certain “style” on things and on the world in which we live, and this “style” constantly prevents us from seeing things as they are. The child’s vision of the table is neither a vision conditioned by a certain culture, nor a scientific knowledge of the table based on the exact dimensions of the object, on its color, etc. The vision of the table is a “*pure experience*” that the child undergoes with the table. It is a vision that is indifferent towards a particular culture, but which, in itself, is nevertheless profoundly cultural and not at all scientific.

Nishida’s “*pure experience*” resembles the seeing of the table not as a table, but not as a neutral and abstract object either. For Nishida the table is a concrete object permitting a concrete experience. As a matter of fact, Nishida’s *pure experience* seems to be expressed in some Western discourses on style. What is usually in question in Western discourses on style, is the relation between the individual and the general, but also between the absolute and the relative. Nishida’s *pure experience* is individual and general, and at the same time neither. In the West, the concept of style has often initiated battles concerning its individual or general character, a battle whose scheme can be summarized thus: even if all style requires individuality, a style that is a

purely individual phenomenon is no longer a style, but simply an individual expression. Style needs general recognition. On the other hand, a style that is only general, is no longer style, but exists as an abstract rule far removed from every definition of style. Style cannot be seen as a half-general and half-concrete quality, but it is a quality that self-determines itself within the tension existing between the two.

This indicates a parallel with Nishida. Style is not simply the fusion of the individual and the general, a fusion in which the one generously yields space to the other until both meet right in the middle. The stylistic fusion of the individual and the general is the paradoxical fusion in which everything subsists, and which creates something new only on the grounds of this paradoxical constellation. Nishida's *basho* exists in a similar way. The question is how individuals, though each with its own absolute essence, can manage to avoid relativity when they are to coexist with one another? Masao Abe provides the answer saying that the *basho* reflects in itself not individuals but their "ways of being" (Abe 985: 371). In this way, individuality can lead – paradoxically – to the greatest generality: "The more we become individual, the more we approach God", writes Nishida (Nishida 1944a: 131).

Let us put these general thoughts on style in relation with the aforementioned concept of style. Shizuteru Ueda analyses a poem by Rilke (S. Ueda 1976) following principles derived from Nishida's thought about *pure experience*. It is remarkable that Ueda's main idea appears close to Western modernist approaches, i.e. to approaches, which use *Verfremdung*. The poem analyzed is the inscription on Rilke's gravestone:

Rose, oh reiner Widerspruch, Lust
Niemandes Schlaf zu sein unter soviel
Lidern
(Rose, oh pure contradiction, the lust
to be nobody's sleep under so many
eyelids)

In his interpretation of the poem, Ueda insists on the exclamation "oh" in the first line between "Rose" and "Widerspruch". The "oh" signifies for him a certain "pure presence" in Nishida's sense. Ueda explains that the moment of "pure presence" is produced by "breaking" the habitual image of the rose, an image that the reader had so far considered as a "normal rose". This image or concept is not immediate but already past, even when pronounced in the present (by saying 'this is a rose'). It remains over-familiar and cannot produce a pure experience of the rose as something present. At the very moment I say "I see the

rose”, my act of seeing is already in the past; furthermore, one can also note that here a certain conceptualization has installed itself in the understanding of the rose. According to Ueda, it is the “oh” which “breaks” everything that is familiar and conceptual, and which is thus able to refer us to that pre-conceptual state of mind in which we even lack the word for “rose”. All we can say is “Oh!” Ueda explains this approach in a way, which shows the proximity between these ideas and those of the Western *Verfremdung*:¹

“Oh!” Was da gegenwärtig west, ist nicht mehr dasjenige, was man, oder “das Man” mit seinem vertrauten, aber auch abgenutzten Wort Rose bezeichnet; nicht mehr dasjenige, dem man in der sprachlich vorverstandenen Welt begegnet. Es blitzt da sozusagen die Rose, nein, ETWAS, etwas unsagbares. Bzw. die Rose ist zum “Oh!” geworden, oder angemessener ausgedrückt, entworden... Das “Oh!” ist ein Urlaut der Präsenz in eins mit dem primitiven Urlaut, mit dem die Sprachwelt durchbrochen wird. (S. Ueda 1876: 155)

The experience of the rose is contained in a virtual “nothingness” or the rose has become virtual itself. The “Oh” is seen as an “original word”, an *Urwort* which refers us to the pure presence of objects. Such an *Urwort* does not appear in all poems in such a clear and marked way as in the one quoted; but even where it does not appear, the reader can be referred to a pure presence through a generalized structure, as Ueda points out, through stylistic analysis. Pure presence as communicated by a poem will be represented by its style, as Ueda explains: “Sehr oft verschwindet das Urwort, wenn es zu einer sprachlichen Artikulation kommt, ‘zwischen die Zeilen’ und bestimmt nun unsichtbar den Stil von der Gesamtkomposition bis zur Wortwahl” (157).

I will resume the thoughts on the relationships between style and pure experience by means of a more abstract reflection that is founded on Nishida’s “logic of place”. As shown above, *basho* represents a universal quality, which contains all individual qualities, without becoming substantial in an Aristotelian sense. This paradoxical character necessitates a special logic. All substantialism restricts the individual at the moment it is taken over by the general. Being founded on the logic of the subject, the subject submits itself to the individual predicates. Nishida attempts to avoid this by designing an alternative logic: the logic of place as a predicative logic (*jutsugo no ronri*, 述語の論理) that opposes itself to the Aristotelian logic of the subject. Contrary to the latter, in the logic of place the grammatical or logical identity of the subject is resolved in the predicate of the subject. For this reason there is a resemblance between the “logic of place” and what one can call a “logic of style”. The resemblance becomes clear when one tries to retrace a

proverb on style first by Aristotelian logic, and then by the logic of place.

The proverb “One should not have a style but style” will serve as an example. It is clear that it is impossible to retrace what is expressed by the proverb, by founding the explicative discourse on a logic of identity of the Aristotelian kind. The logic of place serves much better the purpose of an interpretation because in this proverb all identity (of style) is “swallowed” by a predicate. Before, style was considered a subject that could appropriate different qualities (to be good, bad, etc.). Suddenly, through this proverb, style becomes a predicate founded on nothing more than its own existence as a predicate. “Style” is not founded on the vision of an autonomous, Cartesian subject. But it has not simply become an abstract rule either. “Style” is neither general nor individual, but rather a “nothing”, very much in the sense of the *basho* which subsumes the individual without altering its unique character. In other words, “style” functions like “absolute nothingness”; it also resembles the “presence” of *pure experience*. Expressed in terms of Western aesthetics one can say that “style” (in contrast to “a style”) is a style that has not been stylized. It is a style presenting itself as a unified quantity, which has not yet been unified by a subject. It is a style that is present without having been made present. In a more Eastern way, one can say that “style” (in contrast to *a style*) is pure action. It is not the voluntary action of an individual since the individual can only produce “a style” or “styles” but not “style”. “Style” exists within a place, it represents its own structure and its own system without being dependent on human reflection.

Some of Nishida’s ideas that touch upon the subject of style help to clarify the idea in question. Nishida writes little about style,² but he elaborates an aesthetic category that goes beyond aesthetics, though clearly remaining an existential category attached to works of art. First, Nishida describes this quality in *Zen no kenkyû*, and it seems that it is precisely the phenomenon of style in the sense defined above that he is alluding to:

Insofar as the painter intends various things in his or her consciousness, we cannot yet truly see the painter’s personality (*jinkaku*). We first see it only when, after long years of struggle, the painter’s skills mature and the brush follows the will. (Nishida 1911: 154)

The personality of the painter can be detected in works of art; this personality is the style of the painter, but it is a style that has not simply been constructed or created by accumulating certain thoughts or feelings. Sartre has said that style is “la langue toute entière, prenant sur

elle-même, par la médiation de l'écrivain, le point de vue de la singularité" (Sartre 1972: 109). Without wishing to deny the existence of thoughts and feeling in this style, it is nevertheless clear that the "style" or the "personality" of the work of art is produced through a process which is more negative than positive. The "personality" of the painter found in his works exists on the "real ground of his self", a ground which the painter himself has found only by abandoning a large part of the "fabrications" (ideas, thoughts, feelings, etc.) proper to his habitual being. The style or personality that he finally finds is not due to a rational stylization, but to a pure experience that leads the painter and his work towards self-identity.

There is yet another aspect of the *basho* showing a parallel of this concept with a certain Western notion of style. Nishida also sees the *basho* in which the will self-determines itself as "history forming (歴史的形成的であるのである)" (Nishida 1944b: 445). The place forms an historical world that is not a biological or material world, but a cultural world. Science can only "objectify" this world (just as it objectifies psychic life) by discovering intellectual objects, i.e. by reducing the world to *noemata*. In Nishida, in contrast, the world is a world that self-determines itself in a *basho*, and this world is a socio-historical world, which always maintains an individual-general aspect. In this way, Nishida's philosophy suggests a theory of culture. The different civilizations, epochs, and states are individual, but at the same time they self-determine themselves from the point of view of the *basho*. The historical world is only one presence in which, through a dialectical process, the individual is confronted with the Absolute. This confrontation produces, as Nishida says in *The Unity of Opposites*, a "form of a style of production" (生産様式の形, *seisan yoshiki no katachi*) common to a certain people. By overcoming the biological stage and by becoming cultural, society becomes a "style of poesis" (Nishida 1939: 164). Not so different from his thoughts on aesthetics developed in *Zen no kenkyû*, "character" and "personality" are key words for the formulation of the Self (171), but this time they appear in the context of a theory of culture. All personality forms itself through the process of negation, an approach that clearly distances this concept, as Nishida insists in this text, from the Jamesian concept of the self. While James reduces the Self to the "brandmark" of a lamb (羊群の焼印, *yogun no yaki'in*) (171), for Nishida a people "is formed by its own forming" (186) as a self-negating unity. Arisaka and Feenberg comment on these passages from *The Unity of Opposites* by saying that "with this notion of historical 'style' Nishida attempts to reconstruct the Hegelian understanding of society as 'objective spirit' in the framework of an ontology of action" (Arisaka and Feenberg 1990: 198). The style of an

historical epoch has become the paradoxical fusion of individual action and general history.

Notes

1. Nishida has been dealt with in the present book in the context of the thoughts of the young Bakhtin, which renders any outline of the Russian formalist's arguments about similar matters particularly interesting. Russian formalism's aim was to avoid intellectual conceptualization by using aesthetic methods within the very process of understanding. In this they differ from positivists. For the formalists, human perception should avoid falling into the trap that civilization constantly creates with the help of its prefabricated concepts: we should try to place objects beyond their habitual context. This is done by applying an aesthetic method. More precisely, it is a method, which resembles that of stylization. The complex character of the formalist approach is provided by the fact that the device that could be called "stylization" has always had a very negative relationship with the phenomenon of style. This means that the weight of civilization to be avoided was also designated by the name of "style". It may thus appear strange that the aesthetic method by means of which the formalists were trying to neutralize the stylistic degree of things itself still resembles a stylization. The interesting though problematical side of the Russian formalists' alienation effect (*остранение*, *ostranenie*, *Verfremdung*) is represented by the fact that, paradoxically, their stylization does not aim at the production of style (in the sense of a cultural style), but intends rather to reveal the world "as it is". It is thus wrong to say that the formalist approach is an anti-stylistic approach, because the true experience undergone with objects is obtained through an aesthetic stylization of these same objects, that is through a stylization based on the approaches of *Verfremdung*. It is better to say that what the formalist *Verfremdung* obtains is the style of a "higher order". It is not the "arbitrary style" present in the form of the product of culture and society that one wants to reveal; it is certainly not the scientific truth that positivism believes it grasps, either. In order to know the "what" that the formalists want to grasp, we need to look once more at the example of the table as seen by a child.. Because of this constellation of elements, Russian formalism decides to combat style. However, it combats it only insofar as it is a certain style. At the same time, the formalist method remains a stylistic method, which does not intend to oppose itself to the phenomenon of style, but which rather has every reason to accept style as a phenomenological basis for its theory. The *Verfremdung* "stylizes" things so they appear to us as objects, which are completely new, (which are "strange"), and of which we have no pre-knowledge. A real experience with things is produced on the grounds of the "strangeness" attached to "seeing for the first time".

2. Cf. the ideas developed in Nishida 1941. After interesting analyses of style in Semper and Riegl, Nishida defines artistic style as the “contradictory self-identity” of the subject and its environment. Nishida insists that for the artist, style is something “clear” and “necessary”.

Appendix

Eight Western Paradigms Of Dreamlike Spatial Perception

In the preceding analyses of Japanese concepts of space, any “Western” concept of space had been forced to play the counterpart of a more “humanized” Eastern idea of space. It appeared as technological, geometric, disenchanting, intellectualized or “virtualized” in the material “Western” sense. It is, however, also necessary to point to the existence of *Western* concepts of space that transgress a state of pure “positivity” and share something of the intuitive, spiritual, and “virtual” ontology of *basho* or *ma*. From there comes my idea to enlist a selection of Western spatial paradigms attempting to perceive something of a virtual or “dreamlike” quality of space. Of course, none of the “eight paradigms” described in this appendix is entirely compatible with traditional Eastern spatial qualities. But in each of them the temptation to use their underlying theory for a “non abstract” and non-Cartesian perception of space is relatively powerful.

It is, finally, up to the reader to judge how close the present “Western paradigms” come to the Japanese paradigms of space analyzed in this book. An “East-Western” list of spaces could perhaps most easily be obtained by adding to the present list that of “Eastern spaces” offered by Günter Nitschke in his article “Kukan – Empty Space” in which he presents “Japanese spaces” as: Empty Space, Shinto Space, Court Space, Buddha Space, Tatami Space, etc.¹

1. Chôraic Space

The Platonian-Aristotelian distinction between the intelligible and the sensible has dominated the understanding of Elean philosophy. However, there is one idea that appears to be central in Elean thought, which

has challenged this very Aristotelian distinction: the idea of “being-in”, as it has been produced by Zeno of Elea, and which presents itself as a dialectical problem in regard to Being. Being, so one thinks, must be “in itself”, and the *Seiende* must be contained in a space. Interpreting this in a Platonic way one can understand this idea, as Gadamer suggests, as if the Eleans would have thought an all-embracing quantity of Being as “matter” (*Stoff*) that is absolutely necessary, but which bears in itself the possibility of single forms (“die leere Unbestimmtheit möglicher Formen”). However, the Eleans themselves would, as Gadamer points out, have contradicted the conception of an unlimited space and this for a particular reason:

In reality it is ‘all being’, it is all which is, nothing is lacking. And just for this reason it is ‘limited’, because it refers to no possible Other, to no Outside” (“In Wirklichkeit ist es ‘alles Sein’, alles, was ist, es fehlt nichts – und eben deshalb ist es ‘begrenzt’, weil auf kein mögliches Anderes, keinen Außenstand mehr hinverweisend”) (Gadamer 1985: 15).

In other words, absolute boundlessness is an absolute limitation because it limits itself; absolute boundlessness represents an abstract form of Being that does not enable any concrete experience with a *Seiende*. The place, the *chôra* in which being is, becomes interesting because, even in Plato, it relativizes the absolute repartition of being and becoming. “The place” is a third kind of being, which overlaps with neither being nor becoming. Derrida has written about the *chôra* as it appears in the *Timaeus* (48e, 52a) that it advances a “logic other than that of the logos” and that it is “neither ‘sensible’ nor ‘intelligible’” (Derrida 1993: 15).

The point which interests me most is that in the *Timaeus* Plato suggests that, because the discourse on the *chôra* is not purely “logical”, it would be “like a dream” (52b). This means that the perception of the *chôra* is constituted by dreaming: dreaming “sees” a *chôra* residing between abstract (invisible) and concrete (visible) Being. This also means that the dream corresponds to a third kind of being, which is called *chôra*. Of course, dreaming does here not signify “seeing something”, it rather signifies to be taken to believe that a being that does not exist would exist nevertheless. This effect of “taking something for something” is produced through an image, which is why Aristotle calls the dream an “*eidolon*”, an image: “For these things are really something, but not that of which they create the impression (image)” (1963b: 1024b). Gadamer explains the signification of dreaming (cf.: also Rep. 476c) by drawing a parallel between the being of *chôra* and that of the image (*Abbild*) as it is presented in the *Timaeus*

(52d). In the same way in which Being is different from the space that it is in, so also an image is *never itself* but only *signifies* what it is. In other words, like the *chôra*, the image is what it is not, or, better, it is *through* what it is not. The consequences of this have far reaching effects: all appearances that we see in the *chôra* are images, they are not the things themselves (“everything which shows itself in space, everything which appears [is] understood not as itself but as a copy”. German: “[...] alles, was sich im Raume zeigt, alles Erscheinende, [wird nicht als es selbst, sondern als Abbild verstanden [...]]” (Gadamer 1985: 256). *Chôra* is the realm of dream in which we do not meet beings (which are what they are) because here, in *chôra*, Being is always different from the place (*chôra*) in which it exists.

The Elean conception of Being as an all-comprehensive unity or a self-contained *eidos* (with all the paradoxical consequences it entails) is incompatible with Aristotle’s idea of Being as an entity constituted by different individual *Seiende* that are, as to themselves, not linked by any universal element except by what we produce ourselves with the help of our own intellect. Even Plato develops in the *Timaeus* a line of thought seemingly to announcing as the final function of the “third kind of being”, the production of a sort of “pre-order of elements” (within the *chôra*) which will later make possible the real order of the world (53d 3, cf. Gadamer 1985: 257).

Here, we see the difference between Plato and Aristotle. For Aristotle, any act of signification is essential and the existence of an image that is what it is not can only be permitted in regard to attributions. However, “to denote a substance means that the essence is nothing else” (1963b: 1007a26). The place which is an image of something (meaning that *signifies* what it is and does not only *attribute* to itself the quality of a certain being) leads to confusions about Being as an essence: for this reason the paradox of the third kind of being must be dissolved.

The Elean *aporia* of the space as a place has been developed especially by Zeno and Melissos (A 24); it is treated by Aristotle in his *Physics* where it is rejected in a way similar to the one in which Zeno’s paradox of the slow runner who is pursued by a fast one and who “will never be overtaken when running” is rejected (1963a: 239b 15-16). Aristotle says:

We shall now have no difficulty in escaping Zeno’s dilemma that either there is no such thing as a place, or it must itself occupy a place; for there is no reason why the proper place of a thing should not be ‘in’ something else – only not in the same local sense as that in which its own content is ‘in’ it” (1963a: IV, III, 21 Ob. 22).

For Aristotle, being cannot be one and only and in itself, and this is why Zeno's *aporia*, would it be taken for granted up to its last logical consequence, leads right into a state of absurdity: "If everything that exists, exists in some 'place', then if the place itself exists, it too must have a place to exist in, and so on ad infinitum" (1963a: IV, I, 209a 23). Aristotle's idea of Being and of space comes close to the idea that we currently maintain. Zeno's *aporia* is excluded from our intellectual horizon as long as we see space as a static extension within which things appear. Within this *extensio* dynamical moments as provided, for example, by dream are banned; space guaranties a stable basis for the existence of an absolutely necessary being which is fully present at any moment.

Bergson has criticized the fact that Aristotle examined the place (*lieu*) instead of the space (*espace*) (Bergson 1889: 50). However, we should understand this *only* in the sense that for Bergson, the distinction between space and place cannot be developed in the way in which it has been done above. It does *not* signify that Bergson adhered to an idea of space as a scientifically and mathematically measurable, abstract quantity (cf. also Ohashi 1984: 23-24). This would be contrary to his philosophy in which matter is declared to be an "ensemble d'images" (Bergson 1939: 17). In fact, at the moment matter is an "ensemble of images", it is impossible to ban, in a Platonic way, the image as a phenomenon which "represents" fictions. It is impossible that matter exists isolatedly as an autonomous *Seiende* within a geometrically defined space.

In his thesis on *The Idea of Place in Aristotle* Bergson criticizes this state of affairs by concentrating on the distinction that exists in Western philosophy since Aristotle between matter-form and abstract form:

Since our philosophers have established two modes of existence, one for the object composed of matter and form, the other for free and independent form, it can be, understandably, that everything that is composed of matter and form be finite, but that form extends infinitely. (Bergson 1889: 51)

Heidegger, for his part, insists that the Greek did not even have a word for "space" (Raum):

They experience the spatial not from the point of the *extensio* but of the place (*topos*), that is the *chôra* which means neither place nor space but which is conquered (eingenommen), occupied by what is there (Heidegger 1976a: 70).

The idea of space as an extension opposed to matter (a distinction that simply would not have made sense for *Timaeus*) is obliged to

exclude the dreamlike experience of space that can be made through *chôra*. In this way, Aristotelian space prepares the Cartesian space (cf. Derrida 1993: 58) as well as modern conceptions of space as a geometrical phenomenon which has, in the first place, the quality of being *empty* and which contradicts, thus, the possibility of being a space as a “thing”.

Although Aristotle is convinced that Being should be studied as Being and not only in terms of “numbers, lines or fire” (1963b: 1004b), *space* becomes a necessary and structured phenomenon. Gadamer writes: “It is thus not the question in which way the single is single, but that, in order to be single, it is submitted to a general spatial law” (1985: 259). The place adapts itself to that abstract form of being which, by its nature, does not need any place in order to be: it adapts itself to the abstract beings of mathematics. In this sense, also Bergson writes: “The mathematical objects can very well not be in the place, they have, according to our position, a right and a left side which they do not have received by nature” (Bergson 1889: 5).

We can also express the aforesaid by saying that since Aristotle, *chôra* is perceived as if it is “only in a dream”, and that philosophers are asked to “wake up” in order to perceive within this kind of space real limits, geometrical lines and abstract structures. In this way an – in Bergson’s terms – “infinite theatre of movement” will be transformed into a limited space though, and this is the problem, it will be done at the risk of losing *reality*.

Aristotle neglects the idea that the (in Bergsonian terms) “nature of the place considered as a reality” (1889: 6) can also (or even better) be perceived in dream. In fact, such a claim does not suggest a simple confusion of dream and reality. On the contrary, it tries to offer an alternative to a reality that is *represented* through single objects that are put into a space: this alternative is a reality in which time and space form a playful unity perceived *through imagination* by the human mind. It is in this way that *chôra* questions (by involving the opposites ‘limited’ versus ‘unlimited’ or ‘static’ versus ‘dynamic’ in a playful intellectual movement) the status of dream and reality respectively.

2. Aporiatic Space

The intention of the proceeding reflections is not to simplify Aristotle by radicalizing some general Heideggerian ideas. On the contrary, there are some relativizing elements in Aristotle himself that should be examined one by one. One effect of the *aporia* about space, for example, is that it takes us by surprise: whenever we are confronted with the *chôra* we are surprised that things are as they are; and this is, also for Aristotle, the beginning of all philosophy (cf. 1963b: A 2, 983a 13). Of

course, at the moment the *aporia* takes us as far as asking “are we dreaming or not?” we have left, in Aristotelian terms, the domain of philosophy. Still, one should insist that, also in this context, the continuous work on the distinction (*chôrismos*) between *Sein* and *Seiende* that Aristotle develops expresses a concern with the problem of Being as such. Pierre Aubenque is right in saying that “making of Aristotle an *Aufklärer* would mean not to recognize the authentic religiosity on him, this intuition of transcendence and of the *chorismos* which are the profound reason for his speculative prudence” (Aubenque 1963a: 176). Bergson has characterized the qualities of the *chôra* by defining at the same time its limits when he mentions Aristotle’s “profound and intinous” insight into

the connection and the continuity of matter and form [which] *do not permit* to say where begins form and where ends matter. But the place is a fixed and determined thing and cannot be attributed to form without mixing it with matter, i.e. to the body itself (1889: 15).

Finally, it is the place that fixes the limits of Aristotle’s conception of a “nature-like” being: *eidos* and *hyle* go always together, and any attempt to separate them leads to ‘idealization’ and ‘abstraction’. That said, one should not go as far as Timaeus and question also the separateness of extensionality and matter; this leads our mind, for Aristotle, straight into a dream.

Apart from this, the “fault” might not be Aristotle’s but already that of the Eleans. This at least is how Bergson interprets Zeno’s discovery of the impossibility of movement. Zeno’s introduction of the paradox of the flying arrow, taken up by Aristotle in his *Physics* (1963a: 239a-b9, 30-3), inspired in Western thinkers a preference for a static world as an object of their examination, which made their methods more and more abstract. Bergson believes that instead of extracting an essential dynamism of movement and of change from the very absurdity to which Zeno had pointed, Aristotle and his successors had been obsessed by a reality that never changes. Accordingly Bergson writes in *La Pensée et le mouvant*:

Ever since the philosophers of the Elean School have shown or believed to have shown, by criticizing the idea of transformation, the impossibility to closely remain with the sensual data, philosophy got on the rail on which it is rolling since, the rail which leads to a “supra-sensible” world: with pure “ideas.” (1938: 148)

Aristotle had conceded that nothing can move at an instant: movement must take place within a certain lapse of time. Bergson believes that movement can be perceived immediately and that the Eleans' fault was to be concerned not with the movement itself but only with its intellectual reorganization (cf. 1939: 215). Bergson's methodological intuitionism is opposed to the analysis of what has been made stable: his aim is to grasp mobilities taking place within a certain duration, a duration that is more than a consecution of stable moments but that is coherent in itself. It is clear that – at least in some way – Bergson's concept of space had to be developed in parallel with this idea of time. Already in Aristotle, time and movement make of the *place* “something”, as has said, for example, Victor Goldschmidt:

Like time seems to be movement, the place “seems” to be, with regard to the body, what it is not: form, because it wraps the body; interval, because in it bodies succeed; matter when one considers the mobile in a non-mobile position. (Goldschmidt 1982: 24)

Goldschmidt points to the possibility of understanding Zeno's critique as an anticipation of Bergson's critique of the reduction of time to a spatial metaphor. However, he concludes that Aristotle wants rather to clarify than to criticize the relationship between time and space (Goldschmidt: 32).

Vladimir Jankélévitch has noted Bergson's hostility towards spatial metaphors in general (Jankélévitch 1959: 7); it is the idea of the duration as an “empty extension” within which different, separate moments would be “lined up” that will produce too easily, as soon as we try to grasp it, metaphors derived from space (cf. Bergson 1938: 5). As a consequence, Bergson avoided much inadvertent talk about space, though, at the same time it is also – slightly paradoxically – true that Bergson did nothing other than, as Deleuze has said, “integrate something of space in duration” (Deleuze 1966: 88). Still, it is certain that Bergson's idea of space is, like that of time, determined by a thinking that perceives coherence instead of separateness and simultaneity instead of succession: we *perceive* space as an immanent phenomenon that must be called *image* and not as a signifier or as something which is simply represented. As a consequence, the perception of the images through which we perceive space takes place during a duration within which nothing is stable: “To the extent in which my body moves in space all the other images vary” (Bergson 1939: 45). The perception of space is dynamic without being really constituted by a succession of images; the perceptions “appear to us all together though

successively” (1939: 73). The perception of space is (like our body) part of the space itself.

However, succession is too abstract an idea, it is opposed to the experience of movement in reality (cf. Deleuze 1983 1ff). The hand which moves from A to B “certainly lasts; but its duration (...) is compact and undivided like itself” (Bergson 1939: 212). Science will observe only “change of length of the interval” (1922a: 36). Through the theory of the *perception pure* (of space), Bergson reconstructs also Aristotle’s deconstruction of the space into *lieu*. Duration implies human consciousness (cf. 1922a: 62) and perception which goes through duration perceives a space that is undivided – spatially as well as temporally.

It remains to ask if Bergson’s claim that we should place ourselves into a *durée pure* to perceive reality as “free action” or as a creation does not, in some way, invite us to confuse reality with dream. In France, one has more than once been tempted to use Bergson’s philosophy to legitimate philosophically psychological states of indistinction between dream and reality as they appeared, for example, in the practical work of Dr. Janet (cf. Jankélévitch 1959: 99). Bergson himself is also ready to declare that “in order to evoke the past through an image, one must abstract from the present action, one must value the useless, one must be willing to dream” (1939: 87). However, what might be interpreted as a provocative opposition to scientific utilitarianism will make no concessions to pathological forms of *délire*. Dream as a direct expression of simultaneous spatial and temporal perception is strictly opposed to what can be called (pathological) dreamery, and the fact that “dream entirely appears like reality” can even be verified by means of Descartes (1938: 125). It is just in the *délire* of the madman that the logical coherence of right and left, of past and present, is missing. A mad *rêverie* does not constitute an experience of *rêve*, but is opposed to it because of its lack of reality. In this way, Bergson writes about “un fou qui raisonne:” “His destiny is not to suffer from lack of reasoning but to reason too much, beyond reality, outside reality, like a man who is dreaming” (1922b: 51). Whenever reality is perceived partially, through an arbitrary selection of its elements that are isolated through a dissection of the natural flow of time, the result will be dream. The problem of the madman is thus not that he is overwhelmed by the intensity of certain real experiences but that he is too idealistic: he collects ideas of the reality and “assimilates [...] the perception to dream” (1938: 126).

When the *perception pure* lets appear reality as a dream, in that case, all metaphors of non-clarity that cling to dream need to be cancelled beforehand. The perception of reality that we make in a *durée pure*

should not be imagined like a superposition of several elements as it happens in a film attempting to produce dreams or retrospectives. Like in film, these evocations of dream are completely unrealistic. They cannot render the reality either of dream (in dream there are no superpositions) or of any other human experience. Jankélévitch points out that Bergsonian devices like simultaneity, continuity, etc. do not lead to an alienation of reality, but to a heightening of its experience:

It is not at all that the becoming would disappear in the fog excluding all variety; continuity is neither unclear nor indistinction, and time is rather undividable and not undivided. (Jankélévitch 1959: 39-40)

Here dream is clear though strange and it should be recognized *as such*. In other words, dream, like human reality, even in its most ethical sense, should not be “normalized” but recognized. Finally, this thought, even if it leads – in a very restricted way – to an idea of indistinction of dream and reality, is even compatible with Aristotle’s ethics. Aubenque has said in regard to Aristotle that “man, this ‘strange’ thing among all things, is not what should be passed by but preserved, and this first of all against his will; [...] the super-human is more like the inhuman” (1963a: 2). Man’s ambition to “straighten out” what appears strange, to prefer visions of reality that he has made rational and geometrical instead of accepting reality “as it is”, can also be understood as a target of a Bergsonian critique of a Western rationality that decided, among other things, to transform the *place* into *space*. The metaphor of dream as another kind of “reality” can be understood in this sense.

There is a sentence in Jankélévitch’s book on Bergson that seems to have gone rather unnoticed by interpreters of Bergson though it contains, in my opinion, a rather essential remark about modern man’s tendency to geometricize the world. Jankélévitch talks about the rational idealism, which tends to *stylize* space or simply the entire world by producing an effect of “distanciation”. Jankélévitch writes: “The musician receives the sounds of the fair and the nursery songs as such. As such means without the *idealist* distance which is the principle of stylization” (Jankélévitch 1959: 288). To “stylize” means to draw limits (between the general and the individual) instead of accepting reality as an ethical unit which is human or all too human and perhaps “strange,” but which does *not need* any stylization because – and this is the clue – it has its own style already.

3. Phronetic Space

For Bergson the dreamed space – which could signify the *lieu* of the *durée pure* – is not abstract, reasonable or stylized. On the other hand, it

is not – in Aristotelian terms – a domain in which all *phronesis* has been light-heartedly abandoned, a fantastical area of images in which dominates only *délire*. On the contrary, the perception of space within a pure duration that implies consciousness is supposed to help the perceiving individual to gain knowledge about its self; and this procedure is not at all incompatible with the Greek idea of prudence (*phronesis*), which is also supposed to help man to recognize his own limits. The man of the right judgement is the man of prudence; and to have judgement does not simply mean, as has said Aubenque “subsume the particular under the universal, the sensible under the intelligible” (Aubenque 1963a: 152). The Greek *phronesis* is rather knowledge of the self that is neither realistic nor idealistic and that Aubenque has characterized as “the ‘know-yourself’ [which] does not invite us to find in ourselves the foundation of all things, but reminds us, on the contrary, our own finitude: it is the highest formular of Greek *prudence*, that is, the knowledge of *limits*” (1963a: 166).

Phronesis as a kind of practical reason is used to deal with the amount of contingency with which we are confronted in life. *Phronesis* helps man to find his way within a world where too many things are unforeseeable. It has been pointed out that Aristotle is neither a romantic nor a psychoanalyst and that the rediscovery of dream that took place in the nineteenth and twentieth century has no equivalent in Aristotle. R. Brague holds that “*phronesis*, compared to sleep is the state of being awake” (Brague 1988: 82). In dream (as well as in *chôra*) there is no *phronesis* but this does not mean that our mind would abandon itself to a fantastical play of images. The absence of *phronesis* does not represent a *lack*, but it proves the extraordinary condition of dream: in dream *we do not need* *phronesis* because all things happen as if they are absolutely necessary. Brague points also to the difficulty clinging to dream as soon as we decide to find “truth” in it, a truth that we derive from classifying schemes declaring more or less bluntly that dream is different from reality. Brague writes: “The truth of the dream appears only when waking up. In which sense would dream thus be ‘wrong’?” (1988: 83). In fact, “dream does not manifest itself as a dream but as an adventure that I have in real life” (86).

The virtue of practical knowledge is not intellectual; it can be neither learned nor unlearned, but it exists, like nature, as a “pre-formed Being”, absolutely necessary and self-sufficient (cf. Gadamer 1985: 376). Also the dream represents such a necessary and self-sufficient sphere, which means that the dream cannot be constructed by a *technê*. It cannot be “produced” by *phronesis* either, not because *phronesis* is unable to do so but because the dream resembles, already by its nature, too much to *phronesis*. It cannot be obtained or explained through it.

Finally, dream resembles the “style” that we are confronted with when reading Jankélévitch’s above declaration that music is not due to stylization. What we perceive when listening to music is simply – music and this *is* style. The same is true for dream and for the *chôra*.

Philippe Nys has made a claim about architectural space and the problem of style, which strengthens this point: “Architecture is not a work of art because it adopts this or that style, but because its answer to a construction problem augments it being and also the being of place” (Nys 1996: 173). It is not just “this style or style” that we impose upon space in order to “stylize” it from a space into a place. On the contrary, the place is a question of Being and if there is anything like style in this Being, it must have been inherent in this Being itself.

4. Chronotopic Space

A rationalized version of the concept of *chôra* produces a geometrical form of space; in the same way the *chôra* is opposed to the drawing of lines that are applied within any act of a stylization. The criticism of the geometrization of space that has been presented in the preceding sections uses the model of dream as an alternative to a reality that is constructed or perceived through *technê*. Intellectual movements try to “re-enchanted” the modern world not by referring to dream in a metaphorical or conceptual way but by looking for a certain “authenticity” in a more Platonic, rationalist way. Alberto Peres-Gomes’s definition of two possibilities for *chôra* in human civilization are too narrow. Perez-Gomez says that “humanity, as it decided to live in an objective *chôra* and a linear and progressive temporality was confronted with two possibilities. It could either construct paradise in a utopian future [or in] a paradise here and now” (Peres-Gomes, 1996, 148). The Utopian dream of a non-reality, which is too dependent on reality itself, appears as the only alternative to scientific realism. However, the reality of *chôra* as an intermediary state of human reason overlaps with neither of the two possibilities. Philippe Nys has established three modalities of being of the “place”: 1. The place in its natural environment, 2. Pictorial or literary representations (images) and 3. ‘The place of dream’ (cf. Nys 1997: 135). It is this third one that I want to oppose to the Heideggerian approach.

Bergson’s claim – when interpreted historically and in the context of Aristotelian philosophy – that “thirty minutes” should not be seen as an abstract, scientific quantity but as a concrete experience does not necessarily lead to a discourse on what some like to call “concrete Being” but, on the contrary, it leads to reflections on the correspondences between reality and dream. It is useful to contrast these reflections with some philosophical considerations on the topic from

Heidegger. Heidegger's treatment of Being, which uses a revised concept of time, cannot and does not want to avoid the question of spatiality. In *Being and Time* Heidegger attempts to grasp the "Räumlichkeit des Daseins" with the help of metaphors such as "das Umhafte der Umwelt" (Part I, Ch. 30). In later works he introduces terms that can appear as "concepts of the unconceptualizable" such as 'die Nähe' (closeness), 'das Zuhandene' (being-at-hand), 'das Zeug' (stuff), 'die Gegend' (region), etc. Heidegger undertakes a dynamization of geometrical notions which he successfully pushes towards a "humanist" personalization (which can, however, also mean homocentralization). In short, Heidegger forces abstract notions into the more individual-subjective context of a "world" so that "space" becomes finally "my space", and this is efficient as much as it is problematical.

It is possible that the often stated "urbanophobia" of Heidegger has limited the development of his philosophy of space by grounding too much of it on the idea of what Henri Lefebvre calls an "espace artisanal" (Lefebvre 1974: 47). It is also possible that in this realm Heidegger's critique of modernity does not fully function as a *reaction on* modernity but more as its avoidance. Daniel Payot has explained how for contemporaries "space" turns more and more out to be a matter of the city. This could announce the necessity of a revision – though not necessarily negation – of some of Heidegger's conceptions of space.

It is true that in Heidegger's philosophy an active intuition immediately linked to historical Being reproduces spatiality as a mode of existence and therefore prevents us from perceiving the *place* as something appearing within a pre-given space (cf. 1976b: 103). On the other hand, the condition of *chôra* as a "primitive scene" which, as Jean-François Matéi has described, is born "in the shadow which pushes back intelligible Forms and the sensible world" (Matéi 1996: 210), cannot and will not be provided by this constellation alone. Where the *chôra* is not immediately recognized as a dreamlike and closed entity that can be neither subjectified nor objectified, the "place", once it has been wrenched from scientific spatial conceptualization, risks to be "mystified" by simply rearranging too common subjective and objective (metaphysical) components.

In general, Heidegger's concern in regard to space was to cancel the Kantian idea of space as a subjective or even an *a priori* idea and to disperse this concept of space in accordance with his general conviction that any Platonic dichotomy employing subjectivity and objectivity as opposing notions needs to be overcome. However, to present an existential *Lebensraum* (life-space) for which abstract spatiality has become concrete and *zuhanden* (at hand) as a necessary alternative to

the geometrical space does not necessarily follow from reflections on space. Yoko Arisaka has noted that “it is because Heidegger must describe the space-of-action without presupposing objective space and the derived concept of a system of spatial coordinates that his discussion of space is so difficult and awkward” (Arisaka 1995: 459). It is true that by becoming an *existential* of *Dasein*, spatiality ceases to be a container. In some way, space is now not abstract but “ready at hand” (cf. Seifler 1973: 247), and this is true not only for the present space but also for the space of the past. Still Heidegger does not seem to respond sufficiently to the problem of the *chôra*: instead of trying to perceive the mystical character of the *chôra* itself as a phenomenon that has its own existential style, he mystifies or stylizes space into an “idyllic” place in which everything is declared to be *zuhanden*. The metaphysical presuppositions suggesting a dichotomy formed by the subject and the object are here not neutralized but rather reinforced.

If we accept Walter Benjamin’s claim that, in any case, Heidegger’s notion of *Geschichtlichkeit* (historicity) is too abstract and that it is rooted in a formalizing metaphysical tradition, we will also recognize that the idea of an authenticity of the place (with all its concepts of *wohnen* dwelling), *Zuhandenheit*, etc. attached to it) are inscribed in the same tradition. William La Fleur has criticized that German Idealism made spatiality “into that acting subject’s products or deeds”, and that in Heidegger things would have remained similar (La Fleur 1978: 242). We can add, in a Benjaminian way, that in Heidegger’s “place” the past does not speak to us through surprising allegories or through non-formalized symbols, and that it does not suggest itself through the dreamlike language of the *chôra*. Instead, it becomes, through the establishment of an (artificially) coherent, organical universe, “ready at hand”.

The result is the pronouncement of what Mikhail Bakhtin once named very aptly an “idyllic relationship of time and space” (Bakhtin 1981: 229) or the accentuation of an “age old link between generations”. Space seems here to be too much as stylized into a “strictly limited locale” or into a “locus for the entire life process” (Bakhtin’s expressions). Heidegger’s *Wohnen* is mainly based on these possible perceptions of a limited environment whose existential vibrations are supposed to be captured by man’s instincts. In other words, it is the “communal existence” or “das Kleine” which annoyed already Nietzsche (but by which he remained nevertheless attracted in a paradoxical way) which are on the focus. The small, limited, caduc and superseded gets its own dignity” (*Das Kleine, das Beschränkte, das Morsche und Veraltete erhält seine eigene Würde*) writes the young Nietzsche in the *Untimely Considerations* mocking the “honorifying

soul (verehrende Seele) of the antiquarian man” unable to see one thing: “das Große” (1976: 119).

For Nietzsche, the superseded man of one of those many German provinces perceives the world in the form of a small, idyllic whole, and draws links between the past and the present in a too direct fashion. In the end, the idyllic world appears as a *rationaly* organized, two-dimensional space in which everything that exists in the present has its official equivalent in the past. Nietzsche writes: “For him, his town’s history becomes the history of himself; he understands the wall, tower gate, the city council, the folk fair like the colored diary of his youth” (1976: 120). Nothing could be removed further from the original dream-like irrationality supposed to speak to us through the Platonic *chôra*.

Interestingly, the precursors of the Heideggerian *Andenken*, the *bewahrende* and *verehrende* (venerating) attitude of the antiquarian self, represent for Nietzsche one of the principal obstacles why Germany will always remain unable to obtain something that it needs so much: a “nationaler Stil”. Contrary to Heidegger, the more urban Nietzsche *is* interested in style, and a “stilvolle Kultur” (cf. beginning of *Unzeitg. Betr. I*) is one of the main objectives of the Nietzschean “man of culture” (*Kulturmensch*). Heidegger, in regard to space (as as well as in regard to other cultural phenomena) did certainly not look for style. He did not look for style as the absolute, dreamlike state of Being also required by a *chôra*, but he saw style as not more than an act of formalization; and as an act of relativizing geometrisation to which he opposed *his* notion of the absolute: authenticity (*Eigentlichkeit*). For Heidegger, style can only be “one style or another”; an expression of mediocrity and relativity (*Uneigentlichkeit*). A traditional concept of authenticity is the only alternative that he can think of. Cultural space can become a reality that is *as absolute as nature*, but it will never have a chance to become a *second nature* which is as absolute that it eludes even any comparison with reality because it presents itself like something autonomous.

Heidegger’s idyllic space of authenticity (which seems to be his idea of “place”) bears signs of stylization but not of style. This might seem unimportant at first sight, but if we consider that in Heidegger’s philosophy some of the reflections on the *chôra* are prolonged – in a very interesting way – into the domain of the aesthetic, we cannot conceal our disappointment when seeing that these reflections remain stuck in concepts of the idyllic that had already entangled the thinking of Nietzsche. Nietzsche observed (when he was sixteen) how the idyllic Italian provinces became one vulgar “state” and might have had, in spite of his obvious ambition for *Größe* (greatness), regrets similar to those of his colleague from Basel, the specialist of Italian art, Jakob Burckhardt.

At the time Nietzsche wrote the *Untimely Considerations*, Bismarck was uniting Germany under Prussian leadership so that the provinces of the German *Märchenprinzen* gradually ceased to exist. Still, in the end, Nietzsche opts for style and not for idyllism. When Heidegger discovers, almost a century later, how the remainders of an idyllic Europe are getting unified and flattened by an internationalist, technologically minded modernity, his reaction is similar though, in the end, different from that of Nietzsche.

Heidegger's personalization of space effectuates a shift from the objective to the subjective, or from – in accordance with Heidegger's general tendency – science to aesthetics. However, what is in question in the *chôra* is more than only idyllic subjectivity. Without holding that something like the “magic of space” is completely absent from Heidegger's idea of *Eigentlichkeit*, it needs to be said that his re-enchantment of the world remains very much based on the “conventional” idea of subjectivity that is also current in modernity. Merleau-Ponty has said that “we have evinced the magical into subjectivity, but nothing can guaranty that the relationship between men does not necessarily include magical and dreamlike components” (Merleau-Ponty 1964a: 43-44). The Heideggerian “authentic place” of cultural “rootedness” is, despite the potential incommunicability through which it opposes itself to the *space* of modernity or to modern definitions of social *milieux*, not a *chôra*. It might appear as a paradox: whereas the younger Heidegger could be reproached with “neglect[ing] space” just because he neglected, as it is typical for German Idealism, “the social component” (La Fleur 1978: 241), the later Heidegger does willingly avoid any kind of sociological analysis that could transform the place into a *milieu* in order to just *deal* with space. However, as long as the alternative remains the elaboration of a maximum of authenticity, the *chôra* will not be grasped. Robert Curry writes of a man saying: “I dream with such visual authenticity, so why can't I even draw the simplest shape?” (Curry 1974: 86) Dream can be more authentic than reality and a shift from reality to dream does not at all imply a loss of *Eigentlichkeit*.

5. Mnemonic Space

It has been suggested that an examination of the place of dream, of the “place” as it is perceived in dream together with the theoretical elaborations flowing out of it, can produce a more efficient alternative to the space as a geometrical phenomenon. The component of time with all the relationships existing between the past and the present get integrated almost automatically into these reflections.

In the first place humans seem to be inclined, when thinking of space and dream, to think of a concrete space functioning as a *container* of dream. Bachelard has approached the subject in this way, which is why his thoughts are not so far removed from Heidegger's on the idyllization of space. For Bachelard "the house contains *rêverie*, the house protects the dreamer, the house permits dreaming in peace. [...] The places where one has *lived* one's *rêveries* will reconstruct themselves in a new *rêverie*" (Bachelard 1961: 26). The homely space as a safe container of dreams about the past does not accept the anarchic situation brought forward by the *chôra*. The homely space will reinforce the limits of the "pharmakon dream." Real and unreal should not get confused. The "real" is the house, the psychic symbol for solidity and containment; the dreams permitted in this house are not real and not even present but only idyllic reveries about the past. In other words, if the place is a dream, it is only because Bachelard's "dream-effect" is limited to the re-experience of a past life supposed to increase the living presence of *present life*. The space as a container, as well as the dreaming subject, together with the position that this subject has within this space, are very well defined. Geometry can become, as Bachelard says, "rêveuse" (1961: 59), but this is permitted only to a "past geometry" of houses of the past but not to houses of the present.

There is another approach to the space of the dream, and I will elaborate it carefully. Derrida examines, very differently from Bachelard, the "place" (he prefers to use the Latin word *topos*) of a poem, a poem which wants to be a dream, and finds that this place can be derived neither from objective geometry nor from subjective self-ness. Derrida writes in essay on Shelley's *Triumph of Life*:

What is the *topos* of the 'I' who quotes himself in a narrative (of a dream, a vision, or a hallucination) within a narrative, including, in addition to all his ghosts, his hallucinations of ghosts, still other visions within visions. What is his *topos* when he quotes, in the present, a past question, formulated in another sort of present? (Derrida 1979: 86)

The hidden allusion to a *chôra* ("visions within visions"), which concerns explicitly hallucinations and dreams, does here not permit the evocation of something authentic. In Bachelard, "la chambre" becomes "ma chambre" (1961: 31) and this leads him, in parallel with Heidegger, to saying that "habitated space transcends geometrical space" (1961: 58). Such reflections are useful, but in the end they are not consistent enough or simply not radical enough to cope with the problem of "place" as it appears since the first attempts to define the *chôra*.

In conclusion, we can say that Heidegger takes over a concept of the German *Geschichtlichkeit* (or a Goethian “dwelling in oneself”, *wohnen in sich selbst*), which he only “personalizes” without relativizing the self-reflexive character of formulations like “dwelling in oneself” or by recognizing the differentiating irony that is inherent in such terms. The idea of space has shifted from subjective abstraction to the concreteness of a “communal existence”, and this is no solution. The objective space becomes subjective, but already a little later a subjective *Geist* can become a concrete object. Obviously, the thinking of spatiality is here still not detached from the metaphysical dichotomy that Heidegger himself declared to be willing to combat. Heinrich Dumoulin has explained – though without thinking of Heidegger – what he considers a “mirror play” of a *Geist*, which needs, for him, to remain non-conceptual at any costs: “Too easily the mind commits the subtle error of imagining absolute reality objectively in order to dwell in it” (Dumoulin 1959: 97). The place in the sense of the *chôra* represents such a non-conceptual *Geist* that is not subjective but whose objectivization can wax to undue dimensions when we express a desire or only sympathy for a *Wohnen*.

6. *Ur- Space*

Heidegger’s view of the place is what it is supposed to be: non-modern. However, there are several ways of being non-modern. Heidegger contests the non-authentic aspect of an industrialized world and suggests that an alternative world be created by negating certain elements of the world. A critic of Heidegger can criticize exactly those idyllic components. What strategies can such a critic apply? Most probably he would proceed in agreement with classical devices that existed at the beginning of this century and even before, which are based on the idea that culture, art, and civilization are brought about by altering *nature*, be it by making it simply different from itself, or by applying effects of estrangement all the way running the risk of receiving the negative results of this procedure, which consist in alienation effects as one form of the several existing “civilization diseases”. However, it should have become clear that neither of the two procedures, neither the Heideggerian nor the “modernist” one, can grasp the “place” as a dreamlike event as suggested in the *chôra*. Distanciation starts with the “real world” or at least an “original world” and transforms it technically (or otherwise) into what is believed to be a more convenient world. In this sense the *aufklärerische* heritage of a “back to nature” might be feelable even in Heidegger’s layout of the authentic, non-industrialized *Wohnen*. However, the *chôra* gives us a hint about the experience of the space as a dream. It is not enough to

alienate nature nor to re-alienate civilization; what is in question is the creation of a “second nature”.

We neutralize here not only the dichotomy of subjectivism and objectivism but also the distinction between space and time. Heidegger, in his combat against an abstract notion of time, left aside a large part of the notion of space. Later he designed a concept of space that is non-abstract and non-static (thus, like the dynamical time) *just because* it integrates concrete expressions of time. Space is now dynamized by conveying concrete ideas about time (about the past). The problem that has been detected above, that Heidegger’s “place” sometimes appears too “idyllic”, is linked to the fact that, despite his anti-metaphysical ambitions, Heidegger remains captured within a system in which space (even in the form of a concrete “place”) and time (even in the form of a *concretely experienced* time) maintain fixed positions. They are allowed to overlap but still they are supposed to remain distinguishable. In other words, if metaphysics and science neglect the timely components of the world in order to have a better access to an *Urstoff*, also Heidegger’s formulation of the “place” remains, to some extent, mechanistic because “authenticity” itself appears as nothing other than an *Urstoff*. The experience of space as a dream does not permit such a distinction.

7. Dandyist Space

Walter Benjamin sketched the playful *flâneur* as a person who experiences a fully developed capitalist world. As a person constantly in movement (walking), the *flâneur* concerned with the phenomenon of space. Benjamin immediately appears to be “ahead” of Heidegger in regard to definitions of space which is mainly due to the fact that Benjamin’s critical position towards modernity is not *against* modernity. He tries to join it though he maintains a playful distance. Benjamin’s distance is not the distance of the “effet de distanciation”, of the *Verfremdung*, nor that of the “anti-*Verfremdung*”. It is that of the player, the dandy or the *flâneur*. These protagonists perceive the space of urban capitalist society like a place designed for the playing of certain games. This place is not an alternative, authentic *topos* negating all those elements that it finds to be incompatible with its own definition. On the contrary, dandyist place excludes *all* “either-or” and comes thus close to the *chôra*.

For Benjamin space and time form a unity, which means that everything that we have noted above about space is also true for time. Benjamin relies on the metaphor of *dream* to express the ontology this kind of space: “The phantasmagorias to which the *flâneur* submits himself correspond to the phantasmagorias of time after which is

running the gambler. Game transforms time into – a drug” (Benjamin 1982: I, 57).

Through the contact with capitalist culture the place gets involved in a game. It is not simply authentic but has its own nature. The idea is not to alienate or to re-alienate an existing place or space, but to involve a place or a space into a certain game. Alienation is not formal but gamelike. This is true for the transformation of a non-personal space into a “place” as well as for the transformation of “idyllic” places. “Idyllic places” will be alienated not by manipulating their formal temporal structure or by exchanging certain aesthetic-symbolical components, but by altering their structure of perception.

8. *Unheimlicher Space*

An “idyllic place” can be changed: Freud’s *Unheimlichkeit* (uncanniness) makes geometrical spaces but also idyllic places strange. It does not follow procedures of formal stylization. There is no real risk of *estrangement*. The “place of the dream” does not appear as a topic in Freud’s work and *Unheimlichkeit* is not represented as linked to dream. This could point to a deficiency in Freud’s system regarding the relationship between dream and reality. Freud once mentioned a remark by Fechner that the dream does not deploy itself at the same place (“auf dem selben Schauplatz”) as the non-dream (Freud 1922: 89). Freud admits that the strangeness we perceive in most dreams can indeed be due to such a “place of the dream,” which is different from the “place of the waking life”. Freud links the interesting idea that the dream can be contained in a place to the *quality* of the dream, that is, to its particular characteristics. But he does not pursue this idea further. Instead he introduces the “soul” as the container of the dream, which neutralizes the initial disconcerting atmosphere so reminiscent of the *chôra*.

Freud’s interest in the place of the dream is limited to the “place in which dreams produce themselves (in the soul)” [Schauplatz, auf dem sich die Träume (in der Seele) abspielen].” Metaphors can help to resolve conceptual problems, especially when they are derived from a metaphysical vocabulary. However, what is “the soul” and why and how would can it “contain” a dream? Why would the soul be a space within which the dream installs its proper place (*Schauplatz*)? As a matter of fact, the dream is not contained in *any* space and this is, in the end, one of the reasons why the “place of the dream” is so “dreamlike” or, in other words, so *unheimlich*.²

Henri Maldiney has shown how in E.A. Poe’s story, *The Devil in the Belfry*, an idyllic chronotope in which people live a “robotized” existence, is suddenly getting “strange” in a sense that can be associated with the phenomenon of *Unheimlichkeit*. Though nothing has changed

in this village (either aesthetically or structurally), suddenly the place is no longer what it used to be. E.A. Poe shows

a small Dutch village with mountains and a horizon that the inhabitants have never transgressed because it opens on nothing but on the village. There they are walking in their gardens, praising their world, their pigs, always waiting for the clock to strike noon. Suddenly it strikes noon but there is a thirteenth stroke: this is the devil in the belfry (Maldiney 1996: 20).

The irony residing in this “distanciation effect” lets the new, strange world not appear as a “second world” that can be subordinated to the first one, that can be integrated, as a sort of “sub-place” into the first “reasonable, usual” world. On the contrary, there is no possibility for a space in a space, but the *entire space* has lost its idyllic character and has become strange. One of the peculiarities of dream, is, has said Susanne Langer, “the nature of its space. Dream events are spatial, often intensely concerned with space, intervals, endless roads, bottomless canyons, things too high, too near, too far - but they are not oriented in any total space” (Langer quoted from MacCann 1966: 203). Langer wants her observation of dream theory to be valid for the theory of film. There is a parallel between the transformation of space and the transformation of time in the dream. Like the logical time that ceases to exist in dreams, logical space (as a geometrical phenomenon) cannot exist in a dream either. It is a place whose physical limits remain undefined.

If, as Merleau-Ponty has said in *L’Oeil et l’esprit*, “la science a renoncé à habiter les choses”, an alternative, non-scientific concept of *wohnen* is not necessarily found by inverting the scientific concept of space. The space of the dream, together with the reflections coming to us from the philosophical discourse on the *chôra*, indicates the possibility of an alternative thinking.

Notes

1. In T. Botz-Bornstein (ed.) 2004.
2. Freud’s *Unheimlichkeit* comes close to the Japanese *yûgen*, which occupies a central place in Japanese aesthetics. It is some-times translated as “mystery and depth” and maintains, as has often been noticed, a relationship with dream. As follows from the writings of Yoshineri Onishi, it is also relevant for the definition of style and stylistics (cf. M. Ueda 1990). The basic function of *yûgen* is often defined as a description of nature that has “eliminated the distance between noetic

object or topic and poet, rejecting superficial psychological descriptions of a subject” (Konishi 1985: 204). The directness and simplicity with which the objects appear, though at the same time maintaining a distance between the object and the observer, describe a constellation reminiscent of the *Unheimliche*. Jin’ichi Konishi writes: “The contemplative expressive approach involves the bracketing of a poet’s individual impressions and drawing near the very essence of the subject. Once the essence has been regained, the poet will recommence grasping forms manifested on a more superficial level of awareness”. The origin of *yûgen* is the Chinese *yu* “which is what is hazy or unclear to the senses, a kind of veil which is a hint of loftier realms” and *gen* which is the “calm repose of the unfathomable depths of ultimate darkness” (Konishi 1985). Richard Pilgrim has likened the *yûgen* to dream writing that thus “yûgen as a scrim, haze, or dream through which the numinal is vaguely is vaguely sensed [...] point[ing] beyond itself to a sense of reality veiled by, and not confined to, the phenomenal world” (Pilgrim 1977: 294). What is thus important in *yûgen* is the transition between reality and dream, fact and imagination and the experience of such a transition on the aesthetic level.

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