THE KYOTO SCHOOL'S TAKEOVER OF HEGEL

PETER SUARES

NISHIDA, NISHITANI, AND TANABE
REMAKE THE PHILOSOPHY OF SPIRIT

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Introduction

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) conceived one of the last systems of Western metaphysics, a work standing at its zenith and a perfection of its fundamental conceptions. Toward the end of his life, his system gave rise to a distinctive philosophical school that carried on his legacy in fields as diverse as metaphysics, theology, logic, philosophy of law, ethical and social theory, political philosophy, and theory of art. Hegelianism radiated from its native Germany to become a major philosophical current in Denmark, Norway, Holland, France, Italy, and the Slavic countries. It was received positively in America, as well, where its political and historicist aspects stirred interest initially among immigrant German populations of St. Louis and Cincinnati. Soon, the Hegelian wave reached philosophy proper, where it became a factor in shaping the thought of, for instance, Josiah Royce (1855-1916). In Great Britain, despite a spirited opposition to the speculative character of Hegel's ideas, their metaphysical and methodological originality garnered a following of thinkers such as Thomas Hill Green (1836-1882), Edward Caird (1835-1908), and Francis Herbert Bradley (1846-1924).

Because of its richness and complexity, Hegel's system lends itself to many, often conflicting interpretations. A philosophically idealistic and politically conservative reading became the hallmark of "old Hegelians" whose ranks include Johann Karl Rosenkranz (1805-1879) and Kuno Fischer (1824-1907). These *Althegelianer* remained faithful to the teachings of the master, extending them further in established religious, ideological, and political directions. On the opposite end, the early 1840s witnessed the emergence of "new" or "young" Hegelians (*Neuhegelianer* or *Junghegelianer*) who used Hegel's method to pursue goals increasingly at odds with his own. That later branch produced atheist, reformist figures such as Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-1872), Max Stirner (1806-1856), Bruno Bauer (1809-1882), and Karl Marx (1818-1883).

In the second half of the nineteenth century, Hegel's idealist system was eclipsed on various fronts by Neo-Kantianism, Bismarck's (1815-1898) political realism, European and American positivism, empiricism, and pragmatism. But its developmental view of history, appreciation for the concrete reality of human

existence, and unique method continued to conquer minds in twentieth-century Germany, Italy, France, Eastern Europe, and the United States. Hegel's ideas found their way into the political theories of Marxism-Leninism and fascism, into existentialism and existential anthropology, phenomenology, literature, and aesthetics. The list of names directly or indirectly associated with Hegel's philosophy includes Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911), Benedetto Croce (1866-1952), Ernst Bloch (1885-1977), Georg Lukács (1885-1971), Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980), Jean Hippolyte (1907-1968), Jean Piaget (1896-1980), and dozens of others.

One example of the way Hegel's ideas took hold far from his native Germany is their reception in modern Japan. His *Phenomenology of Spirit*[1] was among the first few books in Western philosophy brought back to Japan by two scholars, Nishi Amane (1829-1897) and Tsuda Mamichi (1829-1903), from their trip to Europe in 1862.[2] From 1877 on, American educator and orientalist Ernest Fenollosa (1853-1908) taught courses on the German philosopher at Tokyo Imperial University. Since the late nineteenth century, Hegel's works have been translated into Japanese in advance of Kant's, and the list of Japanese publications on his philosophy now fills over three hundred pages. The pace of publication accelerated since the hundredth anniversary of Hegel's death in 1931, the year around which the growing popularity of his philosophy of history began to eclipse the interest in Neo-Kantianism dominating Japan's philosophical circles until that time.

There are several reasons for Japan's fascination with Hegel. In the first few decades following the Meiji Restoration of 1868, the country held German culture in deep esteem and accorded it a place of honor in the state curriculum. Hegel was seen naturally as a major representative of German thought. Another reason lies in the scope and the character of his achievement. Hegel's philosophy took upon itself the task of interpreting, according to its principles, everything known to man. It strived to provide a complete account of reality and to build up that account into a system. This could not but strike a sympathetic chord with the Japanese people, fond as they are of the tangible and the phenomenal, and please their sense for organization and exhaustiveness. Of appeal to the Japanese public was also Hegel's theory of moral substance and objective spirit manifested in social forms. The philosopher's appreciation for the socializing power of the community and its traditions, palpable in that theory, found resonance in the Japanese propensity to derive individual identity from the group and the community of one's belonging. The social orientation of the Japanese held firm despite their avid but superficial experimentation with Western individualism and "subjectivity" since about the turn of the twentieth century. From the other side of the globe, Hegel's views offered a soothing reassurance for a core Japanese value.

While engaged in patient examination of one temporal aspect of reality after another, Hegel never lost sight of the ubiquitous presence of the eternal. That

enduring focus was no less characteristic of his political philosophy, making it agreeable to the absolutist tendencies of the Japanese state of that time. Prevailing over numerous liberal subcurrents, the overall trend of early twentieth-century Japan was conservative. It favored the strengthening of national polity (*kokutai*), an immutable structure of the racially homogeneous family-state with the divine Imperial household at its center. Hegel's politically conservative view of the absolute spirit developing through history toward the perfection of its own consciousness manifested in the state was syntonic with that ideology.[3] Ironically, Hegel's principles (recast in the Marxist form) were exploited in equal measure by the Marxist foes of the Japanese establishment.

Japan's Buddhist heritage fostered its appreciation for the affinities between Hegelian and Mahāyāna metaphysics. For Hegel, all beings are determined by otherness. More plainly, everything finite is by nature relative to something else; a thing is defined through the complex of its finite relationships. This quality was perceived to accord with the Mahāyāna notion of emptiness (*śūnyatā*), according to which things have no inherent nature or reality, except in a conventional sense. In particular, the Kegon school of Buddhism postulates mutual identity of phenomena that, while appearing to be possessed of independent existences, lack fixed boundaries and interpenetrate. Having their identities grounded in something other than themselves, yet maintaining their individuality, finite beings in both views can be characterized as both transcendent and immanent to themselves.

One also notes the inner unrest and multiperspectivism of Hegel's dialectic, which draws upon the notion of an ever-shifting and fluid nature of conceptual determinations. The dynamic character of dialectic helps loosen the separation between the relative and the absolute. In that, it brings to mind the three-truths (*santai*) teaching of Tendai Buddhism, which attempts to reconcile two opposite views—one that absolutely rejects the notion of an inherent reality of phenomena, and one that accepts them as provisionally real—by postulating a middle way in which each view determines and offsets the other.[4]

In its impact, Hegel's thought was not limited to delighting the Japanese public with its affinities with their cultural tradition; it became a powerful force shaping the nascent Japanese philosophy. This is particularly evident in the case of the Kyoto School, a collective name given to a succession of academics active at Kyoto University through a good part of the last century. Although the Kyoto Scholars did not form a school or organization in a formal sense, they shared a neo-Buddhist outlook and adherence to the tenet of absolute nothingness, an outgrowth of the Mahāyāna notion of emptiness. Hegel's ideas and method played a role in forming their thinking, both directly and mediated through later Western figures captivated by Hegel. Nishida Kitarō (1870-1945), the first and foremost representative of the Kyoto School, is sometimes described squarely as a Hegelian. Hegel's philosophical idealism also reverberates deeply in the work of many of Nishida's disciples. To be sure, had their reception of Hegel taken

the form of simple adoption or imitation, it would not be of much interest to us today. What makes the Kyoto School's enchantment with Hegel intriguing is its strongly negative undercurrent. In contrast to the assiduousness with which the Kyoto Scholars assimilated Hegel's philosophy, they were not always disposed to acknowledging their indebtedness to his ideas. Their overt attitudes toward Hegel ranged from willing embrace to contemptuous rejection, often shifting from one to the other within a single essay, if not in the course of a few pages. To ascribe these fluctuations to confusion or a lack of logical rigor would be a mistake; it would fail to do justice to the complexity of the motives involved. By taking a stand on Hegel, the Buddhist-leaning Nishida and his disciples were confronting a major current of Western intellectual history belonging to—all similarities notwithstanding—a very different tradition. When responding to it critically, they were defining their own distinctive position. Their ambivalence toward Hegel is a sign of self-assertiveness, and at the same time, of an unsettled attitude toward the West. A study of their responses to Hegel offers a glimpse into that attitude. Beyond that, it affords a vantage point from which to view their own philosophy of true reality and the diverse "dialectics" through which they define our place within it.

A word is due about the choice of thinkers for discussion in this book. We look at Hegel's reception by Nishida and two of his disciples: Tanabe Hajime (1885-1962) and Nishitani Keiji (1900-1990).[5] The former was the successor to Nishida's professorial post at Kyoto University, the latter Nishida's intellectual heir who belongs to a younger generation and is generally regarded as the third in the Kyoto School's order of importance. We do not consider anyone else. Certainly, a typical list of the "members" of the School—even if there is no single, definitive one—contains more than three names. Our goal, nevertheless, does not lie in historical completeness. We try, rather, to capture the most meaningful and typical, both in the Kyoto School's extensive borrowing from Hegel and in its struggle at maintaining intellectual independence. A selection of three essential thinkers of the School is sufficient for this purpose.

Another question concerns the introjection of the chapter on Nishitani, who was Tanabe's junior, between those on Nishida and Tanabe. The reason lies in the preference we give the logical order of discussion over the chronological one. While operating within Nishida's general philosophical framework, Tanabe voiced strong opposition to some of its specific presuppositions. He exhibited a similar degree of intellectual autonomy when agreeing with much of Nishida's assessment of Hegel, yet diverging from him in the choice of the Hegelian themes he considered worthy of developing in his own work. In contrast, Nishitani walked largely in Nishida's footsteps. He ventured into new areas of interest, but he always kept within the orbit of Nishida's metaphysical assumptions. Lacking his teacher's logical and systemic ambitions, Nishitani did not borrow from Hegel's philosophy to the extent Nishida did. Yet indirectly, drawn to the mystical strain of Nishida's thought, Nishitani did inherit through it the basic

idealist presuppositions of Hegelianism. He also assimilated Nishida's version of Hegel's dialectical method. As for Nishitani's critique of Hegel, it is well articulated but not pronouncedly original; it may perhaps be best regarded as an elaboration of Nishida's own. In their general philosophical outlook, as well as with respect to Hegel, Nishida and Nishitani belong together; Tanabe stands somewhat apart. The order of the chapters reflects this configuration.

The approach of this book is pronouncedly critical. Because of its focus on the Kyoto School's interpretation of Hegel's philosophy rather than on his philosophy as such, it is the Kyoto Scholars who receive the lion's share of attention—and with it, of the critique. We respect their central claim that reality at its core is inexpressible and that it can be penetrated only in direct experience, experience that goes beyond the scope of normal consciousness and that eludes verbal expression. But we often wonder, on philosophical grounds, at the contentious way in which they advance that claim, so much so that on occasion we may appear to discount the uniqueness of their "Eastern" point of view. We also pay close attention to the way they try to harmonize their assessment of Hegel's philosophy with their own teachings. What we seek in these teachings is not a demonstration of the superiority of direct experience over other forms of consciousness, but rather, to the extent possible, its rational interpretation. Critical analysis is the best tool at our disposal for assessing the success of the Kyoto School at that task, and it is hoped that its virtues will offset the inevitable biases involved in employing it.

Notes

1. *System der Wissenschaft: Erster Theil, die Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Bamberg und Würzburg: Joseph Anton Goebhardt, 1807). All subsequent references to *Phänomenologie* are to a later edition: *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, ed. Johannes Hoffmeister (Hamburg: Meiner, 1952). In English as *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J. B. Baillie (New York: Harper & Row, 1967). The translation subsequently quoted as "*Phenomenology.*"

2. H. Gene Blocker and Christopher L. Starling, *Japanese Philosophy* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2001), 119. Part of the following discussion is indebted to that book. Nishi Amane: 西周. Tsuda Mamichi: 津田真道.

3. A construct in the Confucian tradition, *kokutai* (国体) was given new life in the Meiji Constitution of 1889. A related concept is "Japanism" (*nihonshugi* 日本主義), an ideology supporting Japan's imperialist ambitions. As noted by an intellectual of the period named Takayama Rinjirō (高山林次郎, also known as Takayama Chogyū 高山樗牛, 1871-1902), Japanism was influenced by Hegel's idea of individual fulfillment through the state. Gino Piovesana, *Recent Japanese Philosophical Thought, 1862-1962. A Survey* (Tokyo: Enderle Bookstore, 1963), 60-61. Subjectivity: *shutaisei* 主体性.

4. One view is correct only in conjunction with the other. One of the influential figures of the Meiji and Taishō periods who saw in Hegel an intellectual scion of Buddhism was Buddhist priest Inoue Enryō (井上 円了, 1859-1919). In his eyes, the Hegelian synthesis of mind and matter was identical to the Tathāgata Buddha. Blocker and Starling, *Japanese Philosophy*, 133. Kegon:華厳. *Santai*: 三諦. Tendai 天台.

5. The Kyoto School: *Kyōto gakuha* 京都学派 or *Kyōto ha* 京都派. Nishida Kitarō: 西田幾多郎. Tanabe Hajime: 田辺元. Nishitani Keiji: 西谷啓治.

Chapter One
Nishida

According to some, the most prominent feature of Nishida's philosophy is that it is—"Hegelian." Yet Nishida's first motivation as a thinker was to make sense of the world he saw through the eyes of a Zen practitioner, while Hegel had little to say about Buddhism and was cautious in matters of religious experience. Nishida displayed a romantic penchant for will, feeling, and irrational impulses. Hegel was dry and cerebral; he held reason for God and God for reason. What substantial affinities can possibly exist between the two men, so different from one another in temperament and philosophical interest?

One thinks immediately of one. Religious experience sought in Zen practice transports the practitioner into a state of mind in which the world shows itself in a new light. Each type of experience, quotidian and religious, involves a different relation between consciousness and reality. Second to no other philosopher East or West, Hegel offered a penetrating insight into the dynamic of that relation, making himself relevant to Nishida in the area of the latter's utmost concern. Despite Hegel's foreignness in many other respects, it was natural for Nishida to assimilate this aspect of Hegel's philosophy without difficulty.

The point of departure for Hegel's metaphysics is human consciousness. Through thinking, consciousness grasps reality in concepts that make up its content. Its activity determines individual objects by assigning to each a place in total reality. Things and events attain their full identity first when they are reflected in thought. In that sense, they are sedimentations of processes of consciousness; they are products of self-reflection. Their character fluctuates according to the movement of their concepts. Knowledge of objects does not cross the mind-world divide. It occurs entirely within the framework of self-consciousness in which—despite the appearance to the contrary—subject and object are fundamentally inseparable. The objective world is determined by its own deeper, spiritual or subjective nature. Hegel refers to the latter as the absolute or absolute spirit. The physical, social, and historical dimensions of humankind are forms or objectifications of absolute spirit; the individual mind (subjective spirit) is its instantiation.

The absolute is originally an undivided, undifferentiated whole. Spontaneously, it reflects on itself, generating its own objectification in the form of the natural world. The absolute now has two forms: spirit as such (subject) and spirit objectified (content or object). Disturbed by the inner separation, it starts evolving back into its initial state. Along the way, it encounters the familiar division in different forms at all levels of reality. But the further it comes, the more clearly the original unity shines through the division. At the highest level, spirit recuperates fully its inner harmony. Perfectly self-conscious, it realizes that its representations of the ostensibly external objects are in fact none other than these objects—the objects it now locates no longer outside, but rather within itself. With this realization, the inner partition is healed, and the long return of spirit to its unitary self comes to an end. This process is analogous to the ontogenetic development of the human mind, and with good reason: in its last stages, it becomes clear that the two, the human and the absolute spirit, are identical. Human consciousness at the highest level embodies the perfect unity of spirit's knowledge of itself.

As for Nishida, the essence of his philosophy can be expressed in one word: *jikaku*. Its literal meaning is "self-awareness" or "self-consciousness." In his first major work, *An Inquiry into the Good*, Nishida speaks on the one hand of direct intuition and pure experience, and on the other, of reflective self-knowledge (*jichi*).[1] The former are derived from the Zen Buddhist notion of fundamental insight (*kenshō*)—"seeing one's nature, [which] means to penetrate to the roots of one's own self"[2] and through it, to the foundation of reality. The latter denotes the result of the subject addressing itself in thought, much the way the term "self-consciousness" has been often understood in the West. This latter sense of self-consciousness is distinct in the way Nishida uses the word *jikaku* in several works following *An Inquiry*.[3] But in time, he gravitates back toward the Buddhist meaning. Particularly in his last complete essay, "The Logic of Place and the Religious Worldview,"[4] the term takes on distinctly religious overtones. If one considers the pure experience of *An Inquiry* to be a precursor of *jikaku*, the concept forms an unbroken thread running through all periods of Nishida's philosophy and uniting them in spite of their thematic diversity. In its most developed form, *jikaku* denotes the core of reality, the infinite source of our capacity to understand the world at the deepest level, or the state in which reality presents itself to us, directly and intuitively, in its truth. It signifies neither individual consciousness alone nor exclusively the external world, for it is their perfect unity—not as a simple conjunction of separate entities, but rather as an amalgamation of consciousness, its object, and the framework in which one knows or reflects the other.

Originally an undifferentiated unity, *jikaku* spontaneously reflects on itself and thereby issues from itself a pair of opposites: consciousness (subject) and its object. Reflection signals a shift from the mode of prerational, intuitive immediacy to that of conceptual thought. For the latter, the duality of consciousness

and the external object constitutes a jarring contradiction. *Jikaku* launches itself in search for a remedy. It will find it in the recuperation of its initial state. The original unity is recovered only gradually as *jikaku* rises above layer after layer of conceptualization. In the process, it passes through several planes of reality (ultimately, levels of its own self-determination), at each of which the opposition between subject and object is progressively reduced. It disappears altogether on the final plane, where the objective aspect is folded back completely into subjectivity. Later in his career, Nishida will emphasize the role of the objective side of *jikaku* by turning his attention to history and social modalities of human life. But he will never cease to understand the world as an embodiment or expression of subjectivity.

At the point where *jikaku* has resolved all contradictions, it can no longer be described through attributes. These can be associated only with objects, while *jikaku* now lacks any objective determinations. It can only be referred to as absolute nothingness. It is "the self that sees itself within itself" [5] or self-consciousness *par excellence*. Nishida's primary goal is to penetrate the self-conscious or purely subjective side of *jikaku* through turning consciousness directly at itself and making it immediately accessible and transparent to itself. Rather than viewing it from the outside, as a biologist or psychologist would do, he wants to capture it in its very activity, from within its own process. Borrowing Husserl's terminology, Nishida calls this aspect of consciousness "noetic" in distinction to the thought-of or objective, "noematic" aspect. But as he tries to grasp the subjectivity of *jikaku*, his medium of choice is philosophy. Philosophical expression involves logic and language. Through their use Nishida can only express the objectified aspect of consciousness, which falls short of what he has set out to achieve. To attain his original goal, Nishida needs a non-Aristotelian logic that accommodates contradictions. This is where Hegel proves to be of use. In order to analyze self-consciousness, which is a key concept also of *his* philosophical system, Hegel has developed a procedure that thrives on contradiction. With his dialectical logic, Hegel furnishes precisely the tool that Nishida requires to deconcretize immediate, prereflective Zen experience into a viable philosophy. Along with the tool, Nishida adopts a good measure of Hegel's metaphysical scheme. Behind differences in terminology, striking similarities of ideas are apparent even in a cursory comparison of their thought. Let us recapitulate three fundamental postulates that Nishida shares with Hegel: the conscious character of reality conceived as a self-determination of the absolute (however the latter may be defined); the extensibility of the human mind, through development based on self-reflection, into the absolute dimension; and the restoration of the primal subject-object unity once the absolute dimension has been reached.

Nishida was well versed in Hegel's work and delivered repeated lectures and seminars on his *Science of Logic*, *Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences*, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, and *Philosophy of Right*. The profusion of explicit references to Hegel in Nishida's publications, letters, and diaries testifies to the

sway the philosophy of absolute spirit held over his own. Beyond the references, to establish specific aspects of Nishida's thought definitively as borrowings from Hegel is a delicate matter. Where unequivocal evidence is lacking, one takes recourse to conjectures. These are acceptable, provided one proceeds carefully and remains mindful of two points. First, even terms as obviously Hegelian as "concrete universal" and "absolute spirit" may, upon reappearing in Nishida's work, differ in nuance from the way they were originally employed. Sometimes, the difference is due to Nishida's transformation of foreign notions into vehicles for his own. At other times, it may reflect his idiosyncratic understanding of Hegel. Secondly, some of the apparently Hegelian motifs in Nishida's work may have actually originated elsewhere. Hegel is far from being Nishida's only Western source of philosophical ideas. The patriarch of the Kyoto School was also well-read in the works of Plato, Aristotle, Böhme, Eckhart, Spinoza, Leibniz, Kant, and Fichte. Since these writers had a hand in shaping Hegel's thinking as well, the resemblance of certain of Nishida's philosophical motifs to Hegel's may have more to do with their common derivation than with direct influence. In other cases, similarities may be a result of indirect filiation since Nishida was also familiar with the work of more recent authors, such as Thomas Hill Green and Josiah Royce, who were sympathetic to Hegel's thought. Finally, one can speak of those historically unrelated to Hegel but coinciding with him in certain respects; a few Eastern, especially Buddhist, thinkers may be cautiously counted in that category.

The multiple influences converging in Nishida's ideas are often difficult to disentangle, especially since he is not always forthcoming in identifying them for his readers. But although separating Nishida's mimetic strands may be a worthy historical concern, it is not our primary one. We shall tolerate an occasional possibility that a notion significantly present in Hegel's philosophy reached Nishida through the work of someone else. What matters more is the way the philosophy of absolute nothingness has been shaped by such notions, both when reacting to them positively and when challenging them. Our findings may serve as a commentary on a more general topic: the coming together of the "Eastern" and "Western" philosophical traditions in Japan—allowing us, perhaps, to expose a few common misconceptions about each.

Nishida's Challenge of Hegel

For initial clues, we turn to an essay in which Nishida takes stock of Hegelian philosophy: "Hegel's Dialectic from My Point of View," dating from 1931.[6] In a clarification appended later to the essay, Nishida admits: "There is much in my present thought that I have learned from Hegel, and I feel closer to Hegel than to anyone else." The belated avowal of closeness is unusual and suggests a stirring

of remorse, for Nishida's treatment of Hegel in the essay itself is anything but sympathetic. In a preamble to his critique, Nishida points out that judgments (propositions) and inferences are not made in a void. Whether true or false, they are meaningful only within a context or, as we would say today, within a universe of discourse. They are founded on a deeper, primal intuition of what it makes sense to judge about or infer. Nishida believes that Hegel lacks a proper understanding of that intuition. He goes in a wrong direction, Nishida says, when treating it as but an extension of reason. In opposition to this alleged misstep, Nishida argues that no true insight can emerge from rational thinking, from reasoning constrained by Western-style logic. It has to come from acts and sensations,[7] which, on account of their direct character, are the only effective path to "self-determining actuality," i.e., to knowledge of things as they are in themselves. Siding with Kierkegaard, Nishida reprimands Hegel for failing to recognize that paradox reaches into the depths of existence the way logic never can. Hegel, he believes, ranks their importance in incorrect order by discussing paradox in logical terms and presenting dialectic as, still, a type of logic. He elevates rationality to a high status it does not deserve, while turning noesis into a noema and in the process ruining its living, concrete character. When speaking of consciousness or the idea, Nishida continues, Hegel adopts the common but faulty position of a subject confronting an object. This determines his thinking as "object logic"—an inferior medium, effective only on the noematic side of *jikaku*. (We note that in Hegel's philosophy, idea [*Idee*] denotes a living totality that manifests itself in a diversity of finite forms. It comprises spirit and nature.) Nishida realizes that even the alternative approach he himself proposes cannot free him completely from logic, or rid logic from its abstract character. But, as he believes, it can at least relativize ratiocination properly with regard to its transrational ground. To underscore his appreciation for the noetic, Nishida pits his Buddhistic notion of *pure* nothingness against Hegel's equation of nothing *and being* at the beginning of *Science of Logic*. Hegel's *magnum opus* opens with the state of pure being in which reality enters the stage unmediated by the least trace of rational thought. That state is so unreflected and undetermined that one may equally well take it for the state of pure nothing. It is identical only with itself and has no characteristics that could relate it to anything else. Hegel sums up its nebulous character by saying that neither the statement "being and nothing are the same" nor "being and nothing are not the same" are adequate to represent it.[8]

Nishida is unimpressed by these subtleties. However Hegel may choose to represent pure being, Nishida puts his weight squarely behind nothingness. He argues that it alone, rather than nothing in combination with being, is a fit designation for *jikaku*. Conceived in reference to being, *jikaku* would become determinate. It would instantaneously turn into a thing and thereby cease to be genuine self-consciousness. With respect to Hegel, Nishida draws a sweeping conclusion: his misapprehension of nothingness corrupts his entire philosophical

enterprise. Without an adequate notion of nothingness, there is no foundation for the universal; without the universal, no grounding of discursive knowledge in *jikaku*; without the grounding, no return path from objectivity. In short, Hegel fails to provide a foundation for his central postulate of the self-conscious structure of reality: "In Hegel's logic the universal in my sense, as that which envelops and determines the individual, does not come out clearly; the relation between the universal and *jikaku* that forms the basis of discursive knowledge is not clear. Consequently, the transition from object to *jikaku* cannot be established, and it is not clear why the idea itself must be self-conscious."[9] We shall elaborate on Nishida's notions of universal and individual at a later opportunity. Here, we limit ourselves to observing that if—in Nishida's view—Hegel's logic blurs the relation between the two, it is predominantly in the sense of compromising the sovereignty of the individual by construing it as a mere expedient manipulated for universal ends.[10]

In the essay as a whole, Nishida's scanty praise for Hegel is far outweighed by critical remarks. We are interested in the merits of each as part of a larger concern. How well does Nishida's own philosophy reflect the standpoint of his critique of Hegel? To the extent that Nishida successfully assimilates the Hegelian principles that have met with his approval, and avoids those that have not, he will have demonstrated the plausibility of his critique. But insofar as the philosophy of *jikaku* unwittingly replicates or otherwise fails to redress Hegel's perceived shortcomings, it will have fallen short of its claim to provide a viable alternative to the system of absolute spirit. In view of the objections Nishida voices against Hegel, we hope to find the following remedial traits in his own work: reasoning that transcends normal logic and reflects the principle of subject-object nonduality; a satisfactory demonstration of the grounding of the manifest world in absolute nothingness; and a balanced view of the relation between the individual and the universal.

We begin looking for these traits in Nishida's early period.

The World Within

Hegel's first major work, *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), and Nishida's literary debut, *An Inquiry into the Good* (1911), bear a number of similarities. Among the publications of their authors, they are the most romantic, uneven, and rich in non-philosophical content. Each established the reputation of its young author and, to the wider public, has remained his most famous opus. With respect to their subject matter, both treat of consciousness. Even though *Phenomenology* is a philosophical work, its first section reads like a textbook of psychology, and it is befitting that Hegel's original idea for its title was *The Science of Experience of Consciousness*.[11] Adding "pure" in front of "experience," Nishida could well

have used the same title for *his* first book. The main topic of *An Inquiry* is pure experience, conceived as a metaphysical category, yet often discussed by Nishida in distinctly psychological terms.

Pure experience is the forerunner of *jikaku*. In the opening paragraph of the book, Nishida defines it in the following way: "To 'experience' means to know things as they are. It is to know by following things, without any contribution of the self. 'Pure' describes the state of true experience as such . . . without adding the least discriminating thought."[12] Elsewhere, Nishida explains "pure" as referring to "the strict unity of concrete consciousness," to the fact that originally consciousness is not a complex of elements, but rather a single system.[13] Pure experience works differently than reflective, rational thought. In reflection, we differentiate between ourselves and the world. We break reality into elements, losing sight of the unity that they compose. Pure experience is a state of awareness that knows all, including itself, to be part of the same deep flow of life—awareness made of the same stuff as reality at large.[14] Nishida's example of the sight of a running horse clarifies the point: in immediate perception, we recognize the entire phenomenon intuitively as a unitary fact. Only secondarily do we develop a reflected judgment upon that intuition, dividing it into the logical subject, "a horse," and the predicate, "is running."[15] It is also at that time that we take note of our own distance from the running horse, a distance separating a reflecting human subject from the object of reflection. To reflect, judge and make distinctions is an inherent part of individual consciousness. But to realize the unity of reality is a matter of pure experience, a mode of consciousness that goes so far beyond our usual way of thinking that Nishida believes it cannot be a function of a human individual. Pure experience precedes the personal, temporal, and spatial; it is their condition and foundation. "I succeeded in escaping solipsism," Nishida congratulates himself, "by thinking that it is not that there is an individual and then experience, but rather that there is experience and then the individual, and that experience is more fundamental than individual distinctions."[16] The assertion of the primacy of experience over the experiencer is one of the salient points of *An Inquiry*.

To experience is to know things as they are. This intuition will remain the foundation of all of Nishidian philosophy. Looking back, he says: "I do not know what I was influenced by, but from early on I had the thought that reality must be actuality just as it is, and that something called the material world is only an afterthought. Even today I remember that at the time when I was still a student at the high school and I was walking down the street in Kanazawa, I became engrossed in that thought like in a dream."[17] The "I do not know. . ." signals Nishida's reluctance, until late in life, to acknowledge the Buddhist factor in his thought.[18] In the Buddhist view, "reality" is generally neither a manifestation of inherent or transcendent essence, nor a fixed, passively given object. To those who can appreciate it, it is "thusness" or "suchness"—the ineffable way things are in their individual, immediate presence and according to their

nature, the way that is "truly so" and that constitutes "actuality just as it is." In things and events, there is nothing beyond their actuality, their active presence. That actuality is the basis of our experience. This is why experience is active.[19] Its heightened form is pure experience.

An individual self is an actualization of pure experience in the human being. From that point of view, pure experience is synonymous with the greater or infinite consciousness that Nishida considers to be our true self. Using a simple spatial analogy, he represents the individual self as *part of* that greater consciousness, occupying a delimited, small area within it.[20] For help with a more sophisticated interpretation of the relation between the two types of self, Nishida turns to Hegel with trust unmatched later in his career. The Hegelian notions that according to Nishida correspond to pure experience the most closely are "universal concept" and "spirit." In Hegel's system, the concept (*der Begriff*) is the activity of thinking, I, or pure self-consciousness. It is the universal through which individual concepts (elements of knowledge that unfold in the process of thoughtful comprehension—*das Begreifen*) develop their determinations and manifest themselves as content (objects). A concept penetrates an object and establishes it in its objectivity; it realizes itself as its truth (*die Wahrheit*). For example, a universal concept "life" determines itself individually in every living thing. When realized objectively, a concept becomes an idea. As for spirit, it "is not only as individual, finite consciousness, but [also] as universal, concrete spirit. This concrete universality involves all the developed ways and aspects in which [spirit] is and becomes an object to itself according to the idea."[21] Through self-determination, spirit realizes itself as a concrete universal and takes the shape of an object or content. Nishida agrees: "Seen from [the perspective of] concrete thought, the universality of a concept is not, as usually said, that which is abstracted from similar characteristics, but rather the unifying power of concrete things; and Hegel, as well, states that the universal is the soul of the concrete."[22] Unlike abstract universal, concrete one preserves the specific differences of the particular entities it subsumes. Concreteness, Nishida points out in full accord with Hegel, should not be equated with sensations and perceptions. Contrary to common belief, these are generalities with minimal content.[23] Concreteness is individual. Nishida illustrates the point with the example of the inspiration of a painter which he calls truly individual.[24] "The universal is the spirit of the concrete," he restates, but he brings the discussion quickly back to the question of the individual: "as Hegel and others said, true individuality does not exist apart from universality; individuality is 'determined universality,' *bestimmte Allgemeinheit*."[25] The universal comes before the individual self and determines it, working toward its concretization as individual while it brings the specific within itself, like the seeds of a plant, to unfolding and growth. Nishida views the individual as the consummate stage of the development of the universal. Nevertheless, the universal neither entirely creates nor transcends the individual. As concrete, it depends on individual experience. Universal and individ-

ual form a pair of interdependent opposites, a relationship that Nishida will later codify into a formula to become a hallmark of his philosophical procedure.[26] In this case, giving both sides an equal role in the relationship presages the greater importance of the individual characteristic of his later work.

From a broader perspective, not only individual consciousness but the entire world is animated by the universal. If we operate with objects in our own thinking, so must greater, universal consciousness. The principal difference seems to lie in the scale of the operation. Nishida thinks of the world as a giant object of the universal spirit: "We unify the experience of the self according to individual subjectivity and we further proceed to unify the experience of each individual according to transindividual subjectivity, and the natural world is born as the object of this transindividual subjectivity."[27] Nishida's conception of pure experience as the active nature *of reality* enables him to follow Hegel in interpreting consciousness at the level of pure experience as infinite "spirit that recognizes itself in all things of the world."[28] Spiritual self-recognition can take place because, as the title of a chapter of *An Inquiry* proclaims, "The Phenomena of Consciousness Are the Only Reality." Nishida does not deny the material world outside our mind. The title suggests simply that "we are unable to know even matter separately as an independent reality apart from our phenomena of consciousness," and that "the secret key of explaining the universe lies in this self. . . . The order of natural phenomena actually is nothing more than the order of our phenomena of consciousness."[29]

Hegel interprets reality as a purposeful movement and development of spirit through well-defined stages. Nishida's reality follows a similar course. As a single entity—spirit or universal—it evolves spontaneously from an indeterminate unity to the manifold of the world, and then further, toward the restoration of the original oneness. Following Hegel's formula, its movement leads from *an sich* (in itself) through *für sich* (for itself) to *an und für sich* (in and for itself). *An sich* is the state of unitary, innocent mind. *Für sich* stands for the paradigm of rational thinking that divides the world into the knower and the known. *An und für sich* is the self that sees itself, as unity again, transparently in itself. Taking into account the effort required to recover the final unity, Nishida describes it as greater than the original one.[30] Its recovery constitutes the self-realization of the universal.

The symbiotic coupling of the universal and the individual, the process of reality spanning two unities across a division, and the modeling of that process after the developmental pattern of the human mind, form the metaphysical backbone of *An Inquiry*. Years later, Nishida will identify the source of these ideas: "From the beginning, the idea of the spontaneous self-development of pure experience in *An Inquiry into the Good* contained in a fundamental way also Hegel's idea of the development of the concrete concept."[31]

Philosophically, the unitary notions of *an sich* and *an und für sich* are relatively straightforward. In contrast, the wedge driven into unity by rational

thought in the *für sich* stage presents a problem. Is the unity completely shattered by rationality or do the two manage to coexist? Nishida's pronouncements on the subject do not yield an unambiguous answer. Compared to his later position, the Nishida of *An Inquiry* treats reason with cautious respect—but already not without a good dose of ambivalence. At times, he accords it a place comparable to one it holds in Hegel's system. For example, since pure experience is the self-realization of the universal *concept*, its systematic development consists in the progression of *thinking*.[32] The latter is "a process in the development and realization of a great system of consciousness" and "a wave on the surface of one great intuition."[33] Thinking is the actualization, presencing, or vehicle of pure experience in the temporal world; reason is "the principle through which objective reality actually comes about."[34] Without it, "we are unable ever to go outside the scope of pure experience"—and to continue the process of development and self-realization.[35] In an even stronger endorsement of reason, Nishida declares reflective thought to be identical with pure experience: "Behind reflective consciousness, too, there is unity, and reflective consciousness is established according to it, i.e., it, too, is a kind of pure experience."[36] He goes as far as to uphold Hegel's often-questioned saying that what is rational is real and what is real is rational. In Nishida's interpretation, things are reasonable because each emerges for a reason and occupies a definite position in the causal chain of events.[37] But in the end, Hegel's respect for the human ability to think becomes too much to stomach for the philosopher nourished on Zen's distrust of reason. A process and a wave, to which he likens reflective thinking, are, after all, secondary to their foundation, to the pure interiority of the self at the surface of which they occur. Nishida lets misology come to the surface. He discounts reflection as an individual and subjective function, contrasting it negatively with pure experience, which transcends the individual. He does not hesitate to cleanse pure experience of all rationality: he denies that it has any trace of "meaning."[38] Compared to the other two planes of consciousness, the affective and the volitional, he treats the cognitive plane with suspicion.

Nishida's vacillation betrays a sense that rationality and the orderly external world it produces can neither be simply equated with pure experience, nor—at the other extreme—classified as its direct opposites. He sets out to assign to each a place in his model of reality by asking: "For what reason is the unifying function of reality distinguished in particular from its content, i.e., from that [with] which [it] must be unified, and appears precisely as if it were an independent reality?"[39] He wants to know why reason divides reality, which is unitary, into subject (the unifying function that he identifies elsewhere as "our spirit") and object (the content of consciousness). The cause of the division seems to be difficult to establish, for Nishida settles on accepting it simply as a "natural" propensity of consciousness. "Although consciousness is originally a single system, spontaneous development is its natural state."[40] Spontaneous development of consciousness entails the emergence of multiple systems, or unities.

Contradictions and clashes occur among these systematic unities, inducing consciousness into self-differentiation that gives birth to reflective thought.[41] Nishida regards the externalization of mental content as an inalienable aspect of pure experience: "Pure experience is something which in this way automatically possesses an aspect of discrimination."[42] Our mind attains maturity as *self*-consciousness "able to perceive that which is the heart of the self" not while reposing in the quiet state of unity, but as a result of the contradictions and clashes.[43] In the state of original unity consciousness is only rudimentary, not much different from the non-conscious, physical world or "objective nature." It is "unaware of the unity [i.e., of pure experience] that works in it. Only when that unity is abstracted and objectified, it manifests itself as a specific consciousness."[44] Consciousness *as such* comes into being first with the appearance of rational thinking. It is necessarily reflective or self-reflective, conceptual, and in perpetual discord within itself.

What are the systematic unities that contradict one another and clash, signaling the birth of reflection? Nishida sometimes ascribes the clashes to reality, at other times—to "spirit":

> This undoubtedly arises from the contradictions and clashes of various kinds of unity *in reality*. In reality there are various systems, i.e., there are various unities, and when these systematic unities mutually clash and are mutually contradictory, these unities come to appear clearly in consciousness. . . . Yet whence arise the contradictions and conflicts of these systems? They arise from the characteristics *of reality itself*. . . . Where there are conflicts and contradictions there is spirit, and *where there is spirit* there are contradictions and conflicts."[45]

True to the principle that the phenomena of consciousness are the only reality, Nishida lets the view emphasizing consciousness (spirit) predominate. He refers to contradictions and clashes alternatively as "conflicts of motives."[46] Since motives are a matter of consciousness, so must be their conflicts. And since according to Nishida all consciousness is systematic,[47] the mutually contradictory, systematic unities conform to *its* structure. They are states of experience, above all earlier, less complex states and subsequent, more developed ones. The latter come into conflict with the former: "When we have matured in a certain art, i.e., when we have acquired the unity of reality, on the contrary we are unconscious, that is, we do not know this unity of the self. But when we try to *advance more deeply*, arousing *conflict with that which we have already acquired*, here again we become conscious, for consciousness always arises from this kind of conflict."[48] The paradigmatic case of consciousness arising from the conflict with previously acquired experience is the confrontation with the objective world. To become conscious of the surroundings as different from the self is to have outgrown the previous state of unitary immediacy. In an essay "Logical Understanding and Mathematical Understanding" published shortly after *An Inquiry*, Nishida states: "But from the contradictions and clashes of the sponta-

neous, self-developing system of consciousness thus comes also this so-called relational consciousness that unifies these [contradictions and clashes]."[49] Consciousness of this new, relational (formal-logical) type finds expression in objective disciplines such as science and ethics. Seen from another angle, a conflict of motives involves a discrepancy between the actual state of consciousness and its desired objectives or ideals. An ideal presents a clash with actuality. In order to resolve the clash, consciousness must be adjusted—whereby we move toward a higher unity of experience.[50]

Another conflictual relation is that between a human subject that differentiates itself as one pole of pure experience, and the infinite, true self which is pure experience proper. Their difference is overcome in "the pursuit directed toward the self," which is at the same time the striving toward the attainment of "the eternal true life stemming from our union with the absolutely infinite power."[51] The union joins the human and the divine in religion. "The religious demand is the demand of the unity of consciousness in this sense, and at the same time is the demand for union with the universe. . . . The religious demand is the deepest and greatest one of men's hearts."[52]

There is also a systemic or structural explanation. Conflicts are apparent only in a particular view of the entire system that excludes other, alternative views.[53] A one-sided view is a false one. Truth can emerge only from within a comprehensive perspective, the highest form of which is unitary, pure experience. Undoubtedly mindful of a well-known Hegelian statement that the true is the whole, Nishida tells us: "Falsehood, evil, and ugliness always appear at the point where one looks at one aspect of things abstractly and does not know the whole view, and where, leaning to one side, one goes against the entire unity."[54] The holistic, truthful view of the system reveals that "while on the one hand reality is unlimited conflict, on the other it is also unlimited unity. Conflict is half of unity which must not be lacking. By conflict we advance further to still greater unity."[55]

Nishida's propositions point in the right direction, but they do not go far enough to secure a solution. The reconciliation of the rationality of everyday life with the transrational level of consciousness at the basis of reality is the central problem with which he will struggle until the end of his career. The titles of the works written after *An Inquiry* attest to that enduring concern. Take, for example, *The Self-Conscious System of the Universal*, *The Self-Conscious Determination of Nothingness*, and "The Logical Structure of the Actual World." The terms "system," "determination," and "logical structure" are analytical notions that belong to the world of reason. "Self-conscious," "universal," "nothingness," and "actual" point to the impalpable sphere of *jikaku* that transcends rational analysis. Nishida tries to bring the two spheres together, but the logical basis of the equation is shaky and the conclusion, half-hearted: "[Rational] thinking and [pure] experience are one. It is possible to see a relative difference between them, but I don't think that difference is absolute."[56] One element that stands in the way of a

stronger argument is Nishida's approach to the question of human subjectivity. In keeping with his assertion that experience precedes the experiencer, he believes that true knowledge hinges upon removing all individual, subjective determinations from an act of perception. We recall that *An Inquiry* opens with an appeal to know things directly by casting away all artifice of the self. With that appeal, Nishida demonstrates a disregard for the role of subjective bias in the construction of an object. It is not that Nishida is unaware of ubiquitous subjectivity; but he attributes it *in toto* to rational thought. Through a call for the rejection of object logic, he thinks to have disposed without residue of the entire problem. But human subjectivity cannot be wished away at any level of consciousness; it can only learn to see through its own uninterrupted operation. (This realization is at the core of Hegel's derivation of true knowledge from a properly recognized and applied subjectivity.) The consciousness that Nishida designates as pure experience ignores its own role in the epistemological situation, and in consequence fails to develop a realistic perspective on its relationship with the world. By eschewing thoughtful, self-correcting subjectivity, it remains *uncritically* subjective. As a result, Nishida struggles to keep apart two distinct aspects of reality. It is true that in the final conclusion, they may overlap. But in order to reach that conclusion, it is important first to understand each in its uniqueness. Nishida's illustrations attest to a blurring of the distinction between pure experience and rationality. He detects the former in the simplest perceptions or functions—recognizing an event or an object, hearing a sound, seeing a color, or following a habit or a goal.[57] The capacity of any of these activities to take the self out of its normal mode of dichotomizing cognition and join it in primordial oneness with its object is not readily understandable. Based on the examples, the best we can do is to accept pure experience for the mental state of an ordinary subject unordinarily engrossed in its object.

By reading it into the most mundane reality, Nishida absolutizes and idealizes pure experience. By the same token, he undervalues language, logic, and rationality. He believes that "our consciousness is part of divine consciousness, its unity stems from God's unity. All, from our own little everyday preoccupations and joys all the way to the course of the stars, is founded in that unity." On the other hand, "[our] reason and conscience are part of God's unifying function, but they are not His living spirit itself. . . . This spirit works in the depth of every consciousness (reason and conscience are its voices). We cannot recognize it only when our little self stands in the way."[58] Our little self is indisputably a form of consciousness. This makes it fit for the role of one of the voices of God's spirit. But then, how can it stand in the way of our seeing and hearing Him? In another passage, Nishida hastens to limit the divine in us expressly to our true self, excluding the little (individual) self from the privilege.[59] But this restriction only begs the question. What exempts the little self from the rule that all consciousness is founded upon divine unity? And what is the relation between the two selves? Nishida submits that the false self is "utterly killed" upon

our realization of our inner true self.[60] But the metaphor only obscures the process through which one type of self is transformed into another. The negative role of the little self can be compared to that of mental impurities (*kleśa*) in Buddhism; these blur our clear vision despite the fact that fundamentally all things, including the impurities themselves, are endowed with Buddha nature and are therefore pure. The matter comes down to the duality of truth: the worldly, historical, or commonsense truth represented by the little self as opposed to higher, eternal, or absolute truth. But the fact that each truth presents a different image of the world is only part of the problem. Attempting to overcome the dualism enmeshes us in an even deeper difficulty: that of ascertaining the reality of the dualism itself. The literal-minded, discriminating "little self" perceives an unbridgeable gulf separating it from God. But from the perspective of "divine consciousness" equipped with "God's unifying function" that goes past literal distinctions, *all* reality, including the world seen through the eyes of the little self, is "His living spirit." The distinction emphasized on one side is denied—at most, grudgingly accepted as "provisional" or "conventional"—on the other. It is a problem of cognitive asymmetry; we shall have an opportunity to return to it later.

By interpreting rationality and selfhood as necessary evil—essential to pure experience but at the same time, an obstacle hindering us from achieving it—Nishida denies the human mind a chance to evolve not only in the capacity of reflective thinking, but as mature consciousness in any sense. On the contrary, laboring under the romantic illusion that pure experience returns us, through "absolute activity that is cosmic consciousness,"[61] to the point antecedent to the subject-object split, he postulates a *devolution* of the human mind. He explains this remarkable phenomenon with the aid of a religious metaphor. The process through which rational thought retrogrades and undoes itself consists in "casting away self-power and putting our faith in Other-power."[62] Nishida is referring here to a venerable Buddhist doctrine, but its invocation does little to help him advance through the thorny problem. Questions remain: In being cast away, is self-reliant rationality simply erased from our mind, or does it leave traces that continue to play a role in higher experience? How can rational thought undo itself? How can we, as human subjects, function without subjectivity?

Any philosophy worthy of its name makes transcendent assumptions. Nishida is well within his rights to make *jikaku* the cornerstone of his thought and to emphasize the limitations of "object logic." Undeniably, most forms of experience contain emotive, volitional, and existential aspects, many seated deeper than reason and therefore not easily accessible to rational discourse. As their basis or extension, pure experience transcends all objectifications and cannot become an object of thought. But precisely for that reason, any attempt to discuss it on its own terms runs quickly aground. To use Nishida's expression, following that path would lead him to "surrender to the camp of mysticism."[63] He knows that in order to convince his readers of the unity that he finds at the

root of reality, he needs to express it in the medium of differentiation and heterogeneity, i.e., in philosophical language. He must set pure experience, without objectifying it, within the context of the rational world; he must relate it to our ordinary ways of thinking and reconcile his assumption of the unified character of reality with the empirical evidence of its diversity. In other words, he must see intuition through reflection. To this end he enlists the help of Aristotle, Kant, Neo-Kantians, and Hegel. But he is also pulled in the opposite direction, letting himself be drawn to the religious mysticism of Master Eckhart and Jakob Böhme.[64] It is the latter current that seems to carry him away. Enraptured by his realization that "the material world is only an afterthought," Nishida does the opposite of what he set out to do. Instead of interpreting *jikaku* from within the context of the manifest world and from the rational perspective, he makes it his concern to subsume the rational under pure experience and to integrate difference into unity. Rather than letting the ultimate oneness emerge naturally from the analysis of experiential diversity, he sets it down as an axiom from which the world of individuation is then forcibly derived. Nishida constructs his philosophical edifice starting from the top, a technique that fails to produce a sustainable metaphysical structure.

Nishida's disquisition on pure experience is a testimony to his youthful idealism. Soon, he feels dissatisfied with the results of *An Inquiry*, and continues to seek a better answer to the dichotomy of intuition and reflection. After trying a few paths leading to a dead end, he rediscovers a promising possibility in Hegel's developmental theory of consciousness. From there, he works out a scheme which lets *jikaku* emerge as absolute nothingness through a series of iterative self-mirrorings of the finite self.

The Anatomy of Subjectivity

For the young Nishida, "conflict is the other side of unity that must not be lacking."[65] But it is the unity that sets the tone. To a developing mind, what from an earlier point of view appeared to be a contradiction, from a more informed one reveals itself as the beginning of further systematic development toward a greater unity. Unity is the foundation of meaning, judgment, and will.[66] Indeed, the entire "system of consciousness is that certain unified thing, which, as in all organisms, divides and develops in an orderly fashion, and actualizes its totality."[67] The unitary foundation remains the keystone of Nishida's philosophy from first to last. But following *An Inquiry*, differentiation is brought into sharper focus. Nishida's attention then turns to structure and processes of consciousness, that is, to consciousness in the aspect of differentiation.

In Nishida's metaphysical scheme, everything is consciousness, either as subjective awareness of mental content, or as content itself. The two go together,

for to be conscious *of nothing* is impossible; mind cannot be without content.[68] But if the content is part of consciousness itself, then in being aware of it, consciousness is aware of itself. Fundamentally, consciousness is self-consciousness. It is a single entity set in two distinct roles: that of reflecting, as subject, and that of being reflected upon, as object. This is how Nishida understands consciousness: as the self referring to itself, or as the self looking directly into its own ground. He says: "When in self-consciousness the self makes its own activity its object and reflects upon it, this reflection is the very process of the self's development. . . . Thus to conceive or to think the self consists in the operation of the self itself toward itself."[69] Self-reflection builds upon itself an infinite number of times: we think something, making it an object of our consciousness, then think of our thinking of that thing, and so forth.[70]

In "Logical Understanding and Mathematical Understanding," Nishida quotes Hegel's discussion of good and bad infinity.[71] In Nishida's interpretation, bad infinity consists in endlessness; good infinity is realized in the act of mind's reflection on itself. Reflection is a function of I. In turn, I is "being for itself" (*das Fürsichseiende*) that has transformed and then absorbed the difference between itself and its other. The Hegelian notion of infinity, Nishida continues, was elaborated by Josiah Royce (1855-1916) on the basis of the work by Georg Cantor (1845-1918) and Richard Dedekind (1831-1916). Cantor developed a theory of infinite sets that distinguishes between different orders of infinity. For example, a set and a subset may both be infinite, as the case is with set A, containing all natural numbers (a series starting with "1"), and its subset B, consisting in a series of natural numbers starting with "2":

(A) 1 2 3 4 5 . . . infinity
(B) 2 3 4 5 6 . . . infinity

B is a subset of A since it does not contain "1." This demonstrates that a part is not identical to the whole because it lacks something that the whole has. Nevertheless, each number in B can be mapped to a distinct number in A. It follows that set B is of the same size (power, or cardinality) as A. From this perspective, in the infinite the part does equal the whole. Dedekind, as well, uses an example of a self-mapping system to illustrate infinity. A system (set) is infinite when it is similar to a proper part of itself.[72] Royce recasts this idea in the form of a self-representative system, which he describes as "a system that can be exactly represented or imaged, element for element, by one of its own constituent parts."[73] Nishida quotes an example given by Royce: to draw a current, detailed map of his (her) country, a cartographer must include in it an image of his (her) own drawing activity. That image in turn shall contain a smaller replica of the map being drawn, again complete with the cartographer drawing the map; and so *ad infinitum*. Such system is self-contained; its self-replication occurs entirely within itself. Following Royce, Nishida seeks infinity in a self-

representative system of consciousness that, through iterative self-reflection, spontaneously evolves toward self-realization:

> Within our reflective consciousness, we can make again into an object of our thought the fact that we make ourselves into an object of thought. . . . But the infinity of thinking is also clear from its nature as a consciousness of validity. Thinking is not simply a consciousness of representations, but also a consciousness of validity, that is, a consciousness of truth. . . . As a consciousness of truth or validity, thinking contains . . . infinity.[74]

Under "validity," Nishida may be referring to the veritative aspect of the judgment, distinct from the predicative aspect: every judgment is accompanied by an implicit understanding that its predication is true or valid. When a judgment is pronounced, the act of predication is finite, but the movement from the predicative to the veritative aspect can be compounded infinitely: one is certain of the validity of the judgment, certain that one's certainty regarding the validity is valid, and so forth.

Nishida traces Royce's exposition of infinite self-reflection back to Hegel. In the Hegelian model, consciousness advances through the compounding of self-representations, in which the current form of consciousness is superseded by a higher, emerging form that takes the current one as its content. (What we call the form of consciousness is the subjective aspect of awareness, in contrast with content, which is its internal object.) This idea influenced Nishida himself no less than Royce. Not fully spelled out but already discernible in *An Inquiry*, it assumes a central role in the "logic of place"[75] that forms the backbone of the second period of Nishida's philosophy. To prepare the ground for an analysis of that logic, in the following chapter we take a closer look at Hegel's scheme prefaced by a discussion of some of its predecessors.

What Is Self-Consciousness?

The term "self-consciousness" was coined in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but its concept had been circulating in Western philosophy since antiquity. Signifying the relation of I to itself, self-consciousness is constituted by feeling or knowing oneself as a single entity. Plato mentions self-referential knowledge—knowledge of oneself—in one of his dialogues.[76] Aristotle speaks of *noesis noeseos* or the unmoved mover that thinks itself.[77] The term designates the activity (*energeia*) of the highest realm of being (*prote ousia*), understood as pure self-intentionality (intentionality with itself as the object) free from the constraints of time and space. Such self-intentionality can be described as pure reflexivity or perfect self-reference, which is a self-realization of *prote ousia*. Plotin treats self-intellection as a fundamental principle of God and of the human soul, describing it as a structure which is "of one piece . . . so that, seeing any

given part of itself as identical with itself, it sees itself by means of itself, knower and known thus being entirely without differentiation. . . . [S]eeing subject and seen objects must be present as one thing."[78]

In modern times, the interest in self-consciousness marks the beginning of a subjectivist turn in Western philosophy. It arises slowly and takes time to mature. While Descartes (1596-1650), Spinoza (1632-1677), Locke (1632-1704), and Leibniz (1646-1716) are interested in consciousness as such, they do not spend much time on its self-referential aspect. Hume (1711-1776) gives up explaining it altogether on the grounds that the observation of intrapsychic phenomena is thwarted by its own operation. The self being observed is no longer the self in its natural state:

> When I am at a loss to know the effects of one body upon another in any situation, I need only put them in that situation, and observe what results from it. But should I endeavour to clear up after the same manner any doubt in moral philosophy, by placing myself in the same case with that which I consider, 'tis evident this reflection and premeditation would so disturb the operation of my natural principles, as must render it impossible to form any just conclusion from the phænomenon.[79]

Self-consciousness assumes a central role first in German Idealism. It is conceived as philosophical self-reflection that opens a view on the genesis of subject and object from the original unity of I. Objects are thought to be an offshoot of subjectivity, with which originally they form a unity. This school of thinking begins with Kant (1724-1804), who submits that all our mental representations are accompanied by "I think," which is the subjective awareness of their being *my* representations. The "I think" is the pure I, transcendental subject, or self-consciousness. It is the source of the *a priori* identity of the knowing self and the known object. "The conditions of the possibility of experience as such are at the same time the conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience."[80] The ability to perceive objects and make judgments about them originates in our self-consciousness. Calling the synthesizing function of the pure I "the synthetic unity of apperception," Kant describes it as "the highest point" that determines "all the use of reason, even all logic and then transcendental philosophy . . . indeed, that capacity is reason itself."[81]

In his early period, Nishida cautiously endorses this aspect of Kantian philosophy: "Kant's pure apperception that provides a unifying function to the structure of objective knowledge and the unity of pure experience that I postulate are not entirely different."[82] He looks upon pure experience as a unifier of the elements that judgments have separated from the original unity, a constant behind the incessant stream of reflection, and the ground upon which it takes place. So construed, pure experience functions in the manner of the Kantian "I think." According to Nishida, "Self-awareness is a phenomenon that accompanies the circumstance wherein partial systems of consciousness are unified in the

center of entire consciousness." And: "That which is our self, which is the unifier of spirit, is originally the unifying function of reality."[83]

The synthetic unity of apperception is a necessary assumption. It enables Kant to advance beyond Hume's reductionist view of consciousness as a bundle of perceptions. But how does it fit into his own model of consciousness? It belongs to neither of Kant's two epistemological functions: intuition (*Anschauung*), which brings in external material through the senses, or comprehension (*Verstand*), which organizes that material according to its own conceptual categories. Since the synthetic unity of apperception is no substantial object, it eludes intuition. It is not an intellectual object, either, or for that matter any kind of object: it provides a foundation for the categories of comprehension, but it does not fall into any of them.[84] As such, it escapes comprehension as well. Consciousness can neither sense nor think itself in its unitary, active form. Neither of the two Kantian epistemological functions leads to the transcendental subject, the "I think." Intuition and comprehension alike turn it into an object. Realizing the limitations of both, Kant examines briefly a third possibility of representing self-consciousness—the mode of thinking referred to as intellectual intuition (*intellektuelle Anschauung*). The romantically inclined German Idealists will later treat intellectual intuition as a gateway to transreflective unity of consciousness and to the absolute itself. But Kant is no romantic. His strict separation between the senses and the intellect (reason) leaves him no choice but to conclude that intellectual intuition is an oxymoron.[85]

Kant's difficulty in resolving the problem of self-consciousness lies precisely in the synthetic unity of apperception or the pure I. Its notion is obscure and unpersuasive; its existence cannot be proven. Since the pure I is assumed to accompany all cognitive operations, it must also be actively involved in that assumption itself. One can recognize the pure I only by exercising it. To prove it, one must use it in the proof. Kant's definition of the pure I involves a logical fallacy. What guarantees the unity of consciousness can be neither its own operative function nor its object. Kant himself recognizes the problem and admits that it traps him in a vicious circle. He doubts that the pure I or self-consciousness can ever be known: "Through this I or he or it (the thing) which thinks, nothing further is represented than a transcendental subject of thoughts = X. It is known only through the thoughts which are its predicates, and of it, apart from them, we cannot have any concept whatsoever, but can only revolve in a perpetual circle, since any judgment upon it has always already made use of its representation."[86] Nishida may have in mind the difficulties Hume and Kant went through when observing: "The unity of consciousness cannot become an object of knowledge; it transcends all categories. We are unable to give it any fixed form, and yet all things are established according to it."[87] As individuals, Nishida cautions, we are precluded from having true self-consciousness. The latter is equivalent to pure experience; it is a prerogative of God and the entire universe, not of a particular self.[88] On the other hand, individual human con-

sciousness is part of God's. We can be self-conscious only on God's coattails and only in the mode of pure experience, not through reflection within our own finite mind. So Nishida in *An Inquiry*. Later, as his interest in the relational and self-referential aspects of consciousness grows, he will look for ways to admit the possibility of individual consciousness knowing itself.

Kant recognizes that the scheme of the subject reflecting on itself as its own object (the reflection model) does not do justice to the unmediated, direct character of self-consciousness; this is his advance on Descartes and Leibniz.[89] But he is unsuccessful in formulating a positive theory to support that recognition. This creates an opportunity for Fichte (1762-1814) who steps in, determined to solve the difficulty. Fichte makes it his concern "to find the absolutely first, simply unconditional principle of all human knowing. . . . It should express the deed-act which does not and cannot occur under the empirical determinations of our consciousness, but which rather lies at the basis of all consciousness and which alone makes it possible."[90] Similar to his predecessors, Fichte understands self-consciousness as I's relation to itself. In his philosophy, the reflection model retains its two traditional aspects: subject (the reflecting I) and object (not-I, or the reflected I). These aspects remain at play when the subject reflects on its own self-reflection: it then assumes the role of a new subject reflecting on a new object. With repetition, self-reflections stretch out recursively in an endless chain. But something remains constant through all of them: the awareness on the part of the reflecting subject that its object is no other than the subject itself. This awareness of self-identity figures as the third aspect of self-consciousness in Fichte's system. He calls it intellectual intuition. Laid over bipolar self-consciousness, intellectual intuition provides the founding identity "I = I" behind the I/not-I opposition, as well as the framework for the subsequent equation of the two opposites in any other form. In view of its subjective and non-passive character—evident in the terms "deed-act" (*Tathandlung*), "activity" (*Handeln*), and "active I" (*das handelnde Ich*)—intellectual intuition is "I." In the sense that it cannot be turned into an object of reflection, it is the immutable and infinite, "*absolute* I."

Thus Fichte attempts to reinstate intellectual intuition, a notion rejected by Kant, as a legitimate term. The question is how to define it in a way that preserves its foundational character as unconditional and undivided subjectivity. The moment we think "I," i.e., when we reflect on ourselves, we have already separated ourselves from the unity of the original I and established an object-I. Since the original I eludes this type of thinking—for it can never be turned into an object—the only fit designation for it is the indefinite "X." Based on their shared derivation from X, subject-I and object-I are identical. All the same, the identity is relative, for in order to become identified with one another in a non-tautological way, they must first be non-identical. Identity and distinction coexist within the same relationship.[91] This is possible in the sense that at the level of intellectual intuition (absolute I) that represents identity, I remains identical with

itself; while at the level of reflective self-consciousness that represents non-identity, it reflects on itself as an object.

Fichte's philosophy exerted considerable influence on Nishida, whose early understanding of the law of identity is quite similar to Fichte's: "How can one understand the affirmation of A as A and its distinction from not-A as thinking of identity? In order to distinguish A and not-A, there must be a universal that unites them both [cf. Fichte's X]; their distinction and their conflict come from that unity of the universal. . . . That is, various conflicts are here unified from the inside, and at the same time they are distinguished."[92]

The notion of identity recurs in the philosophy of Schelling (1775-1854). Referring to it by the German term *Identität*, Nishida likens it to his own concept of direct experience.[93] Schelling's approach to self-consciousness does not differ substantially from Fichte's. He understands it as "a concept of an object that opposes itself and at the same time, is identical with itself. . . . The concept of original identity within duality, and vice versa, is thus simply the concept of subject-object, and such concept occurs originally simply in self-consciousness."[94] Another of Schelling's Fichtean notions is that of the subjective or absolute I as the presupposition for the empirical I. Similar to the empirical I, the absolute I consists in the self-referencing of consciousness, that is, in self-knowledge. But while the empirical I acquires self-knowledge through relating to itself as an object, self-consciousness that is the absolute I is direct; it does not entail an objectification. How can one say anything about the absolute I, which is pure, nonobjectifiable activity? To grasp it, one requires a different, non-conceptual kind of knowledge: intellectual intuition. As proposed earlier by Fichte, intellectual intuition is the way the absolute I intuits (*schaut*) itself directly rather than in the manner of the subject contemplating an object. "Such intuition is *I* because *I itself* (the object) arises first *through I's knowledge of itself.* Because I (as object) is nothing else than simply *knowledge of itself*, I arises simply through that it knows of itself; it follows that *I itself* is knowledge that at the same time creates itself (as object). . . . *I itself* is an object *which is through this, that it knows itself*, i.e., it is constant intellectual intuition." The absolute I that intuits itself is *pure* oneness (*schlechthin Einheit*), not a unification of separate entities. It has no corresponding object and there is no other I. As non-objectified self-knowledge, it is the foundation of all conceptualizations. It is also an organ of "all transcendental thinking," which has the freedom to objectify without turning the objectified into an object in the usual sense. This remarkable capability is predicated upon the simultaneous production and intuition of "certain activities of spirit" so that "the production of an object and intuition itself are absolute one." Lest the opacity of this "transcendental" argument should be misattributed, Schelling hastens to warn his readers that "any professed incomprehension of [transcendental] philosophizing is caused not by its inherent incomprehensibility, but rather by the lack of the organ with which it must be grasped."[95]

We do not support Schelling's imputation of the failure to comprehend his doctrine to an intellectual deficiency on the part of his audience. His (and Fichte's) formulations do not convince us because they suffer from a problem similar to Kant's. They leave without a satisfactory answer the question of how the absolute I is grasped (and grasps itself) in a non-objectifying way. What makes intellectual intuition superior in this respect to normal reflection? The designation of the absolute as absolute I takes us surreptitiously back to the reflection model of self-consciousness. It invites the suspicion that despite Schelling's claim of unitariness, his absolute does have a self-referencing structure flawed by subject-object differentiation. This is the way it is understood by romantic poet-philosopher Hölderlin (1770-1843). Hölderlin exposes the postulate of the absolute I as a device calculated to bring the separated parts of consciousness *back* together, as a means of *re*pairing the separation inherent in self-consciousness—rather than as its unitary ground that it purports to be. He concludes that the absolute I promises pure unity but delivers an already reflected one; absolute I and empirical self-consciousness are actually different names for the same thing. As the true ground of self-consciousness, Hölderlin proposes a category of his own. He finds the primal, unobjectifiable unity not in self-consciousness, but rather in "being as such" (*das Sein schlechthin*) that in his opinion precedes all divisive reflection.[96]

It is unclear whether Hölderlin's solution is superior to Fichte's and Schelling's. In its position as the ground of self-consciousness, the category of being as such is weighed down by its own share of problems of logical consistency. Searching for a key to unlock the mystery of self-consciousness, neither Kant nor his intellectual heirs are able to break out of the unfruitful subject-object paradigm. It is first Hegel who takes the matter one step further. He refuses to accept the ultimacy of the distinction between two aspects of self-consciousness: reflection and unity. Based on the dialectic of difference and identity expounded in his phenomenology of mind, genetic history of consciousness accounts for both. His analysis of the interweaving of the two aspects demonstrates an unprecedented depth and precision, and it is therefore *his* philosophy that can serve as the most complete model for Nishida's philosophy of self-consciousness. In the remainder of this chapter, we look more closely at that model.

To tackle the question of the source of consciousness, Hegel turns the questioner's mind at itself in reflection on its own nature and genesis. Its *self*-reflecting character comes through in Hegel's assertion that in the course of cognitive development, consciousness constructs a system of concepts entirely *out of itself*, free from foreign elements and admitting no external influence. Self-reflection constitutes a self-grounding of knowledge and a rudiment of a theory of its development.[97] When engaging in it, consciousness brings into awareness its current situation, structure, or form. In this activity, it becomes an object to itself. It assumes two roles: as reflecting, it remains the form; as reflected, it reappears as its own content. To make sense of this complex situation,

consciousness is forced to examine its tacit assumptions about itself. The knowledge it gains accrues to its content. It also affects its operation. Its new knowledge about itself transforms the way it thinks and feels. Hegel sees the progress of consciousness as a series of transformations hinging on self-scrutiny and the attendant self-objectification. The latter is inseparable from consciousness as such. Any mental activity involves subject-object interaction which is fundamentally interaction of consciousness with itself through self-objectification.

But this is a philosopher's view. Hegel cautions that the "natural" or unsophisticated mind sees itself in a different way. It does not recognize itself in what it reflects on. On the contrary, it treats its content (object) as separate from itself. Its fundamental principle is to differentiate between the two. It is the principle of subject-object dichotomy, the ultimacy of which is challenged by both Hegel and Nishida. The primary technique through which natural consciousness implements the principle is projection. Projection occurs when consciousness unknowingly externalizes its own structures, i.e., when it interprets its characteristics as belonging to something else than its own subjective self. A projecting consciousness does not lose the capacity to distinguish between the subjective and the objective dimension as such, but it draws the line between them falsely: it fails to properly identify its own subjective perspective and the objective material it is working with. This makes projection a favorite maneuver of egocentrism, in which the relativity of the object with respect to the perspective from which it is viewed is ignored. Hegel gives an example of a child, for whom morality, religion, and science are manifestations of reason embodied by its parents, i.e., by an external authority. Only after growing up does it put an end to the projection; it then understands these manifestations correctly to be part of its own nature. A criminal engages in a similar self-deception when seeing punishment as an external compulsion, while Hegel considers it to be a manifestation of the criminal's own evil will.[98] Projection is comparable to the Buddhist notion of delusion, which consists in the belief that objects possess an inherent self-identity (*svabhāva*) independent of the conceptualizing activity of the subject. In either case, the subjective and the objective sphere (the form of consciousness and its own objectified structures) appear to be different from each other, while in fact the difference is spurious, for over the range of the projection the spheres are identical.

Perhaps short of the state of Nishida's pure experience or Hegel's absolute knowledge, egocentrism never disappears completely.[99] However, it declines in the course of mind's maturation. Projection is at odds with reality and sooner or later it has to be seen through. The moment it is exposed, consciousness realizes that the fundamental principle of separation between mental form and content has been compromised. Threatened in its foundation, consciousness becomes confused and opens itself to doubt (*Zweifel*) over its representations and opinions. If what appeared to be objective reality turns out to be thoroughly conditioned by one's way of looking at it, how can one ever come to really know it?

At its extreme, doubt turns into exasperation (*Verzweiflung*) that drives consciousness into confronting its projective tendencies head on. The confrontation marks the consciousness's transition to the next developmental stage, in accord with the rule that to become aware of one's bias is to have already left it behind. The realization that the objects appearing to be independent of our thinking are in fact embedded within it constitutes a turning point for consciousness. As it moves to higher ground, its previous position ("in itself") reveals itself as "*only for-it* of in-itself," i.e., as absolutely true only to the consciousness at the previous stage.

What does Hegel understand by "in itself"? Consciousness as it is in itself is the current mental form or activity. "In itself" refers to the immediate, unreflected certainty with which it holds its content.[100] After consciousness has advanced to a position from which it reflects back on that state, in-itself loses its stamp of unconditional truth.[101] Consciousness comes to realize its subjective bias. It learns that its earlier beliefs were valid only from the perspective operative at that time, or in Hegel's words, they were only "for the consciousness of the first in-itself." In-itself loses its immediacy and becomes relativized, questioned and judged. The tension between in-itself and the for-it of that in-itself—the tension that comes to the fore during the transitions of consciousness, and then, with the emergence of a new content or object, temporarily subsides—is the principal motor of development in Hegel's philosophy of mind.

By virtue of its new ability to see through its own bias, post-transitional consciousness deems to have disentangled itself from it. "This is the way I was but now I recognize my confusion for what it was," it says to itself, convinced of the incontrovertibility of its realization. It is confident that the judgment it presently passes on its past errors is free of subjectivity. It admits that its former way of thinking involved a fundamental distortion, but it does so from a higher position that is not affected by a similar flaw—or so it thinks. Consciousness has well realized that its earlier position is no longer current, literally having "become history" or part of the record of consciousness's progress, part of its genesis. What it does not foresee is that its present corrective separation from its former egocentrism will become exposed as illusory in its own turn. Its selective ignorance shows that consciousness has not touched the core of the problem. While it believes that it has succeeded in upholding its fundamental principle of subject-object separation (by distancing itself from its former self that became the object of its scrutiny), it did so only within its objectification, within an earlier form of consciousness that has already been relegated to the past. The consciousness that looks at its own role in cognizing an object is no longer the same consciousness that looked *directly* at the object.[102] The vindication of the principle of separation does not extend to consciousness in its present condition because its turning marks the beginning of a new mental stage or form in which truth and certainty mean something else than they did before.[103] Completing the turn, the new consciousness promptly accepts the for-it of the former in-itself as

a new, valid belief. Its acceptance of that belief now becomes its new in-itself. More precisely, the new in-itself is constructed from the contrast between the former in-itself (earlier unquestioningly taken for truth) and the for-it of that in-itself (the realization that that truth was only a temporary perspective). As Hegel says, "we see that consciousness now has two objects, the first being the first [i.e., the former] in-itself, and the second—the for-it of that in-itself."[104]

The second, new object does not annihilate the earlier one. It comprises it within itself, along with the presuppositions (now exposed as false) held about it by the preceding form of consciousness. Still, as soon as consciousness realizes the for-it character of the formerly absolute in-itself, it loses the latter from awareness. Turned into a building block of consciousness, the old in-itself becomes irretrievable as such. "Consciousness finds that the first object transforms itself in this process; it ceases to be an in-itself and becomes an *in-itself* only *for consciousness*. . . . This new object contains the nothingness of the first one; it consists of the experience made of it."[105] From a fresh perspective, we can only recall harboring a given view or belief in the past, but we are no longer capable to call this view or belief back into existence. Each new perspective conceals the earlier one even as it supplants it; the earlier perspective becomes embedded in the new one below the surface of awareness.[106]

Consciousness has not only lost its direct relationship with the previous object; its new perspective or form, too, remains hidden from its view. The nothingness of the first object, or the experience of its falsity, becomes part of the cognitive setup of the new stage of consciousness; but that setup constitutes the new in-itself, new consciousness that is not conscious of its operation as it unfolds. Mind is unaware of the new in-itself *as in-itself*, for it gets absorbed or engrossed in its current object, just as it did earlier in the former object. For the time being, the current in-itself is absolutely compelling; its true, for-it (relative) nature remains hidden from consciousness until the next turning takes place. The turnings, as well, are apparent only to an external observer, to *us* who follow Hegel in surveying the process. The developing consciousness has only a vague sensation of its own evolution.[107] It does not understand that even as it distills "objective" reality from its own general awareness, it remains caught in delusion. The core delusion is consciousness's belief in the objectivity of its content, for it ignores the fact that it is only a belief. In time, the incongruence of that belief makes itself felt again, prompting consciousness to invoke once more its principle. Time and time again, consciousness becomes aware of its delusion and thus surpasses it—while invariably remaining caught in it.

Retracing the movement of natural consciousness with Hegel allows us to identify a series of distinct stages. Their character and arrangement fall into an identifiable pattern. Since the number of stages is not fixed in Hegel's writings, establishing that pattern involves by necessity some arbitrariness and imperfections; a few loose ends and unresolved inconsistencies are unavoidable. Despite these difficulties, a number of attempts have been undertaken. The scheme of

Hegelian dialectic proposed by Thomas Kesselring is of special interest since it is built directly around Hegel's analysis of the movement of consciousness, an analysis that has attracted Nishida's special attention.[108] In his reading of Hegel's *Science of Logic*, Kesselring identifies six stages of consciousness.[109] The first two are defined by unreflected positivity; the middle two, by negativity and finitude; the last two, by an infinite perspective. Many sections of *Science of Logic* mirror, within themselves, this six-partite pattern, although usually with some variations. Consciousness at every stage consists of two levels or spheres. One constitutes its form, the other—its content. Kesselring numbers the stages using Roman numerals; the spheres, using Arabic numerals. The form represents the highest cognitive level of the subject at a given time. The content consists of object representations; it is controlled by the form. Kesselring refers to the sphere of the form as the upper sphere or sphere 1, and the sphere of the content as the lower sphere or sphere 2. For example, II.1 is the upper sphere of stage II, while II.2 is its lower sphere.

At a given developmental stage, sphere 1 (the form) is not conscious of itself or its operation. Its relation to itself is immediate and indeterminate. During the transition to a new stage, a new sphere 1 emerges, while the form and the content of the current stage are objectified, i.e., subsumed under the emerging new form as *its* content. It is first through the subsumption under the new form that the current (now, previous) form becomes visible to the subject. In this process, the previous form and content undergo a categorial transformation and for the first time are separated from one another. The transformation reflects the developing mind's progressively clearer understanding of the categories of reality and its own growing sophistication.

Kesselring designates the form that has been transformed and objectified as 2a. The transformed content is 2b.[110] Taking stage II as an example, II.2 is composed of two subspheres: II.2a which is the transformed I.1, and II.2b which is the transformed I.2. The following figure illustrates these dependencies. We shall call it a dialectical model of consciousness. (See Figure 1.1.)

As the seat of the fundamental principle of separation between subjective consciousness and its content, sphere 1 guarantees that subsphere 2a is not projected into subsphere 2b, as it was at the previous stage—that the two are now separate. Sphere 1 applies the principle also to itself in relation to its own content (sphere 2), treating it as separate from itself: when referring to the content, it believes to be referring to the *other of itself*. But a philosopher who observes the process from the outside knows that this belief is false. Content is structured as a stack of surpassed form-content pairs; the content-element of each pair is composed of the pair of the previous form and its content. Content as a whole is the sublated history of consciousness. Therefore, when sphere 1, the current leading form of consciousness, refers to its content, it refers to its own genesis, hence to itself.[111] This violates the principle of separation of the spheres. Mind's lack of awareness of the true (mental) provenance of its content constitutes a new pro-

jection at work. Hegel calls this situation "*being by itself in its other*" (*in seinem Anderen bei sich selbst sein*).[112] The projection of sphere 1 into sphere 2 (or more precisely, 2a) reoccurs at every new stage. Each of its iterations is a return to the indeterminateness and immediacy that mark the beginning of a new dialectical cycle.

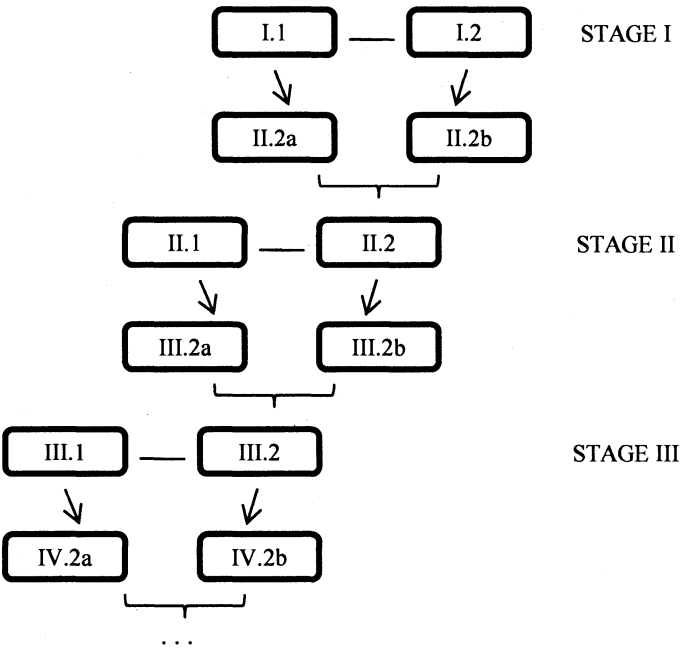

Figure 1.1 Stages and spheres of consciousness (the dialectical model).

Projection can be defined broadly as sphere confusion.[113] It consists in consciousness's failure to distinguish between itself as the guiding principle (the principle of form-content separation) and itself as governed by this principle. Consciousness applies the principle to itself, and as a result it believes falsely in the separateness of its content, while in fact it is joined with it. With respect to the distinctiveness of the two spheres, the form (upper sphere) finds itself in the same relation to the content (lower sphere) as all the upper spheres reiteratively encapsulated within the content are in relation to *their* contents; in that respect, it does not differ from its content—the two belong together. But if the form is thus identical with its content, then by virtue of this identity it differs from the content, in which (according to the principle) the form at any level is distinct from *its* content. As thus differing from its content, however, it conforms to the separation principle the same way as its content does; the two are

indistinguishable. In short, if form and content are identical, they differ from one another, and if so, they are identical. Sphere confusion manifests itself here as an antinomy, a phenomenon that stems from the concurrence of two conditions affecting a structure or an element: self-reference (unity) and self-negation (separation). At a given level of consciousness, self-reference and self-negation occur at the same time; keeping them apart in Hegel's-Kesselring's dialectical model is the work of an external observer.

An antinomy presents itself when distinct logical (semantic, epistemological, or ontological) levels or types are not held apart as they should be. The definition of antinomy is more restrictive than that of contradiction. A contradiction is a conjunction of two antithetical propositions, only one of which can be true. An antinomy is the equivalence of two statements, each of which is the negation of the other: the conclusion follows from the premise and at the same time, it contradicts it. For example, the statement "sphere 1 projects itself into subsphere 2a" is completely equivalent to the statement "sphere 1 does not project itself into subsphere 2a." A statement is true when it is false, and it is false when it is true. An antinomy is simultaneously a contradiction and a tautology (logical equivalence). Eubulides is reported to be the author of a classical antinomy, the liar paradox: When one says "I am lying" truthfully, then one is lying; but when one says it as a lie, then one is telling the truth—so again, one is lying. Alfred Tarski transformed the liar paradox into "this statement is false," a proposition that refers to itself while claiming its own falsity. It is false when it is true, and true when it is false. In either proposition, a statement is confused with its own referent; or, its predicative ("I am lying") and veritative ("it is false [or true] that I am lying") functions are not differentiated. The analysis of the liar paradox has led Tarski to establish a theory of metalanguage. Another well-known antinomy was formulated by Bertrand Russell. It describes an Alexandrian librarian confronted with the task of cataloging the books that do not mention themselves in their content. Should the catalog list itself? If it does, i.e., if it mentions itself in its content, it will disqualify itself from being listed. If it does not, then it will satisfy the criterion for inclusion, and it will have to list itself. In Russell's antinomy, a type (the catalog of books) is confused with its own element (one of the books cataloged). Its discovery has induced Russell to develop a theory of types. Antinomies can be avoided (or resolved) through distinguishing between logical levels, e.g. between the predicative and veritative functions of language, and between types (classes) and their elements.[114]

In the dialectical model, the levels or types that fail to be distinguished are the two cognitive spheres. The principle embodied by the upper sphere (form) excludes the possibility of self-referencing. The prohibition includes its own case. In its case, then, its determination (the prohibition of self-referencing) applies to itself. On one level, this self-application violates the determination of the principle. On the other, it means that the principle successfully *upholds* it-

self, whereby it does not refer to itself after all. But by upholding *itself*, again it refers to itself.[115]

Hegel defines antinomy as a unity of opposed moments.[116] In the section of *Science of Logic* treating of logic of being (*Seinslogik*), he describes it as the crossing-over (*Umschlagen*) of such moments. In another section, dedicated to logic of essence (*Wesenslogik*), he speaks of a negative relation between opposed determinations.[117] The pairs of opposed moments or determinations are manifestations of the subject-object pair at various categorial levels. Since the fundamental identity of subject and object, side by side with their empirical differentiation, is a basic assumption of Hegel's system, the presence of negative self-reference, and hence of antinomy, can be expected to be quite widespread in his work. Indeed, Hegel asserts that "a deeper look in the antinomic or, more truthfully, the dialectical nature of reason shows *every* concept to be a unity of opposed moments, to which one consequently could give the form of antinomic assertions. Becoming, determinate being (*Dasein*), etc., and every other concept could thus supply its own antinomy, so there would be as many antinomies as there are concepts."[118] Antinomy is to be found "in *all* objects of all kinds, in *all* representations, concepts, and ideas. . . . This characteristic constitutes that which is determined as the *dialectical* moment of the logical."[119] And again: "Everything is opposed. In reality there is nowhere, whether in heaven or on earth, whether in the spiritual or the natural world, such abstract either-or as is claimed by comprehension (*Verstand*). Everything that exists is concrete, that is, differentiated and opposed within itself."[120] Hegel is saying that antinomy and contradiction inhere in things, not only in the human mind and its logical constructs. Of course, for him the distinction is irrelevant, and in fact, the antinomy derives from this irrelevance. It occurs precisely because there is no such distinction—while the mind believes that there is. Another reason for regarding antinomy as a basic structure of reality is that it occurs in any system that claims to model *all* reality, i.e., any system purporting to be complete. This observation has been formalized in 1931 by Kurt Gödel (1906-1978), who saw that in every finitely presentable mathematical theory or system at least as complex as the arithmetic of the integers, statements can be legitimately constructed that are either contradictory (both true and false), or not provable as either true or false using the axioms of that theory or system. In the latter case, the theory or system is incomplete. Contradictory or unprovable statements refer to the boundary conditions of a system using the means specified by the system itself, effectively confusing the framework of a theory with its contents—or the metalanguage of a statement with the statement itself. Systemic self-reference (the system modeling itself) leads to inconsistency, or the state in which the system contains false statements. An alternative to inconsistency is incompleteness: a system can avoid the contradiction of self-reference by excluding itself from the model, but it can do so only at the price of depriving the model of completeness and making it insufficient for solving some of its problems—notably,

that of proving its own consistency. Gödel's incompleteness theorem, as it is called, can be generalized to all fundamental symbolic systems. A system of that kind is part of the reality it models; hence, it includes itself in the model. In Hegel's language, it represents being-in-itself (*Insichsein*), i.e., it involves a reference to itself as part of a larger whole. Hegel regards being-in-itself as the basis of subjectivity. The either contradictory or incomplete nature of self-referencing is an ineluctable characteristic of all thinking. Mind cannot think or understand itself (its form) because in order to do so, it has no other means than those determined by the form itself. Since, according to Hegel, there is ultimately no separation between a thing and the thought about the thing (all objects and thought-constructs are facets of the same concept), all thinking—including thinking about things—involves self-reference or infinite regress.[121] Thinking resembles looking in the mirror and seeing not just oneself (this alone would not constitute true self-reference), but rather oneself in the act of looking in the mirror. A look in the mirror is observed through the look in the mirror that itself is an object of observation, etc.[122]

Kesselring shows an analogy between, on the one hand, Gödel's findings in the field of the number theory and formal logic, and on the other, his own formalization of Hegel's stage-wise model of cognitive development.[123] To the objects of Gödel's theory (numbers and arithmetic operations) correspond, in Kesselring's model, structures of consciousness. In general terms, it is impossible for consciousness at a given level to understand itself fully and unambiguously. The principle governing consciousness specifies that the upper sphere at a specific developmental stage does not belong to the cognitive content, which is the lower sphere. This principle of exclusion is applied within each level of content. Similar to the situation described in Gödel's incompleteness theorem, the principle is part of the content that it, as principle, governs. One can only escape the problems this entails by moving outside the system to the level of a metasystem (in the model, by advancing to a higher stage). But there again, one finds antinomic statements (the principle being part of its object) within *that* system or stage; this forces one again to move up a level, to a meta-metasystem (the next higher stage). The consistency of a system (stage) can be secured only in a larger metasystem (at a higher stage). Hegel's system can be represented as a multilevel structure in which a given set of elements at a certain level can be reflected upon from the metalevel, thereby bringing out and expressing the properties that cannot be formulated at the original level.[124] The dilemma of inconsistency-versus-incompleteness is solved through enlarging the universe of discourse—by expanding the plane of analysis to metaanalysis. Unlike formal logic, Hegel's dialectic is structured to accommodate Gödel's predicament, since his solution—the widening of the universe—is already factored in it as the prime dynamism of the *developing* consciousness.

The System of *Jikaku*

With Hegel's model of consciousness fresh in mind, let us recapitulate Nishida's own perspective on the workings of consciousness with the help of the following passage from *An Inquiry*:

> That which appears within meaning or judgment is a part which has been abstracted from the original experience. . . . [W]hen this unity [of pure experience] is broken, i.e., when one enters into relationship with something else, meaning is born, judgment is created. Since, in the face of pure experience which appears to us directly, consciousness of the past immediately begins to operate, it unites with a part of present consciousness and conflicts with another part, so that thereby the state of pure experience comes to be broken down and destroyed.[125]

According to Nishida, in a judgment, the originally unitary experience breaks down into judging consciousness (in our terms, form) and the object of judgment (content). Content is an objectification of pure experience, in which the latter becomes "consciousness of the past." When consciousness views itself, it sees itself objectified, hence shifted into the past compared to the active, living consciousness that is viewing itself. Active consciousness continues its operation in the present. It functions as "present consciousness," which is the new form as which pure experience continues to steer the mental process. In one respect ("a part of present consciousness"), the two types of consciousness form a unity—they remain the same entity. In another ("another part"), they are differentiated. This complex structuring introduces disunity into the state of pure experience and launches consciousness on a dialectical path. Nishida's analysis of the vicissitudes of pure, self-conscious experience on that path is one way in which he believes himself to stand apart from traditional philosophy—and in which he shows remarkable similarities with Hegel.[126] His conception of the universal as the foundation of discursive knowledge[127] constitutes another point of differentiation from a conventional approach, and at the same time another Hegelian motif in Nishida's philosophy. How successful is Nishida in integrating these two themes into the framework of his logic of place, the main philosophical scheme of his middle period?

Both themes hinge on the nature of the knower (subject) and the known (object), and on the act or event through which knowledge is acquired. Nishida's view of that act builds upon the position of nineteenth-century German Idealism, with extensions inspired by neo-Kantianism, phenomenology, and Henri Bergson. In "Place,"[128] one of the essays that lay the foundation for his philosophy during this period, Nishida starts the exposition of his system by considering Kant's presentation of knowledge as a confluence of two factors: form and content. To elaborate on our earlier mention of Kant's epistemology, form inheres in

the mind of the subject. Content, inchoate and lacking determination, is supplied by the thing we are coming to know, an entity that affects our senses, producing sensations. Sensations arise as a function of intuition. But intuition accounts only for one aspect of an act of knowing. In order to know *an object*, we need to give form to the intuited sensory content. For that purpose, comprehension organizes and interprets sensations according to its own inherent concepts and categories. In this manner, it determines objects by stamping its logical form on the external world. Knowledge requires both components. In Kant's words, thoughts without content are empty; intuitions without concepts are blind.[129]

Nishida establishes his own position through a critique of Kant's. He looks for a real unity above the "simply formal constitution" of the Kantian intuition-comprehension (form-content) dichotomy. In this regard, he walks in the footsteps of Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. These later Idealists took exception to Kant's view of subject-object interaction as an irreconcilable opposition. They felt that knowledge of objects was not a result of consciousness reshaping its sensations of the external world. It was a matter of consciousness shaping itself. Nishida embraces their view. Consciousness shaping itself into mental acts and objects is a focal point of his own philosophy in the late 1920s.

The shaping occurs in the process of self-reflection. Knowledge is acquired when experience reflects or forms itself,[130] or when consciousness at a given level determines its own content.[131] Self-reflection, self-formation, and self-determination are three angles of the same phenomenon. Faithful to his original philosophical revelation, Nishida upholds the belief of the days of *An Inquiry*, the belief that "phenomena of consciousness are the only reality." Defining the entire act of knowing as internal to consciousness is only possible based on the assumption that the latter is a unity of the knower and the known: "What is the meaning of self-consciousness? Self-consciousness is the knower knowing the knower himself, and in self-consciousness the knower and the known are one."[132] All things that exist are things in the self, Nishida tells us, adding lyrically: "Thus we can say that we feel our own life in the moon shining in the sky and in the insects crying in the fields."[133] As always, "our own life" that encompasses and permeates all things is not the isolated consciousness of an individual self. It is synonymous with broadly conceived self-consciousness, *jikaku*, which encompasses both individual consciousness and its objects. Individual consciousness can know its objects precisely because it and the objects are two aspects, the determining or self-knowing, and the determined or self-known, of a universal, single entity that determines itself. But if the knower and the known are originally identical, why need an act of knowing occur? In order for it to take place, there must be some distance or difference between them. Nishida accommodates the difference by tacking it onto identity. This produces a hybrid that he calls contradictory identity and that he places "one level deeper" than mere opposition.[134] He finds a structure that exemplifies contradictory identity in the subsumptive relation involved in logical judgment. An example of subsumptive

judgment is "red is a color."[135] The grammatical subject, red, is a particular, while color, expressed in the predicate, represents a broader, universal category. Judgment subsumes the particular in the universal when color differentiates itself as red. Nishida takes the idea of judgment as self-differentiation over from Hegel. Since "at the base of [judgment] there must be the experience of a certain unifying factor," "judgment in reality is thus a differentiating function of the universal."[136] As in the relation between the whole and its parts, identity in one respect (red *is* a color) coexists with difference in another (color can also be of a non-red variety).

Grammatical subject represents the epistemological object (the known). Predicate stands for the epistemological subject (the knower),[137] in line with Nishida's characterization of the categories of consciousness as predicative. The foundation of experiential knowledge lies in the objectivity of the predicative aspect. Consciousness acquires knowledge by objectifying itself and becoming its own grammatical subject. The mapping of the elements of judgment to epistemological functions allows Nishida to interpret judgment broadly as an act involving consciousness and its object,[138] that is, as an act of self-consciousness. This is an extension of his view of judgment as a self-determination of the universal, since the universal is a form of self-consciousness,[139] a mindset, or a level at which we perceive the world. Within one universal we see the natural world; within another, we find ourselves in the intelligible world or the world of ideas.

From here, Nishida proceeds to hold up subsumptive judgment as a paradigm of all knowledge, and more: he elevates it to the status of an image of reality itself. Judgment receives the highest distinction possible in his system: Nishida declares it to be an aspect of the place of nothingness.[140] This is a departure from the position of *An Inquiry*, where he tends to portray judgment in a more negative light, as a corruption of the unity of pure experience. In both instances, judgment epitomizes the self-reflectivity of consciousness. The difference lies in the interpretation. In the first case, Nishida contrasts self-reflectivity with the non-objectifying manner in which *jikaku* sees itself in itself. In the second, he regards it as representative of that manner.

In the long run, the concept of logical predicate is awkward and unworkable. Logical judgment, of which it is part, has limitations as a model of consciousness, let alone of reality. This is probably why Nishida extends his metaphysical terminology beyond judgment and its components. A thing is not only a grammatical subject, but also a known, a particular, a being; more than a predicate, consciousness is a knowing self, a universal, nothingness. Nishida switches between semantics, epistemology, logic, and ontology, but the relation between the two principal elements within each remains the same: the grammatical subject is part of the predicate, the known—part of the knower; the particular belongs to the universal, and being—to nothingness. In each case, to be subsumed under a larger entity means to be its reflection. Going beyond the judgment-

centered model of reality, Nishida regards consciousness no longer simply as the predicate but rather as something larger and truer behind it: the predicative plane or the plane of predicates. This opens a broader view on judgment. The latter cannot take itself as its own object. It is first on the plane of predicates that we become conscious of a judgment and judge it in turn.[141] A judgment such as "red is a color" occurs in consciousness; it is consciousness that pronounces the subsumption of red in the category of color and that also tells us: "this is known *by me*." When defining the plane of predicates as such *self*-awareness and as "the predicative unity" of I, Nishida seems to be taking his cue again from Kant's "synthetic unity of apperception."[142] But he makes a distinction between the Kantian unity and his own. He believes that *his* unity, which he understands as pure subjectivity, lies deeper than the Kantian I, which he belittles as an objectified I. The distinction does not prevent Nishida from occasionally employing another, related Kantian term—"consciousness as such."[143] Consciousness as such does not carry individual characteristics. It underlies individual consciousness. It plays an important role in Nishida's metaphysical model, but in his quest for the ultimate, Nishida relativizes this notion as well. Granted, consciousness as such is a forerunner of true nothingness, but it falls short of the goal, for it, too, operates within the limitations of subject-object dichotomy: it objectifies phenomena of consciousness, including its subject. In his search for the fountainhead of knowledge, Nishida must advance beyond it.

Consciousness is not uniform. Sensing, thinking, feeling, willing, and the awareness of selfhood are different functions. But they are not all of the same rank. Nishida arranges them into a hierarchy, erecting a stratified structure of layers with the true self or *jikaku* at the top. As one moves up in the hierarchy, one's vision of reality broadens and becomes more penetrating. Each consecutive layer constitutes a dimension that *envelops* or *subsumes* the previous one.[144] These terms denote more than spatial covering or enclosing. For consciousness to envelop or subsume a function or object means to determine them actively within itself as its content. The conceptual basis of envelopment is already present in *An Inquiry*. To relate the judgment "a horse is running" to the original perception "a running horse," Nishida points out that "in the background of a judgment there is always the fact of pure experience."[145] "In the background of" is the ground that bears the judgment. In Nishida's later language, it envelops it. To judge is to comprehend; and to comprehend is to grasp and envelop.[146] Subsumptive judgment consists in the grasping of the logical subject within the predicate; in turn, the overall determination established by the judgment is comprehended within our understanding, our reason. Sensing, feeling and other functions of consciousness, as well, are comprehended within a broader function. They are executed in a dimension that envelops and subsumes them. To account for this dimensional envelopment, Nishida adds a new term to his philosophical vocabulary: place. In his words, "a place in the background of an act [of consciousness] is not truly nothing, i.e., it is not simply a place, but it is a place

with certain content, or a place determined [in a certain way]." "A true place is a place not merely of change, but [also one of] of birth and death [of its content]." And "that which is within [a place] shares the qualities of the place; [for example,] things that are in space must have a spatial character."[147] Nishida's "place" is not simply a fragment of space, a container housing arbitrary objects that chance to be there. It is a field with a specific character that it imparts to its content. The homogeneity of that character is assured since the content—be it a physical object or a mental act—is a product of the place's self-reflection or self-determination. Although endowing place with a capacity of determining itself may strike one as a personification, one notes that Nishida understands place as a form of consciousness. Certainly, it is consciousness of a special type: consciousness that constitutes the fabric of reality without belonging to any particular individual. Place is a form of *jikaku*, and its self-determination lies in the nature of *jikaku*.[148]

In order to account for all the functions of consciousness, the hierarchy of places becomes quite extensive. Things get quite complex in Nishida's logic of place, especially since his exposition is not always systematic, and new, often overlapping, sets of categories pop up every few pages in his texts. To keep focused on the overall scheme, we reduce the diversity of places to three principal ones.

1. *The place of being.* This is the place of everyday reality, coextensive with the natural world. Beings appear here as objects, i.e., entities endowed with independent existences, disjoint from ours. Since this place is explored and understood through the employment of logic, particularly through judgments and syllogisms, Nishida calls it alternatively "the universal of judgment." We note that he tends to use the word "place" in relation to structure, while the emphasis of "universal" is somewhat more logical and epistemological; nevertheless, the two terms are roughly equivalent.[149]

2. *The place of relative or oppositional nothingness.* What we see in the place of being tells only a part of the story. A being is necessarily a determined being, but it is not determined from within itself. Objects are there for us, obtaining their identities through reflection in our consciousness. Accessible only through acts of consciousness, they *are* only in a relative sense. Their immediate validity, their apparently self-subsistent, independent existences are negated by the revelation of that relativity. The place of oppositional nothingness makes evident the nothingness of objects in opposition to, or relative to, consciousness. This is why an alternative designation for it is "the universal of *self*-consciousness." Here, we become aware not only of objects, but equally of our own activity of reflecting them as we judge, infer, and engage in other mental operations. Nishida groups these operations into various "selves." Besides the knowing self, he distinguishes the feeling self, as well as the willing self. The

knowing self analyzes the manifest world. The feeling self is moved by internal emotions. The willing self, also propelled from within, takes an active stance as it sets goals, directs its own operation, and has the capacity to affect and change itself.

While we can reflect on the three selves, we are not yet at the level of the ultimate *jikaku*. In these mental functions, we see ourselves as *objectified* subjects—as a noema. Although the essential function of the universal of self-consciousness is self-knowledge, what it can see of itself is not its current form but merely its conceptual abstraction, or itself as a previous form. This goes against Nishida's precept that "it must never be possible to make the knower into an object; to the extent that the knower is objectified, it is no longer the knower. In that sense, the knower must be nothing to the known."[150] If so, not only are objects negated from the position of consciousness, but the opposite is also true. Consciousness that has become an object to itself negates its own noetic character. It negates itself as *jikaku*. Just as a class can only see its elements, not itself, consciousness is powerless to examine its own structure and principles—the principles by which objects arise and move within it. These principles can be evaluated only at a higher level of consciousness. With this in mind, beyond the universal of self-consciousness, Nishida posits a higher, more inclusive universal that he calls "intelligible." In the Platonic or Kantian sense, intelligibility denotes the world of eternal forms or ideas that, unlike the perceptual world, are visible only through the intellect, not the senses. Ideas are the universal ground of our individual consciousness with its beliefs, affects, and actions. In the intelligible universal, consciousness becomes aware of its own content as such intelligible ideas. It encounters here the intelligible counterparts of the three selves. In distinction to the simple selves, the intelligible ones transcend individual consciousness. They make up consciousness as such (the Kantian *Bewußtsein überhaupt*)—knowing, feeling, and willing as such—and direct the way in which we, individual consciousnesses, give our own mental objects their identity. The intelligible selves become manifest as a result of the individual's selfless absorption in the activities involving its guiding principles and values. As intelligible, the knowing self becomes aligned with the idea of truth. The intelligible feeling self is governed by the idea of beauty. The intelligible willing self is directed by the idea of goodness expressing itself in the dictates of conscience.

But the problem of our mind's inability to grasp itself is not yet resolved. In the intelligible universal, the unwelcome phenomenon of objectification appears in a new guise. The ideas that occupy it are not yet truly universal. They turn out to be no more than the forms in which the universal has objectified itself and is now appearing to itself as its own content. Continuing his quest, Nishida presses forward, onto the ultimate place.[151]

3. *The place of absolute nothingness.* In order to reach the ultimate place, consciousness turns at itself once more in self-reflection.[152] This is the last of such turnings. By decreeing that there is no further perspective beyond, Nishida bars the possibility that consciousness at this level becomes itself an object of scrutiny. This marks it as unobjectifiable, and as such it can only be described as lacking form, inexpressible, indeterminate—as true, absolute nothingness.

Absolute nothingness envelops the ideas and values that were the lifeblood of the intelligible universal through the mode of operation of every Nishidian place: negation. Ideas and values are negated not because of their function, but rather because they have been seen through as concepts, hence objectifications. The place of absolute nothingness goes even further in its negativity, beyond ideas and values. Since it envelops and negates consciousness, which is already a negation of the objects it contains, its operation amounts to negating everything, including negation itself. Through undoing itself in this manner, negativity makes room for a perspective free of positive or negative coloration. Absolute nothingness is such free consciousness. Nishida calls it religious consciousness. At times, he also speaks of it as a place of "quiet existence," "most immediate existence," or even "pure quality," which reminds one of the pure experience of *An Inquiry*. Nothingness described in such terms is understood as a consciousness that has emptied itself of the propensity to objectify, and therefore distort, the objects it reflects. The way is now clear for objects to appear truly as they are. "Since from the standpoint of true nothingness even the so-called nothingness as such disappears, all being must be just the way it is."[153] An object reflected in consciousness emptied of all determinations may well be said to be reflected nowhere or, better still, only in itself. Self-reflection is tantamount to self-constitution or self-independent existence. But it is a deeper, more meaningful self-constitution than the one encountered in the place of being and then rejected. It is real and no longer only apparent. Nothingness elevated to absoluteness absolutizes the self-identity and particularity of its objects, as well. In Nishida's words, "when the predicate plane becomes infinitely large [and] the universal predicate reaches this boundary, this means that the particular grammatical subject also reaches it."[154] In a letter to a friend, he explains: "When the grammatical predicate transcends itself to the infinite maximum limit and loses itself, the grammatical subject reaches the apex of particularity and becomes that which sees itself."[155] As consciousness (grammatical predicate) deepens in the direction of subjectivity through "losing itself," i.e., emptying itself of objectification, so do its objects (grammatical subjects). What is left at the end is the pure consciousness that is absolute nothingness, and the self-independent objects it reflects. Their "seeing themselves" means that they are no longer abstractions produced by our intellect. Seeing oneself is an attribute of self-consciousness. Nishida claims that "since there is no further place . . . that reflects this [place], each [being within it] must reflect itself or be self-conscious."[156] Both the known

and the knower vanish as objectifications in order to reemerge as consciousness *par excellence.*

In the direction of increasing subjectivity, as "we advance from the place of the determined being to the place of true nothingness at its root, we see the place of being itself as the place of nothingness, and being itself directly as nothing. Thus in the place of what up until now was being, we see the content of nothingness."[157] Consequently, "to say that all being is just the way it is means that while it is, it is nothing."[158] Since for Nishida nothingness is another name for the subjective aspect of consciousness, to be something and nothing at the same time means to be an object in parallel with having the nature of consciousness.

After having been negated, being does not vanish. It persists through and in parallel to its nothingness. In the final place, a place of the infinite number of dimensions, it reemerges as true being. This makes the negation of being an example of Hegelian dialectical negation. Nishida refers to Hegel explicitly in his discussion of the manner in which being and nothing become one.[159] In Hegel's philosophy, infinity is born of the finitude that has destroyed itself as such. It is finitude turned into nothing in order to be reborn as what it is in its depth—infinite spirit. In Nishida's work, we encounter a similar idea: mediated through nothing, being as such (the finite object) becomes its own shadow, only to reappear at a higher level of consciousness in infinite, unobjectified form. For Hegel, natural things do not possess reality since their truth lies beyond them. Nishida seconds his position by making nothingness the gray eminence of finite being, always present in its background to underscore its finitude. It is not relative nothingness since the latter, too, in the end becomes only a shadow. It is the absolute nothingness of "place as such," which is the true self or *jikaku* in the broad sense. Absolute nothingness gives reality to all beings. Our actions, as well, have reality not in themselves, but rather "in an infinitely deep place," where they ultimately belong.[160] "All acts [of consciousness] appear first when their place is seen as located directly in the place of true nothingness."[161] In the manner of beings and acts, place itself is located in the irrational *hypokeimenon* (substratum)—it is founded ultimately in *jikaku.*

According to Nishida, place has two components: form and content. Form is the place proper. It is subjective consciousness at a particular stage. Unobjectified, it is invisible from within the place. The content of a given place is the objectified form of a less advanced place, one that the given place envelops. It is visible and determinate. A place, then, is a plane stretching between two extremes: subjectivity and objectification. The place of being has its form in individual, judging consciousness, while its content is composed of the objects forming the natural world. The form of the place of relative nothingness is intelligible consciousness, the content—individual consciousness as an objectified subject facing objects. In the place of absolute nothingness, the form is absolute nothingness, the content—intelligible consciousness objectified as ideas. In all

three places, content (the known) is derivative of form (the knower) and is positioned lower in the hierarchy of consciousness.[162]

The following diagram illustrates the structure of the three places:

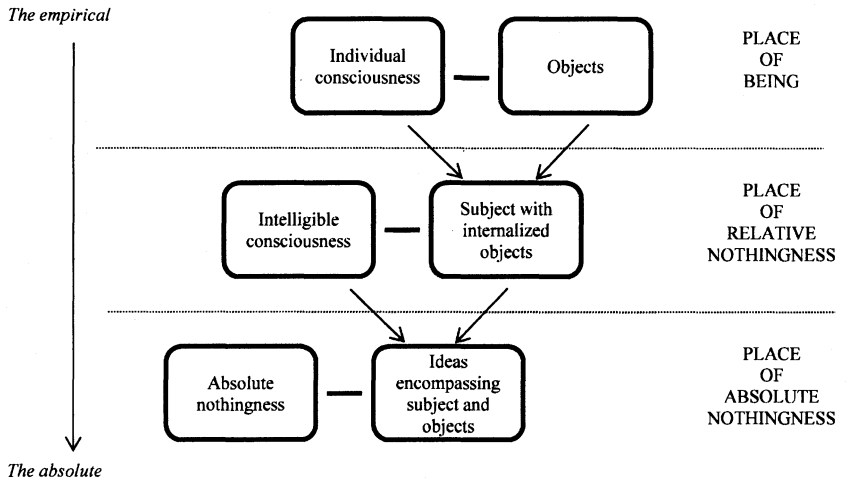

Figure 1.2 The structure of the logic of place.

The diagram shows that the form of a place closer to empirical reality becomes incorporated in the content of one closer to the absolute. This restructuring is produced in a process whereby "that which can truly envelop various objects within it must reflect its own form within itself, just as various forms arise in space." By reflecting its own form within itself, place becomes objectified as content.[163] Each successive place presents a perspective (form) that is correct in its own right but is relativized and rendered obsolete from a higher perspective. To fulfill its role in the total scheme, it serves as a stepping stone to a more inclusive place, offering itself as its content. Nishida describes that offering also as the sinking of the plane of the subject into the plane of predicates.[164] It enhances the quality of consciousness: it represents an accrual of knowledge, and at the same time, a turning point at which consciousness transcends the current place. In the language of formal logic, at that point consciousness moves from a subordinate concept to the superordinate, more general one.[165] In the language of universals, the terminology is different but the central conception remains unchanged. In judgment, a universal makes itself into a particular. This occurs through self-specification: "The copula *aru* [in judgment] means that the particular is subsumed in the universal. From the standpoint of the universal, the subsumption means that the universal divides and develops itself. Judgment can be thought of as a process in which the universal specifies itself."[166] Given that

the particular is part of the universal, self-specification of the latter means that the universal objectifies itself as its own part. Referring to the universal as "active self," Nishida states:

> In the direction of the noetic determination of [the most fundamental universal] is seen active self, and in the direction of its noematic determination expression is seen. But since active self has the meaning of a noetic determination of a self that sees while making itself nothing, it cannot in any way noematically determine its own content. For this reason, active universal in the broad sense is divided into two parts: that which conforms to the noematic plane and that conforming to the noetic plane.[167]

The form ("active universal in the broad sense") relates to itself in the subject-part of the content ("that conforming to the noetic plane"). The relation is one of self-reference.

The process of repeated self-specification of the universal involves the modification of consecutive forms of consciousness as they turn into content and are replaced by new forms. The content is also affected. Not only does each modification add new content; it also alters the current one. A later, broader perspective shows the content of an earlier, narrower one from a new angle, and in that sense it negates what was previously seen. For example, "when one enters from the place of simple being into the place of negating nothingness . . . existentiality is lost, but the meaning of the place in which beings are found becomes transformed."[168] After the transformation of the form of the place of being into the content of the place of relative nothingness, the old content of the place of being (objects) loses its appearance of self-independence ("existentiality") and reappears to us explicitly as content of consciousness.

Through such transformations and redefinitions, the self gains in depth. Nishida often uses the terms "a deepening of the background of consciousness" and "a thorough penetration of the standpoint of consciousness," naming the processes and events through which one advances toward the inner core of the self. With the shift of focus from the objective aspect of knowledge to the subjective one, the world, initially understood as external, becomes progressively blended into the self. One by one, the sensory-spatial, mental, and ideal universes (or universals) are recognized to possess the nature of consciousness. Each is conscious and, conversely, consciousness has its seat in all of them. Taking the sensory sphere as an example, "the intelligible character does not lie outside the sensory and unify it [from the standpoint external to the sensory]; rather, the intelligible must lie within the sensory and sparkle in its innermost."[169] The general direction of the movement is along the axis of subjectivity toward the center of the self and into its ground, where subjectivity reaches its ultimate form as absolute nothingness: "The universal transcends into the ground of the universal, the immanent into the ground of the immanent, and place into

the ground of place; consciousness sinks into its own ground. This is the nothingness of nothingness, negation of negation."[170]

If there is a Hegelian ring to the "sinking into the ground"—the purposely ambiguous term "*zugrunde gehen*" is often encountered in Hegel's work—the resemblance of Nishida's ideas to Hegel's is even more pronounced in Nishida's characterization of development as a movement of concretization, as a progression from the abstract to the concrete. Physical objects are the most abstract since they lack an intimate connection with us. Absolute spirit and absolute nothingness are the most concrete in the sense of being the richest and most profound, the most identifiable with our own nature. No less Hegelian than Nishida's emphasis on concreteness is his acceptance of the role of contradiction as a force driving consciousness to self-renewal. According to Nishida, contradiction is formed between the perspectives of adjacent places. For example, the apparent ultimacy of objects in the place of being is contradicted by their dependence on consciousness revealed in the place of relative nothingness.[171] The contradiction becomes visible in the latter place but cannot be solved there since any attempt to address it would mire consciousness in the hopeless task of trying to understand the principles of its own operation. However, it produces "a demand for self-transcendence," subsequently fulfilled by the move into a new, higher place: the place of absolute nothingness where—in Nishida's belief—the contradiction is resolved successfully.[172] In this connection, Nishida is impressed with Cantor's concept of transfinite number, on which he comments as follows:

> Let the elements of a set, that is, the "extension" of a concept, be the content of the act, or the intentional object; and let the type of the set, that is, the "intension" of a concept, be the act itself, or the subjective quality. Then when the former reaches the point of falling into contradiction, the latter has already appeared as content of an act of an even higher order—that is, as the intentional object of an even higher order.[173]

This conforms to Hegel's-Kesselring's dialectical model, in which consciousness at a given level (Nishida's "act itself, or the subjective quality") attempts in vain to come to terms with the status of its content ("the content of the act"), and by extension, with its own. It realizes that content is subjective as well as objective, and that this contradictory condition mirrors the condition of consciousness as a whole. That realization threatens to destabilize the control consciousness holds over its own operation. But it arises one level above the contradiction, at a point where consciousness "has already appeared as content of an act of an even higher order." The realization of the contradiction is at the same time its resolution. It is a sign that consciousness has broadened its perspective on itself. Nishida concurs with Hegel's view that development takes place because the current categories can never describe their universe in a complete and non-contradictory way. At every level, consciousness is compelled to move to the next in order to improve its ability to understand its own experience.

Progress driven by contradiction, transformation of form into content through self-reflection, and reinterpretation of content according to the place from which it is viewed—these principles lie at the basis of the logic of place. The readers with some exposure to Hegel's philosophy will find them intimately familiar. The dynamic of Nishida's system of places conforms in all the major facets to the internal movement of Hegel's *Science of Logic*. Structural parallels are unmistakable as well. Both Hegel's logic of being and Nishida's conception of the place of being describe relations between objects that we know in the immediate manner, i.e., without being aware of our knowledge. Hegel's logic of essence analyzes the ways consciousness produces abstractions or shadows of objects within itself. Analogously, Nishida's place of relative nothingness is populated by its own shadows, objectifications of consciousness incapable of grasping itself in unadulterated subjectivity. Hegel's logic of concept (*Begriffslogik*), as well as Nishida's place of absolute nothingness, are scenes of exactly such grasping, scenes where the illusion of the separateness of form and content is dissolved. Given Nishida's knowledge of Hegel's work, these similarities are unlikely to be coincidental. Indeed, when expounding his logic of place, Nishida often speaks explicitly on Hegel's authority.

The ideas that Nishida takes over from Hegel include the centerpiece of dialectic, spirit's self-realization through its evolutionary return to itself. The logic of place deals with the subject-object pair at various levels of cognition. At each level, the pair is a projection of undifferentiated *jikaku*. Projections are arranged in a series beginning with the furthest from pure *jikaku* and ending with the one equivalent to it. This arrangement in the order of maturity of its manifestations implies an evolution of *jikaku* in time. Nishida's own pronouncements leave no doubt about his intention to base his philosophical scheme on the process of development. In *An Inquiry*, he states that "all consciousness is systematic development."[174] Ever since the publication of the book, he speaks of development of consciousness as the self-realization of the spirit, as its return to itself.[175] Although in the logic of place spirit is mentioned sparingly under its own name, it is omnipresent in the guise of universal and of place. Nishida often speaks of the process taking place in his system in terms of "transcending," "moving outside," and "proceeding forward"—terms that refer unambiguously to movement and evolution.[176] The evolution is complex. Since Nishida is sympathetic to the Buddhist view that the goal strived for is realized from the beginning, his scheme does not constitute a simple teleology. Its movement comes to an end (in absolute nothingness as the goal) at the point from which it originated (absolute nothingness as the ground of the movement). Absolute nothingness posits itself as the goal and makes the pursuit of itself meaningful to human beings trapped in the place of being. "To step outside the universal concept . . . means to *move* from a[n already] determined place to the determining place, to *advance* from the place of oppositional nothingness, i.e., from the mirror that merely reflects, to the place of true nothingness, i.e., to the mirror that reflects itself. The mirror

of that kind is not brought in from the outside; it has been at its foundation *from the beginning*."[177] The movement of the logic of place forward, to the foundational beginning, parallels spirit's return to itself in Hegel's dialectic.[178] Nishida uses the visual imagery of a self-reflecting mirror and the self that sees itself in itself[179] while Hegel refers back to Aristotle's *noesis noeseos* as the idea that *thinks* itself,[180] but in both cases the substance of the notion remains the same. In each, the goal is to realize the *basic* structure of consciousness by having it attain pure self-reflectivity.

Yet, despite the presence and a similar construction of the idea of development in Nishida's logic of place and Hegel's dialectic, each philosopher understands it in a different way. For Hegel, the destination is more important than the origin, for it is the point at which spirit arrives enriched by the experience it has gained in the manifest world. Still, although the destination point is the culmination of development, it is not the pivot of his system. To define the absolute as the endpoint would make it a *result* of development. It would turn it to a given, fixed determination that objectifies and relativizes it. Hegel's absolute is not an object. It is not a determination posited by the human mind; it posits *itself*, for it is an epitome of all determinations. It cannot be defined; it can be shown only indirectly, through analysis of the movement of its determinations. It is neither the end product of a process nor its ground. It is the process itself. *Science of Logic* presents this process as the development of thinking that traces the history of the subject-object relation, starting with the thought of being. The absolute can only be inferred from that history. This is why spirit's passage through the categories of material reality is not only a means to reach the destination; it is part and parcel of its absoluteness. Hegel's understanding of the absolute as a process should be viewed in the context of his concern to account for the manifest world in his philosophy—to present it as a movement of the absolute. Only a consistent and exhaustive reconstruction of that movement can offset and liquefy static representations of reality and show them to be vehicles of the absolute. Assuming that Hegel succeeded in integrating (through sublation) *all* finite categories, in ascending order of spirituality, into his system of development, the final point of development is indeed, necessarily and consequently, final.

Nishida does not attach the same importance to development as Hegel does. He is less concerned about the process of realizing absolute nothingness than about the structure of its manifestation as reality. His system of places is essentially static. It accommodates consciousness as a formation extending between two poles: noesis and noema, or *jikaku* and discursive reasoning. Within that formation, movement is possible in either direction. For example: "A plane of expression has both a noematic and a noetic direction; in its noematic direction, objective cognition is constituted self-consciously, while experience is constituted in its noetic direction."[181] Nishida does not mandate proceeding in a particular direction. Although the process of evolution from place to place is acknowledged, it lacks inner necessity. Nishida turns expressly away from the view of

consciousness as a process: "As I said again and again, in contrast to traditional philosophies which consider the structure of consciousness in terms of acts or processes, I think of it in terms of places or, so to speak, in terms of planes."[182] By defining consciousness in terms of places or planes, Nishida is treating it as a spatial structure. While this approach does give his dialectic a distinctive character, it takes away its effectiveness, for it disregards the intimate connection between structure and process. Without the presence of a well-conceived process to support it, structure alone cannot account for what happens within it. In particular, Nishida's relegation of process to secondary status renders problematic his postulate of the ultimate character of absolute nothingness. His logic demands that any place that reflects itself and the resulting reflection be located somewhere, i.e., in a larger place. When the larger place itself engages in self-reflection, it requires another place to accommodate it and its self-reflection. This creates an interminable need for new places. "When the self tries to reflect itself onto the plane of representational consciousness, there must arise an infinite process, but at its bottom one must think the self-aware self. . . . Thus arises infinite processual determination."[183] The self that infinitely reflects itself in representational consciousness points in the direction of true infinity (absolute nothingness) embodied in the self-aware self.[184] And yet, the path it actually charts is one of bad infinity. The logic of place yields a potentially endless series of motionless, "representational" self-reflections. We have examined three selves and found them equally vulnerable to turning into objects or representations. Objects are representations from the start. Consciousness becomes one when labeled "subject" and addressed, as it were, from without. Ideas are conceptualizations of the intellectual universal, and so, again, representations. Moving from one universal to another does not lead us to the self-aware self that Nishida postulates "at the bottom" simply because the infinite processual determination, as infinite, does not have a bottom. In Nishida's scheme, there is no passage from the structure of places to the ground of absolute nothingness on which it stands.

How can Nishida resolve the discrepancy between an endlessly recursive structure of the logic of place and the postulate of absolute nothingness as the unsurpassable, ultimate place? Without an effective process of development leading consequently to such ultimate endpoint, Nishida's search for pure subjectivity can stop only by a *fiat*:

> To the question of whether there might be nothingness beyond real nothingness, *I have no answer.* . . . I consider the predicate aspect as the field of consciousness; the final predicate field that cannot be determined conceptually is the field of intuitive consciousness, and that which exists therein is that which sees itself, i.e., the subject-object unity. As to the question of whether there is not an intuition of intuition, *I fail to understand the meaning of the question.*[185]

Unable to derive "real nothingness" naturally from a series of self-determinations of universals or places, Nishida simply declares one in the series as final, as the zero point that precludes the possibility of having another zero beyond it.[186] This end state is said to possess a special quality of selflessness, making it immune to objectification that poisoned all the universals before it. Consciousness without a self is intangible, and seeing without the seer cannot itself be seen, because "at the root of consciousness lies only eternal nothingness."[187] These characterizations of the highest level of consciousness are acceptable. But looking back at the path it has traveled, how does consciousness know that it has really reached this state? And how did it reach it? The following statement is as close as Nishida comes to an answer:

> The standpoint of consciousness may well be thought to lie in a higher dimension than any standpoint that has already been determined. . . . But if that higher dimension was determined in any way, we would recognize further nothingness which contains it, and it would lose the meaning of [unobjectified] consciousness. The standpoint of true consciousness must be the standpoint of the last nothingness.[188]

It must indeed. But whether in fact it is remains a question threatening to derail Nishida's logic of place. His answer is insufficient; his injunction against going any further is arbitrary. Not surprisingly, despite his insistence on the utterly indeterminate and unobjectifiable character of absolute nothingness, at times he falls back into speaking of it in quite specific terms, such as "quiet existence" or "the flow of internal life." If it can become an *object* of such determinations, how different is it then from any other place? Nishida has the right to use these designations metaphorically and for the sake of expedience, since the alternative would be not to speak of absolute nothingness at all. They may be said to refer to manifestations of absolute nothingness, not to the thing itself. They may also be regarded as a way to draw attention to its (paradoxically) all-affirming nature. Still, their use by Nishida furnishes ample ground for skepticism. Indeed, he compromises the absoluteness of absolute nothingness not only by concretizing it as one thing or another; he also relativizes it according to the depth of nothingness it contains: "Already in so-called intuition we stand in the place of true nothingness, but the place from which issue feeling and will must be a still deeper and broader place of nothingness."[189] Under the coercion of "infinite processual determination," Nishida subdivides absolute nothingness indefinitely, generating a steady flow of new entities that keeps washing away one candidate for the final place after another. The emergence of a still deeper and broader place of nothingness invalidates the ultimacy of a merely deep and broad one. With each new arrival, there is no guarantee no superior depth and breadth are yet to come. For example, in the passage just quoted, Nishida identified will as the place of true nothingness. A few pages later we read: "However, will does not link directly an act with an act. In this place, will, too, is a seen

thing; it is no more than a reflected shadow. Will, too, can neither separate itself from the universal concept nor escape an already determined place. Intuition transcends also the place of will and reaches deep into the root of nothingness."[190] We shall disregard Nishida's indecisiveness in the way he ranks intuition and will with respect to *jikaku*. What interests us is that the place of will, which he classified as ultimate, has itself been transcended. The root of nothingness is dividing too fast for Nishida to follow. He struggles trying to interpret the phenomenon:

> Of course, in the self-consciousness of absolute nothingness, there is neither noesis nor noema, and yet when it sees itself, we have to start from the confrontation of the noema and the noesis. The last universal is determined as its noematic plane, and the world of our knowledge is established through the determination of such universal. In contrast, internal life can be seen as its noetic determination. The content of such internal life can no longer be seen cognitively, but from the standpoint of internal life, also cognitive determinations are nothing but the flow of internal life with noetic determination reduced to a minimum.[191]

In other words, in absolute nothingness the object of the subject is the subject itself; the two are the same. Yet, since absolute nothingness is self-*consciousness* (and there cannot be consciousness without an object), subject and object do get differentiated and enter into the relation of opposition. Nishida tries to reconcile the unitary character of ultimate reality with the empirically observable split between subject and object. But the reconciliation is really no more than juxtaposition: there is no separate subject (noesis) and object (noema), *and yet* there they are, opposing each other. The casting of the argument in the form of "and yet" presages Nishida's later logic of absolute contradictory self-identity. For the time being, he favors a quantitative interpretation: in the last sentence of the text just quoted, he states, in effect, that noema is really noesis, just very little of it. The two levels of reality are differentiated by the dosage of absolute nothingness they contain. Our consciousness may go in either direction, that of self-objectification (noema) or deeper into noesis, through combining or merging with one or the other: "When 'in the self' [= our consciousness] merges with the 'object-self,' we have representational consciousness, and when it merges with the 'subject-self,' we have self-consciousness."[192] This very physical imagery reminds one of early Buddhism, in which things were conceived in terms of *dharmas* (properties or essences), aggregated and merged in various proportions.

Nishida finally capitulates, relegating the conundrum to the sphere of the irrational. Absolute nothingness simply defies reason. After the futile struggle, Nishida returns to his mystical-agnostic position: "The self that sees while making itself nothing cannot be seen—therein lies the limit of knowledge."[193] The failure to show why the last stage of consciousness is really the last, i.e., differ-

ent from all previous stages, is at the same time a failure to demonstrate the ultimacy and uniqueness of *jikaku*. Both failings can be attributed to Nishida's departure from Hegel on the question of the process of consciousness. While Hegel exploits that process as a means to express the ultimate nature of reality, Nishida defines the ultimate not as a process, but rather as its ground. Ground is a static notion, and so is *jikaku* in Nishida's exposition.

Without a decisive change of perspective, the weaknesses of Nishida's logic of place are not easily corrigible. Understandably, within the span of a few years, he abandons its abstract language and, in his last period, develops a set of ideas more openly centered on human beings and their presence in the world. He looks for the source of contradiction no longer in the tension among universals but rather in human existence. He concretizes negativity by relating it not uniquely to nothingness, but also to our own existential anxiety. Absolute nothingness ceases to be the only light illuminating the path to the wellspring of reality. Nishida broadens the horizon of his philosophy, opening it to life and love.

The Objective Dimension

Jikaku in History and Society

The following paragraph from a lecture Nishida delivered in 1932 can serve as an introduction to his philosophy in its third, last period:

> Reality is historical. Our self derives from that. Both I and Thou are historical determinations. Such world is the world of the actual, and to think the actual one must look from this perspective. The world of the actual means seeing directly the content of the self. To see directly means that the actual determines the actual. The actual means that everyone sees directly everyone's content. The existential relation between the self and the other is love. . . . The basis of the reality called I is personal, and that means that the personal lies in the tying together of what is absolutely separate, and that the personal lies in history.[194]

To restate Nishida's argument, history is the common denominator of such disparate entities as individual subjectivity, social relations, and reality at large. The world of historical determinations is actual, i.e., it is the true world or the world that is truly "thus." Its thusness is predicated upon our self-insight as well as interpersonal communicability.

The argument can be distilled into three major themes. The first is quite familiar. Individual, concrete things can be known in their truth and actuality. We can let their content, their self, express itself freely. But while we must do this by casting aside the apparatus of our logical thinking, the process is anchored in

self-consciousness. We know reality ("the world of the actual") through delving into our own self ("the reality called I"). The linking of the world in which "the actual determines the actual" to the self is an extension of the young Nishida's conviction that things as they really are can be known only in direct or pure experience.

The self-insight that allows us to see the world of the actual presupposes in turn a look into the other (Thou). It is a look over the boundary of individual subjectivity, extending into the open sphere of social relations. This objective extension of the self is the second theme of the passage quoted above, a theme through which Nishida attempts to take his thought in a new direction. Responding to the criticism directed at him by Marxists and his own students (in some cases the same people), he tries to diffuse the mystical tenor of his philosophy by opening it up to elements that would bring it closer to objective reality. He refocuses from the relation between the knowing subject and its internal object to interaction between human subjects, and shifts from the search after the godhead to the examination of "the environment." Taking what may appear to be a pronouncedly anthropocentric position, Nishida now advocates placing in the center of our thinking that which is specifically human. Its two manifestations are history, on a global scale, and personality, on an individual one. History is the scene upon which the human personality appears and acts.[195]

A self can be formed only in human interaction. The factor that determines it, making it personal and historical (i.e., human), is its immersion in the society of other selves. In Nishida's words, "I am I because I recognize you, and you are you because you recognize me."[196] The product of mutual recognition is no longer the absolute individual that monopolized Nishida's attention in his earlier work. It is a social individual. Nishida admits that this realization is not originally his own. He points to Marx's social perspective on the individual and to Kant's view that I becomes I, that is, I becomes aware of its own personality, through recognizing the personality of the other. "I am absolutely free," Nishida restates, "but my freedom is realized only through the realization of an equivalent, absolute freedom of Thou."[197] Kant and Marx notwithstanding, the major impetus for Nishida's social ideas comes from Hegel. The author of *Phenomenology of Spirit* and *Philosophy of Right* emphasizes a close interdependence between individuals and social or universal substance (*sittliche Substanz*). Social substance constitutes a moral reality (*sittliche Wirklichkeit*). Since it is an objectification of spirit in human society, Hegel calls it objective spirit. Following Hegel, Nishida argues that our actions are morally constrained by communal, objective spirit:

> We can be thought to share a common world of spirit, a world of a "universal self." . . . The world of objective spirit as the determination of the environment, which is grounded in the determination of a field which determines individuals, can thus be conceived. . . . Therefore, the objective social-historical world . . .

> has the meaning of determining our personal action, i.e., a moral function, and can be regarded as "objective spirit." Family and nation in this sense become what Hegel called morality.[198]

An individual self is a focal point of world's self-determination; it is created by the socio-historical environment, and it belongs to it. In fact, the determination is bidirectional. Following closely in Hegel's footsteps, Nishida points out that while individuals are shaped by communal spirit, they are also its source. The outward thrust of being human is factored into Nishida's alternative definition of the self as active self, active *jikaku*, or active intuition.[199] This is because in his late period Nishida understands activity no longer simply in the manner of Fichte's *Tathandlung*, i.e., as purely subjective and noetic. Now he uses the term also to establish the self in relation to objective spirit and "the world." The relation runs deep, down to the physical level. Through our bodies, we are the organs, the hands, and the means of expression of the world.[200] At the same time, the self is an active self that transforms the environment through its unique presence within it. Nishida uses the Greek word "*poiesis*" to describe the way the individual asserts, determines, and expresses itself outwardly. While it, the created, is born of a self-reflection of the creating world, the opposite is also true. To quote Nishida's often-used expression, the world moves from the created to the creating. The relationship between the two can be described as a "contradictory identity" or dialectical unity. It is the third theme in the quotation opening this chapter, intimated in what Nishida describes as the "tying together of what is absolutely separate."

The Dialectical Formula

In order to put Nishida's "dialectical unity" in context, we pause to comment on the history of dialectic in Western philosophy. Derived from the Greek *dialegesthai* ("to converse"), dialectic is originally understood as a set of rules guiding the discussion between two opponents. It is used by the Sophists as a verbal technique employed for demagogic purposes. Socrates defines it as a tool for exposing contradictions in the opponent's assumptions and arguments. Gradually, dialectic comes to be understood as a method of reasoning from mutually opposed assumptions. For Plato, its goal is to penetrate through sensory appearances to the essence of things—to their ideas. He employs dialectic as a method of moving from the particular to the general, whereby every idea along the way is superseded by one of higher generality. At the end of this process, one reaches the supreme idea, the idea of goodness. Aristotle defines dialectic as the ability to make judgments about probabilities, i.e., about questions that admit no certainty but only more or less plausible opinions. Medieval scholasticism retains the Platonic and Aristotelian definitions, but uses them often for the sake of hairsplitting argumentation that eventually brings the dialectical method into

general disrepute. But its career is not over. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, dialectic comes to enjoy a grand revival in the hands of the German Idealists.

The first of those is Kant who exposes the human proclivity to ascribe certain principles of reason to material reality and to misinterpret them as laws of nature or real objects. Against this projective tendency, Kant argues that the objective existence of ideas such as I, God, and world is an illusion. He calls it a transcendental illusion (*der transzendentale Schein*); the process through which it occurs is transcendental dialectic.[201] Kant does not limit the application of the term "dialectic" to fallacious reasoning. To complicate things, he uses it also to designate his own procedure for uncovering the transcendental illusion. The Kantian formula contains the rudiments of the method taken over by his successors. Fichte refines it into what he calls synthetic procedure (*synthethisches Verfahren*).[202] Its central goal is to elucidate the subject's experience of objects, to identify the ground that makes empirical knowledge possible. As we saw, Fichte understands this ground as the absolute I, undivided and complete within itself. Reflection breaks it up into the constituent "moments," I and not-I. The task of the synthetic procedure is to reconstruct the original totality from these two moments. From thesis (I) and antithesis (not-I) comes forth the synthesis that furnishes the basis for all further syntheses. Fichte is the first to interpret the three-step movement as the mainspring of reality. Schelling, who follows in his footsteps, refers to this movement explicitly as "dialectic." He accepts Fichte's idea that the absolute I creates the subject (the empirical I) and the object out of itself. The two mutually oppose and restrict each other in the material sphere, but unite through a synthesis in the absolute. Schelling's dialectical subject-object thinking extends into philosophy of nature. Reality has the character of spirit that posits its other, the natural world, in opposition to itself, ultimately in order to recognize itself in it. Their reunification proceeds gradually, through a chain of three-step cycles of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, where the synthesis of the last cycle becomes the thesis of the next, to be negated by a new antithesis. In his late period, Schelling grows skeptical of this process and seeks a new horizon by articulating the limits of dialectic. Although he continues to find the three-step movement adequate for analyzing the absolute in its derivative, broken-down condition, he now denies its potential for intuiting the absolute in its primal aspect of unity. Dialectical thought can only point in that direction; it should not be regarded as more than a propaedeutic.

Hegel takes umbrage at such separation of the absolute from thought and nature. Through public criticism, he turns a onetime friend into an enemy that Schelling will remain for the rest of his life. Hegel reassigns the role played in Schelling's philosophy by intuition to philosophical thinking. Contradictions inherent in reality are at the same time contradictions in thinking itself. They are a driving force of the development of both reality and consciousness. Hegel

conceives of development as a dialectical process, which is a process guided by the following assumptions:

1. *Categories of reality are relative to consciousness.* Categories and determinations of reality (such as objects) are formed dynamically through a process within consciousness. Their structure reflects their genesis in mind. This filiation allows the subject (mind) to know its other, object, for it implies that at a deeper level the two form a unity.

2. *An isolated determination is necessarily false. Truth is founded upon the totality of determinations.* Determination is inseparable from negation.[203] Anything is itself by not being what it is not. In this sense, its identity depends on the distinction from—and by the same token, on the mediation through—its opposite. This is why a particular position that excludes its opposite is one-sided, and hence false. A comprehensive view is founded upon the realization that opposites belong to a totality that furnishes their context and ties them together.

3. *Reality is a process and development. Nothing is fixed or given within it.* Since self-identity involves opposition, it is never simply given. It is continuously achieved through a process involving a sequence of three phases: (1) Simple unity or simple relation to itself, which is an abstract identity, the state in which an object is undeveloped or understood only superficially or one-sidedly; (2) Division or difference, through which the object comes into opposition against its other and thereby gains in determinateness and clarity; and (3) Reunification of the object with its other, equivalent to the return from the state of difference, whereby the object is comprehended in the entirety of its aspects and implications.[204]

4. *Negation involves affirmation.* In a dialectical negation, the negated does not disappear. It becomes transformed into a higher form of itself according to its master plan of evolution. That which is dialectically negated is sublated: not only negated in the ordinary sense of the word, but at the same time preserved and lifted. Through sublation, it is reconstituted at a higher level of consciousness.

Dialectic is an interpretive framework or methodology. It functions as a polarizing lens. It provides a means to transcribe a particular position, entity or event into a set of conflicting motives or forces, and to account for their resolution. But its role is not limited to interpretation. In Hegel's distinctive understanding (especially in relation to Kant), dialectic is not only a theory but also a real, physical or historical, process. Its movement leaves a trace in reality; it charts the "course of the thing itself." Concepts are not merely produced and manipulated in thought. They animate things. In Hegel's view, reality and our

thinking of it conform to the same pattern. Referring to dialectic as pure science, he observes: "Pure science . . . contains thought insofar as thought is also a thing in itself, or a thing in itself insofar as it is also pure thought."[205]

We return to Nishida and his dialectical unity. The concept of dialectic is not new in his philosophy, although its meaning has evolved over time. *An Inquiry* is centered upon the process in which *jikaku* develops, through negation and contradiction, toward greater self-realization. Although Nishida does not define it explicitly as such, this process satisfies the criteria of dialectical progression. In the logic of place, Nishida extends his dialectical conception through the scheme of three places or universals. Compared to his early period, he also develops the relationship between the universal and the individual in considerable detail. But on all levels of reality, the universal towers over the individual. This confirms Nishida's critics in their view that, in his philosophy, the individual is derived from the universal through emanation. Nishida listens and reacts by emphasizing, in his last period, the diversity of independent, individual "many" as a way to counterbalance the monolithic, universal "one." With an added accent on the individual, he redefines the dialectical relation: instead of linking what in effect were two aspects within the universal (universal as such and universal in its individual emanations), the relation is now said to span the universal and the individual conceived as independent peers. Nishida believes that as much as the universal cannot be reduced to the individual, the opposite is equally true: there is an aspect of the individual so unique that it cannot be regarded simply as a self-determination of the universal. The individual moves and determines itself by its own power, effectively taking the role of the universal upon itself: "[W]hen the universal determines itself, it must have the contrary meaning of a self-determining individual." Stated even more emphatically, "the self-identity of the universal is the same as that of the subjective individual."[206] Establishing a close parallel (but not an identity) between the two, Nishida takes a step toward removing the rift between the true self (universal) and the little self (individual) which marred his earlier philosophy. He defines their relation as a dialectical unity. To make sure we do not take it for a tautology of the form A = A, he reaches back once more to the unity of *jikaku* and at the same time, to the Hegelian absolute.[207] Taking as a point of reference Hegel's pronouncement that the individual is universal, Nishida likens the dialectical unity to the copula "is" that both joins and divides the grammatical subject (individual) and the predicate (universal).[208] It expresses identity as well as difference, oneness as well as multiplicity. It not only links the individual and the universal, but it also serves as a defining factor in the relation between individuals, between I and Thou. Nishida describes the individual's reference to others as seeing "the absolute other in the depths of the self and vice versa" and asserts that "the individual is determined relative to other individuals *in its own depths*."[209] This seems to be a straight transposition of Hegel's "being by itself in its other," especially since a few pages following the assertion Nishida refers explicitly to Hegel's "unity of

sameness and difference" while rejecting—as Hegel did before him—Schelling's static notion of self-identity.[210] Nishida softens Hegel's dry discourse by equating the reciprocal seeing of the other in oneself with selfless love.[211] With its source in God's personality that moves through history, love is manifested through I and Thou expressing themselves to one another. Expression of oneself, when understood by another, becomes the basis of their communication and establishes a relation between them.[212] To underscore the importance of this simple interpersonal psychology, Nishida adopts a distinctive term for the human world: the world that ties together one personality with another is the world of expression.[213] Nishida calls this tying together "continuity of discontinuities" or "disjunctional conjunction." Since an individual is both independent and relating to others, through other individuals noetic consciousness refers to itself and at the same time to its own other: within itself, consciousness is continuous while being discontinuous.[214]

An example of continuity of discontinuities outside the social sphere is time. To form a conception of temporality, Nishida amalgamates the ideas of several Western philosophers. Following Bergson, Nishida regards time as a unity underlying disparate, individual moments. With Augustine, he rejects the notion of time as a line leading from the past into the future, and prefers to view it as a dimension of mind; time has its source in the present where it forms the basis for the past and the future. In accordance with Kant, Nishida believes that even though phenomena within time are subject to constant change, time itself persists. Finally, he concurs with Einstein's theory that time is relative to the place and the person experiencing it.[215] These ideas combine to form the nucleus of Nishida's dialectic of time. But it is Hegel who seems to have influenced it more than the others. Nishida locates the source of the temporal flow in our individual consciousness or, to use his favorite term in this period, our personality. "Where I am, there is the [eternal] present, and where the present is, there arises time."[216] Time is the self-determination of the eternal now or eternal present. Past, present in the narrower sense, and future are its secondary, abstract forms, reflections of the eternal now in the manifest world. This reads like a restatement of a passage from Hegel's *Reason in History*: "That which is true is eternal and for itself . . . it is simply present, 'now' in the sense of the absolute present. The world of the present, a form of spirit, its self-consciousness, contains in itself all that appears in history as its earlier stages."[217] For Hegel, spirit or self-consciousness is the eternal now that transcends time while generating the past, the present, and the future from within itself. As he would be the first to admit, this notion goes back to earlier philosophers, notably to Aristotle who saw "now" as the source of time in eternal spirit (*nous*). But Hegel enriches it with elements of his own dialectic. Past, present, and future represent for him the interplay of two facets: immediacy and reflection. Assuming that to reflect is to determine and to cancel the immediacy, the two form a pair of opposites. The first, atemporal and prereflective facet is that which is intuitively given—the

unreflected, sheer present. The second facet, a result of reflection, is the *re*cognized, temporal, determinate event—an event transformed from the immediate (sheerly present) into one *determined as* present. But what is determin*ed* as present and given is effectively already past and no longer given. The "reflective act itself at the same time becomes the *present-act* of negation and determination, and such that past [event] and present [act of determination] as contrary differentiations mutually imply each other as opposites."[218] The future is a process of transition, of transcendence of the past into the present. Seen this way, the present-past-future scheme becomes another exemplification of the general dialectical pattern of simple unity, division, and reunification. According to Hegel, "the past is a sublated being (*das aufgehobene Sein*), and spirit is the reflection-in-itself of the past. The past endures solely in that reflection; but spirit also differentiates from itself this being which has been sublated in it."[219]

Nishida picks up Hegel's argument in his own account:

> This I call the dialectic of historical life. If the past is something that has already been decided, and is "given," or is taken as "thesis," then there are innumerable possibilities of negation ["antithesis"], and therefore there is an unlimited future. However, the past has been decided as unity of opposites, and only that which has decided the past, as unity of opposites, also decides the true future . . . then, as unity of opposites, an always new world is created, and this is the synthesis. . . . Creation of an always new world does not only mean that the world of the past is merely negated, or gets lost; it means that the world of the past is "lifted" ("*aufgehoben*"), as it is called in dialectical logic. In the historical-social world, the infinite past is lifted and contained ("*aufgehoben*") in the present.[220]

Time is a unity of opposites in another sense as well. A temporal moment emerges from nothing into being, only to turn again into nothing. Time, which exists only as the present, consists precisely in this process: it disappears with every passing instant, yet simultaneously, it comes into being with the next one. The present is fleeting, yet it never passes away. According to Nishida, it *is* while *it is not*, and vice versa. Time's being and not-being occur simultaneously and presuppose each other. Time is a contradiction, yet unity, of being and nothing.[221] This interpretation goes beyond continuity of discontinuities. Considering that unity and interdependence are forms of identity, Nishida gives the close relation between opposites the name of "absolute contradictory self-identity." He ties opposites together through the conjunction *soku*, translatable as "at the same time as," "and yet," "through," or "in." For example, the nature of time may be expressed in English as "being at the same time as nothing," "being and yet nothing," "being through nothing," or "being in nothing." Each of the opposites exists by virtue of complementing the other in a way that is simultaneously contradiction and identity.[222]

The rudiments of absolute contradictory self-identity can be traced back to the beginnings of Nishida's philosophy. The conjunction *soku* appears as early as in *An Inquiry*, in expressions such as "knowledge-*soku*-action." Nishida starts using it to represent the contradictory self-identity in the 1920s.[223] He has a wealth of examples to draw on. Early Greek philosopher Anaximander (born ca. 611 B.C.) finds the coincidence of one and many in *apeiron*, the single principle of reality doubling as the repository of all existing things. Thinkers associated with the beginnings of dialectic—Zeno of Elea, Plato, and the Sophists—also play with the concepts of identity and opposition. In more recent times, a contradictory yet self-identical relation between the individual and the whole appears in the philosophy of Leibniz, which exerted a considerable influence on Nishida in the late 1930s, at the time of the publication of "The Position of the Individual in the Historical World."[224] The relation is embodied in a monad (an individual being) that reflects the entire world in its own, unique manner. Another source of the idea is Nicolas of Cusa (Cusanus, 1400-1464). Nishida's early essay "Coincidentia Oppositorum and Love"[225] refers to Cusanus' notion that the opposition between greatest and smallest, unity and multiplicity, or being and nonbeing is not ultimately real. In each case, it is a product of finite thought. It is overcome in transrational intuition (*docta ignorantia*, learned ignorance) that reaches into the divine unity of reality and brings out the coincidence of opposites (*coincidentia oppositorum*). Giordano Bruno (1548-1600) and Schelling continue this line of thought. In his own essay, Nishida complements Cusanus' view of the coincidence of finite and infinite with a reference to Georg Cantor, from whose writings he derives the idea that the infinite is that in which a part and the whole are identical.

Teachings conducive to the notion of contradictory self-identity are advanced also in various schools of Buddhism. For instance, the Mādhyamika School denies that a being possesses self-nature (*svabhāva*), essence, or independent existence; this view weakens the sense of individual self-identity and blurs the boundaries between opposites. In Mādhyamika logic, all possible views are categorized as affirmation, negation, both affirmation and negation, and neither affirmation nor negation. The last two are conceptually related to Nishida's contradictory self-identity. In the philosophy of the Kegon School, universal nature, principle, or reason is nondual with respect to phenomenon or fact; reason interpenetrates with fact and facts interpenetrate among themselves without obstacle, engaging and reflecting one another.[226] Nishida's paradoxical formula could be taken as a crystallization of that view. The fluidity of concepts in the Buddhist universe facilitates the construction of paradoxes. Interestingly, Nishida himself links the logic of *soku*, as his exposition of absolute contradictory self-identity is often called, explicitly to Buddhism only since 1939, when the 69-year old philosopher remarks:

> Buddhism expresses . . . paradox through the dialectic of "is" and "is not." I am indebted to Suzuki Daisetsu for showing me the following passage in the *Diamond Sūtra*:
>
> > Because all dharmas are not all dharmas,
> > Therefore they are called all dharmas.
> > Because there is no Buddha, there is Buddha;
> > Because there are no sentient beings, there are sentient beings.[227]

For Nishida, the *soku* formula represents the basic structure of reality. He uses it unsparingly to depict various instantiations of that structure. One that attracts his particular attention is the relation between many and one. The infinite multiplicity of individual beings stands in contradiction to the singleness of reality they inhabit. Nishida call this unitary reality alternatively "the world," "environment," "universal," "God," "Amida Buddha," and "absolute nothingness." Each of the two poles of contradiction, single reality and individual, is a multivalent entity. The world is not merely the sum of individual beings; it is *sui generis*, above and beyond them. An individual being, as well, is both self-determining—it stands alone, against the world—and an instance of the self-determination of the world, a point at which the world manifests itself. From the positive angle, the self-identity of each contradictory is a function of its relation to the other. An individual becomes consciously individual in distinction from the universality of the world. The world, as well, would be meaningless in the absence of individuals. To emphasize the point, Nishida states that the more the environment is subject, the more it is environment, and that "as unity of opposites, the subject is essentially subject by submerging in the environment, and the environment is essentially environment by becoming subjective through self-negation."[228] From the negative angle, the relation between contradictories is built upon the *non*-identity of each. Nishida portrays mediation between them as an objectification of the subject (its "submerging in the environment") and a subjectification of the object (the environment). Each can overcome the infinite rift or discontinuity separating it from the other only in contradiction with itself ("as unity of opposites")—only by negating itself and becoming the other.

Continuing this line of thinking in "The Logic of Place and the Religious Worldview," Nishida suggests that in order for the absolute to make itself accessible, it must relativize itself. Relativization means negation of absoluteness, thus a self-negation of the absolute. More importantly, a self-negation of the absolute is mirrored on the human level by a self-negation of the individual. In order to enter into a conscious relationship with the absolute, the individual must undergo a symbolic death through which it will rise above its own finitude and relativity: "Only by dying does the self encounter God in terms of inverse correspondence."[229] The relation of inverse correspondence is realized when the finite, rational self negates itself ("dies"), clearing the way for the birth of the true self. Nishida metaphorically describes the rebirth of the self as an encounter

with God. He regards the relative at a deeper level as absolute; hence it is the absolute, God, who assumes a central role in the encounter and provides the foundation of the relation.

The second common variant of absolute contradictory self-identity is the relationship between the peer opposites I and Thou. Expressed positively, I is I first through the acknowledgment of Thou as different from I, and vice versa. Negatively, "the dialectic of I and Thou consists in the fact that the self and the other mutually deny one another and thereby unite with one another."[230] To one another, I and Thou are absolute others. The identity of I is determined by its differentiation from Thou, and vice versa. Differentiation from the other is a form of negation. It is common to I and Thou: in the aspect of the absolute negation of the other, the two are the same. If so, then the negation of I by Thou amounts to I's self-negation; the negation of Thou by I is equivalent to Thou's self-negation. At least, this is a natural extension of Nishida's assertion, quoted earlier, that I sees the absolute other, or the absolute negation of I, in its own depths. The self-negation on the part of each individual clears the way for their mutual recognition, whereby each acknowledges the other in the aspect of absolute nothingness working through individuality. To interrelate is thus to assert oneself by negating the other, and to affirm the other through negating oneself.

Another instance of absolute contradictory self-identity is the case of two opposite representations of a single entity. It can be schematized as "A through not-A." A is not the simple, static entity for which we ordinarily take it. The true nature of A is a contradictory self-identity of A's ordinary manifestation and its negation. For example, the self as which we normally see ourselves is not our true self; the contradiction consists in the gap between the two perspectives on the self: "the self" and "not the self." Realizing the discrepancy, we come to understand the true nature of the self behind its relative façade. The self that emerges from the contradiction is more truly itself; it is an enriched self.

In all three examples, the aspect of contradiction dominates at the level of manifest reality; the aspect of identity is realized at the deeper level of absolute nothingness. The formula of absolute contradictory self-identity draws upon the relation between the two levels which, themselves, are contradictory yet identical. All particular contradictions and identities can be derived from this single, basal relation. This foundational character makes absolute contradictory self-identity the mainstay of reality. In that capacity, it corresponds to the Hegelian contradiction (*Widerspruch*).

The Hegelian Contradiction

Disputing a common view of contradiction as an unwelcome result of faulty argumentation, Hegel regards it as a positive force at the root of reality. Contradiction is the motor of life. Its immediate external form is physical motion.

Hegel reminds us of Zeno's analysis two-and-a-half millennia ago: "Something moves not insofar as it is here in this now and there in another now, but rather insofar as in the same now it is here and not here, insofar as in this here it is and at the same time it is not."[231] Standard logic prohibits two antithetical propositions ("here" and "not here," "is" and "is not") to be true in the same respect. We cannot have p and ~p (not p) at the same time. This is why one often tries to explain Zeno's problem away by specifying that each such proposition refers to something else (the p in "~p" is not the same as the p in "p"), or by interpreting p to be true at a different time than ~p. Hegel disapproves of such maneuvers. He admits and welcomes the coexistence of direct contradictories. "Here" and "there" exclude one another, yet in a moving object they coincide. Movement through time, as well, involves simultaneous exclusion and identity, simultaneous nonbeing and being. As a perfect embodiment of contradiction, it constitutes the foundation of dialectic as such. To move in time is to change and to cancel itself out. To use Hegel's well-known illustration, since a bud disappears with the formation of the flower, the stage of the flower could be said to negate that of the bud. The bud and the flower cannot occupy the same space at the same time. But seen from the standpoint of the living plant of which they are both essential elements, they presuppose one another and in that sense, they are one.[232] Their unity within a larger whole is guaranteed by its concept (*Begriff*). Organic growth is directed by the stable, unchanging concept of the plant that evolves a series of physically manifest forms out of itself.[233] Negatively, development is a function of the drive toward the satisfaction of a want—Hegel likens it to appetition and *entelecheia*—that propels an entity beyond itself, into new forms.[234] On the positive side, change from one state to another requires that the changing entity maintain itself throughout the process. The concept working in the background assures that the entity transcends itself without losing its core identity. What we see as change in the physical object has to do primarily with the internal dynamics of the concept, which is a form of consciousness.

This dynamic of change holds true also on a larger scale. The ultimate concept is equivalent to absolute spirit. Spirit *is* while it manifests itself as nature or matter. In the natural world, it is by itself and at the same time in its other (*ist bei sich selbst in seinem Anderen*). Otherness is its own aspect. Spirit is identical with, yet different from, its manifestation. It is internally divided, yet it remains one. Each of its forms transitions into the next, both continuing and cancelling it, but this movement occurs within the bounds of a single process that makes up a whole. Its driving force is the opposition between finitude and infinity. For something to be, it must be determinate. Determinate being involves a contradiction: being as such is boundless and indeterminate, yet in a specific form it has a boundary and qualities that make it finite. A finite thing refers to itself negatively; it defines itself in distinction to all other things from which it is separated by its boundary. Its negativity is not adventitious. It constitutes an essential quality

of finitude. Driven by negativity, a thing repels itself from itself, sending itself over its boundary, into the larger being that transcends it. Yet the boundary holds firm. As Hegel says, finite things *are*, but the truth of that being is their end.[235] Determinate being has its end because it is untenable. At a closer look, it turns out to be a bundle of contradictions, differences, and self-negations. As such, it seems to be the opposite of infinity which, observed from the distant perspective of the human world, appears to be simple and pure. Indeed, ordinary comprehension (*Verstand*) takes a finite thing as a starting point and obtains infinity as its opposite. But a dialectician knows that the relation between the two is more complex than straightforward opposition. Infinity is not simply that which is not finite. It emerges from the finite as a process in which the finite reveals its own falsity or nonbeing, and thereby cancels itself as finite. Given the nisus of the finite "to surpass itself and cross over into its opposite," infinity lies in the self-dissolution of the finite through its inherent negativity. In Hegel's words, the nonbeing of the finite is the being of the absolute (or infinite).[236] In Nishida's restatement, a thing *is* through (*soku*) nonbeing. A dialectical philosopher sees the finite, which for ordinary comprehension is problem-free, as contradictory, while recognizing an affinity between the ostensibly contradictory categories of infinity and finitude.

The relation between infinity and finitude can be restated as that between the universal and the individual. In addition to these two categories, Hegel distinguishes a third, the particular. A universal is the totality of the concept.[237] On account of its generality, it encompasses the particular and the individual. A particular is a differentiated and determined, i.e., individualized, universal. The dynamic between the two follows the standard pattern of dialectical development. The universal unfolds from the initial state of the concept as undetermined, pure being. Its first transformation occurs when, in an impulse of self-negativity, it turns at itself and posits itself as particular. As such, it is no longer indeterminate. Its particularization is a result of the realization that its initial state of immediate, "absolute" being was only a standpoint. With the recognition of the possibility of other standpoints, its own becomes relativized.[238] Relativization is a form of negativity. To acquire *positive* content, the concept must determine itself further as concrete and individual. If a particular is a determined universality or—what amounts to the same thing—a negation of universality, an individual is a determined, negated, or "posited" (*gesetzt*) particular. Individuality is a determined determination. At the same time, it is an absolute determination and concretization of the concept. This makes the individual a concrete basis for the other two categories. None of the three is to be construed as a given that is defined once and for all. Each is an entity in motion, interacting with the other two. Each is meaningful only in that interaction.[239]

In the organic world, the universal is manifested as genus (*Gattung*), the particular as species (*Art*), and a single representative of species as individual (*Individuum*). In the human dimension, genus is defined less by biological

attributes than by its spiritual character. Hegel believes that unlike lesser organic beings, we bear universal spirit within our own. But this function is restricted by our mortality. A human being is a contradiction between the infinity of the universal and the finitude of the individual. Yet Hegel does not bemoan the inevitability of death, for he believes that it liberates us from physical limitations and lets our spirit rejoin the universal. The individual as such must end since, as finite, it does not correspond to its concept, to what it really is.[240] As Nishida might put it, through death our little ego is reabsorbed into the true self concealed deep within it. The return of a human individual to the universal in death merely completes the circle of the internal transformations of the concept, of which universal, individual, and particular are coequal "moments."

The dependence of the individual on the universal (as part of the three-way interdependence among the three categories) is consistent with Hegel's assertion that the identity of the individual is contingent upon its universal qualities. For example, the fragrance, color, and shape of a flower are universal since they apply to all individual flowers. Were we to consider a flower in abstraction of its qualities, we could only point to it as a mere sense datum, a "this over there." Despite the evidence of the flower produced by our senses, instead of a flower, we would be addressing a pure *abstractum*. An individual acquires reality first when our sensory certainty (*sinnliche Gewißheit*) about it is complemented by a rational recognition and comprehension that operate through universal categories of thought. For example, in logical judgment, the role of the universal is played by the predicate that defines the individual, the subject. In the social sphere, individual freedom is rooted in the universal concept of freedom; individual laws, in universal will (the concept of will) of a people.[241] There can be no individual freedom in a society that has not developed a concept of freedom, and no laws where no legislative spirit has taken root. Individuality as such is universal: it is what all individuals have in common.

The universal brings out the truth of the individual, but that truth is not simply derivative of universal's own. Already in *Early Theological Writings*,[242] Hegel rejects Kant's ethical universal as something foreign and overly objective, unsuitable for a living individual. Instead of subsuming the individual under the universal, Hegel regards the universal as the fullness of individuality. The universal is anchored in life, in the organic body, and in human spirit that is kindred to absolute spirit. For example, Hegel rejects the universal of a law arbitrarily imposed on a people. He sees the foundation of law in the freedom and rights of individuals—even though he believes that freedom is realized at its fullest in the system of law vested in the state. Universal freedom would remain an abstract idea were it not realized concretely on the individual level. The individual functions as a medium for the universal to step into reality, to become active and effective (*wirkend*). It represents the ultimate positivity and the depth in which the universal grasps and realizes (*setzt*) itself as concept.[243] If there is

no individual without the universal, there is also no universal apart from the individual—just as form cannot exist without content.

The unity of the concept that accounts for the close affinity between the universal and the individual forms the backdrop also for the dialectical contradiction between many and one. The contradiction is embodied in the object, which appears "on one side [as] the universal medium of many substantial elements (*Materien*), and, on the other, [as] a unit reflected into self, where their substantial independence is overthrown and done away with."[244] The unity of *one* object clashes with the multiplicity of its elements, but the object's reality hinges upon the conjunction of the two. Conjunction and clash are also present in the relations that Hegel calls reflexive determinations (*Reflexionsbestimmungen*), such as "up and down" or "father and son." In each pair, both terms lead independent existences (in the first example, as directions; in the second, as men), yet neither can be removed from the pair since each has meaning only in relation to the other. Further, each negates the other by being *not*-other. Up is not-down; father is not-son. Hegel describes this interrelation as "negative unity": unity because neither term can exist without the other, negative on account of their mutual exclusion.[245] Negative unity provides a model for Nishida's "dialectical unity."

The consequence of mutual exclusion is that, for example in the domain composed by the two opposites father and son, the negative designation not-father (the negation or self-negation of father) automatically refers to (affirms) son. Through negating the other, each term affirms itself, and—what amounts to the same thing when seen from the other's perspective—it affirms the other through negating itself.[246] While a term affirms itself through a negative reference to the opposite term, it negates itself since, with respect to otherness, it is exactly the same as the opposite term that negates it; in their aspect of mutual exclusion, the two terms are completely equivalent and can switch positions without altering their relation. This circularity stems from the fact that each term is the other of the other. One can speak here of the identity of otherness. When negating itself as the other (which the first term does by affirming itself as itself), the first term distinguishes itself from its opposite that *is* an other (otherness). But since distinction is a mark of otherness, the first term—contrary to its initial determination as different from the second term—has just reestablished itself as identical with it (identity), at least with respect to the quality of otherness. This allows us to consider the relation each has to the other as a negative *self*-reference, and to redefine their contradictory opposition as an antinomy.

Let us also consider Hegel's view of the relation between the whole and its parts. A flower is a whole object, but it is also a composite of stem, leaves, and petals. The stem, too, is an object in itself, yet it is part of the flower. As a part, it presupposes the whole (the flower), just as the whole exists only when its parts

do. The two determinations depend on one another, but their relation is one of negation:

> When matter is defined as a whole, it consists of parts; in these, the whole becomes an unessential relation and disappears. . . . Because the whole is not self-dependent [and whole is the opposite of part], the part is self-dependent; but because it is self-dependent only without the whole, it is self-dependent not as a part but rather as a whole. . . . [T]hrough its self-dependence and separation from the other, each of the two determinations loses self-dependence and passes into the other.[247]

A whole is not a whole but rather a set of parts; on the other hand, being a part means not being a part, but rather a whole. To be independent from its opposite is to depend on it; to be itself is to negate itself and to become its opposite. In the context of disjunctive judgment, which is the judgment of the form "A is either B or C," Hegel calls the whole-part relation negative totality.[248] It is negative because if A is equal to B, it excludes (negates) C, and if it is equal to C, it excludes B. It is a totality in the sense that the "either-or" forms the total universe of A. Within universal A, entities B and C are particulars, i.e., they are parts of the universal. Insofar as the universal is one of B or C, it is both the totality (the universal itself) and its own part. Hegel presents us here with a variant of the familiar pattern in which a totality or form reflects itself in a partial objectification or content: in B or C, A relates to itself.

The shuttling movement between identity and difference, or affirmation and negation, is not haphazard. It inheres in the nature of consciousness and follows the logic of reflection. Reflection emerges from the state of prereflective immediacy. To schematize Hegel's conception, let us designate that simple and indeterminate, non-positive and non-negative state as A. Once reflection gets focused on A, it proceeds in three modes:[249]

1. *Affirmation.* As a result of being reflected upon, A is recognized as something present in the field of consciousness. It becomes determined as an object or event. As a way to indicate that determination is a function of reflection, we enclose the result in a set of parentheses: (A) is the entity A that, through reflection in consciousness, is positively affirmed or announced as positively present.[250]

2. *Negation.* By being determined as positively present, (A) is differentiated against the possibility of its absence. In articulating that possibility, A is still referred to, but only as that which is lacking. It is referred to in its *negative* presence. To express the negative presence of A, we use the notation (–A). Together, (A) and (–A) represent the polarities of A. For example, immediate being bifurcates into reflected being and reflected nonbeing or nothing that contrasts with being and complements it. The two exist side by side, producing a contradiction.

As they become differentiated out of the original entity, their coming into consciousness refines and extends our knowledge. In the present example, the knowledge of being is enriched by the recognition of the possibility of its absence.

Initially, the complementary opposites produced from the original indeterminacy of A appear to be qualitatively different from one another. One presents itself as positive seemingly without regard to the other; the other, equally indifferent to its complement, appears to be negative in itself and to exist in its own space. One begins where the other ends. They are separated by an impenetrable boundary. But the separation belies their close relationship, in which neither is possible other than in opposition to the other: each term *is* only as not-other. To account for this interdependence, the next step for the opposites is to become explicitly posited (*gesetzt*) as mutually mediated.

3. *Self-negation.* The act of such positing expresses the implicit character of the relation in a concrete form. It makes explicit the fact that as completely dependent on its other, each term has taken the other into itself as part of its own determination.[251] Instead of something and its other externally facing one another, we now have "being in itself" and "being for the other," both internal to something as well as to its other. The contradiction has been internalized. In Hegel's words, an object is itself as well as the opposite of itself: it is both "in itself," which negates its "being for the other," and "for the other," which negates its "being in itself."[252]

This internal structuring is at the basis of Hegel's developmental logic, where each level of reflection involves both affirmation and negation. The two do not stand opposite one another; each incorporates the other as an aspect of itself. Presence (affirmation) is a reference to the possibility of absence (negation), and vice versa: absence is negative presence. When applied to entity A, this core dynamic can be expressed as "(A) → (–A)." Its key presupposition is that (–A) does not signal the end of A. On the contrary, it entails the continuing existence of the negated A in the form of negative presence. It constitutes a dialectical or definite negation, which is a negation that preserves its content. Dialectical negation does not efface the negated in the manner of ordinary negation. It includes it in the determination in which the negated is combined with the affirmation to recreate the original entity as a richer, higher unity—a unity of inseparable yet distinct opposites.[253]

Affirmation (A) and negation (–A) thus join together in a higher unity. Within it, they exist only through mutual implication (affirmation) and mutual negation. In order to express that unity as a combination of the double implication and double negation of its components, let it be written as (+–A). Putting together the process we have described so far in a schematic form, we see that an

act of reflection on a given, original entity A gives the following expression with three terms:

(A) → (–A) : (+–A)

Figure 1.3 First-order reflection.[254]

(+–A) is the third term of reflection, summarizing the relationship between the first two terms. The movement of summarization is symbolized by the colon. The third term has two possible modes: in a single notion, (A) and (–A) are either both (positively) present, or they are both absent (negatively present).[255] The positive presence of the first two terms can be expressed as the conjunction "(A) and (–A)." Their negative presence comes into focus when the term (+–A) is considered as the boundary state between (A) and (–A), the state which is neither term as such. We shall have more to say about that state shortly. We express the negative presence of (A) as –(A), and that of (–A) as –(–A). Their concurrence gives a second conjunction: "–(A) and –(–A)." To express the two conjunctions in their complete form, the term (+–A) can be expanded to "(A) and (–A), or –(A) and –(–A)." The expanded form makes it evident that the third term appears to violate no less than two fundamental laws of formal logic. One is the law of non-contradiction, dictated by the sense of consistency that precludes an element and its negation from being present at the same time. The expression "(A) and (–A)" is inconsistent because it both asserts and negates a proposition. The other violated law is the law of the excluded middle. It is related to the notion of completeness, according to which an element and its negation must not both be absent.[256] The expression "–(A) and –(–A)" is incomplete because it excludes (negates) both proposition (A) and its negation (–A), leaving no alternative.

The two laws act as the poles delimiting the inner movement of first-order reflection. The conjunction "(A) and (–A)" is associated with the self-referencing of consciousness through its content (sphere unity or confusion) as specified in Hegel's-Kesselring's dialectical model of consciousness: inconsistency occurs between consciousness as form and consciousness as content. Because it is inconsistent, "(A) and (–A)" resolves itself immediately—through negation of its terms—into the conjunction "–(A) and –(–A)." Negation, as the ground of sphere separation or duality, corresponds to incompleteness, for the two spheres differentiated out of their unity are, in a sense, fictional. Completeness is reachieved only when the two are thought of, again, as a unity. But this takes us back to the inconsistency of the positive conjunction (the contradiction of sphere confusion).

Dialectical logic makes explicit an antinomy into which reasoning gets trapped without being aware of it.[257] The persistence of the dilemma requires that reflection continue indefinitely in a self-canceling, seesaw movement be-

tween unity and duality, contradiction and incompleteness. The motion must be continuous, for the moment it stops, the system will stabilize as inconsistent or incomplete—depending on the point at which it finds itself at that time.

Is this restless oscillation an example of bad infinity? It appears to be, but only as long as we remain bound by the rules of traditional logic. Dialectical logic has found a way to reconcile inconsistency and incompleteness. It interprets (A) and (–A) not as strict contradictories (two propositions that can be neither true together nor false together), as they are normally understood, but rather as contraries. Two statements are contrary when they both cannot be true, yet both can be false. The Hegelian opposites (A) and (–A) are contraries in the sense that neither is true in itself. We recall that dialectical logic bans fixed entities and once-and-for-all definitions, and disallows references to either an element or its negation alone. No single term as such is present. Each is false (absent or negatively present) in separation, and true (positively present) only in reference to its contrary notion: affirmation in reference to negation, and vice versa. Since neither term is true in itself, both are false. To express this condition, the conjunction "(A) and (–A)" is negated. The result is "–(A) and –(–A)." In dialectical logic, –(A) and –(–A) are subcontraries: they cannot both be false, but can both be true. The conjunction "–(A) and –(–A)" does not infringe upon the law of the excluded middle because it can be understood not only negatively, as a negation of (A) and (–A), but also positively, as an affirmation of negatives –(A) and –(–A).[258]

(A) and (–A) are absent in their positive aspect as (A) and (–A), but present in their negative aspect as –(A) and –(–A). As positively absent or false, (A) and (–A) cannot be inconsistent, but only contrary. As negatively present or negatively true, they are not incomplete; –(A) and –(–A) are subcontraries without contradiction.[259] Dialectical logic involves a continual cyclic feedback relation between "(A) and (–A)" and "–(A) and –(–A)," but the end result is not simply an alternation between assertion and negation. It would be equally misleading to see it as an amalgam or static synthesis of the two. More accurately, the result is a metarelation expressing the boundary state of the mutual implication of (A) and (–A) as two possibilities of A. It is a state of transition between them: that which *is* (affirmation) and that which *is not* (negation). It can be seen as a result of the self-negation of A, in which the positive and negative aspects combine to produce a metalevel term (+–A). As a boundary zone between (A) and (–A) that is neither as such, (+–A) is comparable to a mathematical limit relation between two spaces, which entails the negative presence of that which is limited. "Not-affirmation and not-negation" is a boundary of affirmation and negation defined in terms of what they are not.[260]

This completes the analysis of a single act of reflection. However, reflection is not limited to a single act. As a continuous process, it forms a chain of mental acts, each building upon the preceding one and making it into its object. If we consider the three-step reflective act we have described to be the first-order

reflection, then the triad (A) → (–A) : (+–A) becomes a given element of the second-level reflection, which builds upon it to create its own three terms. The first of these represents the affirmation of the first-order triad. The second term is the negative reference to the triad, which constitutes a negation. In the third term, the two preceding ones, the affirmative and negative triad, come together in the form of self-negation. This gives us a triad of triads:

((A) → (–A) : (+–A))	Affirmation
↓	
–((A) → (–A) : (+–A))	Negation
:	
+–((A) → (–A) : (+–A))	Self-negation

Figure 1.4 Second-order reflection.

The third triad of the second-order reflection is the self-negation of the affirmative triad produced in the first-order reflection. The difference between the negative (second) and the self-negative (third) triad in the second-order reflection is that while in the former, affirmation is negated (more precisely, it is referenced in the mode of negation), in the latter, it coexists with negation.[261] The three triads, representing the three modes of the second-order reflection, are conjoined in a pattern analogous to that of the three terms in the first-order reflection. The pattern consists in the movement from the first to the second triad, which is combined with the countermovement, yielding self-negation. In the expanded form, this gives us a triad of nine terms:

((A))	→	((–A))	:	((+–A))
↓		↓		↓
(–(A))	→	(–(–A))	:	(–(+–A))
:		:		:
(+–(A))	→	(+–(–A))	:	(+–(+–A))

Figure 1.5 Second-order reflection with the terms expanded.

The movement that produces the third term of each triad can be conceptualized in relation to the boundary between the first two terms. A boundary does not exist by itself; it is contained within each term. As a boundary between (A) and (–A), (+–A) is therefore contained in (A) as well as in (–A). As part of its own meaning, (A) reflects the boundary condition (+–A) by containing a reference to its other (–A), and (–A) reflects the boundary condition (+–A) through its internal reference to (A). What in the first-order reflection (Figure 1.3) appeared to be an external synthesis (+–A) between (A) and (–A), in the second-order reflection (Figure 1.5) becomes explicitly internalized within the terms

derived from (A) and (–A). The final result of the second-order reflection, that is, (+–(+–A)), expresses the fact that A has now been *self*-determined through its other, instead of merely being *other*-bounded as in (A) → (–A). The diagonal of the expanded matrix (the diagonal formed by ((A)), (–(–A)), and (+–(+–A)) in Figure 1.5) captures the net movement of the second-order reflection. The result represents the synthesis of (A) and (–A) relative to itself: the synthesis is now both itself to its other and the other to itself.[262]

A series of transformations from + to – to +– occurs again in the third-order reflection, which takes as its object the three triads of the second-order reflection. This self-reflective process is repeated with increased complexity in every subsequent order of reflection.

Note the additional arrows and colons between the second terms of the three triads in Figure 1.5, and again between the third terms of the triads. They demonstrate that the movement from A to its contrary, which gives the impetus to the first act of reflection, is mirrored in every term generated in subsequent acts. The alternation of the sign is happening in two dimensions simultaneously—not only horizontally within a mode of reflection, but also vertically from one order of reflection to the next, creating movement *within* terms. Just as each order of reflection passes from affirmation to negation to self-negation, so do its individual terms. Because of this vertical movement, the combinations of all the terms in the earlier-order triads (starting with the original term A) continue to be positively or negatively present in every new term being generated. Since the relation between the two terms in the n-order reflection is repeated within the terms of the reflection of the n+1 order, no n+1 term, positive or negative, is simply itself. In any triadic order, a given positive term and its negative opposite contain in an encapsulated form all the positive and negative terms of every previous order.

The interpenetration of terms within and between the three modes of each order of reflection is exemplified at the beginning of Hegel's *Logic*. Starting with the "zero" state of pure being, the first act of reflection reveals that being manifests itself in two forms: being in itself and being outside itself or nothing. The two forms converge in the third category of *Logic*: becoming. Figure 1.6 illustrates the second-order reflection on being.[263] It shows that each, being and nothing, has internalized their synthesis or becoming. In reflection, any immediate notion of being will transform itself into a state of becoming in which every mode is placed in relation to its contrary. (See Figure 1.6.)

The first mode (affirmation of becoming) produces the affirmative triad being → nothing : becoming. The second mode (negation of becoming) is shown as the triad passing → arising : equilibrium. This triad is a result of the crossing of the terms, such that each implicitly becomes a function of the other within itself. After the crossing, being becomes passing (thus, a function of nothing), which is the nothing coming or having come from being, or the being seen from the perspective of its other, nothing. Passing can also be conceptualized as the

movement being → nothing, or as a boundary of being against nothing, internalized in being. Nothing becomes arising (thus, a function of being), which is the being having come from nothing, or the nothing seen from the perspective of its other, being. Arising may be thought of schematically as the movement nothing → being, or as a boundary of nothing against being, internalized in nothing. The "synthesis" of passing and arising is that which is neither as such, i.e., the state of equilibrium. Thus being and nothing combine to give the boundary state of becoming, which breaks up into two sub-boundaries called passing and arising, which in turn combine and transcend themselves into equilibrium.

being	→	nothing	:	becoming
↓		↓		↓
passing	→	arising	:	equilibrium
:		:		:
dynamic		dynamic		dynamic
being	→	nothing	:	equilibrium

Figure 1.6 Initial categories of Hegel's *Logic* (second-order reflection on being).

In Michael Kosok's reading of Hegel, the third mode of the second-order reflection, or the triad dynamic being → dynamic nothing : dynamic equilibrium, is the self-negation of becoming. The self-negating becoming internalized in being becomes dynamic being; internalized in nothing, it becomes dynamic nothing. Their synthesis, dynamic equilibrium, is thus a double unity or a unity of unities, the basic terms of which are, still, being and nothing. In its three modes or triads taken together, the second-order reflection goes past the opposition of simple being and simple nothing, giving simple becoming; the opposites have mediated themselves into dynamic being and dynamic nothing, such that a unity of being and nothing is already realized within each term.[264]

Starting with being, this process of progressive containment expands until it involves all orders of reality. At the end, all categories (objects) interpenetrate, each containing and composing other categories or objects. Together, they make up a mosaic of affirmative and negative terms in various stages of development. With progress of consciousness, each successive layer added to the stack of its past form-content dyads is more complex than its predecessor, since each term of a new layer encapsulates within itself the pairs deposited in all the previous layers. Continuous reflection builds an intricate structure of interlocking, interpenetrating, past objectifications of consciousness, preserved as objects or mind's remembrances of itself.

Armed with the principle of dialectical negation, dialectical logic redefines the way in which we think about objects. It puts them in the context of the temporal nature of consciousness, where they emerge through an accumulation of the indelible memory traces left by a succession of mental operations. Diluting

the traditional meaning of contradiction, the memory process works to transform objects into unities of opposites, always in the process of being determined and never settling into the state of definitive determination. This contrasts with pre-Hegelian, traditional logic, which presents a static view of objects as determined in themselves and simply given to consciousness. That view limits the role of consciousness to registering and describing such objects. Atemporal in nature, traditional logic operates with fixed entities, and as a result, it shuns contradiction in any form.

The work of reflection is not the last word of *Science of Logic*. Within their reflective relationships, each opposite is only an appearance (*Schein*) in the other. It is still completely relative to the other. Since neither term can stand on its own, their contradiction eventually goes into the ground (*geht zugrunde*), a pun meaning going under (or vanishing) as well as returning into the ground or foundation, which is the unity of their common essence. From here, one advances to the point at which the relation between two opposites is transformed from the interplay of appearances into the self-identity of a single concept. For example, cause and effect are seen no longer as opposites, but rather as the constituents of the concept of causality. With this final, internal unification, the concept realizes itself, bringing the process of *Logic* to an end.

The Elusive Synthesis

Hegel's interest in contradiction sets his *Logic* apart from much of the Western philosophical tradition. But Nishida is reluctant to acknowledge the uniqueness of his approach. He diminishes it through comparisons with Buddhist philosophy and his own way of thinking. After reiterating his favorite dismissal of Hegel's method as "object logic," Nishida continues:

> This is the reason left-wing Hegelians are able to understand *his dialectic of higher synthesis* in pantheistic terms. *Contrary to this*, I hold that the schools of *Prajñāpāramitā* thought can be truly said to have taken the paradox of God to its ultimate conclusion. . . . It is illustrated by Nāgārjuna's logic of the eightfold negation. Nāgārjuna's eightfold negation denies every possibility of objective predication—it is decidedly *not* a dialectic of substance that becomes subject *in the Hegelian sense*.[265]

According to Nishida, Hegel engages in objective predication from the position of a subject derived from substance, i.e., a reduced, objectified subject. Objective predication leads to a pantheistic reification of God, whereby He is equated with the physical universe and ceases to be a paradox. How would Hegel respond to this comparison of his philosophy with Nāgārjuna's? In Hegel's mind, the central tenet of Asian philosophy is the unity of spirit with nature, which on the surface makes it kindred to his own. But Hegel makes a distinction.

He speaks of the rudimentary and undeveloped character of the Asian unity which, he believes, precludes the notion of an independent human subject: "[In Oriental philosophy,] only substance is affirmed; the individual is substanceless, accidental. . . . Spirit's absorption in nature involves directly the finitude of intelligence and will. . . . It is a state of ultimate finitude. . . . Will wants itself as finite and does not yet understand itself as universal."[266] Separated by a century, Nishida and Hegel mutually accuse one another—one directly, the other through our extrapolation—of roughly the same transgression. Each rejects the other's philosophy for failing to free itself from the particular and finite, and for falling into the trap of materialism. In the eyes of each, the other objectifies the subject or subsumes it under the object; he treats boundless, universal consciousness as a finite thing. Which of the two thinkers is right about the error of the other? Which is accused unjustly of committing it himself?

The conviction with which Nishida distances himself from Hegel's dialectic has not failed to impress his commentators. A statement by Robert Schinzinger, although dated, is typical in this respect: "Nishida's dialectic is not so much a process of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, but the discovery of contradictions and the unity or the identity in these contradictions."[267] The method against which Schinzinger contrasts Nishida's dialectic appears to be Hegel's. His assessment raises two points. First, the expression "thesis, antithesis, and synthesis" was coined by Fichte and used by Schelling; Hegel does not typically apply it to the dialectical process in his own philosophy. He does speak of the "triplicity" of his method, but warns against using it in a schematic, formal way. Secondly, process and contradictions are not mutually exclusive. Hegel's philosophy is attentive to both. Schinzinger transfers the credit for recognizing the value of contradiction from Hegel to the Kyoto School, while in fact the Kyoto School is following Hegel in this respect rather than improving upon him. But if Hegel does demonstrate an adequate appreciation for the dynamic character of contradiction, how can he allow his dialectical process to degenerate into the lifeless, mechanical routine implied in Schinzinger's comparison? On the other hand, if contradiction does not preclude synthesis, what prevents Nishida, who adopts Hegel's view of the former, from following him into the trap of the latter?

Development in Hegel's philosophy consists in surpassing one pair of opposites after another as consciousness moves toward an ever broader perspective. The concept (*Begriff*) progresses by positing something, identifying its opposite, and then sublating the two in a new entity. The sublation means that the opposites retain their separate identities; the contradiction between them is as much abrogated as preserved.[268] This makes Hegel's "synthesis" into the dialectical or negative unity to which we have referred repeatedly in the discussion of his logic. Dialectical synthesis is always dynamic, but its character varies according to where the pair of opposites is situated on the developmental continuum. In general, the progression of consciousness leads away from separateness toward unity. The separateness of the two sides entails an endless

alternation in which the two mutually point to one another. For example, in the pair positive-negative, the positive implies the negative, and the negative implies the positive. At the other end of the spectrum, in unity, the two sides no longer alternate. As an example, Hegel speaks of the inner and the outer aspects of a living organism. The outer (appearance, *Erscheinung*) is a perfect expression of the inner (essence, *Wesen*). The form matches the content, for the two are the same. With essence appearing as what it is, the entire entity becomes real or actual (*wirklich*). Synthesis is not a later conjunction of originally disparate elements, i.e., their "resolution," but rather a realization of their essential identity. Yet it is not a tautology. It unifies contradictories in a manner that eludes traditional logic. It can be best understood as a boundary between opposites, as a limit or approximation. As Hans-Georg Gadamer observes, in Hegel's philosophy truth is never definitively proclaimed; its representation is an infinite activity moving through approximations and repeated attempts.[269]

When Hegel is taken to task for ignoring contradiction in favor of synthesis, what is at issue is not so much his use of synthesis as its character. The Kyoto Scholars dismiss Hegel's synthesis hastily as a product of nondialectical ratiocination. They are perhaps misled by Hegel's use of traditional philosophical terms. His language is deceptively conventional. The terms "being" and "nothing," "subject" and "object," "finitude" and "infinity" ring familiar since Hegel is not the first to use them; they have been current in the philosophical vocabulary long before him. The difference is that most other philosophers treat them as static categories. An uncritical observer is apt to read the same static character into the concepts of *Science of Logic*. Whatever movement there is in Hegel's work, it would then manifest itself solely in transitions between categories. This false interpretation obscures the *internal* dynamic with which Hegel imbues traditional determinations. He views truth and falsehood as relative to consciousness that proclaims them, as well as to one another. Subject and object, thing and concept, and any other fixed notions that make up pairs of opposites are the abstract limits of the spectrum over which they interpenetrate, mutually determine, and shade off into one another. Traditional thinking is focused on the limits while ignoring the range of the spectrum. When applied to Hegel, it predictably turns his pronouncements, such as "being and nothing are the same," into absurdities. The reduction of Hegel's method to a simple three-step schema is a natural extension of such misapplication.

What other reason may prompt Nishida to disassociate his logic of absolute contradictory self-identity from Hegel's dialectical synthesis? As a young philosopher, Nishida has little trouble reconciling contradiction with dialectical logic or, for that matter, with conventional rationality. He believes that a contradiction is not a paradox (something opposed to our sense of logic), but rather a normal aspect of thinking: "Thus one can say that contradiction in logical universal is its internal nature, and that it is also the true aspect of logical comprehension."[270] Without reservation, he adopts Hegel's view that contradiction results from

judgment, which is a division of the universal as it projects itself into the sphere of reason. But as Nishida matures philosophically, his attitude changes: he begins to tout his philosophy, and with it, the contradiction, as an antidote to rationality. The dissatisfaction with formal logic and his objective to "take the paradox to its ultimate conclusion" would then seem to place him squarely in Hegel's camp. But for Nishida, the ultimate conclusion consists in the discovery that there is no conclusion. His anti-rationalism is too uncompromising to admit a possibility of a "dialectic of higher synthesis." To justify his position, Nishida cites Oriental culture which, in differentiation from its Western counterpart, he praises for "seeing the form of the formless and hearing the sound of the soundless."[271] Indeed, in some respects Japanese culture favors understatement and ambiguity over logical rigor. Unresolved paradoxicality functions as an effective rhetorical device; for instance, it engenders suggestive overtones exploited in the classical aesthetic notion of *yūgen*.[272] It can also serve as a didactic tool, as it does in Zen-Buddhist *kōan*, enigmatic statements calculated to disrupt our mental habits and open our eyes to truth beyond logical polarities. A *kōan* is often constructed around a paradox. Nishida, similarly, reclassifies contradiction as paradox, qualitatively separating it from products of "logical comprehension." But seeing the form of the formless is not the same as finding a way to describe it; hearing the sound of the soundless does not convey it to others. Nishida's objective is to produce a discourse that can be shared, not to engage in lonesome aesthetic or meditative contemplation. With this in mind, he continues to give absolute contradictory self-identity form and sound by looking for its instantiations in empirical reality. He thinks of it frequently in terms of mediation. For example, body mediates the contradiction between spirit and matter. Spirit manifests itself in the body as meaning and form. Matter is present in it as sensuality. Through their common roots in the body, meaning, form, and sensuality can be regarded as one.[273] More commonly, Nishida assigns the function of the medium to the universal. In an early essay, he formulates its role as follows: "How can one understand the affirmation of A as A and its distinction from not-A as thinking of identity? In order to distinguish A and not-A, there must be a universal that unites them both; their distinction and their conflict come from that unity of the universal. . . . That is, various conflicts are here unified from the inside, and at the same time they are distinguished."[274] The universal, then, works from inside the opposition. Later, Nishida prefers to think of the universal as external, as "going beyond the relation": "If one can say that A and not-A allow no intermediary, it is only because, on the contrary, there is a third party that goes beyond their relation and further, that makes it possible."[275] And again: "The opposition between subject and object already implies a standpoint which transcends that opposition."[276]

In a relation between persons, Nishida seems to hesitate about the role of mediation itself. In two essays from early 1930s, he presents two opposing views. On the one hand, "the I and the Thou must be united with one another

through the mediation of absolute negation. They must be determined in the universal which is negation-qua-affirmation."[277] On the other, "I and Thou are absolutely other. There is not a slightest universal that subsumes them. However . . . [a]t the bottom of I there is Thou, and at the bottom of Thou there is I. I and Thou unite by I passing through the bottom of I toward Thou, and Thou passing through the bottom of Thou toward I."[278] In the first fragment, Nishida speaks of mediation through the universal. But in the opening sentences of the second, he attempts to release the universal expressly from its mediating role. He ties individuals together not through mediation, but rather by placing one, in the manner reminiscent of the yin-yang figure, "at the bottom" of the other. In that view, opposites relate to one another through the part within each in which they overlap. In further interpretations of this type, Nishida is inspired by the history of philosophy. He notes that idealism consists in seeing the other in one's own depth. It derives the external world from consciousness. Materialism carries the opposite meaning. It involves seeing the self in the other, or making consciousness secondary to the objectified aspect of reality. Within his conception of the living self, Nishida feels he has surpassed either position by embracing it together with its opposite; he claims to have "tied together" the polar views of idealism and materialism in a form that steers clear of the one-sidedness he attributes to each.[279] Nishida prides himself on having achieved in this manner a dialectic that is superior to that of either of his two predecessors, idealist Hegel and materialist Marx: he has reconciled the subjective, spiritual world of the self with the objective, social and physical worlds in which the self encounters other selves. Nishida believes to have accomplished a similar reconciliation in another philosophical example, in which he attempts to combine the worldviews of Heraclitus and Plato: "One may think that the combination of the Heraclitean world as described above and the Platonic world is impossible. And yet it is present in the absolute contradictory self-identity of that which goes from the created to the creating, in our human creation."[280] The two worlds are two poles of creation. The Heraclitean pole represents the tumultuous world of the created, the dimension of pure phenomena and illusory appearances. The Platonic opposite is the still realm of ideas, of things-in-themselves that serve as models for creation. Human creativity (*poiesis*) moves from one to the other, bringing them together in the form that Nishida describes as "phenomena-*soku*-reality."[281]

Although the representation of opposites as absolutely irreconcilable renders contradiction more paradoxical, which is the effect Nishida seeks, it forces him to resort to awkward ways to interpret it. In presenting contradictory self-identity as the crossing-over of opposites through their bottom, tying them together, and moving from one to the other, Nishida employs simple physical analogies that do not do justice to the complex nature of the construct and do more to deny its paradoxicality than to convey it. Perhaps Nishida himself notices the problem, for in his last major work he refines his metaphors. He shifts the imagery from spatial, mechanical, and causal to spiritual: "I understand the other through my

own conscious activity. My conscious activity originates neither from the outside nor from the inside: self and other are co-originating simultaneously through mutual interexpression. Self and other interact in this way. It is *neither the self becoming the other nor the other becoming the self*: the other simultaneously creates the self as its own self-expression."[282] Here the unity of contradictories is no longer a function of common, exchanged, or combined attributes. Each opposite becomes relative or corelational: it is secondary to their mutuality, which is seated in neither one. This implies that the relation, i.e., mutuality, arises by its own principle. Trying to explain the unity of contradictories through corelationality or mutuality, Nishida comes close to the fallacy of *petitio principii*.

Does Nishida's new concern, in his later philosophy, about the position of the individual in society, history, and culture bring him to a new, more effective exposition of absolute contradictory self-identity? If we read his mature work as a straightforward philosophy of history or as a social theory, we learn that human beings possess a highly developed mind that they put to use in creating their own, unique environment; that they interact with the world in which they live; that their lives unfold in time and are affected by their collective history; and that they are social creatures shaped by their relationships. Not all readers will find these observations original or particularly illuminating. Nishida takes a somewhat unusual approach by infusing them with a mixture of artlessness and idealistic sentimentality. For example, he interprets the relation between personality and society as "interpenetration"[283] and reduces social interaction to a manifestation of selfless love. In the same spirit, he represents the Japanese emperor as a universal for whom the individual and the whole (society) "mutually negate themselves."[284] But these interpretations, either, cannot be said to constitute a major philosophical achievement. Overall, Nishida's thoughts on society, history and culture do not add significantly to the theories that inspired them.[285] When taking Nishida's later thought at face value, one cannot help concluding that the philosopher is out of his element when tackling these subjects.

But a literal reading tells only a part of the story. Taking a closer look, behind a *bona fide* social theory one discovers a metaphysical lining. The key to appreciating the full dimension of the social-historical direction of Nishida's later thought lies in his novel use of the term "history." In the earlier period, he understood it in the conventional sense of a process unfolding in time, a sequence of events in the human world. History took only a modest position in his idealistic perspective; it served as a setting for his primary, religious concerns. Analogous to noematic content in relation to pure noesis, the historical self was a gratuitous outgrowth of the true self and inner life.[286] In his later years, Nishida holds a dramatically higher opinion of history. In proportion as he grants it a larger role in his worldview, he also grows critical of his earlier treatment of pure experience. He realizes that as a state of consciousness that it primarily is,

pure experience does not account for human, active presence in the world, and that its objects are products of intellect rather than real entities.[287] But contrary to the conclusion of many of his interpreters, these new realizations do not signal a major turn in his philosophy. Despite a different and considerably heavier use of the terms "history" and "historical self" in his later writing, he assimilates them into his original, religious-philosophical position. From its perspective, history and the historical self reveal themselves as vehicles of, respectively, the divine and the true self, in the manifest world. At times, they function virtually as their synonyms. Consider the following three fragments:

> If, as I said above, history is thought of as a determination of the eternal now, then our self-consciousness as a determination of nothingness . . . must be seen as the ideatic content which unifies a particular epoch in historical determination, namely as the so-called spirit of the epoch.
>
> The historical world must thus be partially physical and partially biological. But as an absolute contradictory self-identity of many and one, it also reflects the absolute, and in that it must be ideal. In this point, the formation of the species becomes social; the species becomes a historical species. Society must contain an ideal formation. It must contain a shadow of the idea.
>
> History may be called a self-conscious process of that which expresses itself. But if that which sees itself while making itself nothing can be thought of as our true self, then our true self exists in history, and we have true *jikaku* in history.[288]

At a minimum, the relative, historical world is a determination, reflection, or expression of the ideal, eternal. This is a variation on the theme of the self-determining universal, an important building block of Nishida's logic of place. But now he goes further, endowing the historical process squarely with consciousness and the historical world with ideality. The emphasis of the term "history" shifts from events as manifestations of *jikaku* to *jikaku* itself. The apparent simplicity of Nishida's views on history and society is thus redeemed by the fact that in essence, their objects are not merely historical or social. But what in one respect is redemption, in another becomes a problem. The conscious character of history thwarts Nishida's attempt to close the rift between the two worlds, the empirical and the ideal. It only shifts their boundary, folding the former under the latter. Nishida's acceptance of the empirical as such is limited and half-hearted. His references to historical or social phenomena are often misleading, for, when making them, he keeps his eyes resolutely on the ideal. In this manner, he fails to capture not only the phenomenal, but the ideal as well. Earlier, he trivialized pure experience by recognizing it in everyday auditory and visual perceptions. He has not advanced significantly beyond that practice, for now, similarly, he sees the world moving "from the created to the creating" in a rather

conventional sense of a process sustained by its own results. We saw him try to ennoble this construct by giving it a Greek name, "*poiesis*." But its mundane nature comes out, for example, in an illustration from, of all things, the field of economics: "The things that have been produced by the Japanese move the Japanese people. But because Japanese goods and cultural resources are public things they also may become goods and resources for the Chinese people. The historical world develops through its own creative action in this way."[289] Examples of this kind blur the boundary between a principle and the mechanics of its manifestations. Is Nishida speaking about subject-object nonduality or about international trade? Is history made by the internal movement of *jikaku* or by Japanese cultural exports? With this degree of "interpenetration" between the two worlds, their reconciliation is no longer a question: Nishida has merged them into a single one. One could argue that the demonstration of their mutual identity constitutes the very objective of Nishida's philosophy and testifies to its success. But one can also view their relationship less as an identity than as a subsumption. It may represent not so much a conclusion of philosophical reasoning as an indication of Nishida's idealist leanings and a testimony to his lingering mysticism.

We have surveyed diverse ways in which Nishida tries to make the construct of absolute contradictory self-identity philosophically viable. He presents it in terms of internal or external mediation between contradictories, transformation of one into the other, or their linking, crossing-over, and corelationality. Alternatively, each contradictory negates itself and assumes the identity of the other. None of these interpretations are conclusively successful in explaining the phenomenon. Nishida himself does not fail to sense the problem, for he admits, if only in passing, that the expression "absolute contradictory self-identity" has grown stale through overuse.[290]

But Nishida's effort to identify the principle at work in absolute contradictory self-identity need not end in failure. The problem is not insurmountable; the stale expression can be freshened by approaching the phenomenon from a different angle. Although Nishida advances absolute contradictory self-identity as a testimony to the irrational core of reality, some of his own examples suggest that the construct itself is amenable to rational exposition. In his later work, Nishida himself comes around occasionally to his early view that contradictory identity does not preclude other forms of reasoning. From that conciliatory position, it takes only a step to recognize it as a type of synthesis. Nishida takes that step when stating: "But there would be no contradiction if [the opposites] did not touch each other somewhere. Facing each other is already a synthesis."[291] And again: "[I]n the dialectic [of historical productivity], confrontation is already synthesis, and synthesis confrontation. There is no synthesis without confrontation, and no confrontation without synthesis. . . . In practical dialectic, the synthesis is not merely a need of our reason, but the 'form' of reality or the 'style of

productivity' of the world of reality. . . . The 'synthesis' is something like Hegel's 'idea' ('Idee')."[292]

The highest, absolute idea in Hegel's philosophy is one great system of life containing its own blueprint for development into millions of finite forms, notably those of thinking and being, subject and object, and concept and reality.[293] For Nishida, similarly, "the style of productivity" at the highest level connotes the unity of reality understood as a whole split into fragmentary forms. This complex unity is a product of our realization that A is "A through not-A." It represents the movement of consciousness rising to a new level of truth and higher capacity for understanding. This new state of consciousness presents precisely the solution Nishida has been looking for. It is a synthesis in Hegel's dynamic, dialectical sense. When Nishida's paradox is understood to represent the boundary between mental perspectives at which their unity is both contradicted and affirmed by their disparity, each instance of absolute contradictory self-identity reveals *itself* as a synthesis term in the process of consciousness.[294] In this respect, the logic of contradiction shows a commonality with Hegel's dialectical logic well beyond the degree conceded by Nishida.

Nishida and Hegel: Closing Thoughts

Nishida is a philosopher of a single theme. He is a master at expressing it in ever new ways, but the core idea remains constant: *jikaku* is the foundation of reality. Since *jikaku* moves from pure noesis through noema to their synthesis, it is a dialectical entity. It is only proper that Nishida's preoccupation with it, itself, evolves in the form of a dialectical triad. Its first step is *jikaku* as pure experience, as an all-inclusive universe of the self, untroubled by cognitive dichotomies but ready to launch itself into a process of self-realization. That process unfolds through self-reflection and self-determination, acts in which immediate reality divides and objectifies itself. It is the subject of the logic of place; its analysis constitutes the second step in the evolution of Nishida's philosophy. In the third step, *jikaku* becomes one again, but now it is regarded as a complex product of social interaction. In each step, *jikaku* functions as a dialectical universal, which is ultimately absolute nothingness. It is manifested equally in the oneness of the world and in the manifold of individual beings that compose it. These two manifestations come together as absolute contradictory self-identity that accommodates all forms of *jikaku*, from the unitary self of the first step to the social self of the third. At the end, Nishida calls the self no longer pure experience or the true self, but rather the historical self. His discovery of historicity casts his earlier philosophy, including the logic of place, in a new light: "My logic of place constructed around contradictory self-identity [was] simply an experiment in grasping the world with logic, carried out from the perspective of

the *jikaku* of such historical self."[295] But in essence, Nishida remains true to his earliest philosophical realization. Over the course of years, his thought traces a circle. Its "turnings" show its central theme from new angles without altering its substance. For example, if we see through the technical language of Nishida's middle period, in the logic of place we find the same religious concern that we encountered in *An Inquiry*, a concern that he makes explicit again in his late essays. The path to self-realization leads through places and universals to the dialectical core of the self. While it runs in the midst of the empirical world, it is a spiritual path of religious enlightenment. Although Hegel does not define the goal in the same manner, Nishida relies on him as a guide through the journey. But despite his philosophical dependence on Hegel, in time, Nishida grows unhappy with the relationship. He turns away from it, downplaying Hegel's role in shaping his thought and finding fault with the fundamental assumptions of the philosophy of absolute spirit. One of these assumptions, Nishida believes, is the marginal status of the individual relative to the universal. He sees it as a consequence of Hegel's faulty understanding of both the individual and the universal. And yet, when Hegel defines the individual as *being by itself in its other*, that is, as identity through otherness, Nishida does not hesitate to assimilate the substance of that definition: "True self-identity must determine individual and individual; it must be the mutual determination of individuals. . . . In self-identity the relation to the self must become a relation to the other. Hegel conceived of the unity of identity and difference to be the ground [*Grund*]."[296]

With respect to Hegel's analysis of the individual's opposite—the universal or spirit, Nishida states:

> [E]ven by being called *idea* or *Geist*, [the concept] does not avoid being a mere individual considered in the subjective direction. It is not something identical with itself but simply a single thing. Mutual determination of personal selves is effaced in it. It is thought of as an absolutely unique person. But in consequence independent individuals, each existing for itself, must be denied. . . . Personal unity must mean the unity of independent persons; it must be the continuity of discontinuity. When we think that unity exists in the direction of the noema, the person must disappear. The Hegelian universal thus cannot truly subsume the individual. To that extent it cannot avoid being abstract. Consequently, even Hegel's dialectic failed to be a dialectic of true reality.[297]

Nishida not only thinks that Hegel unduly individualizes the universal. Worse still, he takes Hegel's universal to be "a single thing"—an unmediated, abstract individual. Negatively affected by the relation to such faulty universal, the human individual, too, has no chance to overcome its own subjectivity and isolation and to become an individual in the social sense. It cannot be subsumed in the universal—an objection noteworthy by the fact that Nishida generally identifies and challenges exactly such subsumption in Hegel's philosophy. His reading of Hegel's views on spirit, the individual, and the relation between them

is tendentious. Hegel's actual beliefs are very different from those imputed to him by Nishida. Indeed, Hegel insists that spirit is the individual's *own* absolute aspect, animating and finally sublating its finite side into itself. In his words, "spirit is no *abstractum*, no abstraction of human nature . . . it is thoroughly individual, active, simply alive."[298] That which is thoroughly individual, active, and simply alive hardly deserves to be described as "existing in the direction of the noema" or as negating the existence of independent individuals. On the contrary, it fits to perfection Nishida's own understanding of noesis. Hegel's dynamic conception of spirit demonstrates that Nishida's first objection against him has little merit.

The second objection, as we recall, is Hegel's alleged inability to rise above the level of rational judgment—an inability caused by his blindness toward true reality. Nishida does not always raise this point with equal conviction. For example, he commends Hegel's logic for "a systematic and exceedingly fruitful working out of the idea" that rational judgment is a self-determination of the universal.[299] He praises Hegel for treating rationality not as an end in itself, but rather as a facet of that which lies at its source. But it does not take much for Nishida to revoke his words of appreciation: "Hegel thought reason behind the actual rather than the actual behind reason. One may say that therein lies the subjectivity of his dialectic; one may also say that when seeking to grasp the concrete actual, his dialectic fell into mere formalism. . . . Reality should not be understood through logical formulas. Rather, reason must be understood historically as an aspect of our lives."[300] Nishida believes that Hegel's dialectic is locked within the noematic dimension, where it is applied to processes governing finite things with no attempt to relate them to deeper reality. He contrasts it with his own discourse on the true self: "Dialectic expresses the noematic determination of the *jikaku* of nothingness, but it does not express its noetic determination. . . . While the true self as that which determines itself while making itself nothing determines itself dialectically, it[s meaning] is not exhausted in the simple dialectical process. [The true self] must envelop and determine [the simple process]."[301] Nishida understands the Hegelian "process" approximately in the same manner as Hegel himself thinks of bad infinity: instead of transcending finitude in time or space, it compounds it. It plays itself out in time instead of going toward its source, as Nishida believes it should. In place of Hegel's one-dimensional "processual dialectic," he proposes "true" dialectic that spans two dimensions, noesis and noema: "Instead of trying to explain self-consciousness in terms of object logic, I take the form of self-consciousness to be the basic logical form, i.e., I argue that it is precisely because we are self-conscious that we are able to think logically."[302] Object logic is Nishida's pejorative designation for formal logic, under which he subsumes Hegel's logic. Ironically, Hegel himself was an outspoken critic of what Nishida calls object logic and could not have agreed more with Nishida's characterization of self-consciousness as "the

basic logical form." Behind the show of disagreement, the position Nishida claims as his own is in fact little different from Hegel's.

Hegel's postulate of a transrational source of rationality goes back to his youth. In one of his *Early Theological Writings*, he holds up love as a counterbalance to reflection. Reflection creates oppositions—infinite versus finite, thinker versus thought, subject versus object. Love unifies them. It takes the individual out of the isolation of individuality and brings fulfillment to life. Love and life have the depth that reflection does not. In exalted language, Hegel seeks to understand reality not through reflection, which breaks it apart into components, but rather in direct, religious intuition that preserves its character of a living and feeling whole.[303] He finds the source of that intuition in the spirit that lives in the individual. Many of these ideas recur in the work of later thinkers such as Henri Bergson, a philosopher who enjoyed a rare degree of Nishida's esteem. Hegel himself, however, soon advances beyond his youthful romanticism. He embarks on a search for a richer, more inclusive model of reality. Already in a later fragment of *Early Theological Writings*, his confidence in the power of pure intuition and feeling is on the wane. He submits that religious feeling, a feeling directed by the finite toward the infinite, should be complemented by reflection. The individual is advised to establish itself in relation not only to the infinite, but also to the things of the manifest world. It should recognize objects for manifestations of the infinite not through assimilating them in the depths of its emotive subjectivity, but rather through reflecting on their objective character and allowing them to be what they are *as objects*.[304] Breaking out of inner subjectivity through reflection is a task Hegel assigns to philosophy, charging it with relieving religion of the burden of interpreting the objective world. This is not a call for substituting religious feeling with formal ratiocination. Hegel does not hold the latter for capable of reaching into the sphere of the divine. The impressive regularity and complexity of nature notwithstanding, God cannot be understood through formal investigation of the natural order. What is required instead is "speculative" thinking. The distinction becomes clearer in Hegel's comments on the ontological argument. He reminds us that rational theology of old revolved within a circle of comprehension (*Verstand*) as it tried to prove the existence of God by deducing it from logical premises. In search for the source of God's being, it attempted to mediate Him through something external. It sought to pass from the finite to the infinite through formal argumentation, an approach that invalidated the entire enterprise. The ontological argument was decried by those who believed that God was not an object of logic and that His existence could only be intuited, i.e., experienced directly. Hegel rejects both approaches. He proposes a third way—proving God's existence through reason (*Vernunft*):

> It is true that [similar to the proof through comprehension in rational theology,] the proof through reason also begins with something other than God, but as it

> proceeds, it does not allow that other to remain something immediate and existent, but rather shows it to be mediated and set; it follows that God is to be understood as having sublated mediation and holding it within Himself, as truly immediate, original, and reposing in Himself.[305]

Hegel admits that reason shares some of the limitations of comprehension: both start with an assumption and follow a chain of thought. The difference is that reason is aware of this limitation. It realizes that although all its conceptions of God are finite and mediated, God Himself is not mediated through the finite. Having sublated all mediation in Himself, He is the perfection of immediacy. Reason has the ability to conclude that what appeared to be the result is the cause, and vice versa.[306] With the power to take its own limitations into account, reason becomes an instrument of reality. As Hegel observes, "[w]hat is rational is real and what is real, that is rational." Alternatively: "What is thought, is; and what is, is only by virtue of being thought."[307] Taken at face value, these pronouncements make Hegel a subjective idealist. But few of Hegel's statements can be safely taken at face value, and the ones we are looking at are no exception. Hegel is not suggesting that anything as such, in its fortuitous existence, is rational, whether in the sense of being assigned a proper place in the preconceived scheme of things, being a production of our reasoning, or itself possessing the capacity of thinking. Instead, he believes that existents are rational in their essence, the latter being equivalent to their conception in consciousness. We are not simply *told* that existence and mind are closely connected. To do so would degrade consciousness to the rank of comprehension. The connection is gradually *revealed* during the internal transformation of consciousness in Hegel's *Science of Logic*. Swept by that process, no essential categories remain statically self-identical. No form of subjectivity resists eventual objectification and conversely, no object remains simply an object. In his system, Hegel dissolves "object logic" systematically from the inside, that is, starting from the viewpoint of the object itself. He believes that absolute knowledge can be reached not in abstraction from rational consciousness, but only in unity with it and its objects and through a process grounded in history, both individual and collective. With each consecutive objectification of the subject, the rationality of the previous level is compromised and raised to a higher one. Rationality presents itself differently according to the point in the process from which it is viewed—not because Hegel is inconsistent in depicting it, but rather because his philosophical process reproduces the manner in which consciousness actually (as he understands it) works. With the redefinition of the subject-object relationship in every new category of logic, Hegel questions and undermines our traditional understanding of rationality. He interprets genuine rationality as speculation or thinking that recognizes itself in its objects as if in a mirror (*tanquam in speculo*), an interpretation that earlier, he surmises, would have been considered mystical. He speaks of philosophy as self-knowledge of life and of truth as bac-

chanalian rapture.[308] These views form the basis for Hegel's philosophical procedure—a circumstance that makes the rationalist label that Nishida tries to paste onto him questionable at best.

Both Nishida and Hegel build upon the foundation of absolute subjectivity. But it is Hegel alone who, with his speculative procedure, links it back intimately to ordinary, "natural" thinking that operates with immediate objects. This linking provides a basis for integrating or reconciling the subjective and objective dimensions of consciousness. To the extent that Nishida adopts Hegel's analysis in his own work, he, too, has a chance to succeed in presenting self-consciousness as a dynamic process woven of noesis and noema. But Nishida's reservations about reason prevent him from seizing upon that chance. He prefers to aim his philosophy directly at noesis and to discount discursive reasoning as object logic. Effectively, he persists in the position he took in *An Inquiry*, where rationality was denied a major role to play in determination of truth. A judgment was considered to be true only insofar as it conformed to pure experience: "The standard of all truth lies not outside, but on the contrary, within our state of pure experience."[309] Consequently, "to know truth is to follow the great self."[310] Deprived of the truth-determining function, rational thinking becomes but a pale reflection of *jikaku*. *Jikaku*, in contrast, is guaranteed an unhindered access to truth. Spared the effort to reestablish truth continuously, it has little need for internal movement. With no movement, it turns into a static abstraction which, like any abstraction, is no match for the real thing. Nishida may not only be unfair in denigrating Hegel's logic as object logic; he makes his own philosophy an easy target for that very reproach. He is honest enough to recognize it sometimes. For example, in a clarification appended to "Hegel's Dialectic," he admits that in his critique of Hegel, he has not succeeded in transcending the standpoint of abstract thought. However, such admissions are rare in his texts.

The list of Nishida's major objections against Hegel includes a charge of dualism. Nishida sees its proof in Hegel's failure to reconcile subject with object, ideal with real. Yet, this objection can be refuted, as well. Contrary to Nishida's allegation, Hegel brings the ideal and the real together on several levels. The two can be mapped to, respectively, form and content, the two spheres of consciousness whose intimate relation we had several occasions to examine. Nishida himself makes extensive use of this Hegelian structure. Another form of subject-object reconciliation attempted by Hegel is the dialectical relation between the self and its social object, the other. Their relation necessarily involves mediation. Hegel emphatically rejects the notion of immediacy. Anything exists only by virtue of being mediated through something else.[311] Although Nishida, on the contrary, feels more at home with immediacy than with mediation, he adopts this part of Hegelian philosophy as well.

If the first kind of reconciliation in Hegel's philosophy can be said to be psychological and the second, social, the third is cosmological—it is meant to bring together idea and nature. Hegel links them together when describing nature

as the externalization of the idea. Again, Nishida is quick to adopt this concept as his own,[312] but even quicker to dissociate it from its source: the Hegelian idea is no more than an intellectual *object*, he says, and as such it cannot produce nature out of itself. In order to complement the idea (mind) and nature (external world), both of which he counts among the noematic categories in Hegel's philosophy, Nishida introduces a third term, history, making it the source and the foundation of the other two, which then become its manifestations. He considers this scheme to be superior to Hegel's because in his mind history is a higher dimension than the idea and nature. He believes that as an embodiment of *jikaku*, history is guided not by the absolute idea but rather by absolute nothingness. Nishida views the Hegelian idea as substantial, while *jikaku*, as equivalent to nothingness, is substanceless. Free of substance and "absolutely negating itself" to our understanding, *jikaku* is that which "determines itself while making itself nothing." With all qualifications removed, it is absolutely indefinite and infinitely malleable. It can thus serve as the ground for all things effortlessly and without invalidating Nishida's claim that beings *are* (and have their identity) only through themselves. It can also generate any number of absolute contradictory self-identities without the danger of being taken for a substantial link between contradictories. But Nishida does not succeed in emptying *jikaku* of all substance. Despite its disposition to make itself nothing, *jikaku* is palpably present in the various functions that Nishida makes it perform in the empirical world. We have examined several examples of his difficulty in placing *jikaku* at the foundation of his philosophy without representing it as a finite, objectified entity.

Does Hegel's absolute fare any better? Hegel starts with its opposite, the finite. A finite object has no truth. As finite and defenseless against change, it is determined through negativity.[313] The finite is not adequate to its concept. It is the other of its own other, always carrying it within itself. It is a contradiction[314] of being and nonbeing. Step by step, it destroys itself by turning into its other, each time producing a new category of reality. The absolute consists in this unfolding of finite categories. It is not a system or structure of categories, but rather the process of their transcendence because each category is untenable in itself and serves the whole process only by being transcended and left behind. Categories are part of the process through their instantaneous obsolescence. It is first in negating itself *in its finitude* that the finite reveals itself as the other of itself *as finite*: through that negation it is now infinity, the absolute.[315] The infinite comes forth from the self-undoing of the finite. Since the finite, as determined, is a negation, its self-undoing is positive: the absolute is a negation of negation.[316]

Hegel's absolute is no being or object, no passive target of subjective determinations. It is a movement of negativity that issues from the finite, redefines it, and thereby both affirms and resolves its finitude. Do not these characteristics make it a worthy match for Nishida's absolute nothingness? At times, Nishida

himself seems to think that way: "That which determines itself dialectically must be, as I say, that which determines being while making itself nothing. But that which determines itself while making itself nothing . . . must be our self, and that in turn must be pure spirit."[317] This rare concession suggests that Nishida's usual, sharp differentiation of his basic assumptions from Hegel's should not be taken for granted. In fact, the differentiation may be justified in the opposite sense: Nishida's absolute nothingness is tainted by substantiality that absolute spirit manages to avoid. Not only does Nishida fail to offer a viable solution to Hegel's suppositious problems; he builds them into his own philosophy. Are Nishida's disciples able to use Hegel more productively while extending the notion of absolute nothingness in new directions? We turn to this question in the following chapters.

Notes

1. *Zen no kenkyū* 善の研究 (1911), now in *Nishida Kitarō zenshū* 西田幾多郎全集 (*Collected Works of Nishida Kitarō*, hereafter abbreviated as "NKZ"; Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1965), 1:1-196. In English as *A Study of Good*, trans. Valdo H. Viglielmo (Tokyo: Japanese Government Printing Bureau, 1960) and *An Inquiry into the Good*, trans. Abe Masao and Christopher Ives (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990). *Jikaku*: 自覚. *Jichi*: 自知.

2. The quotation comes from a later work of Nishida: *Last Writings: Nothingness and the Religious Worldview*, trans. David A. Dilworth (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1987), 108. But it was the young Nishida who made the achievement and understanding of fundamental insight his personal goal. Around the turn of the century, he spent several summers with Zen masters in Kyoto working on *kōan* (公案)—paradoxical sayings expected to set off enlightenment when meditated upon properly. He also practiced *zazen* (座禅, sitting meditation) on his own. A master recognized him as a lay disciple in 1901, and in 1903 confirmed that Nishida had achieved initial enlightenment prompted by meditation on the *kōan* "*mu*" (無, nothingness). Nishida himself was not entirely convinced. Discouraged by doubts about his success in Zen practice, eventually he turned his energy to philosophy. Yet, although he seldom referred to it overtly, Zen remained for him a powerful source of inspiration, a force working for the most part invisibly behind his philosophical thinking. Fundamental insight: *kenshō* 見性.

3. In 1917, Nishida says: "Self-consciousness, in my usage, denotes the self-consciousness of the transcendental self (close to Fichte's *Tathandlung*)." *Intuition and Reflection in Self-Consciousness*, trans. of *Jikaku ni okeru chokkan to hansei* 自覚に於ける直感と反省 by Valdo H. Viglielmo, with Takeuchi Yoshinori and Joseph S. O'Leary (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), xix.

4. "Bashoteki ronri to shūkyōteki sekaikan" 場所的論理と宗教的世界観 (1945), NKZ 11:371-464. In English as "The Logic of the Place of Nothingness and the Religious Worldview," in *Last Writings*, 47-123.

5. *Ippansha no jikakuteki taikei* 一般者の自覚的体系 (*The Self-Conscious System of the Universal*, 1930), NKZ 5:422.

6. "Watakushi no tachiba kara mita Hēgeru no benshōhō" 私の立場から見たヘーゲルの弁証法, NKZ 12:64-84. Hereafter quoted as "Hēgeru no benshōhō."

7. Judgment (proposition): *handan* 判断. Thinking: *shii* 思惟. Acts: *kōi* 行為. Sensations: *kankan* 感官.

8. *Wissenschaft der Logik*, ed. Georg Lasson, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Meiner, 1967), 1:66, 75-76. Corresponds to pp. 82, 90-91 in the English edition: *Hegel's Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller, ed. H. D. Lewis (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1969, reprint New York: Humanities Press, 1976). Subsequently, "*Logik*" refers to the German edition, "*Logic*" to the translation.

9. *Ippansha no jikakuteki taikei*, NKZ 5:420-22. Quoted on the basis of Robert Wargo's translation in his *The Logic of Basho and the Concept of Nothingness in the Philosophy of Nishida Kitarō* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms, 1976), 366. Object: *taishōteki naru mono* 対象的なるもの.

10. In the preface to "The Dialectical World" written a few years after "Hegel's Dialectic," Nishida takes a similar view with respect to the particular: "If the universal is taken as foundation, the particular becomes merely one of its attributes; and if the individual is taken as foundation, the particular becomes its attribute. Even Hegel's logic did not truly realize the concept of the self-determining particular." *Fundamental Problems of Philosophy. The World of Action and The Dialectical World*, trans. David Dilworth (Tokyo: Sophia University, 1970), 108. Originally published in 1933-1934 as *Tetsugaku no konpon mondai* 哲学の根本問題; NKZ 7.

11. Hegel planned the book as the first part of a complete *System of Science* that was also to contain logic, philosophy of nature, and philosophy of spirit; but these further treatises were never published in the form complementary to *Phenomenology*.

The section of *Phenomenology* treating specifically of consciousness (divided into subsections on consciousness, self-consciousness, and reason) may have been the first written. The metaphysical, historical and other motifs are surmised to be later additions. Cf. Theodor L. Haering, "Die Entstehungsgeschichte der Phänomenologie des Geistes" in *Verhandlungen des 3. Hegelkongresses*, ed. B. Wigersma (Tübingen and Haarlem, 1954), 118-38, and *Hegel. Sein Wollen und sein Werk. Chronologische Entwicklungsgeschichte der Gedanken und der Sprache Hegels*, 2 vols. (Aalen: Scientia, 1963).

12. NKZ 1:9. The term *jikaku* appears several times in *An Inquiry*, but its meaning is restricted to "perception," e.g. in the expression "to perceive (*jikaku*) that which is the heart of the self" (NKZ 1:90). In its complex meaning of self-consciousness, *jikaku* appears first in the works that immediatly follow *An Inquiry*: "Shisaku to taiken" 思索と体験 ("Thinking and Experience"), 1915, and *Jikaku ni okeru chokkan to hansei*, 1917.

13. NKZ 1:12.

14. Nishida often speaks of "our deep inner life" (*wareware no fukai naiteki seimei* 我々の深い内的生命) and "one flow of life" (*seimei no hitotsu no nagare* 生命の一つの流). These expressions are reminiscent of William James' (1842-1910) description of pure experience as "the immediate flux of life that furnishes the material to our later reflection with its conceptual categories." James is credited in part with inspiring Nishida on this point. See his *Essays in Radical Empirism* (New York: Longman Green and Co, 1912), 93.

15. NKZ 1:18.

16. NKZ 1:4.

17. *Zen no kenkyū*, "On the Occasion of a New Edition" (1937), NKZ 1:7.

18. When formulating his conception of pure experience, Nishida had also several Western sources to refer to. Besides William James, Henri Bergson (1859-1941), Wilhelm Wundt (1832-1920), and Ernst Mach (1838-1916) speak in various contexts about the experience of prereflective immediacy as the point of departure for objective thought. But some of the affinities are superficial. For instance, James views pure experience as a privative state found in "new-born babes, or men in semi-coma from sleep, drugs, illnesses, or blows"; its "purity" is proportional to the absence of mental prowess. William James, *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy* (New York: Holt, 1912), 46. This is a very different conception than Nishida's, for whom pure experience contains all determinations, equals absolute reality, and is ineffable due not to its inferiority, but rather to its superiority, with respect to reason.

19. Reality: *jitsuzai* 実在. Actuality just as it is: *genjitsu sono mama no mono* 現実そのままのもの. Truly so: *shinnyo* 真如. Active: *nōdōteki* 能動的. Besides Buddhism, Nishida's thinking of the active character of experience was influenced by Fichte's concept of "deed-act" (*Tathandlung*) which describes pure subjectivity or the active, unobjectifiable aspect of consciousness. *Tathandlung* refers to I as a self-producing process. I posits itself in the originary act (*die Handlung*), as a result of which (*die Tat*) it comes into being. *Tathandlung* is the act and at the same time the consciousness of the act in which I creates the conscious subject and the natural world. Also see note 3 above.

20. NKZ 1:28. Small area: *isshō han'i* 一小範囲.

21. Hegel, *Einleitung in die Geschichte der Philosophie* (*Introduction to the History of Philosophy*), ed. Johannes Hoffmeister (Hamburg: Meiner, 1966), 37.

22. NKZ 1:25-26. Nishida is referring to Hegel's words: "The universal . . . is the soul of the concrete, in which it inheres, unhindered and identical with itself in its diversity and differentiation." *Logik* 2:242; *Logic*, 602. Nishida can readily embrace this unwonted notion of universal because he identifies it with pure experience, which possesses reality only through individual entities which are its manifestations.

23. NKZ 1:27. In *Phenomenology*, Hegel argues that "here" and "now"—expressions of the speaker's immediate perception of his or her spatial or temporal position—are both universal and abstract since they can be applied to, respectively, any place or point in time. *Phänomenologie*, 81-82; *Phenomenology*, 151 ff.

24. *Zen no kenkyū*, NKZ 1:27. *A Study of Good*, 18-19.

25. *Zen no kenkyū*, NKZ 1:187. *A Study of Good*, 176.

26. In *An Inquiry* as a whole, however, the portrayal of the relation between the universal and the individual is still little more than a simplification of Hegel's view on the subject. Sometimes, Hegel speaks of universal and individual as a pair, for example in discussing judgments (*Urteile*), where the individual is a divided (*ge-urteilt*) universal. His formula "the individual is universal" (*Das Einzelne ist allgemein*, *Logik* 2:274; *Logic*, 632) is a paradigm of abstract judgment transposed into the structure of a sentence consisting of subject (corresponding to individual) and predicate (corresponding to universal). In other contexts, however, Hegel usually distinguishes three categories: universal, particular, and individual, each mediated by the other two. The complex relationship between the three categories is at the heart of syllogism, analyzed in *Logik* 2:308-52;

Logic, 664-704. Nishida, on the other hand, usually speaks of only two entities: universal and individual. Often, he uses "individual" and "particular" interchangeably.

27. NKZ 1:180-81.

28. NKZ 1:33.

29. *Zen no kenkyū*. Viglielmo's translation. *A Study of Good*, 168-69.

30. NKZ 1:24.

31. "Shisaku to taiken," Preface of 1937, NKZ 1:207-8.

32. NKZ 1:26. Thinking: *shii* 思惟.

33. NKZ 1:25.

34. NKZ 1:94. Reason: *ri* 理. Principle: *genri* 原理.

35. NKZ 1:16. Further: "The symbol which from the beginning was operating inclusively (*ganchikuteki ni* 含蓄的に) acquires judgment at the point where it becomes actuality (*genjitsu* 現実)." NKZ 1:18. That is, the actuality of a unitary event of pure experience (such as "a running horse") and its appearance in logical thought operating through logical judgments are mutually contingent. Cf. Sueki Takehiro 末木剛博, *Nishida Kitarō. Sono tetsugaku no taikei* 西田幾多郎 － その哲学の体系 (*Nishida Kitarō: The System of His Philosophy*), 4 vols. (Tokyo: Shinjūsha, 1983), 1:54.

36. NKZ 1:185-86.

37. Hegel's saying comes from his *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* (*Elements of the Philosophy of Right*), in *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Hermann Glockner (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1951-1958), 7:33. Nishida refers to it in NKZ 1:71. Hirayama suggests that despite the reference to Hegel, Nishida's understanding of reason may have been influenced more directly by the Kegon-Buddhist conception of *rishō* 理性 or the cosmic order that makes things into what they are. Hirayama Yō 平山洋, *Nishida tetsugaku no saikōchiku: sono seiritsu katei to hikaku shisō* 西田哲学の再構築 － その成立過程と比較思想 (*Reconstruction of Nishida's Philosophy: the Process of Its Formation and Its Parallels*) (Kyoto: Mineruva Shobō, 1997), 18-19.

38. NKZ 1:10.

39. *Zen no kenkyū*, NKZ 1:90. Translation after Viglielmo. *A Study of Good*, 79.

40. NKZ 1:24.

41. "[W]hen in its [consciousness's] course of development, contradictions and clashes of various systems arise, reflective thought appears in this instance." NKZ 1:24.

42. NKZ 1:15.

43. NKZ 1:90.

44. NKZ 1:25-26, 90. Clarification added.

45. NKZ 1:90-91. Emphasis added. Also see NKZ 1:24. On the subject of conflicts in history, there is again a parallel between Nishida and Hegel. Hegel describes history as "a slaughter bench on which the happiness of peoples, the wisdom of states, and the virtue of individuals have been sacrificed." *Die Vernunft in der Geschichte* (*Reason in History*), ed. Johannes Hoffmeister (Hamburg: Meiner, 1955), 79-80. Translation by Walter Kaufmann in his *Hegel: A Reinterpretation* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1978), 1:251. Nishida may have had this passage in mind when he wrote: "Since our spirit appears out of clashes, there is necessarily agony in it." NKZ 1:91.

46. NKZ 1:90. Conflicts of motives: *dōki no shōtotsu* 動機の衝突.

47. NKZ 1:29.

48. NKZ 1:90. Emphasis added.

49. "Ronri no rikai to sūri no rikai" 論理の理解と数理の理解 (1911-1912), NKZ 1:260.

50. NKZ 1:90-91. Ideals: *risō* 理想.

51. NKZ 1:169.

52. NKZ 1:172.

53. NKZ 1:181.

54. NKZ 1:164. The Hegelian statement comes from *Phänomenologie*, 21; *Phenomenology*, 81.

55. NKZ 1:90.

56. NKZ 1:27-28. The second of the three titles refers to *Mu no jikakuteki gentei* 無の自覚的限定 (1932), NKZ 6:1-451. The third title refers to "Genjitsu no sekai no ronriteki kōzō" 現実の世界の論理的構造 (1934), NKZ 7.

57. NKZ 1:25, 38.

58. NKZ 1:182, 188.

59. NKZ 1:168.

60. NKZ 1:168.

61. NKZ 1:306. The possibility that the unity is achieved *as a result* of experience is accounted for in Nishida's triadic scheme of the development of reality. Nevertheless, Nishida prefers to look back than forward; he sees through the final unity to find there the original one. In the opening paragraph of *An Inquiry*, he states unambiguously: "[Pure experience] refers to that moment of seeing a color or hearing a sound which occurs not only *before* one has added the judgment that this seeing or hearing relates to something external or that one is feeling this sensation, but even *before* one has judged what color or what sound it is. Thus, pure experience is synonymous with direct experience. When one experiences directly one's conscious state there is *as yet* neither subject nor object, and knowledge and its object are completely united." (Translation by V. H. Viglielmo. Emphasis added.) Years later, Nishida confirms: "But pure experience is experience *before* the contradiction between thing and spirit, I and others. . . . It must be experience that occurs *before* thought." NKZ 13:251. Emphasis added.

62. NKZ 1:199. Self-power: *jiriki* 自力. Faith in Other-power: *tariki no shinjin* 他力の信心. Placing faith in the salvific work of Other-power rather than in individual achievement is a central tenet of the Pure Land branch of Buddhism. Other-power is identified with Amida Buddha, the merciful ruler of the Western paradise who grants universal salvation through His original vow. One of the Japanese patriarchs of Pure Land is Shinran 親鸞 (1173-1263).

63. NKZ 2:13. *Intuition and Reflection*, xxvi.

64. NKZ 1:186. Cf. Ōhashi Ryōsuke 大橋良介, *Nishida tetsugaku no sekai* 西田哲学の世界 (*The World of Nishida's Philosophy*; Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1995), 48-49.

65. NKZ 1:90.

66. "Meaning or judgment are the states of this disunity. However . . . [a]ll consciousness is systematic development. Even if it is momentary perception, since it includes various oppositions and changes, in the background of the consciousness of such relationships as meaning and judgment there must be a unifying consciousness which establishes these relationships." NKZ 1:16.

67. *Zen no kenkyū*, NKZ 1:14.

68. " Ronri no rikai to sūri no rikai," NKZ 1:260.

69. *Intuition and Reflection*, 3. Activity: *sayō* 作用.

70. "Ronri no rikai to sūri no rikai," NKZ 1:264.

71. Hegel sees bad infinity as an opposition between the finite and the infinite. As opposites, the two are relative to one another; as such, they are both finite. True infinity is a result of a negation of their opposition. Since the factor responsible for the opposition is the finitude of the opposites, through the negation of the opposition, finitude is negated as well. The true infinite is not an opposite of the finite; it is the sublated finite. It is the relation of something to itself in its other. *Logik* 1:116; *Logic*, 228; *Enzyklopädie*, Section 45, Addition, 122, and Section 95, 201. Nishida refers to Hegel's conception of infinity in NKZ 1:263-64.

72. A set is infinite when to every two different (distinct) elements of its proper part correspond two different elements of the set. Set B is a proper part of set A if B is included in A but it is not equal to it. Richard Dedekind, *Was sind und was sollen die Zahlen* (*What Are Numbers and What They Mean*), Braunschweig: Vieweg & Sohn, 1918, 17-18 (Paragraph 5, 64-66).

73. For Royce's conception of the self-representative system, see his "Supplementary Essay. The One, the Many, and the Infinite," in *The World and the Individual*, First Series, 473-588 (Gloucester, Mass.: P. Smith, 1976), 502 ff. Royce refers to Dedekind's argument about infinite sets on pp. 510-11. Nishida interprets a self-representative system as a system that "reflects itself in itself (*jiko no naka ni jiko o utsusu* 自己の中に自己を写す), i.e., as a dynamic unity that contains within itself the impetus for change, and that infinitely progresses within itself." "Ronri no rikai to sūri no rikai," NKZ 1:265-66. A self-representative system carries the marks of spontaneity and self-development which Nishida normally ascribes to the universal and ultimately, to *jikaku*.

74. "Ronri no rikai to sūri no rikai," NKZ 1:264, 265. Cf. NKZ 2:3-4, 15. The consciousness of validity: *datō no ishiki* 妥当の意識.

75. *Basho no ronri* 場所の論理.

76. Plato, *Charmides*, 166, 169.

77. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, XII, 9, 1074 b 34.

78. Plotin, Ennead V, Treatise 3. In *The Six Enneads*, trans. Stephen MacKenna and B. S. Page (Chicago: William Benton, 1952), 218, 220.

79. David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, 2d ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), xix. Hume's difficulty in explaining self-consciousness is compounded by his representation of consciousness as a bundle of perceptions. Hume interprets the unity of I as a fiction put over that disjointed bundle—all the more reason for his bemusement over the certainty with which I appears to us. "[A]ll my hopes vanish," he laments, "when I come to explain the principles, that unite our successive perceptions in our thought or consciousness. I cannot discover any theory, which gives me satisfaction on this head." *A Treatise*, 635-36.

80. Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. 1st ed. (A). Riga: Johann Friedrich Hartknoch, 1781. 2d. ed. (B). Riga: Johann Friedrich Hartknoch, 1787. Subsequent references to either edition as "KrV," with "A" for the first edition, "B" for the second. In English as *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan, 1929). Subsequent references to the English translation as "CPR." The present reference is to KrV A, 158; B, 139; CPR 194. Also see Werner Marx, *Das Selbstbewußtsein in Hegels Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Frankfurt a.M.: Klostermann, 1986), 4-5, 17-18.

81. KrV B, 132 ff.; KrV B, 134, Note; CPR 152 ff.

82. "Shisaku to taiken," NKZ 1:228. Perhaps it is no accident that when referring to Kant's views on self-consciousness, Nishida renders the term as *jikaku*. Kant's notion is in line with Nishida's own belief in self-consciousness as the foundation of reality.

83. NKZ 1:183; 1:92.

84. KrV B, 422; CPR 377.

85. KrV B, 72; CPR 90.

86. KrV B, 404; CPR 331. Cf. KrV A, 366; B, 422; CPR 377.

87. NKZ 1:186.

88. NKZ 1:184.

89. The present discussion draws in part upon Werner Marx, *Das Selbstbewußtsein*, 1-3; Manfred Frank, "Intellektuelle Anschauung," in *Die Aktualität der Frühromantik*, ed. Ernst Behler and Jochen Hörisch (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1987), 97-126; Dieter Henrich, "Hölderlins philosophische Grundlehre," in *Anatomie der Subjektivität. Bewußtsein, Selbstbewußtsein und Selbstgefühl*, ed. Thomas Grundmann, Frank Hofmann et al. (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2005), 300-24; Jürgen Stolzenberg, "Selbstbewußtsein ein Problem der Philosophie nach Kant. Zum Verhältnis Reinhold-Hölderlin-Fichte," *Daimon, Revista de Filosofía* no. 9 (1994), 64-79; and Joachim Ritter, ed., *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1971-), 9:361.

90. Fichte, *Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre* (*Foundations of the Entire Science of Knowledge*, 1794, 4th ed. Hamburg: Meiner, 1997), 11. Deed-act: *Tathandlung*.

91. Fichte, *Grundlage*, Section 1, Paragraph 1.

92. "Ronri no rikai to sūri no rikai," NKZ 254-55. The comment in brackets is mine. Nishida will retain the notion of unifying universal into his philosophical maturity. For example, in *Benshōhōteki ippansha to shite no sekai* 弁証法的一般者としての世界 (*The World as the Dialectical Universal*, 1934), he defines the identity of a thing with itself, "ontologically" rather than logically, as its self-determination, which is at the same time the self-determination of reality—of "place." NKZ 7:33.

93. NKZ 1:42.

94. Schelling, *System des transzendentalen Idealismus* (*The System of Transcendental Idealism*, 1800) 1:3:365 and 1:3:373. Quoted from *Werke: Auswahl in drei Bänden*, ed. Otto Weiß (Leipzig: Fritz Eckardt, 1907), 39 and 47.

95. The last three quotations are from Schelling's *System des transzendentalen Idealismus* I:2:44. The emphases are Schelling's.

96. Hölderlin, "Urteil und Seyn" ("Judgment and Being"), in *Sämtliche Werke* (*Große Stuttgarter Ausgabe*, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1991), 4:216-17.

To put in perspective this brief overview of the concept of self-consciousness in the period between Kant and Hegel, Fichte was not the first and Hölderlin not the last to confront the question of the unity of consciousness, and to propose a solution. The theoretical framework was set before Fichte by Karl Leonhard Reinhold (1757–1823). Reinhold's philosophy of consciousness and self-consciousness was also a resource that Hölderlin likely drew upon in his critique of Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*. Responding to the critique, Fichte modified his doctrine of the absolute I in a later work, *Das System der Sittenlehre nach Prinzipien der Wissenschaftslehre* (*The System of Ethics as Based on the Science of Knowledge*, 1798).

In accord with Hölderlin, fellow poet Novalis (1772-1801) rejected the reflection model of self-consciousness as an inadequate representation of the original unity of the

self. Unlike Hölderlin, he asserted that this elemental unity was based in feeling and faith. Novalis, *Schriften* (*Writings*), ed. P. Kluckhohn and Richard Samuel (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1960), 2:104, no. 1; summarized after Frank, "Intellektuelle Anschauung," 122-23.

A contemporary of Hölderlin and Novalis, poet Friedrich Schlegel (1772-1829) did not advance a noteworthy view of self-consciousness. Overcome by the idea of the infinite recursion of self-reflection, Schlegel concluded that "noone knows himself completely and in the strict sense" and that "'I' cannot be exhausted through reflection." Friedrich Schlegel, *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe*, ed. Ernst Behler, Jean Jacques Anstett, and Hans Eichner (München, F. Schoningh, 1958), 2:115 and 18:374. Quoted after Winfried Menninghaus, *Unendliche Verdopplung: die frühromantische Grundlegung der Kunsttheorie im Begriff absoluter Selbstreflexion* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1987), 36.

97. *Logik* 1:35-36; *Logic*, 54; Thomas Kesselring, *Die Produktivität der Antinomie. Hegels Dialektik im Lichte der genetischen Erkenntnistheorie und der formalen Logik* (Frankfurt am Mein: Suhrkamp, 1984), 36.

98. Thomas Kesselring, *Entwicklung und Widerspruch. Ein Vergleich zwischen Piagets genetischer Erkenntnistheorie und Hegels Dialektik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1981), 227, and *Die Produktivität der Antinomie*, 122-23, 374 n. 4. "Egocentrism" is used here in the sense given it by the Swiss developmental psychologist Jean Piaget (1896-1980).

Hegel's examples make it clear that projection is an integral part of normal cognition. They come from his *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften* (*Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences*), vol. 8 of *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, ed. Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel (Frankfurt am Mein: Suhrkamp, 1970), Section 140, 276-277. In further references to that work, page numbering (following section numbers) follows the German edition; indication of section numbers makes it possible to cross-reference English editions as well.

99. Hegel expounds absolute knowledge or more precisely, absolute knowing (*das absolute Wissen*) in the closing chapter of *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Absolute knowledge is neither the most accurate knowledge nor knowledge of everything there is to know. Rather, Hegel understands it as knowledge of unity, the state in which spirit recognizes itself as the ground of the movement of self-mediation that brings subject and object into a unity; it is a non-representational realization that our thinking is spirit's thinking and that finite things carry an eternal idea within them.

100. The term "certainty" is only provisional, since it implies mind's capacity to reflect on its content; it presupposes mind's judgement about its object. Yet, before the transition, no such reflection or judgement takes place; consciousness, one might say, simply *is* its content. Hegel speaks here of the complete absorption in the object (e.g., "thought absorbed in its material," *Phänomenologie*, 48; *Phenomenology*, 112.)

101. Cf. Nicolai Hartmann, *Hegel*, vol. 2 of his *Die Philosophie des deutschen Idealismus* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1923-29), 86-87; Kesselring, *Die Produktivität*, 78, 94-95.

102. At a given moment we are conscious only of the object, not of the fact that the object is an object *for our consciousness*. We are not conscious of our current cognition of the object in parallel with cognizing it. This is why becoming conscious of our own cognition constitutes already a turning of consciousness, i.e., its transition to the next stage.

103. *Phänomenologie*, 74; *Phenomenology*, 144.

104. *Phänomenologie*, 73; *Phenomenology*, 142. Cf. Kesselring, *Die Produktivität*, 81-82.

105. *Phänomenologie*, 73; *Phenomenology*, 143.

106. Kesselring, *Die Produktivität*, 365 n. 15. A new perspective is generated through the transformation of the preceding one. As it comes into being, it supplants its predecessor.

107. It is only at the end of the process that the perspectives of the developing mind and the philosopher's unite. At that point, the theory of cognitive development folds under that of absolute spirit.

108. Kesselring presents the model in *Entwicklung* and in *Die Produktivität*, 115-30. He constructs it with an eye on the remarkable correlation of Hegel's view of cognitive development with the Piagetian theory of genetic epistemology. But although the Piagetian parallels are interesting, they will not occupy us here.

109. Kesselring, *Die Produktivität*, 316-18; see also 118, 282.

110. Kesselring, *Die Produktivität*, 124-25.

111. Kesselring, *Die Produktivität*, 279. Sublated: *aufgehoben*, from the verb *aufheben*. This important Hegelian term means not only "to negate" in the ordinary sense of the word, but at the same time, "to preserve" and "to lift" (transform) the negated. *Logik* 1:93-95; *Logic*, 106-7. Sublation is the mainspring of the process of development. Alternative English terms for "sublate" are "sublimate," "transcend," "uplift," "supersede," or "transfigure."

112. *Logik* 1:148; *Logic*, 158 et passim.

113. Kesselring, *Die Produktivität*, 176. Kesselring derives the idea of sphere confusion from Rudolph Carnap, *Der logische Aufbau der Welt* (Berlin: Weltkreis-Verlag, 1928). Kesselring, *Die Produktivität*, 374 n. 6.

114. Paul Edwards, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 8 vols. (New York and London: Macmillan, The Free Press, and Collier Macmillan, 1967), 5:46. A general example of antinomy is the rule that no principle should apply to itself. The rule is followed by all the principles that are not applicable to themselves; it is an arch-principle that consitutes *their* principle. The arch-principle then both applies and does not apply to itself. That is, if it does not apply to itself, then it holds up as the principle; thereby it applies to itself. But if it applies to itself, then it violates the principle (i.e., itself), in which case it does not apply to itself. For a discussion of antinomies, see for example J. M. Bocheński, *Formale Logik* (München: Alber, 1996), 275-92.

115. This situation can also be described as follows. If the form does not reference itself, then in this respect it is indistinguishable from its content. This makes it part of the content. As part of the content, in referring to the content (2a), it references itself (1). But if the form references itself, then it is different from its content, which does not. From that perspective, the form does not belong to the content, and so it cannot reference itself in it. Kesselring, *Die Produktivität*, 178.

Another way to think about sphere confusion and sphere separation suggests itself from the consideration of the double role of the form of consciousness (upper sphere). On the one hand, by failing to see through its projection, the form remains fused with the lower sphere. This is the aspect of sphere confusion. On the other hand, the form guides and regulates the operation of the lower sphere—this is the aspect of sphere separation. Kesselring, *Die Produktivität*, 387 n. 7.

116. "*Die Einheit entgegengesetzter Momente.*" *Logik* 1:183-84; *Logic*, 191. For example, to describe the relation between being and nothing in becoming (*Werden*), Hegel uses two opposed, tautological statements: "Being and nothing are the same" and "Being and nothing are not the same." *Logik* 1:75-76; *Logic*, 82-83; Kesselring, *Die Produktivität*, 147-48; Kesselring, "Voraussetzungen und Strukturen des Anfangs der Hegelschen Logik," *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung* 35 (1981): 575. As for the specific term "antinomy" (*Antinomie*), Hegel uses it interchangeably with "contradiction" (*Widerspruch*). He employs it in the strict sense when referring to the four antinomies of Kant.

117. Occasionally, he characterizes the crossing-over or the negative relation simply as synthesis. In either case, the antinomy is resolved at higher level of reflection. Kesselring, *Die Produktivität*, 116-19.

118. *Logik* 1:183-84; *Logic*, 191. Hegel's emphasis.

119. *Enzyklopädie*, Section 48, 127-28. Hegel's emphasis.

120. *Enzyklopädie*, Section 119, Addition 2, 246.

121. Cf. Hegel's "infinite return of reflection into itself" ("Die Reflexion ist . . . die unendliche Rückkehr in sich") in *Logik* 2:23; *Logic*, 409. Note that the motion of return is made by *reflection* that interprets the development of consciousness, not by the developing consciousness itself. In reference to the latter, we should properly speak of progress instead of regress or return. Cf. Kesselring, *Die Produktivität*, 136. For instance in Royce's cartographical example, the natural (temporal) *pro*gression is from the smallest to the largest map, representing the stages from the earliest to the more recent; but in our analysis of this progression, we follow it—*re*gressively—in the reverse order, from the most recent or current (the largest map) to the earliest (smallest).

122. This is a hypothetical situation involving a magically enhanced mirror. When looking in a normal mirror, from the reflection we cannot tell that we are looking in a mirror; the reflection leaves out a crucial facet of the original.

Kesselring likens the look in the mirror to the upper sphere, and the mirror to the lower sphere of a given stage. The reflection in the mirror *of the look into the mirror* is the subsphere 2a, and the reflection in the mirror *of the mirror itself* is the subsphere 2b. The subsphere 2b reflects the further mirrorings, encapsulated within one another. Kesselring, *Die Produktivität*, 135.

123. Kesselring, *Entwicklung*, 56, 349 n. 14; *Die Produktivität*, 237, 371-72.

124. Kesselring, *Die Produktivität*, 405 n. 14; Michael Kosok, "The Formalization of Hegel's Dialectical Logik: Its Formal Structure, Logical Interpretation and Intuitive Foundation," in *Hegel: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Alasdair MacIntyre (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1976), 237.

125. *Zen no kenkyū*, NKZ 1:16. Viglielmo's translation. *A Study of Good*, 7-8.

126. Self-conscious experience: *jikakuteki taiken* 自覚的体験.

127. "Sōsetsu" 総説 ("General Summary"), NKZ 5:419. Wargo, *The Logic of Basho and the Concept of Nothingness*, 363.

128. "Basho" 場所. NKZ 4:208-90.

129. KrV B, 75; CPR 93.

130. NKZ 4:213.

131. NKZ 5:431. "Knowing is usually thought to be an activity, but that which truly knows must envelop activity: it must be that which actively determines its own content within itself." NKZ 5:423.

132. NKZ 5:422. Self-consciousness: *jikaku*.

133. NKZ 5:463.

134. NKZ 4:254, 274-75, 289. Contradictory identity: *mujunteki tōitsu* 矛盾的統一.

135. NKZ 4:226.

136. The first quotation: *Zen no kenkyū*, NKZ 1:18. Viglielmo's translation. *A Study of Good*, 10. The second quotation: "Ronri no rikai to sūri no rikai," NKZ 1:253. The manner in which the subject and the predicate in a judgment originally form an immediate unity in a higher universal parallels the way in which consciousness and its object are conjoined at the higher level of *jikaku*. Note that Hegel interprets judgment (*Urteil*) as "original division" (*Ur-teilung*).

137. NKZ 4:273.

138. NKZ 4:214. Experiential knowledge: *keikenteki chishiki* 経験的知識.

139. "What I call the self-determination of the universal basically has the meaning of self-conscious determination." NKZ 5:431.

140. NKZ 4:248. We shall discuss Nishida's notion of "place" shortly.

141. NKZ 4:281-82. Cf.: "The standpoint of consciousness may well be thought to lie in a higher dimension (*issō kōjiteki na tachiba* 一層高次的な立場) than any standpoint that has already been determined." NKZ 4:237.

142. NKZ 4:278-79. Predicative unity: *jutsugoteki tōitsu* 述語的統一.

143. *Ishiki ippan* 意識一般 corresponds to Kant's *Bewußtsein überhaupt*.

144. Envelop: *tsutsumu* 包む. Subsume: *hōsetsu* 包摂する.

145. NKZ 1:18. We must look for *jikaku* at the *bottom* or in the *background*. NKZ 4:218.

146. This has a parallel in many European languages. The literal meaning of the Latin "*comprehendere*" is "to seize" or "to include." German *begreifen* means both "to grasp" (to understand) and "to contain," "to envelop." Ōhashi makes a reference to French in this connection; see his *Nishida tetsugaku no sekai*, 26.

147. NKZ 4:219, 227. Place: *basho* 場所.

148. To determine itself is a prerogative of *jikaku*, but Nishida extends the analogy to other entities. All things, as well as our own consciousness, can determine and reflect themselves since they all are incarnations of *jikaku* as self-aware reality.

149. Place of being: *u no basho* 有の場所. Universal of judgment: *handanteki ippansha* 判断的一般者. Each of the three principal universals is subdivided into formal, static, and active universal, the formal being the least deep and inclusive, and the active the deepest and the most inclusive. In this manner, in universal of judgment, Nishida distingushes subsumptive universal, universal of judgment in the narrow sense, and syllogistic universal.

150. NKZ 5:422. More generally, "a place is a complete nothing with regard to the things" within it. NKZ 4:245. It cannot be conceived as a thing, just as a class cannot contain itself as one of its own elements, and in that sense it lies beyond their plane. From the perspective of its elements, a class is nothing.

151. Place of relative nothingness: *sōtaiteki mu no basho* 相対的無の場所. Place of oppositional nothingness: *tairitsuteki mu no basho* 対立的無の場所. Universal of self-consciousness: *jikakuteki ippansha* 自覚的一般者. Intelligible universal: *eichiteki ippansha* 叡智的一般者.

152. NKZ 4:226, 232. Place of absolute nothingness: *zettaiteki mu no basho* 絶対的無の場所.

153. NKZ 4: 221-22, 247-48.

154. NKZ 4:288-89.

155. Nishida's letter 404 to Mutai Risaku, 8 June 1926, NKZ 18:303-4. After Yusa Michiko, *Zen and Philosophy: An Intellectual Biography of Nishida Kitarō* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), 205.

156. NKZ 11:248.

157. NKZ 4:254. Content: *naiyō* 内容.

158. NKZ 4:247-48.

159. NKZ 4:284-85.

160. "From this standpoint, an act is also but a shadow (*kage* 影)." NKZ 4:247-48.

161. NKZ 4:257.

162. NKZ 5:422. Form: *keisō* 形相. Content: *naiyō* 内容.

163. NKZ 4:217. By being reflected in the noematic plane, *jikaku* becomes the object of consciousness. "General Summary," in Wargo, *The Logic of Basho and the Concept of Nothingness*, 388.

164. NKZ 4:261, 279. Subsume: *hōsetsu* 包摂. Sinking: *botsunyū* 没入.

165. NKZ 4:261.

166. NKZ 4:229. Specify: *tokushuka* 特殊化. The copula *aru* ある is part of *de aru* である, the Japanese for "is."

167. *Ippansha no jikakuteki taikei*, NKZ 5:451-52. Active self: *kōiteki jiko* 行為的自己.

168. NKZ 4:243. Existentiality: *sonzaisei* 存在性.

169. NKZ 4:251.

170. NKZ 4:245.

171. NKZ 4:245.

172. NKZ 4:252. Nishida has the following to say about the transition from the intelligible universal to the universal of absolute nothingness: "The fact that the last thing (*saigo no mono* 最後のもの) in the intelligible world contains a contradiction in itself means that at the same time it has inside itself a demand (*yōkyū* 要求) for self-transcendence. It means that in its background there is something that transcends it. Whenever a universal finds itself in another universal that envelops it, and is backed by it (*urazukerareta* 裏附けられた), the last thing in the enveloped universal can be thought to contain a contradiction within itself." NKZ 5:176-77. As we move closer to a higher place, the sense of contradiction intensifies; "the last thing" is the point from which we are finally propelled upwards.

173. "Affective Feeling," in *Japanese Phenomenology: Phenomenology as the Trans-cultural Philosophical Approach*, ed. Nitta Yoshihiro and Tatematsu Hirotaka (Dordrecht, Holland; Boston: D. Reidel Pub. Co., 1979), 238. Originally published in 1920 as "Ishiki no mondai" 意識の問題 ("The Problem of Consciousness").

174. NKZ 1:16.

175. E.g., NKZ 4:257.

176. Transcending: *chōetsu suru* 超越する. Moving outside: *soto ni deru* 外にでる. Proceeding forward: *susumu* 進む.

177. NKZ 4:259-60. Emphasis added. According to a teaching common to many schools of Buddhism, one seeks Buddha nature only to discover that one possessed it all along. Moving forward, one arrives at the origin.

178. Hegel's movement is bidirectional. Natural consciousness moves forward as it develops toward its spiritual endform. At the same time, its growing sophistication allows it to go ever deeper into its own structure and to see further and further back—eventually, to the formation of its first objects.

179. "At the extreme, when we transcend even the opposition between the grammatical subject and the predicate and reach the place of true nothingness, we will have intuition that sees itself." NKZ 4:284. Cf. NKZ 5:454.

180. *Enzyklopädie*, Section 236, Addition, 388. Hegel acknowledges having taken the Aristotelian *noesis noeseos* as the model in his discussion of the self-referential aspect of absolute spirit.

181. NKZ 5:461.

182. NKZ 5:453.

183. NKZ 5:454. Self-aware self: *jikakuteki jiko* 自覚的自己. Infinite processual determination: *mugen no kateiteki gentei* 無限の過程的限定.

184. Cf. NKZ 4:213.

185. "Sōda hakushi ni kotau" 左右田博士に答う ("My response to Dr. Sōda"), NKZ 4:322. Translation by Yusa, *Zen and Philosophy*, 208. Emphasis added.

186. "To think a determination of nothingness above the determination of nothingness is the same as thinking a zero above zero." NKZ 5:428.

187. NKZ 4:238. Eternal nothingness: *eien no mu* 永遠の無.

188. NKZ 4:237.

189. NKZ 4:224-25.

190. NKZ 4:258.

191. NKZ 5:459. Internal life: *naiteki seimei* 内的生命.

192. NKZ 5:442. In the self: *jiko ni oite* 自己に於て. Object-self: *jiko o* 自己を. Subject-self: *jiko ga* 自己が. Clarification added.

193. NKZ 5:460. Limit of knowledge: *chishiki no genkai* 知識の限界.

194. "Jitsuzai no kontei to shite no jinkaku gainen" 実在の根底としての人格概念 ("The Concept of Personality as the Basis of Reality"), NKZ 14:169-70. The actual: *jijitsu* 事実. Substance: *naiyō* 内容.

195. "Jitsuzai no kontei to shite no jinkaku gainen," NKZ 14:133, 169.

196. "Watakushi to nanji" 私と汝 ("I and Thou," 1932), NKZ 6:381.

197. NKZ 14:161-62, 173.

198. "The Self and the World," in *Fundamental Problems of Philosophy*, 68-69, 73. Translation after Dilworth. The essay was originally published as *Watakushi to sekai* 私と世界 in 1933.

199. Active self: *kōiteki jiko* 行為的自己. Active *jikaku*: *kōiteki jikaku* 行為的自覚. Active intuition: *kōiteki chokkan* 行為的直観.

200. Highlighting the intimate connection between subjectivity and objectivity, Nishida says: "[T]he world is a living world, and in one aspect it moves itself; that is, in the world there is the aspect of the world moving itself in and through itself. Our human existence has its being in bodily existence through its functions which are related to that aspect of the self-moving world, functions that various parts of the body have in relation

to the world's movement. . . . [T]he world is a creative process. And our body is a creative element of that world." "The Historical Body," trans. David Dilworth and V. H. Viglielmo, in *Sourcebook for Modern Japanese Philosophy: Selected Documents*, ed. David A. Dilworth and Valdo H. Viglielmo (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1998), 48.

201. KrV B, 85, 352; CPR 99, 298.

202. Fichte offers an extensive exposition of the synthetic procedure in *Wissenschaftslehre*.

203. To say what a thing is implies what it is not—in Spinoza's words, *omnis determinatio est negatio* (every determination is a negation). In a letter of 2 June, 1674, Spinoza says: "Since Form is nothing else than determination and determination is negation, It can be nothing other than negation." Baruch de Spinoza, *Briefwechsel*, vol. 3 of *Sämtliche Werke* (Leipzig: Meiner, 1914), 210.

204. *Enzyklopädie*, Section 85, 181.

205. *Logik* 1:30; *Logic*, 49. Cf. *Enzyklopädie*, Section 81.

206. "A Preface to Metaphysics," trans. David A. Dilworth, in *Fundamental Problems of Philosophy*, 4, 30.

207. "A Preface to Metaphysics," 15-17, 20.

208. "A Preface to Metaphysics," 29, 30. Nishida does not tire of invoking this saying of Hegel for support.

209. "A Preface to Metaphysics," 9, 18-19. Emphasis added.

210. "A Preface to Metaphysics," 25, 30.

211. "Jitsuzai no kontei to shite no jinkaku gainen," NKZ 14:162-64.

212. "Jitsuzai no kontei to shite no jinkaku gainen," NKZ 14:165-66, 171. God's personality: *kami no jinkaku* 神の人格.

213. "Jitsuzai no kontei to shite no jinkaku gainen," NKZ 14:166. The world of expression: *hyōgen no sekai* 表現の世界.

214. "A Preface to Metaphysics," 13, 18. Continuity of discontinuities: *hirenzoku no renzoku* 非連続の連続.

215. "Jitsuzai no kontei to shite no jinkaku gainen," NKZ 14:136-39, 142. In general, Nishida regards time as a fundamental dimension of reality. This view goes back to Dōgen Kigen 道元希玄 (1200-1253), a Japanese monk philosopher of the Sōtō school of Zen Buddhism.

216. "Jitsuzai no kontei to shite no jinkaku gainen," NKZ 14:148. Personality: *jinkaku* 人格.

217. *Die Vernunft in der Geschichte*, 182. In Nishida's texts, self-determination of the eternal now: *eien no ima no jiko gentei* 永遠の今の自己限定. Self-determination of the eternal present: *eien no genzai no jiko gentei* 永遠の現在の自己限定.

218. Kosok, "The Formalization," 261. Much of the present discussion of Hegel's notion of time is indebted to Kosok's analysis.

219. *Enzyklopädie*, Section 125.

220. "The Unity of Opposites," in *Intelligibility and the Philosophy of Nothingness. Three Philosophical Essays*, trans. Robert Schinzinger (Tokyo: Maruzen, 1958), 180-81. The clarification in square brackets added. The original essay, *"Zettai mujunteki jiko dōitsu"* 絶対矛盾的自己同一, was published in 1939, now in NKZ 9:147-222.

221. "Jitsuzai no kontei to shite no jinkaku gainen," NKZ 14:140-41.

222. Absolute contradictory self-identity: *zettai mujunteki jiko dōitsu* 絶対矛盾的自己同一. At the same time as: *soku* 即. Being at the same time as nothing, nothing at the same time as being: *u-soku-mu, mu-soku-u* 有即無, 無即有.

223. The expression "contradictory self-identity" (*mujunteki dōitsu* 矛盾的同一) appears in Nishida's thought in 1927. He starts using the *soku* formula extensively in 1939. David Dilworth, "Postscript: Nishida's Logic of the East," in Nishida, *Last Writings*, 127-28.

224. *"Rekishiteki sekai ni oite no kobutsu no tachiba"* 歴史的世界に於ての個物の立場 (1938), NKZ 9:69-146.

225. A lecture originally published as *"Coincidentia oppositorum to ai"* (Coincidentia oppositorum と愛), *Mujintō* 14 (1919); now in NKZ 14:295-300. Translated into English by Michael Finkenthal in *The Eastern Buddhist* 30, no. 1 (1997): 1-12.

226. Universal principle: *ri* 理. Phenomenon: *ji* 事. Interpenetration of reason and fact: *riji muge* 理事無碍. Interpenetration of fact and fact: *jiji muge* 事事無碍.

227. *Last Writings*, 70. Suzuki 鈴木大拙 (1870-1966), a well-known author of books and essays on Buddhism and Zen, was Nishida's longtime friend. The *Diamond-sūtra* (*Vajracchedikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, 150-200 A.D.) is one of *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtras*, the foundational texts of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Another Buddhist text that argues the identity of opposites is *Avatamsaka-sūtra* (350 A.D.) associated with Hua-yen (Kegon) Buddhism. The *Diamond-* and *Avatamsaka-sūtra* philosophy was influential in Ch'an and Zen Buddhism. "Is": *soku* 即. "Is not": *soku hi* 即非.

228. "The Unity of Opposites"; NKZ 9:201, 219.

229. NKZ 11:396. Inverse correspondence: *gyaku taiō* 逆対応.

230. "Jitsuzai no kontei to shite no jinkaku gainen," NKZ 14:169-170.

231. *Logik* 2:59; *Logic*, 440. Cf. *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, in *Sämtliche Werke*, 17:328-30.

232. *Phänomenologie*, 10; *Phenomenology*, 68.

233. *Enzyklopädie*, Section 162, Addition, 309.

234. *Logik* 2:59; *Logic*, 440.

235. *Logik* 1:117; *Logic*, 129.

236. Cf. *Logik* 1:126, 2:62; *Logic*, 136-37, 443; *Enzyklopädie*, Section 81, Addition, 173.

237. *Logik* 2:243; *Logic*, 603-604.

238. *Logik* 2:240; *Logic*, 601 ff.

239. *Logik* 2:243, 259-61; *Logic*, 603-604, 618-19; *Enzyklopädie*, Section 164, 314.

240. *Enzyklopädie*, Section 119, Addition 2, 246-47; Section 223, 38.

241. *Enzyklopädie*, Section 163, Addition, 312-13.

242. Hegel, *Theologische Jugendschriften*, ed. Herman Nohl (Tübingen: Mohr, 1907). Translated into English by T. M. Knox (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948). The book is a collection of young Hegel's essays on religious themes.

243. *Logik* 2:243, 260-64; *Logic*, 603-604, 619 ff.

244. *Phänomenologie*, 104; *Phenomenology*, 182.

245. *Logik* 2:60; Logic, 439 ff; *Enzyklopädie*, Section 120, 247.

246. *Logik* 2:49; *Logic*, 432.

247. *Logik* 1:144; *Logic*, 518. Clarifications added.

248. *Logik* 2:300; *Logic*, 656.

249. Much of the present analysis is derived from Hegel's discussion of something and its other (*Etwas und Anderes*), *Logik* 1:104-16; *Logic*, 117-22, but it is broadly applicable to the entire process of Hegel's logic, from being to essence to concept. A significant part of the argument is a simplification of Kosok, "The Formalization."

250. A set of parentheses indicates a temporally determined level of discourse, or an order of reflection. When indicating a positive, affirmative result of reflection, for economy we omit the plus sign, representing (+A) simply as (A). (A) is A that has been reflected upon once; ((A)) is the reflection on (A) or the second-order reflection on A.

251. *Logik* 1:112-13, 2:49; *Logic*, 125, 432.

252. *Phänomenologie*, 99; *Phenomenology*, 174. Cf. *Logik* 2:36-37; *Logic*, 425 ff.

253. "All that is necessary to achieve scientific progress . . . is the recognition of the logical principle that the negative is just as much positive, or that what is self-contradictory does not resolve itself into a nullity, into abstract nothingness, but essentially only into the negation of its *particular* content, in other words, that such a negation is not all and every negation but the negation of a specific subject matter which resolves itself, and consequently is a specific negation, and therefore the result essentially contains that from which it results: which strictly speaking is a tautology, for otherwise it would be an immediacy, not a result. Because the result, the negation, is a *specific* negation it has a *content*. It is a fresh Notion [= concept] but higher and richer than its predecessor; for it is richer by the negation or opposite of the latter, therefore contains it, but also something more, and is the unity of itself and its opposite." *Logik* 1:35-36; *Logic*, 54. English by A. V. Miller. Clarification added.

254. Cf. Kosok, "The Formalization," 272, 274.

255. Cf. Kosok, "The Formalization," 241, 243.

256. The version of the law in propositional calculus specifies that we must have either p or ~p. Class calculus expresses the law as $a + \bar{a} = 1$, meaning "A class and its complement exhaust the universe."

257. Reasoning (*das räsonnierende Denken*) is Hegel's designation for thinking in fixed categories.

258. We are interpreting dialectical logic through categories and rules of formal logic. Hegel himself does not always shun inconsistency and incompleteness. We have discussed earlier his stand on contradiction. Regarding the law of the excluded middle, Hegel believes it is useful in that it liquefies the fixed identities of things by recognizing that everything is determined either positively or negatively. However, he thinks the law is wrong in denying the existence of the third term, or the middle element between (A) and (–A). The "middle" does exist; Hegel identifies it as the undetermined A that is neither (A) nor (–A), and by the same token both (A) and (–A). Similar to disjunctive judgment, if A is determined as (A), it is not determined as (–A), and vice versa. Original entity A posits the (A)/(–A) opposition and ultimately resolves it, for it represents unity as the ground that carries the opposites. This becomes clearer once Hegel identifies A as the unity of reflection that accounts for the opposition (*Logik* 2:56-57; *Logic*, 436 ff.). This, incidentally, explains the designation of the pairs of opposites such as up-down as "*reflexive* determinations."

259. Stated in more general terms, the two determinations of A are consistent since *as such* (taken in isolation from one another) they are both absent (false), which satisfies the condition of contrariness without contradictoriness. At the same time, they are complete since they both are negatively *present*. (A) is present negatively as –(A) or in its

dialectical meaning of being "not simply an isolated affirmation." (–A) is present negatively as –(–A) or in its dialectical meaning of being "not simply an isolated negation."

260. Cf. Kosok, "The Formalization," 254-55.

261. Cf. Kosok, "The Formalization," 283.

262. Adapted from Kosok, "The Formalization," 276-77.

263. Modified from Kosok, "The Formalization," 282.

264. Kosok, "The Formalization," 282-84.

265. *Last Writings*, 70-71. Emphasis added. "Left-wing" Hegelians are roughly equivalent to the "new" or "young" Hegelians.

266. *Einleitung in die Geschichte der Philosophie*, 227-29.

267. Schinzinger, "Introduction," in Nishida, *Intelligibility and the Philosophy of Nothingness*, 55-56.

268. *Logik* 2:53; *Logic*, 431 ff.

269. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Hegels Dialektik: Fünf hermeneutische Studien* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1971), 30.

270. " Ronri no rikai to sūri no rikai," NKZ 1:255.

271. *Hataraku mono kara miru mono e* 働くものから見るものへ (*From Acting to Seeing*), NKZ 4:6.

272. Jamie Hubbard notes such "mysterious" overtones in the Taoist logic of the nonduality of being and nonbeing: "the sameness (non-duality) of non-being and being is 'mysterious' precisely because it is beyond conceptual and linguistic differentiation." The concept of mysteriousness or "*yuan* is also central to the Japanese notion of *yūgen*, and the logic of the open-ended and reflexive infinite that informs the aesthetic notion of *yūgen* is very similar to the logic of the infinite tao." Jamie Hubbard, "Topophobia," in *Pruning the Bodhi Tree: The Storm over Critical Buddhism*, ed. Jamie Hubbard and Paul Swanson (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 92-93, 426 n. 30. In the aesthetic complex of *yūgen* 幽玄, the overtones are referred to as *yojō* 余情.

273. NKZ 8:326. After Rolf Elberfeld, *Kitaro Nishida (1870-1945). Moderne japanische Philosophie und die Frage nach der Interkulturalität* (Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1999), 153, 169 n. 2.

274. This passage was quoted earlier in connection with Fichte.

275. "Ronri no rikai to sūri no rikai," NKZ 1:255.

276. "A Preface to Metaphysics," 40.

277. "The Self and the World," 51; see also 83.

278. "Watakushi to nanji," NKZ 6:381.

279. "Jitsuzai no kontei to shite no jinkaku gainen," NKZ 14:155, 172-73. Tie together: *musubitsuku* 結び付く.

280. "Rekishiteki sekai ni oite no kobutsu no tachiba," NKZ 9:109-10. Creation: *seisaku* 制作.

281. "Rekishiteki sekai ni oite no kobutsu no tachiba," 93, 103-4. Illusory appearances: *kashō* 仮象. Things-in-themselves: *mono jitai* 物自体. Phenomena-*soku*-reality: *genshō-soku-jitsuzai* 現象即実在.

282. "The Logic of the Place of Nothingness and the Religious Worldview," 103. Emphasis added.

283. "From my perspective, each individual is in principle universal and every universal is individual. . . . In this dialectical syntax . . . having the form of an identity of contradiction . . . we become aware of our own selves through our forms of *poiesis* in the

places of interpenetration of individual and species." "The World as Identity of Absolute Contradiction," trans. David Dilworth, in *Sourcebook for Modern Japanese Philosophy*, 61-62. Despite its history going back to Kegon Buddhism, the concept of interpenetration may not be the most effective way to elucidate social phenomena.

284. Arima Tatsuo, *The Failure of Freedom: A Portrait of Modern Japanese Intellectuals* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), 11, as quoted in Bernard Faure, *Chan Insights & Oversights: An Epistemological Critique of the Chan Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 77.

285. Although Hegel is a major influence on Nishida also in these areas, he is not an exclusive one. Nishida's views on history are indebted to Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886) and many others. Cf. Woo-Sung Huh, "The Philosophy of History in the 'Later' Nishida: A Philosophic Turn," *Philosophy East and West*, 40, no. 3 (1990): 356-57, 358-59.

286. Cf. *Ippansha no jiko gentei* 一般者の自己限定 (*The Self-Determination of the Universal*, 1929), NKZ 5:401-2.

287. "The idea of pure experience which is personal also does not avoid connoting a world of intellectual objects. The world of intellectual objects neither transcends personal action nor can be thought to include it, no matter how profoundly it is conceived. Personal activity is always free in respect to it. Indeed, the world of personal action includes and grounds the world of merely intellectual objects." "A Preface to Metaphysics," 2.

288. NKZ 12:50; "Rekishiteki sekai ni oite no kobutsu no tachiba," NKZ 9:109; NKZ 12:47. Our self-consciousness: *wareware no jikaku* 我々の自覚. Ideal: *ideyateki* イデヤ的.

289. "The Historical Body," 52.

290. "But the world of simply spatial self-determination is only the natural world. It cannot be called the historical world. The historical world must be a world that includes human beings. To use a stale (*furuki* 旧き) expression, it has to be the mutual determination of subject and object, the world of their absolute contradictory self-identity." NKZ 11:434.

291. "The Unity of Opposites," 177.

292. "The Unity of Opposites," 182.

293. *Logik* 2:225; *Logic*, 824 ff.; *Einleitung in die Geschichte der Philosophie*, 80, 126, 242, 247.

294. In the Eastern context, Wang interprets the contradiction between opposites similarly as the play at their boundary. Youru Wang, *Linguistic Strategies in Daoist Zhuangzi and Chan Buddhism: The Other Way of Speaking* (London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003), 107.

295. NKZ 10:118.

296. "A Preface to Metaphysics," 24-25; NKZ 7:50, 51.

297. "A Preface to Metaphysics," 25-26; NKZ 7:52. Translation after Dilworth. Subjective: *shugoteki* 主語的.

298. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*, ed. Georg Lasson (Leipzig: Meiner, 1930), 1:31. Quoted after Hartmann, *Hegel*, 305.

299. *Ippansha no jikakuteki taikei*, NKZ 5:421. Translation from Robert Wargo, *The Logic of Nothingness: a Study of Nishida Kitarō* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 365. Nishida expresses similar appreciation in an earlier essay, "Ronri no rikai to sūri no rikai," NKZ 1:253.

300. "Hēgeru no benshōhō," NKZ 12:80. The actual: *jijitsu* 事実. Subjectivity: *shukansei* 主観性.

301. NKZ 6:99.

302. *Ippansha no jikakuteki taikei,* NKZ 5:422. Quoted after Wargo's translation in *The Logic of Nothingness*, 366. Processual dialectic: *kateiteki benshōhō* 過程的弁証法.

303. Cf. Willy Moog, *Hegel und die hegelsche Schule* (München: Ernst Reinhardt, 1930), 80.

304. Hegel, *Frühe Studien und Entwürfe 1787-1800*, ed. Inge Gellert (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1991), 585-86; after Moog, *Hegel und die hegelsche Schule*, 111.

305. *Enzyklopädie*, Section 36, Addition, 105-6.

306. *Enzyklopädie*, Section 36, Addition, 106.

307. The alternative saying comes from Hegel's *System der Philosophie* (*Enzyklopädie*), Section 465, *Sämtliche Werke* 10:359. For a cognitive determination of religious feeling, see Hegel, *Einleitung in die Geschichte der Philosophie*, 121.

308. *Phänomenologie*, 39; *Phenomenology*, 105; *Enzyklopädie*, Section 82, Addition.

309. NKZ 1:37.

310. NKZ 1:33. For a discussion of the problems with Nishida's conception of truth, see Sueki, *Nishida Kitarō* 1:133 and Peter Pörtner, *Nishida Kitarō's Zen no kenkyū ("Über das Gute")* (Hamburg: Gesellschaft fur Natur- und Volkerkunde Ostasiens, 1990), 254-55.

311. Cf. *Einleitung in die Geschichte der Philosophie*, 107.

312. Cf. *Zen no kenkyū*, NKZ 1:180-81 and "A Preface to Metaphysics," 30.

313. *Enzyklopädie*, Section 92, 197; *Logik* 1:95; *Logic* 94-95.

314. *Logik* 1:116, 124, 147; 2:62; *Logic*, 116-57, 158-59; 442-443.

315. *Logik* 1:117, 125; *Logic*, 129-131; *Enzyklopädie*, Section 45, Addition, 122-23; Section 62, Note, 149-50. Cf. Traugott Koch, *Differenz und Versöhnung; eine Interpretation der Theologie G. W. F. Hegels nach seiner "Wissenschaft der Logik"* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus G. Mohn, 1967), 45, 48, 111 ff. The infinite is not immanent in the finite. Rather, it is the sublated finite. Koch points out that interpretations such as Nikolai Hartmann's, who sees the Hegelian absolute as immanent in this world, are incorrect in missing the aspect of negativity inherent in the sublation. The aspect of negativity provides a strong argument against the charge that Hegel's philosophy is pantheistic.

316. Cf. *Logik* 1:126, 138; *Logic*, 136 ff; *Enzyklopädie*, Section 95, 202-3; Hartmann, *Hegel*, 216-17; Marcel Régnier, "Logique et théo-logique hégélienne," in *Hegel et la pensée moderne. Seminaire sur Hegel dirigé par Jean Hyppolite au College de France (1967-1968)*, ed. Jacques D'Hondt (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1970), 196-97; Kesselring, *Die Produktivität*, 314-15; Christa Hackenesch, "Wissenschaft der Logik (§§ 19-244)," in Hermann Drüe et al., *Hegels "Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften" (1830). Ein Kommentar zum Systemgrundriß* (Frankfurt am Mein: Suhrkamp, 2000), 104; Bernard Lakebrink, *Kommentar zu Hegels Logik in seiner Enzyklopädie von 1830*, 2 vols. (Freiburg and München: Alber, 1979-1985), 1:129.

317. "Hēgeru no benshōhō," 83. Being: *u* 有.

Chapter Two
Nishitani

Solidarity with others is cemented through a common set of values, beliefs, and practices. In an individual, a breakdown of solidarity manifests itself as alienation. It may result from a frustration of dependency needs or, at the other extreme, from their suppression. Whatever its cause, the breakdown leads to skepticism toward the system in which the problem originated. At the point where it extends to a rejection of shared cultural elements, alienation shades off into nihilism. The word comes from the Latin *nihil*, meaning "nothing." It is sometimes analyzed further into *ne hilum*: "not (even) a trifle." "Nothing" eludes definition. As the opposite of the entirety of being, it can be understood only from the perspective of the latter. But the only way to grasp all being is from a vantage point outside of it, i.e., from the viewpoint of "nothing." Given this logical circle, "nothing" is difficult to represent other than through the phenomena that it is believed to resemble: chaos, disease, and evil.[1] Perhaps this is why it is sometimes traced back to devil himself.[2] But despite the difficulty of capturing the nature of "nothing," the phenomenon of nihilism is relatively easy to approach. The concept has a long history and diverse definitions. We shall settle for the following one: nihilism is a denial of the validity of the unifying principle for a positive interpretation of the world, be it God, tradition, or another moral or metaphysical foundation. It implies chaos and the atrophy of the will to life. Multiple principles or interpretations may emerge in the wake of the single one that has been rejected, but they come across as relative and conventional; they lack the binding force of the original. Following the loss of a strong unifying principle, reality itself becomes derealized.

Nietzsche (1844-1900) saw in nihilism a response to uncertainties of terrestrial existence and social oppression. Disillusioned with life but lacking the force to cope with its problems, vulnerable humankind turns away from the here and now and looks for solutions beyond. It seeks salvation in God and a supernatural world. One such world, a repository of truth, beauty and goodness, was conceived in Platonism. Later, that Platonic world became a model for Christianity. In this manner, Nietzsche equates nihilism with the devaluation of life and the

attendant need for compensatory beliefs. He counts Platonism as the first nihilistic ideology. But he regards anti-Platonism as equally nihilistic. Its high point is the discovery that "God is dead."[3] Under the pressure of this positivist realization, the supernatural realm loses its credence; religious goals are discredited as unattainable and slide into obsolescence. Former adherents become disillusioned and develop a passive attitude of not wanting to want, or the will to nothing.[4] Nietzsche's classic definition of nihilism reads: "What is the meaning of nihilism?—That the top values devalue themselves. There is no goal. There is no answer to 'What for?'"[5]

Heidegger takes up the theme of nihilism in his two-volume work on Nietzsche.[6] He locates the cause of its emergence in modern times in human subjectivism, a phenomenon in which we overestimate our position in the world and take ourselves for the measure of all things. Guided by subjectivism, we force reality into a set of subject-object coordinates that reduce nature to a collection of objects under our technological control. This confrontational posture is pernicious; we ourselves fall victim to our compulsion to objectify the world, for in the end we cannot avoid seeing ourselves, too, as objects.[7]

Nishitani attended Heidegger's lectures on Nietzsche in Freiburg in the late 1930s and was strongly influenced by the philosophies of both. He traces nihilism back to the historical periods of downfall and decadence at the end of Western antiquity, during the twilight of the Middle Ages, and in Kamakura Japan torn by apocalyptic anxiety.[8] In recent times, nihilism has resurfaced in Europe and from there spread throughout the rest of the world. Nishitani ties its resurgence to the breakdown of tradition and communal values, and to the rise of modern scientific thinking which, as the antipode of religion, turns the world into the material for rational analysis and manipulation. By making an unwarranted, sharp distinction between consciousness and the world, scientific objectivism destroys our harmonious relationship with nature and our sense of belonging to a single tree of life.[9] To counter objectivism and the nihilistic attitude behind it, Nishitani advises, we must see reality as fundamentally empty of harmful distinctions. In order to realize such universal emptiness, we must undergo a deep transformation of consciousness, at the conclusion of which we shall have developed self-awareness under the principle of non-ego.[10] The transformation takes the form of a spiritual and religious passage through distinct "standpoints." The progression from one to the next constitutes the drama of development or becoming. Since Nishitani's idea of progression is a reinterpretation of Nishida's logic of place, one hears in it also echoes of *Phenomenology of Spirit* and *Science of Logic*. Nishitani may be following Hegel only indirectly, but the parallels between his sequencing of standpoints and the Hegelian dialectic of consciousness are apparent.

Nishitani distinguishes three principal standpoints, each correlated with a particular structuring of the conscious subject's relation to the world:[11]

1. *Simple positivity (the standpoint of being).* This is the mode in which we lead our everyday lives. We accept without questioning the empirical evidence that the world consists of discrete beings endowed with enduring substance. On that evidence we, as subjects, manipulate objects in our environment.

2. *Relative negativity (the standpoint of nothingness).* Life's frustrations unsettle our existential certainty and spark off doubts about the world and our place in it. Nishitani reports that his own nihilistic experience was precipitated by personal maladjustment and depression.[12] Negativity turns acute in limit situations that place us face to face with our mortality, that is,

> at those times when death, nothingness, or sin—or any of those situations that entail a fundamental negation of life, existence, and ideals, that undermine the roothold of our existence and bring the meaning of life into question—become pressing personal problems for us. This can occur through an illness that brings one face-to-face with death, or through some turn of events that robs one of what had made life worth living.[13]

In such situations, the veneer of existential stability peels off:

> Nothingness is absolute negativity with regard to the very being of all those various things and phenomena . . . death is absolute negativity with regard to life itself. . . . In the face of death and nothingness, life and existence lose their certainty and their importance as reality, and come to look unreal instead. From time immemorial man has continually expressed this fleeting transience of life and existence, likening it to a dream, a shadow, or the shimmering haze of the summer's heat.[14]

Viewed under the aspect of impermanence, reality loses coherence. Things appear to move out of themselves and become their own negatives. Our confidence in the evidence of the senses and reason dwindles; we suffer from doubt and guilt. A symptom of the world turning into nothingness is the loss of the sense of the self. We discover that life lacks an inherent existential basis and start to perceive ourselves fundamentally as nothingness. "Nihilism, first of all, must be a problem of the self. The self becomes a question, the very question in regard to its own existence."[15] The process leading up to nihilism starts with self-doubt, progresses to the search for the self, and ends with not finding it.[16] But Nishitani believes that while this result is the *ne plus ultra* of Western metaphysics, Buddhist philosophy regards it merely as a transitional, if necessary, phase of a path that extends beyond it. Buddhism understands that nihilism cannot be conquered from outside, just as it cannot meaningfully become an object of dispassionate analysis, for it is produced by the pathos of existence. Nishitani concurs that it *can* be overcome—but only from "the *leidenschaftlich* [passionate], confrontational position that Nietzsche spoke about."[17] He approaches the

problem of nihilism from the same perspective as he does all his central notions: the perspective of the search for the true self. The problem is resolved at the successful completion of the search, marked by an internal transformation of the self in which the standpoint of nothingness turns into that of absolute nothingness or emptiness.

3. *Absolute positivity equal to absolute negativity (the standpoint of absolute nothingness or emptiness).* What starts as doubt about the self and the world, ends as "the great doubt" that undermines all our preconceptions and ways of thinking. Dislodging our normal, dualistic vision, the great doubt carries us to the foundational level of existence, where we recognize that our individuality is embedded in the oneness of the world. At that point we, ordinary subjects, discover our true nature that both encompasses and transcends the ordinary. We are cured of negativity not by escaping the frustrations that caused it, but rather by seeing them from a new perspective. What emerges is "the great reality" or emptiness: "Only after passing through those purgative fires and breaking through the nothingness that makes itself present at the ground of the ego, can the reality of the *cogito* and the *sum,* together with the reality of all things, truly appear as real."[18]

According to Nishitani, the standpoint of emptiness represents a breakthrough to the state in which reality is experienced "directly" rather than—as in the first two orientations—filtered through the structures of conceptual thought. Its standpoint is neither a subjective perspective nor an object of consciousness. Emptiness is, rather, a non-substantial point, place, or level of absolute unity prior to the bifurcation into subject and object.[19] To describe that unity, Nishitani likens emptiness to the true self in the "middle." The true self is both subject and object, and neither in isolation from the other: in the true self, by approaching one, we arrive at the other. Yet, while forming a fundamental identity within the true self, subject and object present themselves, still, as a pair of opposites. They unite and interpenetrate while remaining distinct. In emptiness, all things reveal themselves in their "primal actuality," and the world is rediscovered in its pristine, original form—as "truly so."[20] Just as the original self is reborn from the no-self that is the real face of the objectified self, so emptiness arises from the nothingness that has negated the reality of empirical being. In emptiness, all things reveal themselves as void of the exclusivity that is a feature of being. They appear as completely interdependent.

Nishitani does not interpret emptiness negatively as a power that obliterates finite things, but rather positively as the bottomless or infinite character of finitude. Emptiness negates not life but only its false appearance, and in this sense it enriches and deepens life. Perhaps echoing Heidegger's notion of "being toward death,"[21] Nishitani states that one realizes the fullness of being only by understanding it against nothing: "Only by taking a decisive stand in this abysmal nothingness can the human being become a truly free, independent being, a

being that is truly itself."[22] Taking that stand, consciousness liberates itself from the grips of nihilism.

The acutely felt problem of nihilism leads Nishitani to the postulate of emptiness as enhancement of being. At a more concrete level, he seeks to exploit the interplay of two truths, absolute (the truth of emptiness) and relative (the truth of being), in a way that brings value and meaning back to human life. In the previous chapter, we saw Nishida unsuccessfully grapple with the question of two truths and their asymmetry. As a way to prepare the ground for a discussion of Nishitani's perspective on Hegel, we look at his own approach to that question. It comes into good view in his accounts of double exposure and original nature. We examine each in turn.

Emptiness as Double Exposure

Nishitani seeks a theoretical basis for bringing the individual back from a nihilistic withdrawal. To that purpose, he tries to demonstrate the depth, and through it the worth, of life by presenting it in the perspective of two forms of nothingness: relative negativity (nonbeing) and emptiness. In this section, we focus on the relation between being and nonbeing; in the next, we look at that between being and emptiness.

Nishitani says: "In truth, reality itself is two-layered. A hundred years hence, not one of the people now walking in Ginza will be alive. . . . We can look at the living as they walk full of health down the Ginza and see, in double exposure, a picture of the dead."[23] He is not simply juxtaposing the present with the anticipated future. He is trying to represent reality truthfully by bringing together its two polar aspects, life and death:

> [S]pirit, personality, life, and matter all come together and lose their separateness. They appear like the various tomographic plates of a single subject. Each plate belongs to reality, but the basic reality is the superimposition of all the plates into a single whole that admits to being represented layer by layer. . . . In the same sense, the aspect of life and the aspect of death are equally real, and reality is that which appears now as life and now as death. It is *both* life and death, and at the same time is *neither* life nor death.[24]

On the one hand, Nishitani sees "the basic reality" as "a single whole"; on the other, that single entity produces diverse aspects under which it presents itself to us. To demonstrate that the aspects are contradictory, Nishitani refers to them through statements such as "illusory while truly real," "freedom as the inner necessity to act," the Nishidian "being-*soku*-nothing and nothing-*soku*-being,"[25] or, in the first quotation of this section, "look at the living . . . and see . . . a picture of the dead." The self-contradictory formula that he uses with

particular fondness is "A through not-A" ("A-*soku hi*-A"), which can be expanded to "A is not A, therefore it is A." For example, "nirvāna is nirvāna only because it is not nirvāna," "fire is not fire, therefore it is fire," and "self is non-self, therefore it is self."[26] After the conjunctive form used in these example, he names the pattern "the logic of *soku hi*."[27] Its core consists of the postulate that the empirical A is not the true A but merely its aspect; only by realizing this do we come to grasp the true A. Alternatively, the truth of A consists in the realization that the apparent A is not the real A.[28] Out of this postulate Nishitani distills the empirical view of the world, which he calls "life," and the view of the falsity of that empirical view, which carries the name "death." The two views are mutually exclusive, each laying absolute claim to reality: "Life remains life to the very end, and death remains death, they both become manifest in any given thing and therefore . . . the aspect of life and the aspect of death in a given thing can be superimposed in such a way that both become *simultaneously* visible."[29] The "aspects" are the ways things *manifest* themselves to us, or our ways to *look at* them. "Looked at fundamentally, from the ground where each of them [i.e., life and death] presents itself in its own nature such as it is, they stand in absolute contradistinction to one another, as 'eternal' or 'absolute' life and death."[30]

We pause for a moment of reflection. If "life" and "death" are our standpoints or views of reality, then their contradictoriness presents a practical question: how do we manage to hold two opposite views at the same time? The task is difficult but perhaps not impossible; the following three examples seem to confirm the plausibility of such concurrence. The first comes from gestalt psychology, which considers that an object and its background coexist within a single gestalt.[31] They can even be interchanged, with the object becoming the background and vice versa. This is illustrated by Edgar Rubin's well-known figure, reproduced below, in which the perspective revealing a black vase against the white background complements the view of two white faces separated by the black background.

Figure 2.1 Edgar Rubin's figure.

The second familiar example is the psychological state of ambivalence that consists in the simultaneous presence of two opposing emotions toward the same person or object. The third example is drawn from Hegel's philosophy, where a triad of assertion, negation and self-negation is produced in a single act of reflec-

tion (determination). These examples work toward convincing us about the idea of double (or triple) exposure. Even so, the evidence they bring forth is less unambiguous than it appears to be; a closer look will be disillusioning. In Rubin's figure, at a given moment one perceives either the vase or the faces, but not the vase and the faces at once. The object cannot be recognized as an object while the background is perceived as another object. In the second example, each of the conflicting feelings arises in response to a different aspect of the object which evokes them, and is experienced one at a time. In the third, since a determination occurs at a specific stage of consciousness, the character of the entire triad is determined by the general cognitive possibilities of that stage. These possibilities constitute an overall given perspective or form of thinking. The three steps arise simultaneously, but there can only be one triad, or perspective, at a time; no disparate types of triad—more precisely, no two stages or perspectives—can concur. A later perspective is an irreversible transformation of an earlier one, making it impossible to readopt the latter in the original form.[32] Although one may remember one's earlier beliefs, it is impossible to *hold* them again once they have been invalidated by those that took their place. Our standpoint at a given time is absolute in the sense of excluding all other standpoints. Although we are capable of examining multiple points of view *in abstracto*, we can adopt them as our own only sequentially, one at a time.

If anything, the three examples have shaken our confidence in the possibility of synchronous standpoints. This result casts a shadow on Nishitani's claim of double exposure. Fortunately, his own philosophy offers an opportunity for an alternative interpretation. To see the world in terms of life and being is a function of the standpoint of simple positivity. To look at the living as dead and at the world as void is the standpoint of nothingness. As abstract levels of reality or categories of existence, the two may well be synchronous or, better yet, atemporal. But as levels of realization, that is, as standpoints, each is attained at a particular time. Nishitani himself speaks of a temporal *process* in which one field or standpoint evolves into another. The standpoint of emptiness can emerge only from that of nothingness; the latter, in turn, is a reaction to the standpoint of simple positivity.[33] Emergence and reaction are events that occur in a certain order. One follows another, and each has a temporal duration. How does the postulate of double exposure square with this sequential movement?

Nishitani does not give a direct answer, but he points in its direction. Although the images of pedestrians in Ginza and the superimposed tomographic plates draw attention to the simultaneous presence of life and death, he also takes into account their simultaneous absence. In the text quoted above, Nishitani speaks of "*both* life and death, and at the same time *neither* life nor death." Applied to reality, the conjunction "both . . . and" expresses its iridescent and rich but contradictory nature. The contradictoriness is underscored by the fact that each of the opposite aspects makes an *exclusive* claim to represent the total reality. They cannot be reconciled; neither can be true to the full extent of the

claim. This conclusion amounts to a disjunctive conjunction "neither . . . nor" implying that truth surpasses all dualities, including that of life and death. One can perhaps call it "double non-exposure." The "neither . . . nor" highlights the unobjectifiable nature of truth. It underscores the need to transcend the dichotomizing mode innate to human rationality. A further implication is that neither the life- nor the death-aspect *alone* mirror reality adequately; both are required to form its complete image. But this result takes us back to the simple conjunction. We are caught in an endless alternation between "both . . . and" and "neither . . . nor." Other than stating that one alternative is true "at the same time" as the other, Nishitani does not offer a suggestion as to how to resolve the contradiction. On the contrary, in the space of a single paragraph he presents us with two further riddles. First, aspects of true reality manifest themselves in alternation (reality "appears *now* as life and *now* as death"), but at the same time, they "can be superimposed in such a way that both become *simultaneously* visible." Secondly, the diversity of the aspects is both dissolved ("spirit, personality, life, and matter all come together and *lose their separateness*") and preserved ("various tomographic plates . . . represented *layer by layer.*") These contradictions themselves can be counted as instances of double exposure. They call for an explanation. Since Nishitani does not supply one, we must pursue it ourselves. The key to their understanding lies in the conjunction "at the same time." Its roots go back to the concept of absolute contradictory self-identity developed by Nishida. When laying down its theoretical basis, Nishida availed himself extensively of Hegel's speculative logic. We shall follow in his footsteps in our analysis of Nishitani's teaching of double exposure, confident that our decision to draw Hegel into the discussion is justified by an authentic, if circuitous, historical connection.

On account of an endless alternation between the modes of "both . . . and" and "neither . . . nor," the dynamic of double exposure appears to leave the opposition between being and nonbeing unresolved, forcing consciousness into an undefined state without a standpoint. But a supposition of such state is untenable; consciousness as such *is* a standpoint. Nishitani himself is mindful of this point when recognizing the subjective aspect of logical constructions. He insists that the logic of *soku hi* does not involve contradictory *propositions*, in the sense of a syllogism with "A" and "not-A" as the premises and "A" again as the conclusion. It expresses an *existential* realization: "The self-identity of this unity *cannot be a self-identity in the objective sense*, since nothing objective can be constituted out of contradictory elements. . . . An *understanding* is only possible existentially, through immediate *experience* within human Existenz."[34] The immediate experience Nishitani refers to is the *realization* we make of the deeper meaning of a paradox. This confirms our earlier conclusion that the resolution of absolute contradictory self-identity is the state into which consciousness is driven by the need to recuperate inner clarity. From the perspective of the contradictories, their resolution represents a special, *dialectical* synthesis; from

the perspective of consciousness defending its principles—in this case, the principle of non-contradiction—it constitutes a unique experience that establishes a new standpoint. To understand its nature, we go back to Hegel's dialectical model, in which conscious reflection marches forward in the rhythm of alternating incompleteness and inconsistency. In the course of this process, the determinative modes of being and nonbeing at various levels recede into the past. As they do, they are added to the content of our memory. In the sense of having lost their currency, they transition into the category of "neither . . . nor." Successive depositions to memory build a structure akin to Nishitani's superimposed tomographic plates that represent reality "layer by layer." The obverse side of the growth of memory (content) is the evolution of the form. While being and nonbeing are transferred out of active consciousness, their shuttling movement is sublated as a metarelation or a boundary condition in which they imply one another, expressing two possible determinations of the indeterminate totality from which they derive. A new metarelation serves as the basis for a new form. To use Nishitani's example, the act of reflection on reality—on the pedestrians in Ginza—consists in the movement from life to death, i.e., from being to nonbeing, which creates the complex of being → nonbeing. In parallel, a larger movement takes place from the mode of affirmation of that complex ("both . . . and") to its negation ("neither . . . nor"). The boundary between the modes intimates the Buddhist tenet of emptiness of emptiness: it represents reality in a way in which everything up to and including its own emptiness appears absurd and cancels itself out.

In this manner, Hegel's science of consciousness allows for various forms of double—indeed, multiple—exposure occurring in the past, that is, in the content of consciousness. As the content becomes finely articulated, it "exposes" increasingly more layers and categories, both horizontally and vertically. But is this complex formation of past experiences ever actualized in the present? Are the conflicting facets of reality simultaneously exposed also in the *subjective* form of consciousness? We can answer this question only by approximation. In parallel with the progressive structuring of the content, consciousness which reflects itself in it recognizes itself in that reflection with increasing clarity. At the stage of perfect self-knowledge, the identification is complete. Consciousness is now transparently reflected in the entirety of its content. It sees itself in the richness of all its standpoints, as a spectrum of interpenetrating and multiply exposed fields. In Nishitani's terms, in that state emptiness reflects itself in the totality of empirical reality. To paraphrase an old Buddhist saying, the form of reality becomes emptiness and emptiness becomes the form. Since in this special state the normal laws of consciousness are surpassed, we—from our perspective of ordinary subjects bound by normalcy—are not in a position to grasp its structure so as to prove or confirm the postulate of double exposure.[35] Nevertheless, the assumption of the ultimate self-reflection of consciousness renders the postulate more plausible, since with Hegel's help we can at least fathom the process

that leads to it. But the consideration of the process goes beyond Nishitani's own treatment of the subject. The developmental perspective does not play a significant role in his approach, which makes double exposure something of an ideal paradigm of reality, an eternal law, a mysterious apparition without history.

Original Nature and Its Problems

The ambiguous position of development in Nishitani's notion of double exposure has wider implications. It carries over to his thinking about the relation between the everyday world and true reality. We are ready to examine another facet of Nishitani's philosophy where that ambiguity comes to the fore.

Nishitani reminds us tirelessly that the standpoint of emptiness emerges in the wake of the realization of *original* nature.[36] Original nature is the timeless, true reality in the category of Nishida's *jikaku*. In order to realize it, consciousness must move forward. "[T]his reality and our apprehension of it are made possible not by returning from the field of nothingness to the field of rational consciousness, but only by advancing from the field of nothingness to arrive at a field where things and the self appear in their real nature, where they are *realized*."[37] Nishitani appears to deny the backward direction of the movement of realization, but at a closer look, what he is denying is the return *to the field of rational consciousness* (the standpoint of simple positivity), not return as such. The "field where things and the self appear in their real nature" is eternal emptiness; it is also part of our own nature. It can neither be reached within the stream of time, nor created. Since it has always been there, we can only realize it *again*.

The advancement (attainment or development) view emphasizes the acquired character of original nature. The return (*re*cuperation) view points to its inherent, innate, or original aspect. As is apparent from the following passage, Nishitani does not commit exclusively to either view: "Here [in the dimension of original nature,] *working* and *playing* turn back to the *doing* that takes place on this shore, prior to their differentiation; but at the same time, they come to appear as events emerged into their nature from the other shore, beyond those differentiations. Both working and playing become manifest fundamentally and at bottom as sheer, elemental doing."[38] "Doing" is associated with the standpoint of emptiness. In their essential aspect, work and play are joined within the original unity of "doing." Nishitani uses the expression "this shore" to refer to the phenomenal world viewed in intellectual innocence unmarred by reflection. The "other shore" represents the world seen in the awakened state or fundamental insight (*kenshō*). Between them lies the realm of discernment, which organizes reality according to its concepts. "Doing," for example, is differentiated here into "working" and "playing." Unity can be achieved through a swim to either shore; but what is accomplished in either case is the restoration of the original,

essential, and elemental, rather than the achievement or development of something new. This longing after restoration reflects another major paradigm of Nishitani's vision of the world: phenomenal manifestations are what they really are only by virtue of conforming to their essence or ground.[39] This paradigm comes to expression specifically in the dynamic of the self, the pure nature of which comes into view only when the self-centered ego—the sphere of rationality that is the medium of manifest things—has been penetrated and swept aside.[40] The pure, natural self is the way we originally are:

> The self-conscious, self-centered self we usually take for the self—namely, the "ego"—is not grounded in itself. The *original self* within the ego as the home-ground of the ego is, at bottom, ecstatic. The essence of the ego is not of the ego. . . . The reason ego can emerge at all can only lie in the essential nature of ego itself, and yet in its emergence that same ego always comes to appear as something that obscures its own ground of being and its own true nature.[41]

The self-centered ego is born from the essentially pure, original self only to obscure and contradict it. Unhelpfully, Nishitani's explanation of this paradox is exhausted by the conjunction "and yet." The ambiguity of the relation between the essential base and its phenomenal manifestations that work against it, and the associated lack of clear differentiation between return and advance in search of the origin, are something Nishitani shares with the East Asian Buddhist way of thinking referred to as *hongaku* thought. *Hongaku* means intrinsic or original enlightenment. The doctrine states that regardless of the depth of their submergence in delusion, all beings (a notion sometimes implying the entire universe) are inherently enlightened. Its *locus classicus* is *Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna*, an apocryphal text composed in China in the second half of the sixth century A.D. *Hongaku* thought was embraced by many schools of Buddhism in China and Japan, providing the basis for concepts such as *dharma*-nature, one mind, *tathāgatagarbha*, and Buddha nature.[42]

A weak point of the doctrine of *hongaku* lies in accounting for the presence of ignorance or delusion in the midst of original, preexisting and universal, enlightenment.[43] In light of the universality of enlightenment, delusion—which in Nishitani's view is a natural product of the standpoint of simple positivity—must be counted among its aspects or manifestations, just as normal perception of the phenomenal world (conventional or relative truth) is an aspect of the emptiness-based view (ultimate truth). But the converse relation does not hold; ultimate truth cannot be fully grasped in relative terms. For the deluded—those who cannot fully appreciate the universal ambit of enlightenment—their state of non-enlightenment presents a problem precisely because it is qualitatively distinct from enlightenment.[44] Indeed, as divided on the question of the relation between them, the two perspectives themselves (one based in enlightenment, the other in delusion) *are* different from one another. It is ineffective to subsume delusion under enlightenment, diagnosing the distinction between them, itself, as

a delusion, for this higher-level delusion is only the first in an endless chain: its own distinctness from enlightenment will have to be rejected, again, as only a delusion. Fresh proof is required at every level of reflection. This phenomenon can be termed the persistence of asymmetry, whereby two perspectives are identical when viewed from one of them, but different when observed from the other. No matter how many levels one may pass, the difference between the two perspectives replicates itself from one level to the next, standing in the way of the realization of the original unity and challenging the integrity of the *hongaku* doctrine.

In *hongaku* thought, original (or ultimate) enlightenment lights a spark of motivation (initial enlightenment) in a deluded person, and then drives the aspirant to the achievement of itself, original enlightenment. Exempt, as it were, from the constraints of ignorance and delusion, enlightened mind allows the impossible to happen: it lets deluded mind, through the use of deluded thinking, break through its own delusion and dissolve it. In Nishitani's version, similarly, emptiness or the original self conceived as the base or essence enables consciousness at the level of simple positivity (the self-centered ego), transforms it into a consciousness of nothingness, and leads it further to emptiness (that is, to itself). Nishitani explains this in the manner of *hongaku* thought: emptiness at the base of the ordinary world is both beyond the world and inherent in it.[45] Following this line of reasoning, he speaks of Buddha nature as "informing all creatures" in the manner of *imago Dei*. Buddha nature is the essence that projects itself onto phenomena; but the latter, while distinct from essence, are at the same time its actualizations or manifestations.[46] Disappointingly, this is more a restatement of the *hongaku* problem than its solution. In contrast with Nishitani's restraint in this respect, in the hands of Hegel, the analysis of the *progress toward the origin* achieves a high level of complexity. It is, then, to *his* philosophy that we now turn in search for the illumination of the problem of asymmetry in Nishitani's view of emptiness.

If, in Nishitani's view, the true self (original nature) constitutes the ego and things in their essence, helping them become explicitly what they really are, this way of thinking presents a parallel to Hegel's conception of absolute spirit, insofar as the latter posits itself in the beginning as pure being (*das reine Sein*) in order to develop through it into what being essentially is—the realized, fulfilled being (*das erfüllte Sein*) at the end.[47] According to Hegel, the absolute can fulfill itself only through the forward movement of this development. Early in his philosophical career, he abandons the idea that the initial immediacy of experience can be recovered through simple regress or return to the origin. In parallel, he rejects the theory of intuition (*Anschauung*) or direct insight into the absolute, advanced by Schelling—a theory accepted in substance by Nishitani.[48] Hegel believes that immediacy is possible only through mediation—only when it is *understood* or *determined to be* immediate. This does not invalidate immediacy; it does redefine it. Understanding and determination are functions of compre-

hension (*Verstand*). Comprehension does not fall outside the absolute dimension; on the contrary, it is a tool the absolute categorically needs in order to realize itself as immediate. There is nothing in the absolute that cannot be traced back to the finite categories of comprehension making up the relative world.[49] The self-realization of the absolute as fulfilled being is possible only after the absolute has reflected on itself in all its relative predicates, determinations and categories, and only through that reflection. Reflecting mediation, aiming at recapturing the immediate, charts the course of *Science of Logic* from start to finish. The fully true—fully thought-through—concept of the absolute emerges only at the end of the course, from the point of view of its entirety. Upon reaching that point, it is realized that the absolute is the totality of the sublated categories, and that it is the absolute itself that realizes it. Only as such totality can the absolute be truly absolute. Conversely, through this process, the sublated categories become instances of fulfilled being—or, in Nishitani's terms, things as they really are. Hegel's *Logic* dissolves intuition into a dialectic of categorial concepts. The creation and subsequent sublation of these concepts are conditions for the emergence of truth in the structures of human mind. This may perhaps be compared to Dōgen's finding that original enlightenment must be mediated through practice, which is an activity conducted in finite time and space.[50] Through the sublation of our delusions that express themselves in finite categories, we come to understand ourselves as a means of the self-realization of the absolute—whereby we rise above our finitude.[51]

This metaphysical scheme helps explain the bidirectional nature of development. In the universe of Hegelian dialectic, the real thing is not the object corresponding to an individual concept, but rather a concept *understood* as such, i.e., as a subjective concept. That is why, in order to eliminate its own falsification of things, consciousness must move forward, to a deeper understanding; it would be ineffective for it to regress to the point prior to the emergence of a given conceptual comprehension. Yet, the regressive tendency is not entirely absent, for the forward movement of consciousness is conditioned by its reflection on its own assumptions, origin, and structure. Hegel describes the motion of consciousness not only as synthetic, advancing by virtue of its original unity and universality, but also as analytical, whereby the immediate concept is differentiated into a series of oppositions, and so mediated and rendered specific.[52] Looking forward, the form of consciousness continues to extend its state of unity; looking back, it sees itself as mediated into content.[53] In fact, the regressive aspect of mental progression is not limited to an analytical look back into the static past. Development and forward movement involve active dismantling of concepts previously believed in as truth.[54] Such dismantling is necessary for the preservation of the consistency and continuity of the cognitive apparatus as a whole. Emergence of new structures (subjective forms of consciousness) must be balanced by the corresponding adjustment of previous ones—previous forms, now converted into layers of content. These layers are reconstructed by

being extended and universalized.[55] Thus, development proceeds not only forward, but also backward, in the sense that it requires constant reformulation and deepening of the previous points of view. In the actual process of development, immediate experience precedes the mediated; but it is confirmed as immediate only *retro*actively, through *pro*gression from the immediate to the analysis of the conditions or state of its immediacy—and so, through mediation.[56] Akin to Aristotle and Schelling before him, Hegel considers that in knowledge, the first is the last, or that the first in the order of development is the last in the sequence of reflection.[57] Mind's full insight into its own primary conditions and assumptions—into its first (earliest) ontological foundations—comes last, i.e., it becomes possible only in the latest stages of maturity.[58] From the perspective of early stages, ruled by immediacy, future mediation has yet no meaning; the mediated or derived character of the beginning cannot yet be anticipated.[59] This presents an issue for *hongaku* thought, and in general, for all goal-directed mental progression. Striving consciousness pursues a goal, yet it will know it fully only after having achieved it. Only then will consciousness understand the real significance of the beginning as the beginning *of development*, or as a manifestation of that which set the development in motion.

From the Hegelian perspective, the question of whether the unity of subject and object is original or a result of a *re*unification is answered differently depending on whether our point of view is objective or subjective. Nishitani's scheme of standpoints or fields, as well, can be viewed, in the Hegelian manner, from two angles. One is the perspective of emptiness represented by Nishitani himself, comparable to the omniscient phenomenologist in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. From this angle, Nishitani ranks the three standpoints according to the degree to which they approximate reality: emptiness, nothingness, being. As the ground of the other standpoints, emptiness is *the* realization of reality; the other standpoints are deviations, or at best, partial realizations or expedients.[60] This hierarchy of standpoints with emptiness at the base is constructed in the order opposite to that in which the standpoints are realized or actualized by developing consciousness. The perspective of the latter is the other angle from which to look at the standpoints. As Nishitani shows eloquently in connection with the problematic of nihilism, from that perspective, the order of the standpoints follows that of their actualization: being, *then* nothingness, and *finally*, emptiness. Unlike in the omniscient view where it is the foundation, here emptiness occupies only the third place in the sequence. Combining the two views, one discovers that the road to emptiness ends at the point that coincides with its origin—each, of course, in a different respect.[61] Although this discovery does not eliminate the asymmetry of perspectives, it points in the right direction by giving the temporal-developmental aspect its due weight. This even distribution of emphasis is truer for Hegel than for Nishitani. At least on one level, Hegel develops a vision of the absolute by starting from the world of being and by comprehending that world. Nishitani, on the other hand, tilts the balance toward

the omniscient perspective. Although he grants the world of being a place within his scheme of reality, in his postulate of the identity of the ultimate and being he starts with emptiness and descends (perhaps better, condescends) toward the world of being rather than treating them as coequal. This imbalance complements his tendency to reify emptiness as a base or essence. Both vitiate his metaphysical circle, in which emptiness is the *prius* but must reveal itself as such through development in time, and exacerbate the problem of asymmetry. To paraphrase Hegel's reference to "bad infinity," they determine Nishitani's doctrine as "bad *hongaku*."

Armed with these conclusions concerning Nishitani's philosophy, we are now ready to proceed to his critique of Hegel.

Between Emptiness and the Dead Head: Nishitani's Critique of Hegel

Nishitani did not make direct use of Hegel's philosophy on Nishida's scale. He also did not produce a substantial work on it until he was seventy-nine.[62] But this abstention should not be taken as a sign of indifference. Frequent if unsystematic references to Hegel throughout Nishitani's work demonstrate a degree of familiarity with his thought that could only be attained through sustained study and reflection. The analytical depth Nishitani reaches in his late monograph on Hegel supports this inference. His interest in Hegel is readily understandable. As Nishida's follower, Nishitani could not remain unaffected by the strong imprint of Hegel's thought on Nishida's philosophy.

What is Nishitani's understanding of Hegel, and what does it tell us about his own philosophy? Three texts from various points in his career help answer this question: an extended reference to Hegel in "Questioning Nishida: Reflection on Three Critics," an essay dating from 1936;[63] a short section in *The Self-Overcoming of Nihilism*;[64] and "*Prajñā* and Reason," the monograph of 1979.[65] As much as the fragmentary nature of the first two sources permits to observe, Nishitani's view of Hegel remained unchanged over the period spanning the three publications. Taking advantage of this constancy, we forgo a chronological presentation of the texts and follow instead the underlying themes.

It is clear that the absolute and its embodiment as absolute spirit occupy a position of choice in Hegel's metaphysics, but there is little agreement about what exactly they are. Depending on the interpreter, definitions range from omnipresent divine substance to the process of reality; from world reason to human consciousness; from infinity to the essence or totality of the finite. Nishitani takes one of the common positions on Hegelian spirit: "In Hegel's absolute religion (Christianity), God is manifest as spirit. . . . At the basis of this scheme lies the Christian religion with its Revelation of God in history and its belief in the

communion of the divine and the human in spirit. It is here that Hegel's philosophy culminates, in a truth whose content realizes itself most fully in philosophy and religion."[66] For Hegel as a Christian thinker, Nishitani believes, a natural starting point is the rupture between humankind and God. This makes repairing that rupture the central task of his philosophy. Hegel executes that task by attempting to evolve the standpoint of human logic to the level of absolute (God's) knowledge.[67] This ultimate purpose, Nishitani says, imparts Hegel's metaphysics a teleological character. Human knowledge begins in a state external to God, but after passing through various forms of existence, it unites with its divine object and sees it "from the inside," i.e., knows it directly. Therewith, it becomes absolute. Every form of knowledge emerges by transcending the previous one. The transcendence is an act of negation, but its result, a new form, represents an affirmation. The entire process begins with being, the first form or category in *Science of Logic*. This is not agreeable to Nishitani, who takes this introductive position of being as an indication of its foundational importance in Hegel's metaphysics. Indeed, Hegel's philosophy not only begins with being; it continues and ends with it as well. Since, as Nishitani knows from Scholastic philosophy, God is the highest form of being, in his mind Hegel's crowning of his system with divine knowledge confirms the inadmissible centrality of being in his thought.[68]

Hegel's failing manifests itself in diverse ways. His God is not only a consummate being; He also plays the role of reason in world history. Divine reason dominates the world to the extent of marginalizing, suppressing, or destroying the human individual.[69] In "Questioning Nishida," Nishitani depicts Hegel's "cunning of reason" (*List der Vernunft*) as a device through which "the world reason has taken over [the] passions [of the individual] for its own aims, sacrificing the individual in order to actualize itself. As soon as the aim in question is satisfied, the individual falls to the ground like an empty shell left behind by a ripened seed."[70] Hegel's postulate of the cunning of reason "clearly reduces the autonomy and freedom of the individual to an inner necessity."[71] In a later work, Nishitani brands what he sees as Hegel's partiality for the non-individual or ideal (God) in even stronger terms: he equates the idea (*Idee*) squarely with eternal essence. This comes as a surprise since, as we recall, the very point of the Hegelian *Idee* is to transcend any kind of eternal essence by expressing the identity of consciousness with objective phenomena. In contrast, in Nishitani's reading, the idea dominates the temporal dimension as an ahistorical, divine principle: it is a legacy of the Platonic notion of the true, timeless world behind the temporal one of creation. Seen from that perspective, things for Hegel are but illusory appearances (*Schein*), God's projection or reflection (*Scheinen*) within Himself. God as essence (*Wesen*) is the ground (*Grund*) of the appearances; the latter return into the ground where they perish (*gehen zu Grunde*).[72] In short, the only real entity in Hegel's system is God—everything else is a mirage. Nishitani feels that this lopsided perspective compromises the consistency of

Hegel's teleology. What Nishitani finds "obscure" and "hard to understand"[73] is that while, uncontroversially, the teleological process reflects human spirit's drive to self-perfection, Hegel defines the self-perfecting entity at the same time as the other *within* the absolute, i.e., as a provisionally externalized aspect *of the absolute* itself. This immanence of the other poses a conceptual problem. As an offshoot of the absolute, individual human spirit must be, likewise, absolute; the knowledge it embodies cannot be imperfect. Yet, its absoluteness is compromised by the way Hegel structures his system: "To begin [*Science of Logic*] with "being" is, so to speak, a standpoint of the preeminence of content. But from [Hegel's] point of view of knowledge as such, [it] is frankly problematic. Knowledge as such should not be conditioned by content. Knowledge should represent a position involving a certain absolute independence from all that is to know."[74] Nishitani holds that since incipient knowledge is immediately confronted with being ("content"), it cannot be absolute; it must be relative human knowledge operating within the constraints of the subject-object dichotomy. Is, then, the knowledge that evolves toward God human or absolute? Hegel, Nishitani suggests, tries to bypass the problem by endowing thinking, particularly philosophical thinking, with a double capacity: thinking knows the absolute simultaneously from within (because, from the definition of the absolute, nothing can be external to it) and from without (because the externality of the known is a condition of knowing). Nishitani sees this epistemological concurrence reflected in the ambiguity of the term *zuschauen*, which he interprets as seeing a thing as it is, from its interior, and simultaneously from an external point of view.[75] But the Hegelian *zuschauen* does not dispose of the difficulty. In Nishitani's opinion, neither of its two meanings is defensible. If human knowledge is part of the absolute, it must be the latter that develops in it. This leads to the problem of Archimedes' fulcrum. Archimedes reportedly said: "Give me a place to stand and with a lever I will move the whole world."[76] Applied to Hegel's philosophy, this means that as long as human consciousness is part of God's, it cannot be moved toward it. For that, it would require an external "place to stand," i.e., existential independence. This brings one to the second meaning of *zuschauen*: knowing the absolute from without. This interpretation does satisfy Archimedes' condition by assuming an external, independent position of the moved with respect to the mover. But the independence of the human being from the absolute also underscores the fundamental, unbridgeable difference between the two. Human consciousness is relative and imperfect. As such, how can it aspire to ever unite with its object, which is nonrelative and perfect? If it tries to overcome the gulf of separation by making itself absolute, it will negate its own, finite nature. Instead of perfect knowledge, it will then reach its death.[77] Either way, Hegel's scheme, as Nishitani interprets it, makes it logically impossible for the individual to know God.

A larger question stemming from this aporia concerns the general epistemological possibility of perfect knowledge—knowledge that has wholly overcome

the separateness of the knower and the known.[78] In Nishitani's view, Hegel fails to approach that question productively. Nishitani commends him for relativizing common ratiocination, in that Hegel regards it as but a stepping stone to a higher plane of consciousness. But, according to Nishitani, this is also where Hegel's philosophy reaches its limit. Hegel understands that higher mental plane as a standpoint of speculative reason.[79] Nishitani does not believe in the special epistemological status of Hegelian "speculation" that would make it equal to perfect or absolute knowledge. In order to lift itself to the level of absolute knowledge, rationality would have to surpass itself, which—due to the problem of Archimedes' fulcrum—it cannot do. Hegel's fixation on being, which is necessarily external to consciousness, and its ramifications for his conception of knowledge, lead Nishitani to conclude that dialectical or speculative logic does not essentially differ from formal ratiocination. He disputes Hegel's ability to advance beyond rational, finite knowledge. Because dialectical logic starts with the assumption of the subject contemplating an external object, it can never reach *prajñā*, which is wisdom transcending the subject-object divide. Dialectical logic retains the subject-object perspective through all stages of development, including the final one of *noesis noeseos*. As stated earlier, that Aristotelian notion describes the standpoint of the absolute unity of knowing and being, one where absolute knowledge knows itself as absolute knowledge.[80] Nishitani argues that the knowledge represented by *noesis noeseos* cannot in fact be absolute. It is, rather, a consummation of ordinary logic: while knowing in that state *is proclaimed* to be identical with the known, the proclamation itself is issued from the logic-centered standpoint of the subject, the standpoint of thinking.[81] When asserting the dissolution of the subject-object duality, Hegel upholds it through that very assertion. Nishitani sees reflections of this basal duality at every step of Hegel's philosophy—in the opposition between form and content, logic and nature, spirit and history, as well as—more generally—between the divine and the human, or the universal and the individual. The duality precludes the human mind from reaching the absolute, dooming Hegel's Christian mission of the reconciliation with God and the expiation of original sin.[82] More generally, Hegel's failure is the heritage of what for Nishitani is the original sin of Western philosophy: its confidence in being, in rational thought, and in the ability to know one through the other. If we accept Nishitani's interpretation of Hegel, we shall have to admit that the latter's notion that God is being, absolute yet in need of perfection, is incomprehensible;[83] that the status of the individual as a marionette in the hands of the absolute undercuts the possibility of human-divine reconciliation; and that the divisive subject-object perspective precludes a true unity of form (human knowledge or consciousness) and content (being). As an exegesis of Christian doctrine, for which Nishitani takes it to be, Hegel's philosophy appears to be riddled with contradictions. But to what extent does Hegel in fact fit Nishitani's image of him as a theologian?

In his youth, Hegel studied at the Tübingen Seminary, and for the rest of his life he remained a religious man. In a letter he wrote late in his life, he declared: "I am a Lutheran, through philosophy only reaffirmed in my Lutheranism."[84] Undeniably, a major impulse behind Hegel's system grew out of his religious convictions. Nishitani is not alone to believe, as he apparently does, that these factors justify interpreting Hegel's thought in light of Church teachings. Yet, such inference may be overhasty. One needs only to look at Hegel's *Early Theological Writings* or at his letters to Schelling to understand his animosity toward institutionalized Christianity.[85] Many interpreters take the position contrary to Nishitani's, nuancing their assessment of Hegel's relation to Christianity by distinguishing his religiously motivated but original philosophy from theological orthodoxy.[86] They recognize that since his student days, Hegel displayed increasingly unorthodox tendencies that in his intellectual maturity took him far afield of Christian doctrine. Some critics go as far as to claim that major elements of Hegel's philosophy—logic, theory of knowledge, and the dialectical method for resolving contradictions—would be equally viable without the assumption of spirit or God.[87] The ultimate question is: did Hegel practice philosophy in its own right, or did he use it as a means to a religious end? All things considered, it is the former that seems to be true. Hegel's express purpose was to *know* God in His truth; he did not believe that knowledge and truth could be dictated by dogma any more than that it could be achieved through devotion, mystical intuition, or other forms of religious behavior. Nishitani's claim of a theological character of Hegel's philosophy stems from a misunderstanding of this point.

To revoke Nishitani's direct mappings of Hegelian motifs to Christian theology is to undermine the foundation of much of his critique. But the mappings need not occupy us here. We can evaluate Nishitani's assessment of Hegel on the merits of Hegel's thought alone. For example, whatever the theological implications of Hegel's philosophy may be, the very logic of his system stands in the way of substantifying the absolute as being. *Pace* Nishitani, being is absolute not by virtue of divinity, but rather in the pejorative sense of an unreflected content of mind. Due to the lack of self-understanding, incipient consciousness is "buried" (*versunken*) in being, which is its object. Contrary to Nishitani's claim that knowledge arriving at the scene of *Science of Logic* finds being already present, which would be possible only if being and consciousness were independent of one another, Hegel conceives being as an *internal* aspect or content of consciousness—in fact, as the result of the first stirring of thought in the undeveloped mind.[88] The special character of this incipient state consists in the indeterminacy stemming from the lack of distinction between thinking and its content (being). Being is not independent of consciousness; the two are fused together. For the same reason, being is equatable with nothing: "There is *nothing* in [being] to see, if we can speak of seeing at all; or it is this pure, empty seeing itself. There is just as little in it to think, or it is likewise only this empty thinking. Being, the indeterminate immediate, is in fact *nothing*."[89] Nishitani down-

plays the importance of the identity of these two first categories in Hegel's system.[90] For Hegel, pure being is not the highest form of existence but rather "the poorest and most abstract determination of the absolute."[91] When associating being with Christian Divinity on Hegel's behalf, Nishitani makes light of the latter's admonition against the abstract conceptions of God that turn Him into a *caput mortuum*—a dead head, that is, a lifeless abstraction.[92]

Before reflecting on its experience, simple consciousness takes its content erroneously to *be* absolutely what it *appears* to be: a collection of independently existing things, a world of true being, in short—reality itself. *This* is the reason its content appears to it to be absolute. As consciousness develops and grows, it learns to differentiate between itself and its content; being turns out to be different from what it was initially thought to be. This metamorphosis serves as a paradigm for the fate of all the objects subsequently making their appearance in *Science of Logic*. The undoing of the initially absolute character of being is the first application of Hegel's general principle that finite things—things as they present themselves in their immediacy—are devoid of truth.[93] This is why the true absolute (spirit), which is free of the distortions characteristic of developing consciousness, is never an unqualified being—it can only be a sublation or the essence of being.[94] Truth is not to be found in unreflected perceptions; it can be attained only through their thoughtful reconstruction. In this context, the term "truth" means "absolute truth," which in turn is nothing short of the absolute itself.[95] Hegel does not speak of the absolute opening up to the human mind. The absolute is not a substantive entity, a static object for independent human consciousness that tries to comprehend it from the outside. In Nishitani's terms, it does not satisfy the condition of Archimedes' fulcrum. The absolute is not an external, otherworldly source of the world and human beings. Rather, by reflecting on the various ways in which it knows things, it is the finite human mind that reveals itself progressively as containing things within itself, and ultimately, as absolute. Nishitani is incorrect in framing that process in terms of rationality trying to surpass itself. In Hegel's system, no such transcendence need take place. Instead, rationality discovers its *inner* potential to realize itself as absolute by cleansing itself of self-deception. The gradual reduction of self-deception of consciousness is the intention behind the idea of *scheinen* (appearing, projecting) that Nishitani mistakes for an indication of the static ideality of Hegel's system. In Hegel's argument, a thing is not reabsorbed into the eternal ground. Its "perishing" (*Zugrundegehen*) signifies its undoing *as a simple* (independent) object in parallel with its transformation into a more essential (*Wesen*, *Grund*) form of itself.[96] It is a step in the development of reality as well as of our knowledge of it.

To illustrate the point, we revisit Hegel's idea of the cunning of reason.[97] To read it according to Nishitani, as a testimony to a weak position of the individual in Hegel's thought, is to miss its true emphasis. The transcendent universal does not infiltrate, exploit, and then destroy the individual.[98] The cunning is an act of

benevolence that consists in leading the individual imperceptibly toward the higher level of reality, the level of the universal (the absolute). But reality at that level is anything but *abstractly* universal. It is the individual's own essence or proper nature; the universal is a generalization *of the individual.* At a closer look, the "inner necessity" that Nishitani interprets negatively as a coercive force working against individuality turns out to be truly internal—a positive, guiding factor seated within the individual. That factor takes precedence over the individual's nonessential concerns. Of course, the determination as to which of the individual's concerns pertain to its universal essence, and which are adventitious, involves some arbitrariness. But that does not disqualify the principle of the cunning of reason, or warrant Nishitani's equation of Hegel's presentation of the universal-individual relationship with the subsumption of the individual under the universal; by no means does it imply eliminating the individual as such. If the subordination of the individual's private interests to the dictates of its universality constitutes a negation, it is one of a special, determinate kind (*bestimmte Negation*): not an operation that annihilates the negated or lets it "fall to the ground like an empty shell," as Nishitani puts it, but rather one that refines and transforms it in a manner of dialectical sublation.[99] It is an act of reconciliation between the individual and its absolute nature. Otherwise quick to point to reconciliation as a pivotal concern in Hegel's philosophy, Nishitani chooses to turn a blind eye to its decisive role in this case. Naturally, without the aspect of reconciliation, whereby the individual recognizes *itself* in absolute reason, the cunning on the part of latter would become a simple perversity and the individual, a toy in the hands of an external power; the two would remain eternally apart. But such unbridgeable otherworldliness of the absolute is precisely the notion Hegel combats. Ultimately, the individual realizes that the cunning is its own. This completes the reconciliation. To translate this into Nishitani's language, the cunning of reason guides the individual self toward the true self within. Following its directions, the individual dies as an ordinary self and is reborn as the true one. Nishitani apparently does not realize that on this point, his position does not lie far apart from Hegel's.

Hegel resolves the problematic relation between absolute and human knowledge—an identity-in-difference relation that, according to Nishitani, threatens to embroil him in the aporia of Archimedes' fulcrum—by provisionally distinguishing between two modes of thinking: representational thinking operating at the level of abstract comprehension, and speculative reason—a higher type of thinking capable of seeing through contradictory unities. Hegel associates the former with natural consciousness, and the latter with philosophical "speculation" and certain kinds of religious consciousness.[100] To report on the progress of natural consciousness, the philosopher follows it along the development path, seeing its transformations through its own eyes. At the same time, he or she is in a position to look at the entire process from a broader perspective. While natural consciousness busies itself with the objects that constitute its content, the philo-

sopher interprets its activity as part of an overall transformative movement gradually leading toward the philosopher's own position. These two viewpoints—one, of developing consciousness, and the other, of the philosopher observing it—are the two perspectives involved in the activity of *zuschauen* that Nishitani portrays incorrectly as the contemplation of the absolute simultaneously from within and without. The two perspectives eventually merge at the point where natural consciousness has completed its evolutionary transition into philosophical, absolute consciousness. The two prove to have been the same consciousness all along. For Hegel, there is no absolute distinction between types of knowledge or logic. They are no more than diverse moments of the same concept, or different views of a single developmental process. That is why in order to reach the absolute, rationality does not have to surpass itself, as Nishitani assumes it does. All transformations making up the path from relative to absolute occur within it. The absolute is not a prior assumption, but an experience made by ordinary, rational consciousness upon its extended review of itself, the external world, and the way the two interact. It is not an origin, but a sublation. Nevertheless, thinking does not originate independently in the human subject; on the contrary, the essence of being human lies in the infinite self-thinking of the absolute.[101] Hegel's definitions of human consciousness and the absolute spirit are circular, and so is his teleology. The finite beginning and the absolute end of the process of consciousness can only be explained in mutual reference.

Nishitani overlooks the circularity and acknowledges only one agent in this process: ordinary comprehension. He rejects it as much as he does Hegel's speculative thinking.[102] For him it is *prajñā*, rather than speculation, that represents dialectic worthy of its name, for, unlike speculation, it succeeds in transcending rationality. Nishitani understands *prajñā* to be a state of wisdom achieved when formal-logical reason realizes its own fundamental contradictoriness and rejects itself because of it. Along with itself, reason negates all being (denying even the fact that there is anything to negate) in a way so uncompromising that its operation takes it beyond anything relative, positive or negative, being or nothing. Here, the self breaks through to absolute negativity that is prior to all knowledge—that is its source.[103] Absolute negativity is the primary mode in which *prajñā* operates. At the same time, as a generative source, *prajñā* is absolute positivity. Being and nothing, as well as the knowledge of each, issue from it through its power of absolute affirmation. To account for this double character of *prajñā*, Nishitani describes it as "absolute negation and yet absolute affirmation."[104] *Prajñā*, he says, is a point or place prior to *logos*; it is inexpressible and translogical. It allows us to know things in a way unmediated by rational thinking. *Prajñā* reveals them through what Nishitani terms "ignorant knowledge" or "direct knowledge," where they are intuited immediately in their truth. Direct knowledge bypasses the dialectical process in which subject and object interact, developing toward unity.[105] Nishitani denies the efficacy of Hegel's dialectical

logos. For him, since dialectical development perpetuates the subject-object duality that obscures truth, it is part of the problem rather than a solution.

But if, in Nishitani's assessment, Hegel is guilty of promoting rationality to the exclusion of direct knowledge, Nishitani himself suffers from the opposite failing: he does not succeed in integrating the rational function meaningfully into his own epistemology. He does not account properly for its relation to *prajñā*. His anti-rational posture explains some of his reprobation of Hegel's evolutionary approach. But his criticism is largely indefensible. Mistakenly, he believes that Hegel holds the categories of rational thinking, such as being and becoming, for vehicles of absolute knowledge. He concludes that the Hegelian absolute belongs to the world of finite categories and hence, that it is not really absolute. Nishitani draws that conclusion from wrong assumptions. In Hegel's view, ontologically, the world as it appears to ordinary reason is derived rather than original (the latter designation being reserved for the absolute, which is prior to and beyond reason); but experientially, reason is the only possible starting point. No different from Nishitani's direct knowledge, Hegel's absolute knowledge is not a state of ordinary reason; but unlike direct knowledge, it develops from it and builds upon it. For knowledge to be direct, it must first be mediated; it has to involve a process.[106] Hegel's dialectical logic differs from traditional logic precisely in its all-important processual or temporal dimension: its categories are true not in the absolute sense, but only to the extent that they develop and vanish in time. With the aspect of temporality taken away, the absolute no longer derives from the birth and passing of categories. Instead, it degrades to a hollow intellectual construct.[107]

Nishitani sees Hegel's philosophy as a system of such intellectual constructs precisely because he chooses to ignore the role played in it by temporality. He reads Hegel from his own position, in which direct knowledge of reality arises not through a process, but rather through a conversion experience equivalent to a sudden breakthrough. But Nishitani admits he is at a loss to explain the phenomenon on which he bases his entire theory of higher knowledge: "[T]he fundamental conversion . . . is something of which we cannot ask why. There can be no conceivable reason for it, and no conceivable basis for it to take hold of. . . . If a reason is to be sought, it can only be as the traditional religions have all sought it: on the 'other' side."[108] A breakthrough represents an apparent discontinuity, which ties in with Nishitani's view of the disjunction between ordinary mind and *prajñā*. This disjunction implies that *prajñā* cannot be attained through evolution from one mind-form to another. In place of the evolutionary way in which, as Hegel believes, mind normally develops, Nishitani posits a leap or break. Of course, he has the right to disagree with Hegel about the nature of direct knowledge. But, when positing a radically different process through which it is realized, he implicates himself in a difficulty. Whether or not the process leading to direct knowledge culminates in a breakthrough, it must be allowed to run its course, to play itself out in the ordinary world, that is, in the dimension of

human reason. However one may want to define it, direct knowledge postulated by Nishitani must build upon a series of progressive realizations. Whether these realizations are sudden or gradual, they work toward the resolution of prior delusions. The final realization cannot emerge but as their cumulative result. By disregarding the necessary progression of antecedent realizations, Nishitani adopts a standpoint opposed to reason—not through its successful refutation, but rather by going squarely past it. Kadowaki Ken rightly remarks that Nishitani attempts "to transcend the human standpoint because his goal is to perceive reality as it is."[109] As Kadowaki reminds us, Hegel takes a different approach. In order to transcend our karma (manifested through the fact that we are condemned to think in the categories of finite reason), Hegel utilizes it as a medium or vehicle: "[A]s long as humans are human, [rational] knowledge cannot be transcended. This is our karma as human beings. The self-consciousness of this karma is the absolute knowledge of Hegel. . . . [H]e would never attempt to transcend the human standpoint [by treating it] as illuminated by God, because man can never escape this real world."[110] The thrust of Hegel's philosophy is to demonstrate that knowledge (which is ultimately self-knowledge) is anchored deep in human standpoint: it develops through the process of the relativization of forms of consciousness as the latter realizes that they are not absolute, but only subjective. On the other hand, from the vantage point of the perfection or completion of the path, consciousness understands that its forms are aspects of the absolute, which is the totality of sublated forms. Thus, depending on the point of view, a form of consciousness and its associated knowledge (content) have a different status. This idea is quite familiar in the context of Buddhist practice. Once its followers attain the state of supreme awakening at the end of the path, the delusion in which they have been immersed turns out to be an aspect of ultimate truth. Yet, while still on the path, they cope with the delusion as a faulty condition that needs to be overcome through specific actions, i.e., through a determinate process. Nevertheless, Nishitani does not see it this way. By deemphasizing the process of its emergence, he takes direct knowledge out of human reality and renders it implausible.

Despite his disavowal of evolutionary path, Nishitani does not manage to sever direct knowledge completely from its developmental roots. The three standpoints or fields of his "dialectic" form a fixed sequence through which consciousness must necessarily pass before becoming explicitly "religious." The passage to the standpoint of emptiness transforms and subsumes the two earlier standpoints. Being and nonbeing are not eliminated, but rather redefined as two perspectives in a relation of double exposure. As we know, Hegel's dialectical logic, from which Nishitani tries to distance himself, conceptualizes such relation aptly as negative unity. This special unity comes into existence when a category passes through a dialectical negation, generating positive and negative determinations of itself. The unity of these two determinations forms a new category. In Nishitani's philosophy, emptiness conceived as double exposure fits

the paradigm of such negative unity. Yet at the same time, his portrayal of the achievement of that unity through a breakthrough works against such interpretation.[111] If the standpoint of emptiness is achieved through a decisive break through—and from—the other two standpoints, how does Nishitani account for the continuing presence (positive or negative) of the two within it? If the breakthrough is conceptualized as an irrational, unanalyzable event,[112] so must be emptiness itself; it no longer necessarily results from the interplay of being and nonbeing in an active sequence of the three standpoints. Without the element of interplay that determines the sequence, the dynamic of development is effectively removed; Nishitani's model of three standpoints becomes a static structure frozen in time. While Hegel's dialectical logic is temporal in the sense of a process that produces negative unities, Nishitani's "logic of breakthrough" expunges the temporal aspect. In this manner, it is no different from conventional logic. Nishitani's logical medium contrasts sharply with its object, *prajñā*, which surpasses all conventional, fixed forms of ratiocination. The result, as well, is predictably conventional. Nishitani's philosophical discourse does not offer a breakthrough in logic, comparable to that which it never tires of depicting. It fails to produce an adequate representation of *prajñā* in thought. It is an instance of object logic, in the sense in which Nishida and Nishitani use the term to describe Hegel's dialectic.

In many respects, Nishitani's vision of Hegel's philosophy is clear and penetrating. He demonstrates a good grasp of the mechanics of Hegel's dialectical method. Some of his criticism, as well, is reasonable, if not pronouncedly original. Many of his objections are directed at commonly recognized weaknesses; similar points can be encountered in many classical critiques of Hegel's philosophy. One such weakness consists in the unexplained transitions between logic, philosophy of nature, and philosophy of spirit;[113] these transitions raise a concern about the soundness of Hegel's structuring of his philosophical system. Another frequently voiced criticism concerns Hegel's failure to justify the externalization of the absolute as nature (*physis*).[114] Hegel also owes us a better explanation of the process through which determination, contradictoriness, and negativity—the artifices of logic—emerge from the initial state of absolute indeterminacy of spirit. Nishitani's critical observations in this respect restate a well-recognized problem.[115] And again, he is not the first to question Hegel's bold characterization of his *Science of Logic* as "an interpretation of God in His eternal essence, before the creation of nature and the finite spirit."[116]

Dialectical logic may indeed have not originated in divine revelation. Nishitani is free to question its genesis and limitations. But to replace it with the logic of direct knowledge, as he attempts to do, only transposes Hegel's grandiose vision into a different idiom. Those who suspect that dialectical logic does not, after all, convey God's essence, may find it equally difficult to accept Nishitani's claim that his alternate approach reveals the way things really are.

Against rationality, Nishitani warns: "To grasp the Law through intellect is always to capture it as some fixed thing, as a system of dead Law."[117] One can take this as a reference to the way Nishitani himself understands the Hegelian absolute, "the consummation of the tradition of Western philosophy beginning with Plato and Aristotle."[118] Turned into a *caput mortuum* in Nishitani's critique, it becomes the ultimate trophy in the victorious march of direct knowledge through what for Nishitani is the wasteland of Western rationality. Had he known to appreciate the role of mediation in bringing the relative and the absolute together, Nishitani would have perhaps succeeded in breathing life into the dead head. He may then have experienced a surprise over how close some of Hegel's views are to his own—a surprise with the potential to extend and enrich his own philosophy.

Nishitani and Hegel: Closing Thoughts

Nishitani's primary concern is similar to Hegel's: it is to demonstrate the relative nature of the subject-object dichotomy and to uphold the true selfhood that transcends it. But the similarity is limited. Hegel views subject and object as two necessary aspects of selfhood. Their dynamic interaction spurs mind's movement that structures reality into a complex system. As for Nishitani, he tends to emphasize the static character of the subject-object relationship. He does not advance a theory to account for its transformations, nor does he organize the diversity of manifest reality into a system. A theory or system, he believes, would falsify the way things are what they really are.

No doubt, the difference in the ways in which the two thinkers develop their respective ideas reflects their disparate cultural backgrounds and intellectual temperaments. Hegel's vast erudition motivates him to create an encyclopedic model of reality that systematizes and interprets human intellect and its accumulated achievements. His enterprise dictates the critical, analytical, and methodical approach that is the hallmark of his procedure. Nishitani's objective is less extensive, if equally ambitious: it is to find the best possible expression for translogical, direct experience. The nature of his goal helps explain his relatively unsystematic, repetitive, and often circular literary style. On the positive side, it brings to bear Nishitani's sensibility to the natural context of human life and his appreciation for unity behind individuation—concerns reposing on the social and aesthetic ethos of Zen Buddhism, and more broadly, on the Japanese value system. The true self is a self that belongs and unites, a self in harmony with the natural world and with other selves. It is likely Nishitani's deep feeling for harmony, combined with his personal history of depression, that make him particularly sensitive to the dangers of nihilism in which he discerns a potential to disrupt the subject's primal unity with the world. Nishitani seeks a remedy to

nihilism in the restoration of harmony on the primary level (emptiness), beyond the danger of recurrent corruption. For him, nonduality and belonging are "elemental" and "absolute," rather than mediated and evolving along with the maturing mind, as Hegel sees it. They are true not only philosophically, but also—indeed, primarily—on the level of emotions and will.[119] While in order to understand Hegel, we must walk with him along the rational path, the developmental path of consciousness drawn in *Phenomenology of Spirit* and *Science of Logic*, Nishitani offers no path reason would feel comfortable to tread. Instead, he appeals to our artistic sensibility and faith, arguing that the key to his philosophy lies not in *logos*, but rather in poetry and religion.[120] He is doubtlessly correct in claiming that poetical and religious truths are governed by different criteria than logical operations. Yet, these truths cannot be referred to as *truths* other than on logical grounds. To understand and respond to Nishitani's call to faith, one requires not only faith, but also logic. He is remiss not to acknowledge this point sufficiently. Evidently, he himself is not entirely satisfied with pure poetics and religiosity, for over the duration of his career he endeavors to rationalize his convictions in the language of Western philosophy. He strives to formulate his appreciation for direct knowledge in concepts and language. While he does, his attempt to preserve and convey its transrational character is an experiment that, all in all, does not quite succeed. Nishitani does not share Hegel's realization that the road to truth starts from within rationality, not outside it. He also fails to appreciate Hegel's achievement in using that realization constructively as a foundation for a comprehensive philosophical system that accounts for both absolute and relative. Of course, Hegel's philosophical construction raises its own questions. Nishitani's critique, imperfect though it is, helps identify some of them for us.

Each in his own way, Hegel and Nishitani show us the possibilities and limits of rationality, as well as non-rationality. Their respective assumptions are often in conflict, but one can perhaps regard their opposition as dialectical. The line that separates them vanishes in the common concern from which they have developed. As we have learned from both thinkers, one opposite can only exist in virtue of the other, by carrying the other within itself.

Notes

1. Eugen Fink, *Metaphysik und Tod* (Stuttgart, Berlin, Köln, Mainz: Kohlhammer, 1969), 202-5; Denise Souche-Dagues, *Nihilismes* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1996), 49.

2. Karl Rosenkranz, *Kritische Erläuterungen zum Hegel'schen System* (1840; reprint, Hildesheim: Olms, 1963), 39.

3. Nietzsche, *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* (*The Gay Science*) (1881-1886), Section 343.

4. Nietzsche discusses this phenomenon at length in his *Zur Genealogie der Moral* (*A Genealogy of Morals*) (Leipzig: Kröner, 1930), 98-178.

5. Nietzsche, *Der Wille zur Macht: Versuch einer Umwertung aller Werte* (*The Will to Power. An Attempt to Re-evaluate All Values*), vol. 9 of *Nietzsches Werke* (Leipzig: Naumann, 1906), section 2, 11.

6. Heidegger, *Nietzsche* (Pfullingen: G. Neske, 1989). For nihilism as the motor of Western history and metaphysics, see vol. 2, 69, 92, 96, 115, 278; also Heidegger, "Nietzsches Wort 'Gott ist tot'," in *Holzwege*, 6th ed. (Frankfurt am Mein: Vittorio Klostermann, 1980; originally published 1950), 214.

7. *Nietzsche* 2:378-80.

8. The anxiety manifested itself in the "teaching of the final age" (*mappō no shisō* 末法思想). *Nihirizumu* ニヒリズム (*Nihilism*), vol. 8 of *Nishitani Keiji chosakushū* 西谷啓治著作集 (*Collected Works of Nishitani Keiji*, hereafter abbreviated as "NKC"), 26 vols. (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1987), 9. Originally published in 1949. In English as *The Self-Overcoming of Nihilism*, trans. Graham Parkes and Setsuko Aihara (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990). Hereafter, the Japanese version is referred to as *Nihirizumu*, the English translation as *The Self-Overcoming of Nihilism*.

9. Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, trans. Jan Van Bragt (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1982), 11-12, 84-89. The Japanese original is entitled *Shūkyō to wa nani ka* 宗教とは何か (*What Is Religion?*), vol. 10 of NKC. Hereafter, the original is referred to as *Shūkyō* and the translation as *Religion and Nothingness*.

In nihilism as a philosophical current, Nishitani sees a form of radical realism as a reaction to Hegel's absolute idealism. Hegel idealized the world, Nishitani says, by injecting "essence" into the simplest things. Radical realism is an attempt at recovering the earlier simplicity and directness. *Nihirizumu*, 17, 20-23.

10. Non-ego: *muga* 無我.

11. This typology of standpoints (or "fields") appears in *Shūkyō*, 102-10, 140-42, 172-73, 203 et passim. Nishitani's alternative designation for the first standpoint is the field of senses and reason; for the second, the field of nothingness; for the third, the field of emptiness. *Shūkyō*, 159, 162-63, 164-65; *Religion and Nothingness*, 141, 145, and 146-47, respectively; passim. For a discussion of standpoint, see James W. Heisig, *Philosophers of Nothingness: An Essay on the Kyoto School* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), 222-24.

12. Nishitani, "Watakushi no seishun-jidai" 私の青春時代 ("My youth"), in *Shūkyō to hishūkyō no aida* 宗教と非宗教の間 (*Between religion and non-religion*) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1996), 214. Cf. *Religion and Nothingness*, "A Translator's Introduction," xxxv; Heisig, *Philosophers of Nothingness*, 191; and Dora Fischer-Barnicol, "Zur Einführung," in Nishitani Keiji, *Was ist Religion?* trans. Dora Fischer-Barnicol (Frankfurt am Mein: Insel, 1986), 26 ff. Nishitani mentions his personal "nihilism" in his *Nishida Kitarō*, trans. Yamamoto Seisaku and James W. Heisig (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 9. Also see Nishitani, "Shūkyō to hishūkyō no aida—dansō" 宗教と非宗教の間 — 断想 ("Notes on religion and non-religion"), in *Shūkyō to hishūkyō no aida*, 28.

13. Translation after *Religion and Nothingness*, 3-4. Cf. ibid., 26.

14. Translation after *Religion and Nothingness*, 7. Although Nishitani calls negativity "absolute," here he is referring to the complex of *relative* nothing (*sōtaiteki na mu* 相対的な無), that is, nothingness in opposition to being. Nothingness: *kyomu* 虚無.

15. *Nihirizumu*, quoted after Dilworth and Viglielmo, *Sourcebook for Modern Japanese Philosophy*, 375. Cf. *Nihirizumu*, 4-5, 281-82 and *Religion and Nothingness*, 16.

16. Cf. *Nihirizumu*, 4-5. The solid ground of existence (the true self) is not found because it does not exist in a tangible, objectifiable form. To realize this absence without rancor and fear goes beyond nihilism; it is a sign of having attained the true (empty) self.

17. *Nihirizumu*, 10. Nishitani uses the German word. Cf. *Nihirizumu*, 4-5, 12-13.

18. Translation after *Religion and Nothingness*, 19. Cf. *Religion and Nothingness*, 26. In both cases, the adjective "great" qualifies the entity it refers to—doubt or reality—as an aspect of emptiness (*kū* 空).

19. For example, see Nishitani, "Ontology and Utterance," *Philosophy East and West* 31, no. 1 (1981): 40.

20. *Religion and Nothingness*, 158. Primal actuality: *hongenteki na jijitsusei* 本原的な事実性. Truly so: *shinnyo* 真如. Nishitani quotes a well-known passage from a fourteenth-century classic *Muchū mondō* 夢中問答 (*Dialogues in a Dream*) that brings these various motifs together: "Even though we speak of hills and rivers as the self's original part, hills and rivers are here hills and rivers in *not* being hills and rivers, just as the self is the self in *not* being the self. And yet it is only here that hills and rivers are real hills and rivers in their suchness, only here that the self is the real self in its suchness. It is on this field [of emptiness] that our self is the 'self-presentation' of the most elemental 'middle'." *Religion and Nothingness*, 166.

21. "Death is not a missing part of the composite whole, but rather *from the start it constitutes the entirety of human existence* [*Dasein*]. It is first from this entirety that human existence derives the being of individual parts, i.e., of possible ways to be." Heidegger, *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs*, in *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1979), 20:432. Quoted in Thomas H. Macho, *Todesmetaphern: zur Logik der Grenzerfahrung* (Frankfurt am Mein: Suhrkamp, 1987), 108.

22. *Religion and Nothingness*, 92-93. According to Heidegger, as a negative opposite of what exists, "nothing" is the background against which an existent can first reveal itself to us. *Ex nihilo omne ens qua ens fit* (all being as being comes from "nothing"). "Nothing" imparts existence to things by defining and limiting them in their particularity and finitude. As held out into "nothing," human existence, as well, is determined by particularity. Heidegger, *Was ist Metaphysik?* (1929; reprint in *Wegmarken*, Frankfurt am Mein: Klostermann, 1967), 17. Nishitani refers to this passage in *Nihirizumu*, 172. Being: *u* 有.

23. *Religion and Nothingness*, 51. Double exposure: *nijū utsushi* 二重写し. Nishitani finds manifestations of double exposure also in Bashō's poetic meditations on the skull lying in wild grass, Jesus' prophecy about the destruction of the Temple, and T. S. Eliot's vision of the ghostly unreality of the crowd passing over the London Bridge (*The Wasteland*, I, 60-63). *Shūkyō*, 58-60; *Religion and Nothingness*, 50-53. When interpreted simply as a fusion of *temporal* dimensions, the passage becomes comparable to a similar motif in the philosophy of Nishida. For the latter, the historical present is the "place where infinite past and future are considered to be contemporaneous with the present. . . . The dialectic of life means that in the present the past and the future exist contemporaneously." Nishi-

da, *Tetsugaku ronbunshu daini* 哲學論文集第二 (*Philosophical Essays II*) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1937), 12. Quoted in Ha Tai Kim, "The Logic of the Illogical: Zen and Hegel," *Philosophy East and West* 5, no. 1 (April 1955): 27.

24. *Religion and Nothingness*, 52. For a similar point, see Nishitani, "Ontology and Utterance," 38.

25. A variant of the second statement is "fate is one with freedom." The examples respectively from *Religion and Nothingness*, 152; ibid., 246; and *Shūkyō*, 109 et passim.

26. *Religion and Nothingness*, 179-80, *Shūkyō*, 203-4; *Religion and Nothingness*, 283. The last example alternatively as "the true self is reached through self-denial." Nishitani, "Die religiös-philosophische Existenz im Buddhismus," in *Sinn und Sein: Ein philosophisches Symposion*, ed. Richard Wisser (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1960), 381-98.

27. *Soku hi no ronri* 即非の論理, translatable as "the logic of 'and yet not'" or "the logic of 'x through not being x'," is a variant of Nishida's logic of *soku* or absolute contradictory self-identity. The aspect of negation or non-identity is made explicit through the particle "*hi* 非" ("not"). For examples, see *Religion and Nothingness*, 93-95, 152-57, 190.

28. True A is the A recovered from negation. While reaffirmed, it carries within itself the poignancy of having been once undone. In this multivalent state, the identity of an object comprises the differentiation from its opposite: A is itself just as it is not-A. At the same time (from the standpoint of emptiness), A is neither itself nor not-A; in its truth, it transcends both.

29. Translation after *Religion and Nothingness*, 93. Emphasis added.

30. *Religion and Nothingness*, 289 n. 8 (note to p. 63).

31. A gestalt (from German *Gestalt*) is a form or shape representing an organized whole that gives meaning to its parts. An example of such whole is a melody, without which a single note is meaningless.

32. As quoted earlier, referring to objects of consciousness, Hegel makes this point explicitly: "[A] new object contains the nothingness of the [earlier] one; it consists in the experience made of it." Discussed by Kesselring in *Die Produktivität*, 76-78.

33. *Religion and Nothingness*, 19, 92-93, 97; *Nihirizumu*, 172.

34. *Religion and Nothingness*, 289 n. 8. Emphasis added. "Existenz" is the translator's rendition of *jitsuzon* 実存, emphasizing its reference to *human* existence.

35. Consider a restatement of this point—a fully realized coexistence of standpoints being possible only in the final stage of the religious path—in a general Buddhist context. Guy Newland comments on a limitation imposed on a Yogācāra Buddhist under normal conditions: "The ultimate valid cognizers of sentient beings are simply unable to realize ordinary phenomena at the same time that they directly realize emptiness. . . . Ultimate valid cognition gets at the way things really are . . . —but cannot see persons, actions and their effects, or other phenomena that do not exist just as they appear. The other, conventional valid cognition, can see the class of conventional phenomena—existents that falsely appear to be inherently existent—but is unable to get at emptiness." This mutual exclusion of standpoints is first lifted in perfect enlightenment: "Only a buddha can simultaneously maintain direct cognition of both ultimate truths and conventional truths." Guy Newland, *Appearance and Reality: the Two Truths in Four Buddhist Systems* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Snow Lion Publications, 1999), 89.

36. For example, *Religion and Nothingness*, 151-52; "The Standpoint of Zen," *The Eastern Buddhist* 17, no. 1 (1984): 6.

37. Translation after *Religion and Nothingness*, 137.

38. Translation after *Religion and Nothingness*, 253. Clarification added.

39. Nishitani formulates this paradigm as follows: "[T]he existence of all phenomena and the changes they undergo are in accord with some definite rational order: phenomena *being* what they ought to be and becoming what they *ought* to become. In other words, all things are . . . a 'dharmic naturalness.' . . . To speak of dharma that is in control within the existence and change of all phenomena, or, rather, of the dharma-likeness wherein things are just as they are, says that emptiness lets all phenomena be just what they are (or, what comes to the same thing, it lets them be what they ought to be)." *Religion and Nothingness*, 191. Essence: *honshitsu* 本質. Ground: *moto* もと.

40. "The Standpoint of Zen," 6.

41. *Religion and Nothingness*, 183.

42. *Tathāgatagarbha* is the matrix and embryo (*garbha*) of *Tathāgata* or the "Thus come," i.e., of Buddha. *Tathāgata* originally denoted the historical Buddha. In combination with *garbha*, it refers to the essence-body of Buddha (*dharmakāya*), which is pure suchness. *Garbha* is the potential for salvation inherent in human beings. It is both the condition of enlightenment and the fruit of the universal Buddhahood. *Hongaku* thought: *hongaku shisō* 本覚思想. *Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna: Daijō kishin ron* 大乗起信論.

43. The problem is equivalent to the aporia of theodicy: how can evil in the world develop from God's original goodness?

44. T. R. V. Murti touches upon the asymmetry of the two truths in his "Samvrti and Paramārtha in Mādhyamika and Advaita Vedānta," in *The Problem of Two Truths in Buddhism and Vedānta*, ed. Mervyn Sprung (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1973), 20-21, 23.

45. Emptiness both undergirds, and surpasses or negates, ordinary experience. *Religion and Nothingness*, 151-52 et passim.

46. "*Kū to soku*" 空と即 ("Emptiness and *Soku*," 1982), NKC 13:134. In English as "Emptiness and Sameness," in *Modern Japanese Aesthetics*, by Michele Marra (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 179-217. Hereafter, the translation is referred to as "Emptiness and Sameness."

This is also the general sense of the passage from *Religion and Nothingness*, 183, quoted earlier in this section. Cf. a similar interpretation of Buddha nature in Nishitani, "The Standpoint of Zen," 21.

Imago Dei is a Christian theological term denoting God's self-actualization through humankind, or a symbolic relationship between God and humanity whereby the humans mirror God in their ability to actualize the unique qualities with which they have been endowed. From this definition, it is apparent that the aporia of *hongaku* thought is not limited to Buddhism. Interestingly, Nishitani defends the idea of *hongaku* in the Buddhist context but treats it with considerably less tolerance when recognizing it, in connection with Hegel, in the problem of Archimedes' fulcrum. See the next part of this chapter.

47. Cf. Lakebrink, *Kommentar zu Hegels Logik*, 2:9. We are presenting Hegel's position not as *the* solution to the problem of asymmetry in Nishitani's view of emptiness, but merely as an example of how the problem may be fruitfully approached. Other examples can be drawn from sources in Nishitani's own tradition— numerous Buddhist theories purporting to reconcile opposing perspectives, truths, or "natures" of reality. Within the *hongaku* tradition itself, attempts have been made to address the problem by desubstantifying original enlightenment or Buddha nature, thus making it more readily identifia-

ble with finite, temporal conditions and events. For a recent survey of the desubstantification approach, see Wang, *Linguistic Strategies*, 54-80. Dan Lusthaus outlines the history of the substantialist-nonsubstantialist debate in Buddhism in "Critical Buddhism and Returning to the Sources," in *Pruning the Bodhi Tree*, 43-49. Ruben L. F. Habito discusses the "deconstructionist" attempts at desubstantifying *hongaku* from within the tradition in his *Originary Enlightenment: Tendai* Hongaku *Doctrine and Japanese Buddhism* (Tokyo: International Institute for Buddhist Studies, 1996), 45-69. The reader may also be referred to Mervyn Sprung, *The Problem of Two Truths in Buddhism and Vedānta*; Bruno Petzold, *Die Quintessenz der T'ien-T'ai (Tendai)-Lehre: eine komparative Untersuchung*, ed. Horst Hammitzsch (Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1982); Paul Swanson, *Foundations of T'ien-t'ai Philosophy: The Flowering of the Two Truths Theory in Chinese Buddhism* (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1989); and Newland, *Appearance and Reality*. The solutions based on desubstantification are an improvement over the wave simile offered in the *Awakening of Faith in Mahāyāna*, in which the wind is equated with ignorance and the sea with enlightenment. While the waves (momentary deluded thoughts) are roused by the wind, their essence is constituted by "wetness" (enlightened nature). See *The Awakening of Faith*, trans. Yoshito S. Hakeda (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1967), 41, 55. The effectiveness of the simile is questionable, for it neglects to indicate the source of the wind and implies that the sea is not ubiquitous. Lusthaus, "Critical Buddhism," 415-16 nn. 40, 41.

48. Hegel describes Schelling's notion of *Anschauung* (intuition or direct insight) as subjectivity in which subject (mind involved in *Anschauung*) and object are immediately one. *Enzyklopädie*, Section 223. In an early work, *Differenz des Fichteschen und Schellingschen Systems der Philosophie* (1801), *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (Hamburg: Meiner, 1968), Hegel thinks of *Anschauung* and reflection as complementary aspects of consciousness. Starting with *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), he dispenses with the term *Anschauung*. Its idea survives in his later philosophy in the notion of immediacy around which revolves the entire logic of being. Cf. Kesselring, *Die Produktivität*, 42-48, 61, 66-68, 71.

49. Hartmann, *Hegel*, 34, 36.

50. And further: "Because one's present practice is practice in realization, one's initial negotiation of the Way in itself is the whole of original realization." Dōgen, "Bendōwa" 辦道話, trans. A. A. Waddell and Abe Masao, *The Eastern Buddhist* 4, no. 1 (1971), 130. Quoted in Abe Masao, "The Oneness of Practice and Attainment: Implications for the Relation between Means and Ends," in *Dōgen Studies*, ed. William LaFleur (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1985), 102; cf. 106-7. Arguing against the distinction between ends and means, and against the subordination of practice to attainment, Dōgen asserts that Buddhist practice is no different than enlightenment—the doctrine known as *shushō ittō* 修證一等.

A related thought—of enlightenment being contingent on processes in the finite dimension—can be found in the Mādhyamika doctrine of two truths: since ultimate truth is realized as the reality of appearances, it can only emerge through removal of conventional (erroneous) views. Cf. T. R. V. Murti, "Samvrti and Paramārtha in Mādhyamika and Advaita Vedānta," 19. Also see Mervyn Sprung, "The Mādhyamika Doctrine of Two Realities as a Metaphysic," in *The Problem of Two Truths in Buddhism and Vedānta*, 50.

51. *Enzyklopädie*, Section 212, Addition; cf. Hackenesch, "Wissenschaft der Logik (§§ 19-244)," 126-28.

52. *Enzyklopädie,* Section 239, 391.

53. See the chapter on Nishida, "What is Self-Consciousness?"

54. Referring to the complex character of development in Hegel's thought, Bernhard Lakebrink calls Hegel's method "regressive progress." Lakebrink, *Kommentar zu Hegels Logik* 2:320-21. Indirectly confirming the validity of Hegel's insight, also Jean Piaget considers development to be movement forward as well as backward. Kesselring, *Die Produktivität*, 278.

55. The argument is Piaget's. Cf. Kesselring, *Entwicklung*, 145-46.

56. Kesselring, *Entwicklung*, 156-57; *Die Produktivität*, 35-37, 95. Conversely, the mediated comes out of the immediate (as its mediated form) but at the same time, the mediated is the mediating, because first *it* allows seeing the immediate as such. Kesselring, *Die Produktivität*, 255-56, 274.

57. Kesselring, *Die Produktivität*, 36, 56, 254, 354 n. 7; "Voraussetzungen," 579 n. 20.

58. Kesselring, *Die Produktivität*, 81 et passim; Koch, *Differenz und Versöhnung*, 40 n. 33; 46.

59. *Logik* 2:503; *Logic*, 841. Cf. also *Enzyklopädie*, Section 239, Addition, and Section 552.

60. Emptiness is the field of true realization. Nothingness, as a relative form of emptiness, represents partial realization. Being, a superficial production of ordinary senses and reason, is the field of falsehood—until it is reinterpreted through emptiness.

61. Robert Carter makes a similar distinction regarding Nishida's concept of pure experience: "Pure experience is prior to (ontologically), or subsequent to (psychologically) the subject/object split." Robert E. Carter, *The Nothingness Beyond God. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Nishida Kitarō* (New York: Paragon House, 1989), 60.

62. From several essays Nishitani wrote on Schelling early in his career one gathers that among the German Idealists, he was attracted more to Schelling than to Hegel. The essays can be found in NKC 13:163-358.

63. In *Nishida Kitarō*, 192-229. Translation of *Nishida tetsugaku o meguru ronten* 西田哲学をめぐる論点 (literally: "Questions Concerning Nishida's Philosophy"), NKC 9:191-224.

64. *Nihirizumu*, NKC 8:18-23; *The Self-Overcoming of Nihilism*, 9-12.

65. "Han'ya to risei" 般若と理性, in *Bukkyō no hikaku shisōronteki kenkyū* 仏教の比較思想論的研究 (*Comparative studies in Buddhist thought*), ed. Tamaki Koshirō 玉城康四郎 (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1979), 237-300; reprint, NKC 13:31-95. All subsequent references to "*Han'ya to risei*" are to the original edition. All translations from that work are mine.

Prajñā is a Buddhist term for knowledge or wisdom.

66. *The Self-Overcoming of Nihilism*, 10. Cf. "Han'ya to risei," 266, 271.

67. "Han'ya to risei," 294-95.

68. "As the highest existent, 'being' . . . clearly has the characteristics of Christian God." "Han'ya to risei," 266. On the basis of his unqualified interpretation of philosopher Hegel as a Christian theologian, Nishitani takes him not only for a Scholastic, but also for a Platonist or Neoplatonist, reformed Spinozian pantheist, and mystic. *The Self-Overcoming of Nihilism*, 12; "Han'ya to risei," 261-62, 264, 266, 270-71.

69. Nishitani speaks here of "world reason"—*sekai risei* 世界理性. Hegel himself uses the expression *die Vernunft in der Geschichte* (*reason in history*). Either expression refers to reason that operates in history in a providential way.

70. "Questioning Nishida," 192.

71. "Questioning Nishida," 194. Many anti-Hegelian critiques point out the disproportionate importance of the universal in Hegel's philosophy.

72. *The Self-Overcoming of Nihilism*, 9-10, 12. Hegel's German expression contains a pun: "zu Grunde gehen" means both "go to the ground" and "perish."

73. "Han'ya to risei," 263, 264.

74. "Han'ya to risei," 264-65. See also 269-70, 289.

75. "Han'ya to risei," 268.

76. Diodorus Siculus, *The Library of History*, Book XXVI, 18.1, vol. 11 of *Loeb Classical Library* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957), 195. Nishitani discusses the problem in "Han'ya to risei," 267.

77. Cf. "Han'ya to risei," 260-61.

78. "Han'ya to risei," 290.

79. "Questioning Nishida," 185; "Han'ya to risei," 256.

80. Nishitani discusses Hegel's use of the term in "Han'ya to risei," 275-76, 285, 289.

81. "Han'ya to risei," 263, 283, 287.

82. "Han'ya to risei," 294.

83. "Han'ya to risei," 263, 264.

84. Letter of 3 July, 1826 to A. Tholuck. Hegel, *Briefe von und an Hegel*, 4 vols. in 5, ed. Friedhelm Nicolin (Hamburg: Meiner 1969), 4.2:61.

85. For Hegel's comments on theology in his correspondence with Schelling, see for example his letter of January 1795 in *Briefe von und an Hegel* 1:16-17.

86. For a list of the proponents of the view shared by Nishitani, see Régnier, "Logique et théo-logique hégélienne," 212. The opposite view is represented, for example, by Nicolai Hartmann who believes that if "great blasphemer" Hegel managed to escape the odium of the contemporary Christian dogmatists, it is only because his philosophy was beyond the reach of their understanding. Hartmann, *Hegel*, 38-39. Hermann Glockner presents a concise evaluation of the critical tone toward aspects of Christianity in Hegel's early writings in his *Hegel*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1954, 1958), 2:29-34, 146-48. Karl Löwith traces Hegel's philosophical criticism of Christianity back to its beginning in his early theological writings and assesses his philosophy overall as "a decisive destruction of Christian philosophy and Christian religion." Karl Löwith, *Von Hegel zu Nietzsche*, 3rd ed. (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1953), 39, 83, 356, and generally 350-56. Traugott Koch notes that Hegel's emphasis on the historicity of religion, the immanence of God in the world, and the accessibility of God to human intellect was often taken by his critics as incompatible with the Christian faith in future salvation and as Hegel's blasphemous attempt to present his own thinking as divine. Koch, *Differenz und Versöhnung*, 14; 14 n. 18; 21-22; 24-28. Also Walter Jaeschke warns against interpreting Hegel's philosophy of religion as Christian theology in his *Die Vernunft in der Religion. Studien zur Grundlegung der Religionsphilosophie Hegels* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1986), 297-303.

87. For example, see Hartmann, *Hegel*, 181-82, Thomas Kesselring, *Die Produktivität*, 85, 92, 367 n. 1, Otto Pöggeler, "Hegels Jenaer Systemkonzeption," in *Hegels Idee einer Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Freiburg, [Breisgau], München: Alber,

1973), 113-14, and Jacob Loewenberg, *Hegel's Phenomenology: Dialogues on The Life of Mind* (La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1965), xi.

88. Cf. Kesselring, "Voraussetzungen," 564-65.

89. *Logik* 1:66-67; *Logic*, 82. Hegel's emphasis.

90. It may be due to an oversight that Nishitani suggests, quite superfluously, that Hegel could have begun the *Science of Logic* with nothing rather than with being. "Han'ya to risei," 265.

91. *Enzyklopädie*, Section 86. Nishitani mentions this well-known passage, but admits not being able to understand why the absolute, as absolute, needs to develop from an abstract category. "Han'ya to risei," 263.

92. "God as an abstract otherworldly being beyond difference and determination is in fact a mere name, a mere *caput mortuum* of abstract reasoning." *Enzyklopädie*, Section 112, Addition, 234; cf. Section 85, 181-82. Cf. Walter Jaeschke's comments on Hegel's criticism of the traditional definition of God as *ens realissimum* as an empty abstraction. Jaeschke, Introduction to Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion*, ed. Walter Jaeschke, 3 vols. (Hamburg: Meiner, 1993), 1:xxii.

93. *Logik* 1:145; *Logic*, 155; *Enzyklopädie*, Section 112, Addition, 234.

94. Already before the publication of *Science of Logic*, Hegel defines spirit as "the essence [*Wesen*] of all nature, being and doing." "Naturphilosophie und Philosophie des Geistes," a manuscript of 1805-1806, in vol. 8 of Hegel, *Gesammelte Werke*, 280. Quoted in Jaeschke, Introduction 1:xviii.

In overstating the role of unqualified, "absolute" being in Hegel's system, Nishitani may have been inspired by Martin Heidegger. Heidegger mistakenly believes that Hegel resembles him in treating being (*das Sein*) as the pivot of philosophical thinking. Where Hegel goes wrong, according to Heidegger, is in treating being as an ontological entity, i.e., as a being (*ein Seiendes*). Even worse, Hegel is said to make being into a being *in thought*. Thus, according to Heidegger, Hegel is guilty simultaneously of ontologizing and subjectivizing being. Martin Heidegger, *Identität und Differenz* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1957), 42-43; cf. 38, 54. Cf. Heidegger, *Holzwege*, 180. For a critical evaluation of Heidegger's view of Hegel, see for example Koch, *Differenz und Versöhnung*, 37 n. 27, and Lakebrink, *Kommentar zu Hegels Logik* 1:14-20, 32, 37-38, 201, 202.

95. "Only the absolute is true and only the true is absolute." *Phänomenologie*, 65; *Phenomenology*, 133.

96. Cf. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie*, Section 112, 231; 142, 279; *Logik* 2:98; *Logic*, 472. Cf. *Logik* 2:9 ff; *Logic* 395 ff.

97. Besides the passage quoted by Nishitani, Hegel refers to the cunning of reason (or simply, the cunning) in *Enzyklopädie*, Section 209 and Addition, 365, and in *Phänomenologie*, 46, 255 ff, 309 ff.; *Phenomenology*, 114, 374 ff, 449 ff.

98. Infiltrate: *tōnyū* 透入.

99. For a similar argument, see Iwan Iljin, *Die Philosophie Hegels als kontemplative Gotteslehre* (Bern: A. Francke, 1946), 326.

100. *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, vol. 9 of *Gesammelte Werke*, 367, quoted in Jaeschke, Introduction 1:xix; *Enzyklopädie*, Sections 79-82, 168 ff. Actually, Hegel distinguishes between three types or "moments" of thinking: abstract comprehension, dialectical or negative reason, and speculative or positive reason. In the first, the primary modes of operation are discrimination, abstraction, separation, and negation. At its extreme, thinking of this type turns against itself, transitioning into the second type. Here, the primary mode is skepticism, directed at the results yielded by abstract comprehension. It

is the dialectical moment of thinking. The third type combines the first two in a sublated form; Hegel does not hesitate to call it mystical. The three moments are simultaneously present in any single concept or truth. For instance, philosophical thought uses all three.

101. *Einleitung in die Geschichte der Philosophie*, 271. Cf. Traugott Koch, *Differenz und Versöhnung*, 35; 43 n. 34; 48. Also see Hegel, *Enzyklopädie*, Section 2, 42.

Infinite self-thinking should not be equated with simple ratiocination or *theoria* as interpreted by Nishitani. Hegel understands "thinking" not as secondary, theoretical reflection on life, but rather as the very medium through which we exist. Cf. Rudolf Bultmann, "Zur Geschichte der Paulusforschung," *Theologische Rundschau*, Neue Folge, 1 (1929), 26 ff. After Koch, *Differenz und Versöhnung*, 29.

102. "Han'ya to risei," 263. Nishitani believes that ordinary comprehension (rational knowledge) operates through words, *logos*, reason, logic, and *theoria*. As such, it cannot grasp a thing exactly as it is, in its particular facticity and existence, in its immediate truth. It allows us to know the world and ourselves as objects, but at the same time, it isolates us from the primal meaning of things. Referring to a well-known Buddhist metaphor, Nishitani says that concepts are not the moon but only a finger pointing at it, or worse still, the moon's reflection in a river that is erroneously taken for the real thing. "Han'ya to risei," 290, 245, 247-49, 278 ff., 246-47.

103. "Han'ya to risei," 297.

104. "Han'ya to risei," 250-53, 297. And yet: *soku* 即.

105. "Han'ya to risei," 288-90. Ignorant knowledge: *muchi no chi* 無知の知. Direct knowledge: *chokusetsuchi* 直接知.

106. *Enzyklopädie*, Section 215, 372-73.

107. Consistent with his underplaying of the role of temporality in Hegel's philosophy, Nishitani holds its prime manifestation, mediation, in no high esteem, for he feels that Hegel uses it to uphold a logical, reasoned, idealistic view of the world. Nishitani believes that the idea utilizes mediation as an instrument not only to realize itself as the world of actual things, but also ultimately to absorb that world back into itself. *The Self-Overcoming of Nihilism*, 10-11.

108. *Religion and Nothingness*, 231. Breakthrough: *toppa* 突破.

109. Kadowaki Ken, "The Circle Play: Nishitani and Hegel," *Zen Buddhism Today* 14 (1997): 62. Interestingly, the disregard for the human standpoint is precisely what Nishitani criticizes in Nishida, whom he unfavorably compares with Hegel on this point. "Questioning Nishida," 185.

110. Kadowaki, "The Circle Play," 62. By implication, Nishitani positions himself outside the karma of human condition. Indeed, in an essay originally published in 1967, he speaks of cutting the roots of the karma-consciousness: "Discriminative knowledge is essentially falsehood . . . we can see how difficult it is to shake off this falsity. . . . To crack the rigid frame of the ego-self, the force binding the frame together must also be torn loose from its roots up. This great latent force, determining the apparently free discriminative activity of the ego-self from within its hidden depths, imparts to it the character of necessity called karma. . . . Breaking through the frame of the ego-self is only accomplished by cutting the roots of this karma-consciousness which reach to its depths." "The Standpoint of Zen," 20.

111. This would probably be also Hegel's assessment. In *Enzyklopädie*, Section 50, Addition, 131, Hegel argues against the notion of "leap" (*Sprung*) as the mode of transitioning between major mental forms, i.e., as an unbridgeable disjunction in Nishitani's

sense. In *Sämtliche Werke* 16:489-90, Hegel argues likewise against a discontinuous leap into the infinite. Koch reviews the literature on the subject briefly in *Differenz und Versöhnung*, 50-51 n. 46.

112. See the earlier quotation from *Religion and Nothingness*, 231.

113. "Han'ya to risei," 283, 284, 292.

114. "Han'ya to risei," 263-64, 267.

115. "Han'ya to risei," 293. The analysis of the logical difficulties surrounding the beginning of Hegel's *Logic* has evolved within the Hegelian scholarship into a research area in itself.

116. *Logik* 1:33; *Logic*, 50. Trendelenburg was among the early critics of Hegel's claim of the higher provenience of his philosophical thinking. Adolf Trendelenburg, *Logische Untersuchungen*, 2 vols (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1870), 2:423, 425. See Koch, *Differenz und Versöhnung*, 166-68.

117. "Han'ya to risei," 249.

118. "Han'ya to risei," 289.

119. For the importance Nishitani attaches to emotions and will (*jōi* 情意), see for example "Emptiness and Sameness," 185, 194, 204.

120. Cf. the two opening and two closing sections of "Emptiness and Sameness."

Chapter Three
Tanabe

To commemorate the two-hundredth anniversary of Kant's birthday, Tanabe, at that time a thirty-nine-year-old assistant professor at Kyoto Imperial University, set to work on an essay on Kantian philosophy. His intensive study of Kant at that time made a lasting impression on his thought. But Tanabe's fascination with German Idealism began earlier in his career, with Hegel. The insight of *Science of Logic* that "the universal is the soul of the concrete" reverberates in the earliest of Tanabe's published works.[1] Another foundational notion that he adopts from Hegel is the identity of consciousness and its object. Tanabe is convinced of its potential to challenge the one-sidedness of both the particular sciences, exclusively focused as they are on objects, and of the introspective orientation of a Socrates, Kant, or Dilthey.[2] He hopes to bring the two together on the basis of dialectical mediation, another concept that plays an important role in Hegel's system. But despite his assimilation of many of Hegel's teachings, Tanabe misses no opportunity to question their worth. There is an undercurrent of animosity in his Hegelianism. The source from which it flows may not be purely philosophical. Tanabe is known to have expressed negative feelings about Hegel's personal conduct. An erstwhile student once heard him declare: "I revere Kant with all my heart, but there are a few things about Hegel that I find unpleasant."[3] Tanabe's cool stance toward the man Hegel is plausibly a factor in his ambivalence regarding Hegel's thought. But we shall leave Tanabe's personal motivations aside and turn directly to the examination of his philosophical views.

Seven Hegelian Essays

Tanabe's intensive study of Hegel comes to fruition in seven essays published in years 1927-1931: "The Logic of Dialectic," "Dialectic in Relation to Action and History," "The Moral Subject and Dialectical Freedom," "The Coincidence of

the Rational and the Actual in Hegel," "Hegelian Philosophy and Absolute Dialectic," "Understanding the Hegelian Discourse on Judgment," and "Hegel's Absolute Idealism."[4] Tanabe recollects later that the work on the essays sharpened his understanding of Hegel's dialectic. Their publication was a tribute to the philosopher on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of his death, which occurred in November 1831. In 1932, Tanabe gathered the essays into a single volume spanning almost 300 pages. He gave it the title *Hegelian Philosophy and Dialectic.*[5] He drew his material from various segments of Hegel's oeuvre—notably *Phenomenology of Spirit*, *Science of Logic*, and *Philosophy of Right.* The topics, as well, were varied, ranging from the technicalities of the dialectical procedure to the ungraspable nature of the absolute, conditions for viable ethics, and correspondence between reason and reality. Tanabe soon became unhappy with the earlier of the seven essays, assessing them as a failed product of an intellectual impasse and "groping in the dark."[6] He did include them in the one-volume edition but placed them after the later ones, following a sequence opposite of the historical order of their creation. But despite the diversity of the topics and Tanabe's low valuation of his earlier productions, his views on Hegel stayed constant from first to last—not only within the series but also beyond, through his latest work. His general philosophical outlook allows a similar observation. While Tanabe wrote the essays as a response to Hegel, he expressed in them his own position in an almost fully developed form. His adherence to that position throughout the years gives his philosophy constancy despite a considerable diversity of his interests.

Tanabe starts his discussion of Hegel with words of praise. He approves of the dialectical "syntheticism"—a device through which absolutely irreconcilable, contradictory concepts (thesis and antithesis) are sublated in the universal (synthesis) as its particulars, each offering a partial view of total truth. Dialectic accommodates contradictions insoluble at the level of traditional logic. The latter is flat; dialectic functions as its cubic superset.[7] The construction of a three-dimensional structure of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis hinges in turn upon the property Tanabe calls negativism. If antithesis is a negation of thesis, synthesis negates antithesis: it constitutes a negation of negation. This makes synthesis into a higher-order thesis which then enters into a relation of opposition with its own antithesis. Uncontroversially, Tanabe regards syntheticism and negativism as two "moments" of a single logic, intertwined in an infinite progress of thinking.[8]

Tanabe has positive remarks for a few other aspects of Hegel's thought as well. He quotes Schelling's questionable view of the absolute as something disclosed in artistic, direct intuition that obliterates individual differences, and points approvingly to the way in which Hegel objected to Schelling on that point. Hegel likened the Schellingian absolute to night in which all cows are black. Hegel's own "absolute knowledge" should remain free of this problem, Tanabe believes, since according to *Phenomenology* it is accrued in the state of spirit's

differentiation in the world of particulars and individuals. In proportion as spirit passes through the world, the aspect of differentiation is relativized until, in absolute knowledge, it becomes secondary to the aspect of unity. The spirit that has reached that stage is the absolute subject, a universal that recognizes all the elements differentiated out of unity to be its own facets.[9] Looking back at the process that culminates in absolute knowledge, spirit also realizes its oneness with the relative, individual subject from which it has evolved. Tanabe notes that these two identities form a further, supreme unity. But while in absolute knowledge distinctions are put in perspective and relativized, they do not disappear. Tanabe sees *Phenomenology* itself as an instance of the dialectic of unity that preserves differences. This feature earned Hegel's philosophy the name of "absolute idealism," which is a synthesis of subjective idealism with objective one.[10] At least, this is the idea behind the book. Tanabe's assessment of its actual implementation is less laudatory. We recognize many of his concerns from our discussion of the other two Kyoto Scholars. To start with, Tanabe feels uncomfortable with Hegel's proclamation of dialectic as the logic of development within reality. Such claim, he argues, exposes Hegel's position as *de facto* realism,[11] a viewpoint which ascribes real existence to a type of thinking. For Tanabe, dialectic does not represent a metaphysical ground of history or its principle. It is no more than a useful technique to interpret historical processes. Hegel oversteps its boundary by confusing historical development with logical one, Tanabe charges; in *Phenomenology*, spirit's development toward absolute knowledge doubles as the process of world history. Of course, the identity of the two processes is intentional and furnishes the conceptual pivot of Hegel's book, as Tanabe surely realizes; but he dismisses it flatly as a flaw. He asserts that the conclusion of *Phenomenology*, at which this double development comes to an end, bears him out. He accepts that consciousness cannot advance infinitely. Once it reaches the state of absolute knowledge, it stops moving. But history does not obey the same law; it knows no temporal restrictions. Tanabe backs Friedrich Engels' opinion that since there is no end to oppositions in history, synthesis, as well, is inherently perpetual. In this respect, the ending of *Phenomenology* in a standstill flies in the face of historical reality.

The idea that thinking guides external reality extends naturally to the belief that real existence is internal to mind. Instead of recognizing the natural world and the individuals that inhabit it as entities in their own right and a counterbalance to spirit, Hegel—Tanabe points out—traces both back to an act of spirit's own, internal determination. Tanabe associates this derivation with Hegel's passive conception of the natural world. Nature's origination from spirit deprives it of an independent existential status; it makes it into a derivative. Since in nature spirit encounters only its own externalized form—that is, only itself—there can be no real conflict and no true dialectic between the two. Accordingly, Hegelian dialectic is enveloped in an aura of unreality. Considering that Hegel constructed it with the express purpose of liquefying static concepts and imbuing

logic with life, Tanabe's conclusion implies that Hegel's actual result is the exact opposite of the intended one—an allegation that strikes directly at Hegel's method.

Tanabe's misgivings about the status of nature in Hegel's philosophy extend to the position occupied in it by human beings. Despite his appreciation for the way Hegel introduces differentiation into the originally unitary absolute, all told he concurs with Nishida's dismissive assessment that Hegel's individual is subordinated to absolute reason. "Hegel's individual is completely internal to the concept [*Begriff*]," he opines; "in his panlogism, the will of the individual is no more than a puppet manipulated by the so-called 'cunning of reason'."[12] We note a reference to panlogism. If one believes that thoughts have reality and reality moves according to thought, then the two become difficult to tell apart. Realism shades off into the imputation of reason to nature and history.[13] Joining a host of earlier critics, Tanabe contends that instead of treating logic as but an aspect of existence as he should, Hegel reduces all existence to logic. In his view of reality as rational, Hegel projects the richness of existence into a two-dimensional system of logical categories, effectively flattening noesis into noema.[14] Tanabe associates Hegel's alleged panlogism further with theism: the world is rational since it has been created according to a divine scheme. He ventures that Hegel has modeled his metaphysics after biblical events, such as the fall of the angels from Heaven and the separation of the Son from the Holy Father. He also quotes as "already a commonplace," without disputing it, the view according to which Hegel developed his philosophy with the express purpose of reinterpreting the classical Greek conception of fate in terms of Christian theodicy.[15] Now, although Hegel does incorporate diverse motifs in his philosophy, including religious ones, Tanabe's generalizations are too far-fetched to merit a rebuttal. But they make it easy for Tanabe to accept without further ado Emil Lask's assessment of Hegel's dialectic as "emanationist logic."[16] Emanationism holds that the physical universe is an outflow of the absolute. A larger issue is its implication—Tanabe says—that all movement within reality, down to the tiniest event, has been prearranged by a higher instance. Accordingly, reality is the realization of the divine plan in the temporal dimension;[17] history unfolds according to an *a priori* design beyond the individual's control. As Tanabe will state over and over again in his later writings, such predetermination robs the empirical world of its natural fortuitousness and freedom.[18] He holds the negation of freedom for a transgression common to Hegel and Marx. Both seek to ground particular events in an inexorable historical process. But it is Hegel in particular whom Tanabe reproaches for constructing a philosophy of mere ideas, a system disrespectful of reality. He restates an argument already current in Hegel's time. For instance, Wilhelm Traugott Krug (1770-1842) chastised the Idealist philosophy of nature for its alleged abstractness with a mocking challenge to deduce, for once, something real and concrete—such as his own writing pen—from its premises. Hegel responded by ridiculing the demand that philoso-

phy concern itself with empirical fortuities.[19] Its proper objects are the rational principles regulating, say, the nature of iron, the organization of the solar system, or the way history traces the career of world spirit. It is these principles or universals that make the existence of individual, finite entities rationally explicable, or as Hegel puts it, "necessary." He uses the word not in the sense of predetermination, as Tanabe is quick to read it, but rather as a way to indicate that adventitious existences are governed by their universal, inalienable natures. His argument falls on deaf ears. Tanabe feels that despite Hegel's good intentions, his sacrifice of natural randomness brings his philosophy down to the level of Fichte's subjective idealism, where the world, as not-I, is a secondary creation of pure consciousness. For Tanabe, Hegel's Christian spiritualization of the world, or theism, is his first major blunder.

This accusation sets the stage for further reproofs. It leads Tanabe to question whether absolute knowledge at the apex of Hegel's system can truly be an outgrowth of relative knowledge. In Tanabe's opinion, the concept of relative knowledge does not fit within the general assumptions of Hegel's philosophy.[20] The absolute is all that matters in Hegel's metaphysics. Tanabe takes Hegel to task for making individual existence part of the absolute, for it removes all possibility of anchoring the latter in the real world. Because there is no non-absolute individual to give it a foothold, Hegel's universal is absolutely transcendent, in other words, unreal. It is merely an object in Hegel's mind. Bereft of true absolute, Hegel's world is a simple collection of thought-objects; his philosophy amounts to manipulation of these formal objects. Tanabe's assessment echoes Nishida's criticism of Hegelian philosophy as "object logic." Tanabe considers this formal-ideal character of Hegel's thought to be its second major failure. In an apt summary of his position on Hegel, Tanabe takes the two flaws as a ground to declare, with a dramatic *éclat*, the bankruptcy of the Hegelian system.[21]

Only the relative endowed with solid being of its own and the absolute that, as pure subjectivity, goes beyond all being can enter into a meaningful relationship. The derivation of the relative from the absolute and the abstraction of the latter into an intellectual artifact hamper Hegel's project of reconciling consciousness with objective existence. Tanabe takes it upon himself to pick up Hegel's failed task and carry it forward. He starts by seeking an alternative to two traditional philosophical positions: idealism, which derives existence from consciousness, and realism or materialism, which starts with existence as conditioning consciousness. He refuses to deduct matter (existence) from spirit (consciousness), as he believes Hegel does: "Hegel's panlogism obliterates this opposition [between matter and form (spirit)]. It is a result of his attempt to deny that matter exists in a way that is irreducible to form."[22] From Tanabe's perspective, matter is not an alienated, external aspect of spirit but rather an independent, negative moment that mediates spirit so that spirit can return to itself; the absolute is absolute only indirectly, only in this returning that is mediated by some-

thing other than itself. Matter is the formless, dark, impenetrable background and source of the formed, visible, light. It is the wellspring of the historical world; history is matter's formation in time.[23] But Tanabe is not a materialist. He recognizes that while Marxist materialism mends Hegel's problem, it overshoots the mark and falls into the other extreme: it denies the independent character of consciousness. Against what Tanabe understands Marxism to be, he proclaims the spontaneity of human action and human freedom.[24] In his own mind, he betters both Hegel and Marx by postulating (in a later work) that while the absolute depends on spirit and matter for mediation, it cannot be equated with either one alone.[25] Tanabe is a self-conscious dualist for whom spirit and matter, thought and existence, subject and object are irreducible to one another.

Tanabe regards dualism as the only proper foundation for bringing opposites together. Reminiscent of Nishida's absolute contradictory self-identity, he postulates oppositional unity—unity despite irreconcilable opposition—as an antidote to Hegel's unity of synthesis. Given Tanabe's criticism, it behooves him to demonstrate why his unity is superior to Hegel's. He begins by delving into the logic of propositions. Aristotle's logic of categorical propositions, Tanabe reminds us, centers on the subject serving as the substance, basis or substratum (*hypokeimenon*) for the accidental properties expressed by the predicate. In that sense, predicative properties are internal to the subject. According to Tanabe, logic subsequent to Aristotle generally takes the opposite direction: it is the predicate of judgment that subsumes its subject. He considers Hegel, as well, to fall into this category. If we represent the general form of judgment as "individual-copula-universal," then the Aristotelian view can be expressed as "THE INDIVIDUAL HAS the universal," and the post-Aristotelian one as "the individual IS THE UNIVERSAL" in the sense of being its instantiation. Both are one-sided and abstract. Tanabe proposes to reconcile the two views with "the propositional logic of copula"[26] that combines difference and identity in a rich, concrete relation. In non-tautological judgments, the copula stands between two disparate entities: the individual (subject) and the universal (predicate). Its purpose is to bring them together. This conciliatory function of the copula prevents judgment from favoring the subject at the expense of the predicate, or vice versa. It forms the basis for what Tanabe calls "the absolute dialectical unity of subject and predicate."[27] But on a closer look, the supposedly middle ground Tanabe stakes out between Aristotle and Hegel turns out to lie in the center of Hegelian territory. According to the author of *Science of Logic*, "all things are a judgment."[28] Hegel regards judgment not as a subjective mental operation, but rather as a form of the self-division of a unitary concept into individual and universal, i.e., into empirical being and its inner nature. The copula does link them back, but the two remain independent and external to one another. For example, "is" in the judgment "this rose is red" tries to equate two entities that are fundamentally different: a rose and a color. This dooms the equation to failure. Tanabe's logic of copula is based on the same reasoning, but it does not carry it through in all

its consequences. By Hegel's standards, it does not go far enough. To achieve the effect he seeks, Tanabe would have to proceed further into *Hegel's* logic. Here, the dialectical movement within judgment is at the same time a process of the progressive refinement of logic. Qualitative judgment transitions into judgment of reflection, and from there, into judgment of necessity. The most developed is judgment of concept. Stepping beyond it, one leaves the sphere of judgment and proceeds to that of inference or syllogism. As Tanabe himself notes, it is first here that the unity of the concept, lost through its self-division in judgment, is restituted by the mediation of the two "moments" of the concept, posited as the extreme terms, through the third moment in the position of the middle term.[29] In qualitative syllogism, this restitution takes the form of conjoining an individual subject with a universal determination through a particular quality the subject possesses. Hegel's example: "This rose is red; red is a color; it follows that this rose is colorful."[30] As much as all things are a judgment, they are also a syllogism.

Tanabe derives another example of oppositional unity from the dialectic of universal and individual. We become individuals in the socio-historical sense only when we learn to interpret our own willful acts in light of the universal, ethical necessity, that is, through placing ourselves in a relation to what is external to ourselves, to the universal.[31] At the same time, the individual constitutes a dynamic vanguard of the universal and its foothold in the world of existence.[32] The universal does not completely transcend the individual, for that would make it irrelevant. It "envelops" individuality. The obverse side of this codependent relationship is conflict. Universals are rational since they function in the sphere of human reason. In contrast, a living individual is rooted in the irrational aspect of existence represented by nature and more broadly, by matter. In its material aspect, the individual is impervious to reason and cannot be derived from the universal. In this respect, Tanabe considers the individual to be a movement of negation, the negative of the universal and a rebellion against it. Following Hegel's *Phenomenology*, he uses an even stronger term, "evil," to describe the individual's adherence to its determinate ego against its universal essence.[33] In the evil of individuality he identifies a major force determining the individual's ethical choices. Human freedom necessarily involves the freedom for evil, which makes our pursuit of good—when we opt for it—all the more significant.[34]

Oppositional unity takes another form in the "dialectic of corporeality."[35] Tanabe's view on the subject has, again, a lot in common with Hegel's, for whom the individual represents free activity or movement of consciousness. At the same time, the individual is determined by the body, which binds consciousness solidly to phenomenal reality. Since the body is an original or given (*ursprüngliches*) being beyond the individual's control, it appears to be external to the individual. Nevertheless, the reality to which it belongs is the individual's own. Since the individual *is* only in its actions, its body is at the same time an expression (*Ausdruck*) of the individual itself. The body is an instrument of the

soul, which objectivizes itself in it and uses it for its purposes.[36] One can compare this with Tanabe's recognition of the two-fold character of the body. The body is a physical object external to consciousness, but at the same time, an internal category that consciousness perceives as itself. It is internal as well as external, subjective at the same time as objective. As *objective*, it negates consciousness in the same sense as the individual negates the universal. The negation proves that the negating body is an independent opposite, which makes it an equal partner in the union with the negated, consciousness.[37] On the other hand, their unity is possible only because both opposites are rooted in the same noetic, *subjective* moment; body is an expression of consciousness. Tanabe's dialectic of corporeality restates Hegel's thinking of the body as a convergence of matter and spirit, both founded upon pure consciousness. But Tanabe does not seem to realize the parallelism. On the contrary, he construes Hegel's notion of the body in a way that allows him to emphasize the difference between their positions. In his interpretation, Hegel fails to recognize the body as an independent entity; he treats it as a direct emanation of consciousness. To Tanabe, this takes Hegel again in the direction of subjective idealism, in which the relative world is seen as emanating from spirit. Emanation occurs within a simple, positive unity. In contrast, Tanabe considers himself to be an absolute idealist who regards objective reality as both an expression and self-negation of the absolute.

In the human world, the absolute manifests itself through social behavior of individuals. Hegel holds that when taken in isolation, apart from the consciousnesses of others, individual consciousness is no more than "life." Life is matter sublated into a biological attribute of being: for an individual, to be alive is simply to *be*. First in the interplay with the consciousnesses of others does the individual develop into an independent consciousness, a self.[38] Tanabe continues Hegel's line of thought with his remark that as determinations of a single universal, individuals in the collective form represent social-historical, objective spirit.[39] Objective spirit comes into being as a particular society steeped in a historical culture. Incarnated in a specific cultural-historical world and shaped by its members, objective spirit is at the same time an expression of absolute spirit, which it mediates or represents to individuals. Tanabe concedes that Hegel uses the term "expression" sparingly, but the expressive function is inherent in his understanding of the social world.[40] In Hegel's philosophy, the social world or social (moral) substance (*sittliche Substanz*)—his designation for the totality of the customs and laws of a people—is a historical and geographical determination of the absolute. It is the absolute spirit's actualization in the relative world, the highest unity of the absolute and the relative. Through social substance, the universality and freedom of the whole are mediated as the particularity and freedom of the individual. Also in this respect, Tanabe's philosophy remains faithfully Hegelian. Tanabe's accusation of Hegel as an emanationist is a double-edged sword that, if proven true, undermines Tanabe's own position as well.

Our last example of Tanabe's oppositional unity is the relation between consciousness and its content. It takes the form of "the objectivity of the expressive content of the past that negatively confronts the active subject,"[41] resulting from the subject's division within itself. By mediating itself through self-reflection in the present, subjective consciousness (as the active subject) brings forth its own objectification, which is consciousness (as expressive content) shifted into the past. It perceives this objectification no longer as part of itself, but rather as an external resistance that confronts and negates it. This dynamic becomes clearer in a later essay, where Tanabe counts self-mediation among the natural characteristics of the self. Since the *self-mediated* self can only be mediated into its opposite, he postulates the necessary existence of the *unmediated* self equivalent to "so-called immediate being." The interplay between the unmediated and the mediated self starts with the process in which the self alienates or externalizes itself—a process amounting to self-negation. Self-negation is in turn mediated, i.e., negated. The negation of self-negation is absolute negation. In this process, the self becomes aware of itself as unitary and at the same time, internally divided. Its self-externalization is none other (*soku*) than its return to itself. The simultaneous movement of leaving and coming back will become the centerpiece of Tanabe's later thought. At present, he calls it "being with itself" using a German term *Beisichsein*.[42] In being with itself, "the so-called self-alienating is that which is the self without being a self."[43] When in its depths—in *jikaku*—the self realizes that through self-negation and return to itself it has touched the absolute, it enters a religious dimension that is the state of Buddhist enlightenment (*kenshō*).[44] Tanabe transcribes this process further into the paradigm of thesis and antithesis, the former equivalent to immediate being, the latter to nothing or to negation of being. Consciousness reflects upon nothing as a negative moment of itself. In this process, it turns nothing into its own object, and so again a being which is the negative complement of nothing. To arrive at this second being, consciousness performs a negation of negation. But the being born of the negated nothing of the antithesis is not the same as the immediate being of the thesis. It is a dialectical being: neither being nor nothing, but rather nothing-*soku*-being and being-*soku*-nothing, or the absolute switching between being and nothing. It is a "neither . . . nor"[45] synthesis in which the alternatives mutually negate one another. The two negations are tantamount to a negation of their unity. The awareness of this result is the "absolutely negative realization" or absolute nothingness. Tanabe contrasts his solution with Hegel's synthesis, which in his view is a positive "both . . . and" that resolves the contradiction by sublating both contradictories into a straightforward unity or self-identity. As such, it is not a good vehicle for consciousness as *negative* totality. By neglecting to reflect the negative structure of consciousness adequately in his philosophy, Tanabe believes, Hegel's point of view is not that of active self-consciousness that it claims to be, but rather one of theist contemplativeness. It reduces active subjectivity into an object of contemplation.

Ironically, Hegel takes exception to what Tanabe associates him with, i.e., "contemplativeness," explicitly in the discussion of "observing reason" (*die beobachtende Vernunft*) in the eponymous chapter of *Phenomenology*. Observing reason looks at the world in a detached manner, as if at an external object to which it has no immediate relation. Hegel regards this attitude as representative of a relatively immature stage in the evolution of spirit. Theoretical and passive, it is later supplanted by a more active stance which engages knowledge in practical, communal ends. The allegedly contemplative Hegel in fact rejects the contemplative position long before Tanabe. As for Hegel's ostensible failure to recognize the mutual negation of contradictories in a synthesis, Tanabe's supposititious fix, "the absolute switching between being and nothing," is actually the principal dynamic in Hegel's logic of being. For example, "becoming" is the interpenetration as well as mutual paralysis of its two moments, being and nothing. Each removes itself, becoming its own nothingness in the other. This switching or crossing-over (*Übergehen*), in which being vanishes into nothing and nothing into being, is propelled by their contradictoriness. When both vanish, so does the switching: becoming itself is doomed to disappear.[46] Tanabe presents only half of Hegel's position by saying, in effect, that Hegel removes the contradiction by a *fiat*. He denies, in Hegel, the aspect of mutual negation, that is, the destruction of the contradiction through the negativity of opposites. This denial allows him to claim it as an original postulate in his own philosophy.

We have examined several ways in which Tanabe addresses the question of oppositional unity. Although he makes it his purpose to correct Hegel's all-too-positive, "contemplative" approach, by and large his solutions are simplifications of Hegel's. Nevertheless, there *is* a concept important in Tanabe's philosophy that receives no direct attention in Hegel's. In thinking about the entity that expresses itself through the particular or individual—broadly speaking, the universal—Tanabe is influenced by Nishida, for whom the universal at the highest level is an alias for absolute nothingness or Buddhist emptiness. Originally closely associated with Nishida, Tanabe gradually distances himself from him and asserts himself as an independent thinker. But despite the growing estrangement between the two men, in his chronologically last three Hegelian essays Tanabe introduces and gradually fully espouses Nishida's belief that reality is founded in nothingness. Subsequently, he superimposes it on the conceptual apparatus of German Idealism in his philosophy. In the earliest of the three essays, he takes the first step in that direction: he refers to nature as the product of "the absolute negativity of spirit." If this still sounds Hegelian, the subsequent instance attenuates the resemblance: in order to emphasize the unobjectifiable character of the universal, Tanabe describes it as "nothing" and "emptiness." In the last essay, the last traces of ambiguity are gone: Tanabe addresses the universal directly with Nishida's term "absolute nothingness."[47] Similarities between Nishida and Tanabe do not stop here. For both, empirical reality is "the world of expression" of the absolute universal or the absolutely unobjectifiable

subject.[48] Both say that the universal "envelops" the individual, and speak of "*acting* individual" and "the eternal now." Occasionally, Tanabe even imitates Nishida's normative mannerism: "The absolute universal *must*":

> [The absolute universal subject, which is transcendent totality,] does not exist in the same sense as a relative, finite being; it must always be realized as the foundation of the dynamic development of such [relative] existence. As such, it is called absolute nothingness, which, making itself nothing, is the foundation of being. It transcends both being and nothing; it is pure emptiness that permeates both. . . . The absolute universal must be absolute nothingness, which annihilates even nothingness, and true emptiness that empties emptiness.[49]

These pronouncements read as if they came from Nishida's pen. They show absolute nothingness as that which determines itself as being while making itself nothing. Tanabe believes they accomplish it even better than Nishida himself. In his opinion, Nishida approaches absolute nothingness through intuition, which transforms it into an object. As an object of intuition, it is being rather than true nothing. And it is in its capacity as, effectively, being, that Nishida's absolute nothingness functions as the source of the relative world in a manner similar to the Plotinian One. As a result, it predetermines the individual, engulfs it, and paralyzes its freedom of action.

At times, Tanabe is more critical of Nishida than he is of Hegel, whose universal or concept (*Begriff*) he initially accepts as an incarnation of "nothingness or emptiness."[50] Referring to the beginning of *Logic*, where being and nothing confront one another, Tanabe finds that for Hegel, nothing is more primal than being. This positions *Logic* as a dialectic of absolute nothingness. For Tanabe himself, absolute nothingness is a dialectical entity through and through; it cannot be defined directly. Fundamentally, it is always a negation *of being*. It is relative to being and mediated through it.[51] It needs being as an opposite in order to realize its own nothingness, which is another way of saying that nothingness is absolute only to the extent that it denies its absoluteness (through relating to being); it is absolute nothingness only as a negation mediated through a negation.[52] The style of this reasoning is dialectical. Thus, even though the concept of absolute nothingness is the Kyoto School's own, in Tanabe's philosophy it is conceptualized in quite a Hegelian way.

Years later, Tanabe still sees Hegel's universal through the prism of absolute nothingness. He establishes a broad correspondence between Hegel's trinity of absolute, particular and individual and the Tendai Buddhist doctrine of the three truths. As we saw earlier, the doctrine holds that all phenomena are empty of inherent existence, i.e., of reality. Since this vacuity is all-inclusive, it holds also for emptiness itself. A way out of the logical predicament involved in this application of emptiness to itself is to concede phenomena a modicum of realness and to admit they do exist—in a provisional way. To comprehend that both views—that of the utter unreality of phenomena and the opposite one of their

provisional reality—are complementary and indispensable to one another is the view in the middle. It amounts to the realization that emptiness is phenomenal no less than the relative world that it determines; emptiness is identical with phenomena. Tanabe argues that Hegel's highest universal—the absolute concept or God—corresponds to the empty aspect of truth, his particular (when it forms a specific, historical society) to the provisional aspect, and his individual (subject) to the middle, mediatory one. Analogous to the relation between the three aspects in Tendai Buddhism, Hegel's universal, particular and individual form a triadic unity through absolute mediation in the self-consciousness of the subject. On the strength of this analogy, Tanabe likens Hegel's *Logic* to an axis joining East and West. Not only does it stand at the high point of Western philosophy of religion; Tanabe does not flinch from hailing it as the pinnacle of human thinking as such.[53] Still, this outburst of enthusiasm is only a brief departure from Tanabe's standing censure of the Hegelian absolute as an objectified being. As he refines his position on absolute nothingness, he no longer sees Hegel as its fellow advocate. For support from within the world of Western philosophy, he turns instead to Kant.

Kant's work evoked Tanabe's interest already earlier, at the time of his publication of "Kant's Teleology."[54] It made a deep enough impression on Tanabe to prompt his call, in the Hegelian essays, to moving not only "from Kant to Hegel" but also backwards, "from Hegel to Kant."[55] He pays particular attention to Kant's principle of the unity of reality that provides the framework for our understanding of the manifold of the empirical world. We come to know individual things against the backdrop of the infinite totality they constitute. We identify that totality as God's orderly creation, governed by laws and invested with a general purpose. This teleological ideal furnishes a perspective from which to view things, actions and events *as if* they moved toward the fulfillment of an all-embracing, moral-religious goal. That goal should be understood as a regulative postulate, an idea without a corresponding real object. Revealed to us as an absolute dictate, it must be strived for but can never be fully achieved. An absolute dictate eludes us by virtue of its absolute nature, which makes it undeterminable in the dimension of being. In this respect, it differs from the constitutive elements of experience, such as the forms of sensibility (intuition) and categories of comprehension, which for Kant are real entities that determine and structure our perception of reality. What appeals to Tanabe in Kantian philosophy is the ambiguous ontological status of the regulative principle: it guides our behavior while lacking objective existence. Kant's postulate that the teleological ideal is regulative and not constitutive opens a place for absolute nothingness—cast in the role of such an ideal—in Tanabe's worldview. As regulative, absolute nothingness need not exist in the usual sense of the word, which is exactly the condition Tanabe seeks. It provides conceptual underpinning for the aspect which Tanabe feels Nishida has compromised: the purely subjective, dynamic dimension of the absolute.[56] It is a prescription Tanabe recommends for Hegel's

ailments, as well. Instead of turning a universal ideal into something real, into an objectification he calls the concept, Hegel should have construed it à la Kant as a provisory, purely teleological task. By serving as an ethical signpost, the universal could then perform a vital role. It would remain at the individual's disposal without constraining or overwhelming it. Different from the rigid and destructive necessity in Hegel's emanationist and formal-logical scheme, Tanabe argues, *teleological* necessity leaves intact the individual's spontaneity and freedom of action. Freedom is a crucial requirement for Tanabe, since in his view the absolute can be approached (if never reached) only by manifesting itself through the individual's free, ethical acts. Out of the aggregate of these acts arises the historical world. In this manner, Tanabe pairs the individual's orientation toward the absolute with its active participation in history.[57] In principle, the reward for both is the state of consciousness that Hegel calls "absolute knowledge." For both philosophers, it represents the deepest self-awareness of life. But while for Tanabe it forms a moral-religious *basis for* all processes of consciousness, including rational thinking, Hegel, in Tanabe's mind, regards it erroneously as the apex *of* rationality. Tanabe apparently does not appreciate Hegel's differentiation between speculative reason and formal-logical comprehension. He himself is not consistent in repudiating *all* forms of rationality. For example, without a blink he associates the individual's moral-religious acts with *reflection* on the teleological universal.[58] He hastens to assure us that the kind of reflection *he* postulates belongs in a category beyond reason. We remain unconvinced. Any reflection necessarily involves a degree of rationality. Tanabe's embrace of reflection brings him closer to Hegel than he would like to admit. What we *can* accept is a weaker form of Tanabe's postulate: moral-religious activity—for that matter, any activity—involves more than logical reflection. Tanabe's term "activity" (or "praxis") refers neither to the way we lead our everyday lives nor to extraordinary, heroic exploits. It connotes ethical, selfless, or self-negating engagement in the "historical world," engagement that draws in deeper layers of the individual's existence, beyond its reasoning mind. So understood, activity opens us momentarily to the absolute, the eternal.[59] Tanabe seeks to model his own dialectic after the dynamic of an active instant,[60] in which the eternal touches the temporal, producing a synthesis of both. "The true universal is not something known that is posited above temporality; it is simply absolute totality realizing itself ethically and religiously in the active instant that tolerates absolutely no such noematization. In short, the universal is properly a great act manifested in an active instant."[61] In such an instant, an encounter with fate forced Antigone in Sophocles' drama into a moral choice, a choice expressed through appropriate actions. It put successfully to test her obligations to family and gods, reaffirming her individual relation to the absolute.[62] Tanabe notes that such relation transcends time. It does not build up gradually and linearly in the sense of the development of spirit, as he believes is the case in Hegel's system. Temporal, historical acts are full-scale manifestations of atemporal, absolute nothingness. The

determination is bidirectional: absolute nothingness not only manifests itself as the world of relative beings; it is also predicated upon it. Relative good is at the same time absolute good, and vice versa. This intimate relation between the relative and the absolute yields dialectical unities of opposites[63]—leap and continuity, development and completion, movement and stasis. In such unities, neither opposite exists, unmediated, apart from the other. Tanabe takes credit for establishing this very Hegelian way of thinking as his own, "absolute dialectic," a dialectic as action that continuously mediates itself, negating itself as a static philosophical system.

To facilitate the individual's experience of the absolute, its actions, in addition to playing themselves out on the "historical" scene, must be motivated by the pain of self-denial and contrition. The collective name for these impulses is *zange*.[64] The term is Tanabe's, but the concept is not entirely his own. For example, we are familiar with it from—to stay within the thematic boundaries of the discussion—Hegel's *Phenomenology*. Unhappy consciousness (*unglücklich-es Bewußtsein*; according to many commentators, Hegel's implicit reference to a common Judeo-Christian mindset) does not realize its sameness with the divine, absolute spirit that makes up its essence. Tormented by feelings of isolation and anxiety over the disparity between its existential and essential selfhood, it considers approaching the absolute through its own existential self-effacement. Unhappy consciousness puts its plan into, as Tanabe would say, moral-religious action by sacrificing not only its will, but also its labor and the enjoyment of its fruits. It enacts its wishes in the historical world. Yet, since it labors under a false, divisive premise, it cannot achieve its goal. Eventually, it realizes the underlying problem, whereby it advances to a new level of self-understanding. Tanabe, on the other hand, does not express interest in going any further. He steps off the development path. He believes that the answer to the soul's quest for its essence lies not in a more accurate perspective on reality, but rather in deeper self-abasement. *Zange* will become the principal focus of his later philosophy in conjunction with other, new motifs. In the seven Hegelian essays, it appears in an elementary form. If individuality is a sin perpetuated against the universal, *zange* is the expiation. Pulled by teleological faith in the absolute[65] and prodded by remorse, we sinners turn away from evil in order to pursue the good. Negating our physicality—our finite bodies—we affirm our spiritual nature. Through the death of our egos, we resurrect, breaking through to absolute nothingness. This is an impossible task, and indeed, Tanabe defines it intentionally that way. The manner in which he recognizes nature, fate, and body as an irreducible counterbalance to spirit gives his call for their repudiation a special poignancy. Our breakthrough is not a once-and-for-all victory over evil. It is not a real victory at all. To use Tanabe's Kantian language, the breakthrough is merely teleological. This is why we move toward the absolute not by eliminating the evil that we are, but rather by fully disclosing it to ourselves. We succeed not through victory, but rather through defeat. We accept our evil, for only in it can

we find our essence—the essence of evil that, as essence, transcends evil, in a similar sense as the essence of individuality is no longer individual, but already universal (Hegel). We attain the absolute through accepting the relative as relative. By exhausting the relative, by penetrating, negating and mediating it completely, Tanabe says, we reach the absolute self-consciousness that is the practical self-consciousness of an active instant.[66] His call to self-negation should be interpreted through this very Hegelian linking of the relative and the negative and the grounding of the absolute in both.[67] By negating ourselves, we realize the unity of our individual egos with our universal nature, of noema with noesis—a dialectical unity in which the noetic element is both identical with the noematic, and at the same time, distinct from it. Repudiating the relative, we break through to absolute nothingness, but the breakthrough is rooted in the realization that the nothingness that we tried to embrace eluded us at the moment of embrace, and that we are left holding its abstract, static expression. Having brushed against the infinite, we fall back into our inescapable finitude. To sustain our fleeting redemption, our contrition is therefore not a one-time achievement, but rather a perpetual effort.

Absolute Mediation and the Logic of Species

In the model of the world that Tanabe constructs against Hegel's in his seven Hegelian essays, reality as a whole figures as the absolute universal. Tanabe thinks of it as the universal of absolute nothingness. It is actualized as the "world of expression," which he also calls a relative universal. The latter presents itself as species understood as society at a given historical stage. This scheme contains *in nuce* Tanabe's later "logic of species," a body of thought he produces between 1934 and 1939 and supplements with a few publications after the war. The concrete character of the theme of species signals a shift of focus, away from pure metaphysics and toward social and political philosophy. In conscious opposition to Nishida, mesmerized (as Tanabe thinks) by the mystical unity at the heart of reality, Tanabe tries to bring out the aspect of differentiation, a hallmark of the world of human affairs. Although he looks for unity no less assiduously than Nishida, he seeks to demonstrate it first on the basis of mediation between the differentiated.[68]

Tanabe's teaching of species is patterned after the triad of universal, particular, and individual. He rakes through logic, social science, and religion for manifestations of the three categories. The eclectic character of the examples he assembles reflects the twists and turns of his thinking as he attempts to capture their nature. In simplest terms, he concretizes them as genus, species, and individual. Genus is typified by humankind and later, by the state; species, by a people or ethnically homogenous society; and individual, by a single human

being.[69] Priding himself on taking a step ahead of Western social sciences, which place the particular—species—in the no-man's-zone between the other two terms, Tanabe accords it a vital function of its own: species gives an individual the identity as a concrete agent in the historical world, the identity as a true individual. Although species *issues from* genus as its self-alienated and objectified form, it also plays a *generative* part: as society governed by law and ethics, it acts as a medium through which ethical praxis of individuals is universalized back into genus.[70]

Tanabe forms his conception of species in reliance on the theories of totemic groups set forth by Émile Durkheim, Henri Bergson, and Lucien Lévy-Bruhl.[71] It is again to Bergson that he owes the distinction between an open and a closed society. According to Bergson, a closed society promotes its own survival by exacting from its members a strict adherence to its rules and customs. An open one accords individuals a degree of freedom from communal norms. In Tanabe's reinterpretation, species provides its members with an outlet for escaping their narrow individuality. But it also defines, and so closes, a people against other peoples. Its restrictive character stems from its immediate, irrational character. The species is motivated by the unconscious will to life. On the other hand, the individual is driven by the conscious will to power, through which it attempts to bring the species under its control. In order to reach the openness of the universal which, as genus, is the will to salvation, the individual opposes the species. Tanabe assigns responsibility for the opposition implicitly to himself, as he believes it should be carried out through the exercise of philosophy.

In its early form, the logic of species describes the structure of social existence. But this makes it too static, and Tanabe needs to bring it in line with his dialectical principles. That he accomplishes by equating species with dialectical thesis, individual with antithesis, and genus with synthesis. The genus negates the individual and the species at their respective levels, but at the higher level of synthesis, the negation reveals itself as an affirmatory reconciliation. The reconciliation through the genus is facilitated by the universality latent in the individual and the species. The species tends toward universality in its communal aspect. An individual, for its part, is a rational subject, and as such it partakes in universal, human essence. It is guided not only by the will to power, but also by the rational and the ethical will. A dialectical interpretation of the logic of species allows Tanabe to redefine it dynamically as a paradigm of the world's historical development. Drawn in its process, the state undergoes constant improvement through rationalization. In time, every synthesis represented by the genus loses its universal character and degenerates into a new thesis (a closed, irrational species), which is negated again by the individual; the two together then achieve a new synthesis: "[M]ost states begin to disintegrate almost as soon as they achieve a minimum degree of unity. The pattern appears to have almost no exceptions. Similarly, states begin to reconstruct themselves as soon as they disintegrate, and start to disintegrate almost as soon as they have consolidated

their power."[72] The process of continuous renewal of the state is kept in infinite motion by the willful, rational, and ethical acts of individuals.

Tanabe's emphasis on the role of free individual in making the genus materialize and his advocacy of an open society reflect his core values. While the species is internalized at the unconscious level in individuals as ethnic identity, its irrational character is counterbalanced by its broader, genus-state setting, which is universal and supportive of individual reason. The genus-state provides a further remedy for the drawbacks of specificity by relating an ethnic society to other societies, to which it forms interconnections based on universal, moral principles that break up its original closeness and rationalize its irrationality. This scheme offers a balanced view of the human world, in which each of its three nuclei is allotted an equally important role with respect to the other two. But it finds little corroboration in the reality of prewar Japan. The state advances there to the highest status as an embodiment of the Yamato race. Its interests increasingly displace those of citizens, who are treated primarily as "subjects" rather than free individuals.[73] The pressure of history softens Tanabe's core values. His concern about individual freedom yields to that about species; the latter progressively narrows in meaning until Tanabe uses it as a term for the ethnic communality of the *Japanese* people based on their shared "blood and soil."[74] In parallel, the denotation of genus shifts from universal state to the particular state of Japan.[75] For Tanabe, genus in this sense becomes the very paradigm of existence. He begins to believe that all existents, including nature itself, are its abstractions. They are its raw material, waiting to be concretized. Going a step further, Tanabe declares the Japanese state to be no less than a manifested body of the Buddha.[76] Tanabe's eclectic bent allows him to regard the state at the same time as a concretization of the Christian Holy Trinity. He likens it to the divine Son or Christ, with absolute nothingness serving as the Father, and state philosophy taking the role of the Holy Spirit. As Christ, the state mediates between the absolute and the relative. The Buddhist and Christian imageries serve to reinforce Tanabe's contention that the state is a manifestation of the absolute on earth. They legitimize his attempt to present it as an object worthy of religious worship.

As the state rises in stature in Tanabe's thinking, its divine proportions start to block his vision of the individual, who loses ground in his philosophy until his ideal of individual freedom and independence comes close to a travesty. Using Nishida's favorite conjunction, Tanabe comes up with curiosities fit to adorn Japan's ideological cabinet of that time, such as "self-sacrifice as (*soku*) self-realization" and "control as freedom." With these constructions, Tanabe calls on his fellow citizens, including his own students, to seek fulfillment in the sacrifice to the state[77] and to liberate themselves through obedience to the authorities. We can take this as a devious application of the principle of the cunning of reason that Tanabe attacked earlier in Hegel's work. At that time, he shuddered at the

thought of reducing the individual to an unwitting tool of a higher force. Now, he espouses it as a means to salvation.

Did Tanabe find his own freedom in adapting his philosophy to the political ideology of the day? On occasion he did not hesitate to criticize what displeased him in the direction taken by his country. Arguing for the maintenance of the philosopher's inner freedom and autonomy, he also—a fact often adduced in his defense—publicly disapproved of Heidegger's membership, since 1932, in the German National Socialist Party, and of his acceptance of the regime-controlled post of rector at Freiburg University a year later.[78] But it is time to leave aside Tanabe's political involvements, especially since abundant literature in Japanese and European languages is available on the topic. Represented there one finds a full spectrum of positions, from righteously critical to eulogistic. What matters in the context of the present discussion is that behind a nationalistic façade, Tanabe's treatise on state, society and individual turns entirely within the Hegelian conceptual framework. It builds upon Hegel's finding that "the *universal* nature [of the concept] gives itself outward reality through *particularity* and thereby, and as a negative reflection-in-itself, makes itself into an *individual*."[79] For illustration, consider Hegel's interpretation of the Greek drama as that in which "the extreme of universality, the world of gods, is tied with individuality, the singer [of the epos], through the middle of particularity. The middle is the people in its heroes who, like the singer, are individual people, but as only *imagined* they are at the same time *universal*, like the free extreme of universality, the gods."[80] When reporting that in *Philosophy of Right* the role of the universal falls to the state and that of the particular to "the historical culture of society . . . and especially the legal system of an ethnic state,"[81] Tanabe is laying the foundation for his own logic of species. He supports Hegel's conception of the spirit of a people (*Volksgeist*) as a mediator between the universal as world spirit (*Weltgeist*) or state on the one side, and the individual as a member of a people on the other. Through mediation by the other two, each of the three principal categories negates itself as an independent, immediate entity in order to assume the role of their negative unity.[82] Tanabe's designation of "absolute mediation" for this scheme is borrowed from *Phenomenology of Spirit*. He refers to that work again for illustration: he relates *Phenomenology* to existence, *Science of Logic* to logic, and *Philosophy of Right* to praxis, and points to "mediation" between the three works in the sense that the last one "concretely unifies" the other two.[83]

Phenomenology describes consciousness at a certain stage as a simple I that appears to itself as an absolute, undifferentiated, and immediate object. However, an external observer sees it truthfully as a consciousness caught in absolute mediation within itself. Eventually, the simple unity dissolves into the separate moments of independent, pure self-consciousness and the object that depends on it, that is, consciousness in the form of thingness. It is only later that the two moments will come together again, this time in a higher unity.[84] Thus in Hegel's

work, what appears to be an immediate unity of subject and object reveals itself to be a subjective view of the actual, absolute mediation between them. For Tanabe himself, what is the paradigmatic function of absolute mediation? He recapitulates: "With the logic of species, I intended philosophical logic to fulfill practical needs through the concrete grasp of mediation between the negative opposites of *subject versus substratum, formal unity versus matter.*"[85] Subject and formal unity refer to individual consciousness that operates through reason and logic. Substratum (species) and matter form the immediate, irrational, physical basis of existence. Beyond meeting the "practical needs" of making his philosophy politically acceptable, absolute mediation is Tanabe's answer to the question of how to overcome the subject-object dichotomy. He goes about the task of "concretely grasping" that answer in his typical reliance on Hegel:

> When I aspired for the first time to understand Hegel's philosophy from that standpoint, I felt that I found the key to this understanding in the practical unity of the real and the rational stated by Hegel in the Preface to the *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*. . . . Inasmuch as philosophy seeks absolute self-consciousness, its only possible standpoint is in the self-consciousness of an active unity of existence and the self. This belief, together with [Hegel's] method, became my entry point to philosophy.[86]

Seeking "a practical unity of the real and the rational" and "an active unity of existence and the self," Tanabe insists on treating the two opposites on even terms. One notes that in the passage just quoted, the rational and the self are implied to be the same function. Both denote consciousness as opposed to "the real" and "existence." A few years earlier sharply critical of Hegel's "panlogism," Tanabe undergoes a change of heart regarding rationality. He now tries to vindicate it against Nishida's "intuition," Dilthey's "philosophy of life," and any other teaching that regards it as a function at odds with the immediacy and actuality of existence, a function that abstracts and vitiates the immediate content of life. Tanabe, on the contrary, considers its importance to be equal, rather than inferior, to that of any form of immediacy. For a theoretical grounding of this view, he looks to syllogism. On the authority of Hegel's statement that "[t]he syllogism is *rational* and *everything* rational,"[87] he declares it to be the essence of logic. Since a syllogism consists in the mediation of two terms by the third, this declaration makes logic itself a vehicle of mediation. Indeed, logic "rejects anything non-mediated and negates all immediacy."[88] Still, as much as logic abrogates immediacy, at the same time it requires it in order to affirm its own identity as its opposite—as logic. By depending on immediacy in this manner, logic affirms *it*, as well: "To negate all immediacy must mean (since logic necessarily makes immediacy, which negatively opposes it, a mediating factor of logic itself) that while negating it, the logic affirms it."[89]

Tanabe's argumentation follows the logical principle that all affirmation requires negation as its medium, for it is always an affirmation *against* the negated.

In turn, every negation is a negation *of an affirmation*, i.e., it needs affirmation in order to fulfill its own function. Tanabe continues this classical Hegelian line of reasoning by exploring further implications of the relation between logic and immediacy. Since logic leaves no affirmation unmediated by its opposite (negation), it puts itself in a difficult position when trying to determine its own identity. Its affirmation of itself (as rationality) must be mediated by self-negation, i.e., by immediacy (the irrational). Were logic to violate this rule by affirming itself directly—without passing through self-negating mediation—it would negate its own principle and cease to be logic at all. On the other hand, by having negated itself, it would fulfill the condition for its own affirmation. To restate: while logic negates immediacy, which it does by its nature, at the same time it cancels that negation since it needs immediacy in order to be itself; but the "itself" of logic consists precisely in negating immediacy. Logic must affirm itself in order to negate itself, and negate itself in order to affirm itself.

Immediacy is caught in a mirror image of this dilemma. By definition, it cannot be mediated, yet one can think of it only in opposition to logic. Such thinking is tantamount to mediation. Immediacy is itself (unmediated) only in being mediated, yet once mediated, it is no longer immediacy. The difficulties involved in defining logic and immediacy are compounded by the requirement that for each to be truly effective—both in its own right and as a counterpoint to the other—logic and immediacy must be fully independent of each other. Nevertheless, logic cannot be sustained without existence, which is immediacy; and immediacy is unthinkable without logic, for without logic it could not even be identified as such. These observations lead Tanabe to conclude that "the self-consciousness of logic is self-consciousness in the other, and an affirmation of logic is an affirmation inside negation." [90] One understands the "self-consciousness" of logic as its antinomic self-referentiality, where the negativity of immediacy with respect to logic is a function within logic itself (its mediating element), yet, to be effective, it must at the same time be logic's "other."

Whether one regards them as independent of one another or as two facets of the same function, logic (rationality) and immediacy (existence) cannot exist without one another. In a Hegelian manner, Tanabe sublates them as a unity of a higher kind of logic that he calls *absolute* rationality. Absolute rationality surpasses both simple logic and its antithesis, immediacy, while preserving them as its "moments."[91] In this sense, Tanabe speaks of "rationality as (*soku*) irrationality" of logic.[92] The essential structure of logic is thus not simply rational; it is a negative unity of rationality and irrationality. Tanabe regards it as a proper basis for philosophy. But even though he defends rationality against philosophy of life, names the sublative unity of the rational and the irrational "absolute *rationality*," and speaks of the *logic* of absolute mediation, one need not take these as signs of his partiality to logic, for a few paragraphs apart he refers to mediation between the rational and the irrational as a standpoint of *irrationality*. What matters more than the name of the final category is that Tanabe tries not to favor either oppo-

site at the expense of the other. His line of vision runs between the two. What appears as life from the side of immediacy, and as logic from the side of mediation, from Tanabe's vantage point is mediation between the two. It can be compared to the boundary between two states of consciousness, or to a state of transition between them in which logic becomes necessarily a logic of life, while life's self-consciousness reveals itself as the self-consciousness of logic.[93]

Whether Tanabe looks at mediation as a process of consciousness or a vehicle of ethical praxis, both views are, directly or indirectly, thoroughly Hegelian. In both cases, Hegel's dialectic places at Tanabe's disposal a useful methodological framework. But where Tanabe ventures beyond theory, his logic of species begins to falter. The signs of instability are plain to see. Tanabe's elevation of the state to the status of the metaphysical and religious base of nature and individual strains common sense. It is all the more jarring since, barring all other candidates, Tanabe absolutizes a particular state—contemporary Japan. In doing so, not only does he fail to raise himself to the level of true genus; by absolutizing a relative entity, he betrays his own philosophical principle of mediation. A powerful concept though it is, mediation is weakened further by overuse and misuse in his work. It becomes Tanabe's standard recourse in analysis of psychological, historical, and social processes. Used in a schematic way, it does not yield satisfactory solutions to the problems to which it is applied. And indeed, Tanabe applies it to an astonishing range of phenomena. What promised to serve as a useful methodology becomes a license for diffuse eclecticism. The concept of absolute mediation allows him to combine unrelated or mutually exclusive categories effortlessly, creating an appearance of effective synthesis when in fact all that he offers is a simple juxtaposition. Armed with his concept, Tanabe launches himself into assertions that are often implausible or unwarranted. This is the case, for example, with his ascription of irrationality solely to the species, i.e., to Japanese society, while the genus—the militarized state of Japan—is portrayed as a repository of enlightened benevolence and justice. Tanabe's eclecticism could be defended considering the Hegelian maxim that the true is the whole. But even if a misapplication of a theory does not necessarily invalidate the theory itself, Tanabe's examples cast a shadow over the validity of the assertions they are meant to illustrate. The programmatic nature of his social and political views raises a concern that he describes the world as he would like it to be, not as it is. It is a concern about the normative and dogmatic quality of his thought. Not surprisingly, the logic of species enjoys only a limited life span. As the hope for Japan's victory in the war fades, Tanabe falls into silence. He returns to his logic twice again in the time of peace: in the eighth chapter of *Philosophy as Metanoetics*[94] (1946) and in the essay "The Dialectic of the Logic of Species" (1947).[95] In these works, the species still forms a common substratum and basis for mediation among individuals. But while Tanabe defined it earlier as an "ethnic communal body" representing the primordial, natural, and irrational unity of life, the second time around he turns it in a spiritual direction. He now

speaks of species in the context of culture passed on in a "specific" society as its tradition.[96] He also gives it a stronger religious lining. The former political coloring of his philosophy gives way to an evangelical-existential emphasis,[97] in which genus is identified with absolute nothingness, and species with its ethical basis; individual is assigned the role of a moral agent who is rewarded for ethical praxis with religious resurrection. As Buddha's representation on earth, species now provides the individual with a means to attain salvation through absolute nothingness—a topic to which we return in the following section.

The Militant Repentance

Tanabe's religious turn after the war is evident not only in the reworked logic of species. Much of his post-war writing revolves around the concept of *zange*. The way he uses the term, *zange* is a remorseful confession of one's sins in a posture of humility and self-negation so extreme that it is experienced as the death of the ego. It culminates in an attempt to dissociate oneself from one's own will, burdened with the responsibility for the sins, and to submit to a power external to oneself. An experience so emotionally charged cannot but alter one's view of the world. It prompts one to question the validity of one's prior perceptions and beliefs. With this cognitive nuance of *zange* in mind, Tanabe refers to it with the Greek terms *metanoia* or *metanoesis* ("after-thinking" or "rethinking"). Through a confluence of repentance, submission to an external power, and doubt in the testimony of reason, *zange* brings about a religious conversion that sets one on the path to enlightenment. Tanabe calls it "a way of *zange*" (*zangedō*) or "*metanoetics*." According to his account, he passed through the experience himself. In a veiled manner, Tanabe recounts the psychological impact of the ideological compromises he made during the war: "Caught between these alternatives, I was unable to make up my mind and was tormented by my own indecision. . . . In the midst of my distress I let go and surrendered myself humbly to my own inability [to stand up for my convictions]."[98] The surrender was a reaction to the pangs of conscience set off by a reversal of political circumstances. The feeling of relief and elation that accompanied the surrender suggests that the experience was not a mental breakdown, but rather an effective way out of the predicament. The resolution represented by his personal *zange* was neither ethical, as a clear acknowledgment and a pointed apology for his stumbles would be, nor practical in the sense of making good for whatever harm he felt they had caused. On the contrary, to judge from his writings, it cleared his conscience and exempted him from concrete expiatory actions. As he reports, "*zange* unexpectedly threw me back on my own interiority and away from things external."[99] In his interiority, Tanabe turned from a supporter of an aggressive ideology of yesterday into an

egoless conduit of forces of compassion. He externalized these forces—Other-power—as Amida Buddha.[100] With a mental maneuver, Tanabe replaced the real world in which the tides turned against him with a benign, forgiving, projected one. He called upon Other-power to give him absolution for his past and a *carte blanche*, or even an imperative, to resume his philosophical activity with an appeased conscience. As he reports, "through *zange*, Other-power urged me to a new advance in philosophy."[101] *Zange* functioned as a catharsis that led him from despair to feelings of "resurrection" and "joy,"[102] and to a new self-affirmation. Whatever its religious significance for Tanabe may have been, on a psychological level it appears to have worked in the manner of reaction formation, a mental maneuver through which troubling emotions are replaced by their direct opposites.[103] It brought him an additional benefit: Tanabe assumed a posture of humility by declaring himself sinful and ignorant countless times in his writings, yet effectively precluded anyone else from joining him in that assessment: "The decision [to surrender myself humbly to my inability] led to *a philosophy that is not a philosophy*: a philosophy seen as the self-realization of metanoetic consciousness."[104] Shielded by the label of non-philosophy, Tanabe's philosophy made itself immune to criticism. He personally dissociated himself from the responsibility for his work: "It is no longer I who pursue philosophy, but rather *zange* that thinks through me. . . . To be sure, this is not a philosophy to be undertaken on my own power. It is rather a philosophy to be practiced by Other-power."[105] We shall resist taking this declaration literally and continue to hold Tanabe personally accountable for his work. But the self-styled common villain[106] has a surprise up his sleeve. Despite the personal roots of his *zange*, the sinful and ignorant self he tries to leave behind is principally not his own. It is, so to speak, the self of all philosophy at odds with his metanoetics. This turns the latter into "a philosophy that has to be erected at the very point where all prior philosophical standpoints and methods have been negated in their entirety. . . . It cannot be treated on the same level as philosophy up to the present."[107] If Tanabe's self-defense lies in part in preemptive self-debasement, the remainder consists in an all-out attack. He deems to elevate philosophy to a new level through the rejection of virtually all other philosophers, particularly those in the Western, rationalist, tradition. As may be guessed, Hegel is offered a place of honor on the black list.

Even though one would be hard pressed to find a major work of Tanabe without at least a few paragraphs devoted to Hegel, in the late period of his career Tanabe has little new to add on the topic. Through his final works, Tanabe's charges against Hegel run the usual gamut, from the enslavement by the Aristotelian logic of identity to the adherence to a false notion of objective concept. The reproofs lead to an expected *résumé* of Hegelian philosophy: "Not surprisingly, instead of self-consciousness in absolute nothingness we get only substance as being."[108] Since we have already discussed Tanabe's various objections against Hegel's philosophy, in this section we shall focus on a select few.

Tanabe interrupts his diatribe against Hegel occasionally with a few words of appreciation. For instance, reiterating the remarks he made in his earlier writings, he notes commonalities between Hegel's philosophy of religious consciousness and the Buddhist doctrine of emptiness. Also commendably Buddhist Tanabe finds Hegel's equation of being and nothing, which he rephrases as being-*soku*-nothing, nothing-*soku*-being.[109] In his more generous moments, Tanabe credits Hegel outright with deriving his dialectic from absolute nothingness.[110] But the similarities do not appear to go far enough and the admiration does not last. While recognizing the "Buddhist" impulses of Hegel's philosophy, Tanabe decries the result. His argument is based on the conviction that a dialectical progression cannot continue indefinitely. Having liquefied everything else, a consistent dialectic must undo even itself. The correct way to make this happen is *zangedō*, in which dialectic as a philosophical method transforms itself into a personal engagement in the world. A wrong way—Hegel's way, in Tanabe's view—is for dialectic to come to a standstill in a direct, non-mediated union of the human and the divine. Even worse, he believes, is Hegel's definition of that union in rational terms, as a union in reason.[111] According to Tanabe, this is why Hegel's dialectic remains forever trapped in abstract contemplativeness. As a result, while, by admitting its own relativity, his own dialectic produces the true absolute, Hegel reduces the absolute to an unreal, mental construct. We are familiar with this argument from Tanabe's seven Hegelian essays. He extends it now by pointing out Hegel's neglect of "the important fact that the resurrected life of reason is not the same as the former state of reason prior to negation."[112] By implication, the concept of development in Hegel's philosophy is all smoke and mirrors. To help substantiate his astonishing observation, Tanabe offers a distorted reading of a key dynamism of Hegelian dialectic, sublation. Sublation can be described as a simultaneous negation, preservation, and elevation. Tanabe chooses to ignore the negation and the elevation, and to highlight the preservation.[113] This allows him to infer that Hegel's dialectical synthesis is identical with the thesis, and from that to conclude that Hegel's "concept" and "absolute knowledge" are grounded in a self-identity that lacks the movement of mediation. This is wrong, Tanabe cautions, for only God can see absolute truth as a self-identity, while man must be content with dialectic.[114] One notes the contrast between this authoritative exegesis of God's conception of truth and Tanabe's indignation over the presumption of *Science of Logic* to interpret God in His eternal essence.

From his revitalized religious position, Tanabe lambasts Hegel's allegiance to the logic of self-power.[115] It never occurs to Hegel, he submits, to doubt the power of his own reason and to undergo a personal transformation by entrusting himself to Other-power.[116] Tanabe apparently overlooks the contradiction between this invective against Hegel's intellectual autonomy and his own earlier critique of the "cunning of reason," in which he objected to Hegel's ostensible subjugation of individual freedom to a higher will. On his own behalf, he an-

nounces that "the absolute, because it has self-consciousness, makes use of the self-consciousness of us relative beings, which are other than the absolute, as its mediation."[117] In effect, apparently unaware of the parallel, he is describing the way in which he believes Hegelian absolute reason makes use of human individuals. With equal innocence, Tanabe offers his own philosophy on the altar of religion while castigating Hegel for his Christian bias. This unequal treatment is perhaps justified by his assessment that Hegel's "standpoint did not succeed in proving a solid basis for a society that promotes the salvation of its members in a positive sense. . . . The weakness of Hegel's approach lies in this, that he did not present *salvation* as the positive principle of social construction, that he did not bring mediation to the concrete level of sociality."[118] One need not conclude that Tanabe is inconsistent, claiming both that there is too much religion in Hegel's philosophy and that there is not enough. What he rejects is Hegel's association with, in his judgment, wrong religious principles. Supported by the principles of his own religious preference, Tanabe is confident that his philosophy of repentance offers a superior alternative to Hegel's worldview. Repentance is a path of action, faith, and bearing witness.[119] Tanabe works from the assumption that there is nothing in reality besides its actuality, or that in actuality, reality is nothingness. The nothingness of reality starts with the nothingness of the self. But it can be realized neither through mere living nor through conceptual analysis. The nothingness of the self can be manifested only in *action* (the first element of the path of repentance), i.e., by drawing the entire self into self-negation. To realize its own nothingness in a thoroughgoing way, the self engages in selfless, social acts in which it invests its very existence. Referring to the self as "the relative," Tanabe outlines its obligations as follows:

> First, the relative has being and significance only as a mediator of the absolute, as an *ōsō*. But second, this function is fulfilled in a higher stage of self-consciousness: the vertical relation of *ōsō* must also be mediated by the horizontal relation between relative beings, which is the true import of the *gensō*. . . . Hence the absolute itself is able to perform its *gensō* function only if it is mediated by the relative.[120]

Tanabe borrows the terms *ōsō* and *gensō* from the nomenclature of Pure Land Buddhism. The former means to go—through dying or reaching enlightenment—from this world into the Pure Land. The latter denotes a "return" from the Pure Land, i.e., active engagement in the social world, where one helps others on the path to salvation. *Gensō* is a result of the realization that there is no absolute realm of awakening outside the relative world, and that paradoxically, in order to complete the transcendence, one must give it up and redirect one's energy to activity here, on earth. The *gensō* perspective opens up one's private region of religiosity to the society of fellow beings in need of salvation. That development is furthered by *faith*, the second element of the path of repentance. Guided by faith, the self represents, or *bears witness* (the third element) to, its

own compassionate acts as the work of Other-power, the Great Compassion: "The self-consciousness of nothingness is . . . action-faith in the Great Compassion wherein the self dies in the abyss of contradiction and makes nothingness manifest. It is not the self-consciousness of the fact that 'my' self exists, but an action-witness of the fact that 'my' self does not exist."[121] This transference of the source of its power outward, to the Great Compassion, reinforces the self's realization of its own insignificance. Tanabe calls this realization *jikaku.*[122] In this manner, each of the three supports of *zangedō*—personal transformation through repentance, the dialectic of individual-absolute woven around the dynamic of Other-power, and anti-rationalism—both entails and follows from the other two. Its scheme rounds out, with religious and psychological implications, the simpler idea of activity or praxis in Tanabe's earlier work. It also builds upon a developmental pattern in the mold of Hegel's dialectic. The limitations of consciousness at every mental level are prone to drive it into the pain of indecision, in emotional and ethical terms, or contradiction, in logical ones. *Zange* neutralizes both through a double negation, which functions in Tanabe's philosophy in a similar way as it does in Nishida's and Nishitani's: "[T]he absolute unity of nothingness . . . returns into itself in conversion *by piercing through to the depths of negation in the eternal moment.*"[123] Using a Buddhist reference, Tanabe elaborates:

> Only in the Mahāyāna doctrine of emptiness . . . relative beings, which function as mediators of the emptiness of absolute nothingness, are not allowed to rest in the immediate tranquility of being but are to negate themselves as "phenomenal beings" (*ke*). Only when they have been restored through the negation of negation to become mediators of the absolute can they find the self on the middle path of "true emptiness, wonderful being" (*shinkū-myōu*).[124]

In plainer language, the negation of our natural affections, our authority to make ethical decisions, and our ability to reason—in sum, of ourselves in all our functions—sweeps away the indecision and contradictions inherent in these functions, giving us the vigor, insight, and resourcefulness to cope with old quandaries from a fresh perspective. But despite his religious language, Tanabe is not telling us anything a Hegelian would not already know. When observing that clinging to one's self is of no avail because "[a]ll beings that are affirmed directly must, because of their relativity, fall into reciprocal negation, lose their being, and ultimately end up in nothingness,"[125] he is not only restating his own conviction that we are a mediated unity of finitude and infinity. At the same time, he is speaking from Hegel's position that anything finite is a unity of opposite moments and because of this inner contradictoriness, it dissolves into nothing.[126] Finite being—all being—is rooted in nothingness. But we can only realize this from higher ground. For Tanabe, it is the ground the finite human can provisionally reach through the grace of Other-power. We recall that Hegel, for his part, concludes that "the nonbeing of the finite is the being of the abso-

lute." The absolute comes into focus from the depths of the self-undoing of the relative, of finite being, and this in turn confirms that being is not the foundation of reality but only a product (*das Gesetzte*).[127] In both cases, the structure of the codependence between the relative and the absolute is quite similar.

Common to both is also a conceptual problem. "Piercing through to the depths of negation" in *zange* hinges on one's self-assessment as sinful and ignorant. Does that assessment arise from within the self still mired in sin and ignorance, or on the contrary, is a morally and intellectually purer perspective required to elicit it? The question is pertinent to any theory of purposeful transformation from a lower to a higher form. Tanabe would be the first to agree that his pre- and post-*zange* selves are not the same. Since the "resurrected" self is endowed with the capacity to recognize and repudiate its own egoity, it represents an improvement over the prior self, which lacked such critical self-perspective. Yet the improvement cannot be anything but spurious, for egoity is an ineluctable nature of a living being. We must attempt resurrection time and again precisely because we are destined never to reach it. This is another way of saying that the self can be purified only inasmuch as it is sinful, and it reveals itself as sinful the moment it is purified. Whether we choose to ascribe the purification ultimately to Other-power, the cunning of reason, or the impulse on the part of the entity being purified, its manifest trigger is self-reflection—involving, broadly, any form of activity that the mind directs at itself in a negative way, such as Nishitani's self-doubt or Tanabe's self-castigation. Is self-reflection initiated at level n or n+1? If we assume that it occurs entirely within the current position, n, how do we explain the n-level-mind's capability to conceptualize and pursue a higher form of itself, n+1? On the other hand, if the self-reflection is carried out from position n+1, then we are turning in a circle, for the achievement of that position was something we were trying to explain. Neither interpretation is satisfactory.[128]

Neither Hegel nor Tanabe address this matter head-on. What they do consider is the historical setting of the process. Mindful of Hegel's linking of the human individual to historical, objective spirit, Tanabe presents *zange* broadly as a dialectical unity of individual resurrection and the unfolding of historical reality. The requisite repetition of the *zange* experience is of significance not only to the individual who, with every resurrection, becomes (paradoxically) a better self; it occurs *in accordance with* the "circular development of history." Tanabe's projection of individual *zange* onto history is similar to the manner in which the evolution of objective spirit in Hegel's philosophy parallels the processes within individual consciousness—the manner, it should be noted, that Tanabe questioned in his seven Hegelian essays but now he adopts as his own. The discovery of the historical aspect of repentance takes Tanabe back to his prewar interest, species. Now he attributes to it a radical evil comparable to the evil of egoity that he earlier identified in the individual self. At the same time, he offers the species a similar opportunity to expiate its sinfulness.[129] Metanoia

ceases to be only individual. It becomes possible also on the societal level. The capacity to undergo a collective or shared metanoia endows the species with a spiritual character that makes it into "what Hegel has in mind in speaking of objective spirit as an ethical substratum."[130] In Tanabe's late philosophy, this idea evolves further into a vision of society as a brotherhood in which religious salvation is taught and shared. Social structures—in particular, the state and government—provide a medium for such religious engagement of spirit. They are vicarious forms or transient, phenomenal carriers of absolute nothingness.[131] Using terms borrowed from Christian theology, Tanabe equates species with God's kingdom on earth and a "*communio sanctorum*"—a community of saints who, in his last writings, in the manner of Mahāyāna-Buddhist bodhisattvas altruistically transfer their accumulated merits to their fellow humans in order to help them attain salvation. The community of saints straddles the boundary between the living and the dead.[132] Behind religious symbolism, Tanabe seizes upon the Hegelian notion of moral substance as the medium of objective spirit in human society. Moral substance acquires consciousness in human beings and, as the spirit of a people, orients them in the social direction.

In what way does Tanabe's interpretation of species in religious terms present a better alternative to Hegel's conception of objective spirit? As Tanabe correctly points out, Hegel does not share his view of society as a framework for realizing universal, religious salvation; but whether this divergence is a shortcoming or a merit of Hegel's philosophy is open to question. Tanabe's accusation that Hegel's theory of society lacks the element of mediation falls into a different category. Since mediation is an integral function of Hegel's dialectic, Tanabe's allegation can be justified only on the assumption that he understands the term in a substantially different way from Hegel's. Indeed, the wide-ranging manner in which Tanabe uses it in his work is quite unique. At times, true to the principle that even "the absence of mediation must be mediation itself," Tanabe applies it to phenomena that would perhaps fare better without it. For example, seeking to establish "an absolute religion of the present,"[133] he melds it from a perplexing mixture of elements of Eastern and Western traditions. The mainspring of his procedure is mediation. Pure Land Buddhism, as he sees it, emphasizes the individual, Zen Buddhism the genus, and Christianity, the species. This makes Christianity a natural mediator between the two types of Buddhism. This conclusion serves as a basis for a further chain of mediation. In order to neutralize its association with the closed society of a national state, Christianity itself must be mediated. It must be concretized through the Marxist theory of class struggle. A confrontation with the principles of Marxism, opposed to its own, will bring Christianity to self-negation. In consequence, Christians will awaken to absolute nothingness and, thereafter, spiritually return to the world for engagement in social reform. Having passed through Christianity and Marxism, we arrive back at the *gensō* doctrine of Pure Land Buddhism. Tanabe's religious program, commendable as it may be for its interreligious impulse and cultural

inclusiveness, has only a tenuous relationship with reality. "Mediation" at its basis is closer to association of ideas than to a real process. This seems to be the case also in Tanabe's application of the principle of mediation to world politics. Seeing Christianity as best represented by the United States, Marxism by the Soviet Union, and Buddhism by Japan, Tanabe proposes that the three states mutually mediate their ideological orientations. He is optimistic about the prospects of international cooperation that will result from such mediation.[134] Judging from history, this vision, as well, had little chance of realization.

More generally, Tanabe sees human struggle for power as a sphere in which "political life . . . breaks through the confines of reason and is converted into practice and faith in absolute nothingness. . . . Therefore, every existential determination becomes the mediation for the realization of nothingness wherein the self is resurrected through death."[135] We readily agree that political life is not governed by reason alone. But it is not typically associated with death, resurrection, and absolute nothingness other than, perhaps, to highlight the transitoriness of all human endeavors. Tanabe's argument demonstrates a want of realism. His interpretation of social cohesion as a function of universal love and shared concern for salvation is comparably utopian; it reminds one of Nishida's dialectic of the "historical world." Tanabe's recourse to mediation as a way to weave absolute nothingness into the fabric of society produces a set of views that do not have the caliber of Hegel's social and political theories. His negative finding that Hegel "did not bring mediation to the concrete level of sociality" is not only unwarranted under any circumstances; it is rendered suspect by the questionable character of Tanabe's own attempts to interpret sociality in terms of mediation.

Earlier, Tanabe's antirationalism was tempered by his interest in the logical structuring of society. When presently taking aim at Hegel and philosophy in general, Tanabe allows it to come back to the forefront. What is new in the postwar period is his professed determination to make the antirationalism complete by questioning even his own critique of reason. The philosophy Tanabe seeks to create "is not a philosophy of metanoesis that seeks to describe metanoesis as an object, but a philosophy based upon Other-power enabling me to practice metanoesis subjectively."[136] If carried out in earnest, this intended self-transformation of philosophy would have the potential to bring about what Nishida sought but has never achieved: the transformation of a rational perspective on transrational experience into a transrational perspective on the rational world. But Tanabe's project never leaves the stage of good intentions. He does not succeed in laying a philosophical foundation for his personal quest for metanoesis. He adopts new terminology and styles himself as a sinner, but his postwar writings bring little more than an elaboration of the themes voiced in his earlier work.[137] His attitude toward the mainstream Western philosophical tradition, as well as toward his own philosophy insofar as it feeds upon it, becomes more negative, yet it remains conventionally rational.

Tanabe criticizes Hegel's philosophy for its abstractness. Yet the alternative he himself proposes is no less abstract, although in a different sense. The postulate of active *jikaku*[138] is vouched by examples of debatable soundness. Tanabe's personal record of carrying it out successfully, as well, is inconclusive at best. His advocacy of practice before philosophy turns out to be much philosophy and little practice. This limits its value in demonstrating the worth of the philosophy of *zange*. Tanabe's writings do not qualify as a product of transrationality. Failing to transcend the position of reason, they do not present an effective alternative to Hegel's rationalism. Of the latter, Tanabe says:

> [T]he rationalism of Hegel's philosophy has made God, or what Hegel has termed absolute spirit, into a rationally systematic unity which sublates within itself the totality of historical development. The character of this synthetic universal causes God to be more an absolute being than absolute nothingness, and reinforces the tendency to make God into a self-sufficient totality embracing all relative existences in unmediated identity. . . . It was a necessary fate of its own dialectic, however, that Hegel's rational system of world synthesis, as a totality of simple identity in itself, insofar as it demanded to be the unity of already-existent and immediate existence, could not avoid falling into self-alienation and turning into its opposite [i.e., into Marx's materialism].[139]

Tanabe's conclusions are arbitrary. It is a *non sequitur* to infer, from Hegel's sublation of the totality of historical development into absolute spirit, that God is an absolute being. It is equally gratuitous to interpret Hegel's "totality of simple identity in itself" as "the unity of already existent and immediate existence." Both conclusions are of a piece with Tanabe's reductionist interpretation of sublation. Sublation is not a simple synthesis, but rather a negative one. Contrary to Tanabe's assertion, with historical progression, Hegel's "relative existences" increasingly *shed* their admixture of being, so that in the final state (God) simple being has all but disappeared. The result of the progression, as well, is anything but "the unmediated identity" that Tanabe purports it to be. This misreading is another reason why Tanabe's philosophy of *zange* does not offer an unequivocal advantage over Hegel's "rational" approach, for in relation to Hegel it attempts to remedy a largely imaginary problem. In seeing his own work as "a philosophy that is not a philosophy," Tanabe may well be right in the sense of failing, in his last period, to produce a satisfactory philosophy at all. He could have averted this outcome by applying with more discrimination the blanket negativity of his proud "repentance." One cannot help regretting his often ill-advised misappreciation of Hegel—a facet of his rebellion against the philosophical tradition that, despite his proclamations, he has never succeeded in leaving behind.

Tanabe and Hegel: Closing Thoughts

To put things in perspective, Hegelian philosophy as an explicit topic makes up only a fraction of Tanabe's work. It is also far from being the only influence on his thought. Tanabe's inspiration comes from many sources: Kant's teleology, Schelling's theory of freedom, Kierkegaard's subjectivist view of Christianity, Shinran's Pure Land Buddhism, Husserl's phenomenology, and Heidegger's treatise on being in the world and authentic existence, to name a few. Still, none of the vital elements of Tanabe's thought—absolute mediation, the logic of copula, the relation of expression, and religious conversion as a double negation—could have developed into their mature forms without his knowledge of the master dialectician. A statement in Tanabe's seven Hegelian essays refers to a specific area of concern, but it could equally well serve as a summary of his overall philosophical relationship with Hegel: "In the foregoing reflections, I followed the consequences of Hegel's philosophy of judgment discussed earlier without adding to it any extraneous, new determinations. But of course Hegel himself did not follow these consequences to their full extent."[140] Tanabe is unfair to himself when he denies having enriched Hegel's ideas with any original determinations; but his admission of having tried to orient himself by the consequences of Hegel's philosophy is plausible. Even in matters in which he took interpretive liberties with Hegel, overlaid Hegel's conceptual scheme with his own, or overtly disagreed with him, Tanabe went along with the substance of Hegel's thinking. Despite his claim to the contrary, even his interpretation of the universal as nothingness and his repudiation of flat rationality uphold, rather than deny or surpass, the spirit of Hegelianism. The same spirit is evident in Tanabe's idea of absolute mediation, insofar as the latter is taken to mean that anything in itself, taken out of totality, is untenable. First and foremost, this postulate applies to the absolute itself. The absolute is not removed from the human world. As nothingness, it cannot manifest itself directly to human beings, but it does make itself felt in human relationships. This conclusion helps explain Tanabe's interest in the individual's horizontal, communal relationships, and in the ethics of *gensō*. Selfless devotion to others is an expedient for negating oneself, which in turn constitutes a condition of personal resurrection. This intertwining of an altruistic, universal orientation with self-interested, pragmatic motives of the individual makes it difficult, on the logical plane, to disentangle the objective, thought-out aspect of *gensō* from the postulate of noetic purity that fuels Tanabe's unrelenting animus against the ossification of the absolute in thought, "intuition," and "contemplation." In his earlier work, he tries to purge the absolute of substantiality by redefining it as regulative in Kant's sense.[141] Later, he hopes to achieve the same purpose through the notion of absolute mediation. Neither leads him directly to the goal, for Tanabe's all-or-nothing attitude allows no compromises. At one extreme, he takes to its logical conclusion the

proposition that the absolute is conceivable only when mediated and only at the moment of mediation, the moment at which it is negated as substantial *something* in possession of absoluteness—negated as a thing with attributes. At the other, he follows the Husserlian call "back to things themselves" in order to find in one of them—the human individual—a recalcitrant irrationality that makes human existence irreducible to anything else. Through distilling each down to its unique essence, Tanabe sharpens their mutual opposition. This makes their subsequent reconciliation through absolute mediation more dramatic, but also more difficult to argue.

Tanabe's uncompromising dualism makes itself felt also in the way he understands the process of development. In Hegel's system, the way to absolute consciousness leads through transformations that foster a gradual recognition of the elusive character of the mediated. In contrast, Tanabe's "breakthrough" and "resurrection" are not a result of incremental improvement within a larger, continuous plan of development, but rather an "absolute conversion" involving a complete (if not once-and-for-all) break with the past, hence a sharp discontinuity.[142] Philosophically, these two concepts remain a riddle, which is a possible reason why in his effort to render them understandable, Tanabe makes heavy use of religious metaphors. In his distinctive, religious view of society and human nature, he finally achieves his independence from German Idealism. However, by the same token, he loses a theoretical basis to support his sharp dichotomies. He tries to "mediate" them with the help of the notion of oppositional unity and later, through the absolute negation of reason. But the former soon becomes an ineffectual *cliché*. As for the latter, unlike Kant's negativity that works to curb the metaphysical claims of philosophy without disparaging rational discourse, Tanabe's negativity does not stop at anything known to reason. It is religiously powerful but philosophically destructive. The moment Tanabe unleashes it against his own procedure, the course of his philosophy halts—in an antinomy.

Notes

1. In 1918, Tanabe published "Kagaku gairon" 科学概論 ("Introduction to Science"), in which he adopted Hegel's view that, contrary to popular understanding, universality and concreteness are not mutually exclusive. A universal is not an abstraction from particulars, but rather it includes them in its extension. For example, no thing has simply "color"; it must first be red, green, or yellow. "Color" presupposes all the particular colors; it has no meaning apart from them. That quality makes it a *concrete* universal. The essay is reprinted in vol. 2 of *Tanabe Hajime zenshū* 田辺元全集 (*Collected works of Tanabe Hajime*, hereafter abbreviated as "THZ") (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1963-1964), 198-200. After Himi Kiyoshi 氷見潔, *Tanabe tetsugaku kenkyū: shūkyō tetsugaku no kanten kara* 田辺哲学研究 — 宗教哲学の観点から (*Studies in Tanabe's Philosophy: from the Perspective of Philosophy of Religion*) (Tokyo: Hokuju Shuppan, 1990), 59-60.

2. THZ 3:431 ff.

3. Nakano Hajimu 中埜肇, "Kaisetsu" 解説 ("Commentary"), *Tanabe Hajime shū* 田辺元集 (*Tanabe Hajime Collection*), ed. Nakano Hajimu, vol. 23 of *Kindai Nihon shisō taikei* 近代日本思想体系 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1975), 432.

4. THZ 3:75. The original titles and dates of the essays are: "Benshōhō no ronri" 弁証法の論理 (1927-1929), "Kōi to rekishi, oyobi benshōhō no kore ni taisuru kankei" 行為と歴史、及び弁証法のこれに対する関係 (1929), "Dōtoku no shutai to benshōhōteki jiyū" 道徳の主体と弁証法的自由 (1930), "Hēgeru ni okeru riseiteki to genjitsuteki to no itchi" ヘーゲルに於ける理性的と現実的との一致 (1931), "Hēgeru tetsugaku to zettai benshōhō" ヘーゲル哲学と絶対弁証法 (1931), "Hēgeru handanron no rikai" ヘーゲル判断論の理解 (1931), and "Hēgeru no zettai kannenron" ヘーゲルの絶対観念論 (1931).

5. *Hēgeru tetsugaku to benshōhō* ヘーゲル哲学と弁証法. THZ 3:73-369.

6. THZ 3:79.

7. THZ 3:244. Syntheticism: *sōgōsei* 総合性.

8. THZ 3:234, 256. Negativism: *hiteisei* 否定性. Moment: *keiki* 契機.

9. Absolute subject: *zettai shukan* 絶対主観.

10. THZ 3:86, 89, 92.

11. THZ 3:234-35. Realism: *jitsuzaisei* 実在性.

12. THZ 3:253.

13. THZ 3:267.

14. THZ 3:206-7. Tanabe joins Nishida in making copious use of these Husserlian terms.

15. "It is already a commonplace that the main motive of Hegelian philosophy is the reconciliation between the view of fate in Greek tragedy and Christian theodicy. It is said that dialectic is the logic of theodicy as such reconciliation with fate." THZ 3:122.

16. Neo-Kantian Emil Lask (1875-1915) classified theories of scientific concept-formation into analytical, as in the philosophy of Kant, and emanationist, as in that of Hegel. Following Lask, Tanabe labels Hegel's philosophy emanationist idealism. THZ 3:153.

Tanabe also adds his voice to the common outcry against the claim of *Science of Logic* to offer an interpretation of God in His eternal essence, the claim we discussed in connection with Nishitani.

17. THZ 3:235.

18. For example in *Tetsugaku nyūmon* 哲学入門 (*Introduction to Philosophy,* 1949-1952), Tanabe argues that reason can manifest itself in history and guide it as objective spirit or idea only at the expense of man's moral freedom. THZ 11:161 f., 182 f.

19. Hegel wrote his rebuttal in "Wie der gemeine Menschenverstand die Philosophie nehme, — dargestellt an den Werken des Herrn Krug" ("How Common Sense Understands Philosophy, Shown Through the Works of Mr. Krug"), an article in the *Critical Journal of Philosophy*, which was his joint venture with Schelling in years 1802 and 1803. Now in vol. 1 of his *Sämtliche Werke*, 99-202. Hegel mentions the dispute in *Enzyklopädie*, Section 250.

20. THZ 3:159-63.

21. THZ 3:158. Bankruptcy: *hatan* 破綻.

22. THZ 3:207. Clarification added.

23. THZ 3:207, 208. The birth of the formed is triggered by action from within matter. As Tanabe says later: "Action is, so to speak, a for-itself self-consciousness of matter; it lets spirit come forth." THZ 6:477.

24. THZ 3:78, 154.

25. "Shu no ronri no imi o akiraka ni su" 種の論理の意味を明にす ("Clarifying the Meaning of the Logic of Species," 1937), THZ 6:476.

26. THZ 3:151. Propositional logic of copula: *keiji no handanron* 繋辞の判断論.

27. THZ 3:151.

28. *Enzyklopädie*, Section 167, 318. Judgment, proposition: *das Urteil*. In this pronouncement, Hegel is saying that judgments are more than logical constructions: they have ontological existence. Things "are *individual*, i.e., they are *universality* or an inner nature in itself, or a *universal* that *is individualized*; universality and individuality in them are distinct, but at the same time, identical." Ibid. Judgment, the general form of which is "the individual is universal," is precisely an attribution of inner nature to the individual, or a pronouncement of the universal's individuality. Hence, a thing and a proposition about it are the same.

29. THZ 3:136-39, 142-47.

30. *Enzyklopädie*, Section 183 and Addition. The original *termini technici* are: qualitative judgment: *qualitatives Urteil* or *das Urteil des Daseins*; judgment of reflection: *das Reflexionsurteil*; judgment of necessity: *das Urteil der Notwendigkeit*; judgment of concept: *das Urteil des Begriffs*; syllogism: *der Schluß*; qualitative syllogism: *der qualitative Schluß* or *der Schluß des Daseins*.

31. The individual is determined as such by the transcendent, absolute universal. THZ 3:103-4, 140.

32. THZ 3:147, 201. Tanabe also says that the acting individual is a dynamic vanguard of the world of expression. THZ 3:103-4.

33. The topic of the individual as evil with respect to the universal appears at the conclusion of the chapter "Conscience, the Beautiful Soul, Evil and Forgiveness of It." *Phänomenologie*, 471; *Phenomenology*, 679. In a different context, Hegel says of the Greek drama: "The individual self is a negative force through which and in which the gods, as well as their moments—existent nature and thoughts of their determinations—pass away and disappear. At the same time, the individual self is not the mere vacuity of disappearance, but it preserves itself in this very nothingness, holds to itself and is the sole and only reality." *Phänomenologie*, 520; *Phenomenology*, 748. Translation after Baillie.

34. THZ 3:198-99.

35. THZ 3:116-17. Dialectic of corporeality: *shintaisei no benshōhō* 身体性の弁証法.

36. *Enzyklopädie*, Section 208, Addition, 365; *Phänomenologie*, 227-28; *Phenomenology*, 338.

37. THZ 3:117. Against Nishida, Tanabe emphasizes that in any opposition, such as universal versus particular or universal versus individual, both opposites must be independent of one another. One cannot speak of a meaningful opposition between an entity and its own emanation or "self-determination." THZ 6:491.

38. Cf. the discourse on master and slave in *Phänomenologie*, especially 141-46; *Phenomenology,* 229 ff.

39. THZ 3:149-50. "Objective spirit" is a Hegelian term. Cf. Tanabe's remark in a work of 1946: "Hegel's objective spirit in itself signifies the customs, traditions, and laws of a society." Tanabe, "The Logic of the Species as Dialectics," trans. David Dilworth with Taira Satō, *Monumenta Nipponica* 24, no. 3 (1969): 274.

40. THZ 3:98. Social world: *jinrin sekai* 人倫世界.

41. THZ 3:117.

42. When rendering "Beisichsein" into Japanese, Tanabe uses the term *jika shijū* 自家止住.

43. THZ 6:473-75.

44. THZ 6:473-75. In Tanabe's philosophy, *jikaku* 自覚 belongs to the same category as *kenshō* 見性. It is the awakening to the true self which is the self-consciousness of the nothingness of the phenomenal self. Cf. Johannes Laube, *Dialektik der absoluten Vermittlung. Hajime Tanabes Religionsphilosophie als Beitrag zum "Wettstreit der Liebe" zwischen Buddhismus und Christentum* (Freiburg: Herder, 1984), 27-28.

45. THZ 11:255-56. Absolute switching: *zettai tenkan* 絶対転換.

46. *Logik* 1:93; *Logic*, 105-6.

47. Nothing, nothingness: *mu* 無. Emptiness: *kū* 空. Universal: *fuhen* 普遍. (In contrast, Nishida's usual designation for the universal is *ippansha* 一般者.) Absolute nothingness: *zettaimu* 絶対無.

48. THZ 3:103. Expression: *hyōgen* 表現. Tanabe tries to differentiate his conception of expression from Nishida's by interpreting it as a self-negation of the expressing entity rather than its emanation, which in Tanabe's view represents Nishida's position. To make the aspect of self-negation clearer, later Tanabe prefers to speak of "symbol" (*shōchō* 象徴) rather than "expression." Cf. Ōhashi Ryōsuke, *Die Philosophie der Kyoto-Schule: Texte und Einführung* (Freiburg and München: Alber, 1990), 155 n. 23.

49. THZ 3:103, 105.

50. THZ 3:79.

51. "Originally, there isn't anything that unites being and nothing, affirmation and negation. . . . If so, then the two cannot be unified unless there is some mediation that overcomes this abyss of negation [between them.] On that basis, the absence of mediation must be mediation itself. . . . Clearly, this is precisely absolute nothingness." THZ 6:466-67. "'Absolute nothingness' is a name for the operation in which the self is negatively mediated in an absolute way. This is because the true meaning of absolute nothingness lies in absolute negation." THZ 6:473. In Tanabe's thought, the concepts of absolute nothingness, absolute (self-)negation, absolute mediation (through self- and mutual negation), and absolute turning (in the sense of a religious breakthrough) are closely related.

52. THZ 6:468.

53. Cf. THZ 11:577-80, 601-6. Empty: *kū* 空. Middle: *chū* 中. Provisional: *ke* 仮.

54. *Kanto no mokutekiron* カントの目的論 (1924), THZ 3:1-72.

55. THZ 3:134.

56. Taking a Hegelian perspective, Tanabe believes that religious consciousness is an outgrowth of our "regular" consciousness that is steeped in history, in the relative world; but it does not belong to that world in the same way as everything else. Its genesis from that relative source involves the negation of the latter: "Religious self-awareness, therefore, conforms to this irrational historical reality and is mediated by the determinations of the historical *noema* but arises when this historically determined standpoint is

freely overturned." THZ 4:318. Translation after Nishitani, *Nishida Kitarō*, 164-65. Consequently, the absolute nothingness revealed in religious consciousness is not something that can be realized in history or philosophy (which belongs to history). Tanabe sees it instead as an idea projected or extrapolated in the direction charted by actual events: "The transhistorical that is surmised to be the foundation of the historical is merely a differential involved in the direction of the historical. It is but an idea pursued boundlessly in the latter." THZ 4:311.

57. THZ 3:232. Cf. THZ 5:505 and 6:465.

58. THZ 3:103, 164-65.

59. THZ 3:148.

60. THZ 3:168.

61. THZ 3:148. "Great act" (*daiyū* 大用) is a Buddhist term for an accomplishment that serves as a model for all beings.

62. THZ 3:122 ff.

63. THZ 3:127-29.

64. *Zange* 懺悔. *Nishida* uses this term later in his 1945 essay "The Logic of Place and the Religious Worldview," *Sourcebook for Modern Japanese Philosophy*, ed. David A. Dilworth and Valdo H. Viglielmo, 99.

65. THZ 3:126. Faith: 信頼 shinrai.

66. THZ 3:135.

67. Hegel understands the finite as such to be a limitation and negation. Tanabe follows him in that understanding.

68. THZ 11:573-75. Logic of species: *shu no ronri* 種の論理.

69. THZ 6:481-82. Genus: *rui* 類. Species: *shu* 種. Individual: *ko* 個, *kobetsu* 個別, *kotai* 固体, or *kojin* 個人. Ethnic group: *minzoku* 民族. To underscore the universal character of the state, Tanabe refers to it sometimes as "the humankind state" (*jinrui kokka* 人類国家); he also speaks of "the humankind world" (*jinrui sekai* 人類世界).

70. THZ 5:510. Tanabe relates species to the self-alienation of the absolute as matter, and genus to the return of the absolute to itself as spirit. Species furnishes the material substratum for genus. While as a spiritual subject, the individual represents the genus, as a physical body it belongs to a species. In the manner of Hegel's universal, particular, and individual, each two of Tanabe's three categories are mediated by the third. THZ 6:484-86, 489 ff.

71. Émile Durkheim, *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse* (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1912); in English as *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Carol Cosman (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001). Henri Bergson, *Les Deux Sources de la morale et de la religion* (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1932); in English as *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, trans. R. Ashley Audra and Cloudesley Brereton (New York: Holt, 1935). Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, *La mythologie primitive* (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1935); in English as *Primitive Mythology: the Mythic World of the Australian and Papuan Natives*, trans. Brian Elliott (St. Lucia and New York: University of Queensland Press, 1983).

72. Tanabe, "On the Logic of Co-prosperity Spheres," trans. David Williams, in *Defending Japan's Pacific War*, by David Williams (London, New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), 195.

73. Himi, *Tanabe tetsugaku kenkyū*, 99. Yamato race: *yamato minzoku* 大和民族.

74. *Chi to tsuchi* 血と土. THZ 6:477. The expression is a translation of *Blut und Boden*, a term from the nomenclature of the German National Socialist movement used in justification of the exclusive right of the people with German blood to live on their soil.

75. Tanabe argues, nevertheless, that the Japanese state possesses a universal-human character. That character is embodied in the emperor. THZ 8:166.

76. THZ 7:34. Manifested body: *ōgen* 応現.

77. THZ 8:168.

78. Tanabe, "The Philosophy of Crisis or a Crisis in Philosophy: Reflections on Heidegger's Rectoral Address," trans. David Williams, in *Defending Japan's Pacific War*, 181-87. Tanabe's apologists also cite his involvement in helping Karl Jaspers leave National Socialist Germany. We should point out that Tanabe was not the only Kyoto Scholar to promote Japan's militaristic ideology. Nishida and Nishitani also played controversial roles in that effort.

79. *Enzyklopädie*, Section 181.

80. *Phänomenologie*, 512; *Phenomenology*, 732-733.

81. THZ 3:143. Tanabe is referring to Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, Section 30.

82. THZ 6:218.

83. THZ 6:455-56, 458-59. Praxis: *kōi* 行為. Hegel uses the expression *absolute Vermittlung* (absolute mediation) in *Phänomenologie*, 140, 146, 423; *Phenomenology*, 226, 234, 613.

84. *Phänomenologie*, 145-46; *Phenomenology*, 234.

85. THZ 6:466. Emphasis added.

86. THZ 6:458-59. Absolute self-consciousness: *zettai no jikaku* 絶対の自覚. Self-consciousness: *jikaku* 自覚.

87. *Enzyklopädie*, Section 181. THZ 6:171.

88. THZ 6:173. Immediacy: 直接態.

89. THZ 6:173.

90. THZ 6:173.

91. THZ 6:65.

92. THZ 6:179; THZ 6:176. In the post-war period, Tanabe will no longer advocate rationality in any form.

93. THZ 6:180. Self-consciousness: *jikaku* 自覚.

94. *Zangedō to shite no tetsugaku* 懺悔道としての哲学. Now THZ 9. In English as *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, trans. Takeuchi Yoshinori (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

95. "Shu no ronri no benshōhō" 種の論理の弁証法. THZ 7:251-372.

96. *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 285-86. Ethnic communal body: *minzoku kyōdōtai* 民族共同体.

97. Himi, *Tanabe tetsugaku kenkyū*, 163.

98. *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, Preface, l. Clarification added. *Zangedō*: 懺悔道.

99. *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, Preface, l.

100. Other-power is a Pure Land Buddhist concept, but Tanabe associates it sometimes also with Christian God and Nishida's absolute nothingness.

101. Translation after *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, Preface, li.

102. *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, Preface, lx.

103. Reaction-formation (*Reaktionsbildung*) is a psychoanalytic term.

104. *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, Preface, l. Clarification added. The expression "a philosophy that is not a philosophy" reminds one of the title Kierkegaard gave one of his works: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*. "Unscientific" suggests that the book is transphilosophical, i.e., religious, in nature.

105. *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, Preface, l-li.

106. *Bonbu akunin* 凡夫悪人. Tanabe uses this deprecatory expression when referring to himself.

107. *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, Preface lv.

108. *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, Preface lvii.

109. THZ 11:591-92.

110. "I cannot but admire the theory of dialectic based on absolute nothingness that is developed in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*." *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 51. This is a restatement of Tanabe's pronouncements in earlier years.

111. THZ 7:277, 282.

112. *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, Preface lvi.

113. THZ 7:270.

114. THZ 7:270, 272.

115. *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 55.

116. THZ 7:283 ff, 9:61.

117. Translation after *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 271.

118. *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 267.

119. *Gyō shin shō* 行信証.

120. *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 212. Tanabe also states: "Nothingness cannot become manifest as nothingness without a self-consciousness of the determination of being as the self-negation of nothingness itself. The self-revelation and self-consciousness of God is also dependent on a self-negation within the finitude of being, in particular the finitude of human being." *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 183. *Ōsō* 往相. *Gensō* 還相.

121. *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 134.

122. According to one of the texts of that period, *jikaku* 自覚 is the self-awareness of absolute negativity, an awareness of self's nihility (*mushō* 無性). It manifests the absolute convertibility (*tenkansei* 転換性) of the self achieved through praxis. THZ 7:274.

123. "The Logic of the Species as Dialectics," 275. Emphasis added.

124. *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 183.

125. *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 158; Preface lii.

126. *Logik* 2:61-62; *Logic*, 442.

127. *Logik* 2:62; *Logic*, 443. One may read this against the Kyoto School's criticism that Hegel's philosophy is being-centered.

128. Cf. Kesselring, *Entwicklung*, 224; Hartmann, *Hegel*, 195. Robert Wargo describes Nishida Kitarō's recognition of this problem in Wargo, *The Logic of Basho*, 294-95.

129. Cf. THZ 7:254 and Johannes Laube, "The Way of Metanoia and the Way of the Bodhisattva," in *The Religious Philosophy of Tanabe Hajime: The Metanoetic Imperative*, ed. Unno Taitetsu and James W. Heisig (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1990), 321. Radical evil: *kongen'aku* 根原悪.

130. *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 285-86.

131. "Government is thus transformed into the founding of a nation as the expedient means of the divine redeeming love for the individual. In other words, the governments of the kingdom of man become the mediation for the religious foundation of the kingdom of God." "The Logic of the Species as Dialectics," 275-76. Expedient, expedient means: *hōben* 方便.

132. Already in possession of a high degree of awakening, the bodhisattva returns to the world in order to help others in attaining it. In the earlier period of the logic of species, Tanabe portrayed this return as service to the state. Himi, *Tanabe tetsugaku kenkyū*, 113-16. As for straddling the boundary, Himi points out that Tanabe does not mean it in a mystical sense. The boundary is crossed by cultural transmission. For example, Tanabe himself, the living, has been influenced by the teaching of Shinran, the dead. In turn, Tanabe's writings will transmit his conversion experience to generations of readers. Himi, *Tanabe tetsugaku kenkyū*, 287-88, 290. Cf. THZ 13:576.

133. *Gendai no zettai shūkyō* 現代の絶対宗教. Tanabe finds mediation in the absence of mediation in THZ 6:466-67.

134. THZ 10:308, 323; *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 261.

135. "The Logic of the Species as Dialectics," 285.

136. *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 22.

137. This is true also for the political conclusions Tanabe draws from his position. He hopes that metanoetics would furnish a guiding principle "that will enable us to overcome the dichotomy of conflicting principles represented by the United States and the Soviet Union." But he also believes, consistent with his general position during the war, that such principle will be "rooted in the awareness of the historical mission that fate has accorded our own country of Japan." *Philosophy as Metanoetics*, 261.

138. Cf. THZ 7:275, 370. Active *jikaku* (*jikaku of praxis*): *gyō no jikaku* 行の自覚.

139. Tanabe, "Christianity, Marxism, and Japanese Buddhism: In Anticipation of a Second Religious Reformation," trans. V. H. Viglielmo, in *Sourcebook for Modern Japanese Philosophy*, 156. Clarification added.

140. THZ 3:150.

141. THZ 3:104.

142. Cf. "The Logic of the Species as Dialectics," 282-83.

Chapter Four
The Danish Parallel

For students of Hegelian scholarship, the ambivalent reception of Hegel's philosophy by the Kyoto School may not come as a surprise. They will recall a similar attitude on the part of Danish religious philosopher Søren Kierkegaard. For Kierkegaard, thought and immediacy, which he understands as the immediacy of faith, form a sharp dichotomy. Truth is to be sought not in rationality, but rather in individual subjectivity. A human being is a composite of temporality and eternity. In a rare moment (*øjeblik*) in which the eternal now reveals itself in time, a determined "leap" transports one into the authenticity of existence. These teachings strike a sympathetic chord in the hearts of the Kyoto Scholars. For a Western philosopher, Kierkegaard enjoys a rare degree of their respect. Before the closing remarks on the difficult relationship between the Kyoto School and Hegel, we take a brief look at the similarities that inspired the title of this chapter.

To be sure, Nishida's circle does not accept Kierkegaard's views *in toto*. The author of *Practice in Christianity* remains for them a "theist," and his strength in exploration of subjectivity is also a weakness. With his attention fixed on the internal dynamic of spiritual life, Kierkegaard has little to spare for ethics and matters of social justice, not to mention the problematic aspects of the modern scientific view of the world.[1] For instance, Tanabe finds in Kierkegaard's work too much *ōsō* (emphasis on individual religious salvation) at the expense of *gensō* (compassionate work toward the salvation of others). Tanabe detects the evidence of this imbalance in Kierkegaard's ranking of the stages of life, in which the religious, individualistic stage is placed unequivocally above the ethical, relational one. But although the flaw does not go unnoticed, it is well tolerated. Tanabe goes out of his way to interpret it in Kierkegaard's favor, arguing that the ethical stage can be raised to its due status by being *re*visited or returned to, in the manner of *gensō*, from the level of religious consciousness. In the *new* ethics that arises through such return, interpersonal action acquires the significance of "action of no-action"; the pursuit of relative good becomes a striving toward that which lies beyond good and evil. Tanabe takes Kierke-

gaard's literary campaign for the reformation of Christianity amiably for an impulse—insufficient but still commendable—toward religiously motivated, social-ethical engagement.[2]

One facet of Kierkegaard's thought in no need of palliative reinterpretation is his perspective on Hegel. With minor adjustments, it fits the Kyoto School's own viewpoint like a glove. Negative remarks on Hegel abound in Kierkegaard's published writings and in his diaries. They could well be checked off, one by one, against the Kyoto School's own list. Above all, Kierkegaard rebukes Hegel for overstating the might of human rationality. He feels that Hegel is clever in his scheme, but ludicrous when foisting it upon the actual world. Truth is not a matter of impersonal reasoning or dialectic, nor is it handed down to us by absolute spirit. It emerges through an individual decision that puts at stake the entire existential situation of the truth-seeker. Hegel's postulate of historical necessity is seen as equally fallacious. In Kierkegaard's opinion, it involves an enactment of a preset scenario in which human beings are forced to play as unwitting actors. This ill-conceived scheme locks Hegel in the dry complexities of philosophical ethics, leaving him blind to true morality anchored in human religiosity.

Kierkegaard calls for a reformulation of aesthetic and ethical objectives as religious ones, culminating in a passionate resolution to pursue an unknown truth. The resolution is not a one-time act. The quest for truth is a process of incessant becoming, of constant struggle against the relapse into untruth. The attempt to reach the goal must be launched time and again. Kierkegaard contrasts repetition, which is directed toward an always outstanding goal, with recollection (*anamnesis*)—preserving the surpassed and building upon it—that he sees at the basis of the Socratic and the Hegelian dialectic and that he discounts as oriented toward the past, that is, as stagnation.[3] Armed with the concept of repetition, Kierkegaard sees no place for a fixed beginning or end in human spiritual development, and no historical starting point for eternal consciousness.[4] He differentiates his position from what he sees as the linear march of Hegelian absolute spirit through history. While Hegel erects his dialectic on the assumption of inherent movement of logic, Kierkegaard rejects such assumption: "There is no *becoming* in logic; logic *is* and all that is logical simply *is*, and it is precisely this impotence of the logical that provides a transition from logic to becoming where being and reality arise."[5] It is not logic but rather human existence that, torn between the finite and the infinite, is in a continuous process of becoming. That process has no use for Hegelian mediation.[6] The paradox of faith in its immediacy, rather than mediation that can be rationally explained, is key to Kierkegaard's worldview. He sees religious experience rise unmediated from the midst of human finitude, and accords no place in his philosophy to Hegel's idea of *rapprochement* between the divine and the human. Religious faith comes to a climax in an existential leap over an insoluble contradiction between the human and the forever inapproachable and unknowable God. It is a

matter neither of rational synthesis between the individual and the divine, nor of mediation between the individual and society. It ensues from an either-or decision within the individual.

Kierkegaard's animadversions upon Hegel in defense of pure subjectivity complement those leveled by Marx from the opposite position of materialist objectivism. Both lay rich critical material at the disposal of the Kyoto School. Kierkegaard himself was in no want of resources to draw upon. After acquainting himself with a few of Hegel's writings—for example, his *Encyclopaedia* in or before 1837 and *History of Philosophy* in the winter of 1838-1839—he studied an authoritative work in Hegelian criticism: Adolf Trendelenburg's *Logische Untersuchungen* (*Logical Investigations*) published in 1840. He attended lectures on Hegel's logic while visiting Berlin in 1841-1842. He was also naturally exposed to discussions concerning Hegelianism, which were common in Denmark's intellectual circles of his time.[7] But a broad diffusion of an anti-Hegelian argument is no guarantee of its validity. Because of the difficulty of reading Hegel, a good number of comments on his philosophy were accepted and passed onto later scholarship without having been properly understood. Some, including those coming from notable philosophical authorities, were patently wrong. Take, for example, Kierkegaard's own view that a new stage of existence reached through the leap subsumes, rather than supplants, the earlier ones. Kierkegaard compares this trait of his dialectic with Hegel's: "Hegel's subsequent position swallows up the previous one, not as one stage of life swallows another, with each still retaining its validity, but as a higher title or rank swallows up a lower title."[8] Contrary to Kierkegaard's assessment, Hegel's dialectical negation does allow, indeed require, the negated, "swallowed" position to retain its validity in the way sanctioned by Kierkegaard. An essential feature of Hegel's dialectic is precisely the sublation of old content. By definition, sublation includes *retention*. Of course, it also involves modification. For Hegel, no less than for Kierkegaard, the transition into a new stage entails a reinterpretation of the old content in a new light.

We have already addressed many of Kierkegaard's points against Hegel indirectly, in the form they were given by the Kyoto School, and need not repeat the discussion here. The similarity of their critical positions goes back to the common, anti-Hegelian tradition behind them, suggesting that Kierkegaard is correct or mistaken about Hegel often for the same reasons as Nishida, Nishitani and Tanabe. More interesting than this convergence is the possibility, present in both cases, that unwarranted or excessive criticism of Hegel is motivated by more than simple differences of opinion. It may be less a measure of disagreement with, or misunderstanding of, his theories, than an oblique indication of the difficulty the critics have in freeing themselves from its spell. The vehemence of Kierkegaard's attacks betrays their compensatory character: one senses in them a rebellion against the powerful ideas that unsettle and overpower him. Despite his deep disagreements with Hegel, his thinking moves within the Hegelian un-

iverse. Much in his work appears to be a more or less direct reaction to Hegel's doctrines. For example, from the perspective of *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Kierkegaard's brand of religiosity falls into the category of "unhappy consciousness." It is a mentality ruled by dualism, one that isolates itself from God whom it perceives to be an absolute, inapproachable other. In all likelihood, Kierkegaard sensed the relevance of this section of *Phenomenology* to himself, for in *Either/Or* he launched a counterattack by using an almost identical term, "the unhappiest one" ("*symparanekromenoi*").[9] He turned the tables on Hegel by portraying the unhappy person as someone given to pointless reasoning, to perpetual reflection on painful memories, to endless hesitation between alternatives. Fleeing from practical decisions into abstract speculation, the person grieves at the fringes of reality. The "unhappiest one" is a stab at Hegel meted out from a point of Kierkegaard's personal vulnerability. If Hegel might be inclined to relegate Kierkegaard's ideas to lower echelons of religiosity, Kierkegaard returns the favor by confining Hegel's propensity for "rational" speculation contemptuously to the lowly category of aestheticism, below the levels of religion and ethics. For Kierkegaard, Hegel's is a philosophy of crass finitude, an abstract reformulation of plain, mundane concerns.

It comes as no surprise that Kierkegaard's work is interspersed with merciless parodies of Hegel. In some cases, the ironical effect is intended. For example, Judge William's tortuous and inconclusive enunciation of his views on ethics in the second part of *Either/Or*, as well as the title of *Philosophical Fragments*, are a patent mockery of Hegel's system-building.[10] In other instances, the distance separating Kierkegaard's own position from Hegel's is more difficult to determine. Kierkegaard's early work, *The Concept of Irony*, falls into this category. Its style of argumentation, terminology ("in itself," "for itself," "in and for itself"), concepts (negation of negation, sublation, the cunning of reason in history), and tripartite composition—are obviously Hegelian. Some Kierkegaard scholars view them, as they do the entire essay, as ironical references to Hegel. To others, they are *bona fide* borrowings.[11] Hegel's presence in Kierkegaard's thought is not limited to explicit rebuttals and more-or-less transparent parody. Despite Kierkegaard's professed anti-Hegelianism, his philosophy owes some of its significant facets to Hegel's influence. They constitute a reworking of Hegelian motifs that appear to have found their way into Kierkegaard's work unnoticed, breaking through his conscious resistance.[12] These include the attribution of inner development to the tension between the finite and the infinite elements of human existence. The source of inspiration for this idea in *Phenomenology* is more than likely. The same can be said of Kierkegaard's postulate of the historical unfolding of concepts such as irony. His structuring of human development is also unambiguously of Hegelian parentage. The triadic composition of Kierkegaard's ascending stages—aesthetic, ethical, and religious—is built on a Hegelian foundation.

The underlying commonality extends to the points that Kierkegaard brings forth in purposeful differentiation from Hegel. For example, he holds up the paradoxical leap into authentic existence as a paradigm of true Christianity, *against* Hegel's view of the spirit's evolution that excludes sudden and inexplicable transformations. But a closer look at the leap shows it to be but the crest of a wave of consciousness steadily advancing through gradual accretion of self-knowledge. In the process, consciousness becomes aware of the insufficiency of its religious faith and despairs over it. The despair feeds on itself, pushing consciousness further into despair—the despair over succumbing to despair. The first despair is the primary negation. The second functions as a secondary one. The self that reflects on its state of despair is the same as the self submerged in despair, yet the two differ since it is the reflecting self that mitigates and eventually overcomes the despair. In order to get a grip on this antinomic situation, consciousness sets itself in motion toward a higher mental perspective.[13] This extended motion—condensed by Kierkegaard dramatically into a leap of faith—is essential to Hegel's philosophy of dialectical development. Kierkegaard would be at pains to find a more typically Hegelian concept to support his anti-Hegelian argument.

There are many forms in which the Hegelian motifs and ideas that Kierkegaard explicitly rejects find their way into his work after all:

> The very "systematic *ein, zwei, drei*" ridiculed in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* . . . can be discerned in many of the pseudonymous texts, *Postscript* among them! Such Hegelian structures are obvious in the first part of *The Concept of Irony*, prompting the claim that Kierkegaard's apparent Hegelianism there is ironical. But irony can hardly account for the other five works in which such systematic structures can be found, works in which those structures are neither acknowledged nor obvious. Kierkegaard must have been unconscious of the extent to which he continued, even after breaking with Hegelianism, to think in terms that permit—and often seem to demand—a Hegelian structural analysis.[14]

As an advocate of the descent into the nonrational, subjective heart of existence, Kierkegaard accuses Hegel of abstract conceptuality. Yet in his own attempt to define existence conceptually, he covertly imitates the dialectic that he publicly rejects. Kierkegaard's inner struggle against succumbing to Hegel's influence bears the mark of "repetition." Never fully successful, it must be undertaken over and over again. The sheer frequency of Kierkegaard's overt and covert, conscious and unconscious Hegelian references impresses upon one Hegel's powerful presence on his intellectual horizon. It may be no exaggeration to say, as some do, that since much of his philosophy is oriented toward refutation of Hegel, his work is thoroughly determined and limited by Hegel's way of thinking.

The boundary between overt repudiation and covert imitation of Hegel in Kierkegaard's philosophy is often so fine that his admirers in the Kyoto School become occasionally confused in telling them apart. For instance, Tanabe trusts he can rely on Kierkegaard's support against Hegel. In contrast to Hegel's dialectic of "both . . . and," he describes Kierkegaard's paradigm—as well as his own—as "neither . . . nor": letting neither being nor nothing, neither affirmation nor negation, exist and function the way they normally do. In Tanabe's interpretation, Kierkegaard holds that every concept involves affirmation and negation, and that all determinations turn into their opposites. This is why many of Kierkegaard's concepts are paradoxical. For example, the Kierkegaardian "moment" is simultaneously being and nothing, nothing and being—a dynamic unity achieved through mutual negation.[15] Tanabe fails to note that the "dynamic unity" in Kierkegaard's philosophy corresponds closely to Hegel's dialectical negation, of which "neither being nor nothing" can be taken as an example. He mistakes a Hegelian element in Kierkegaard's philosophy for a Kierkegaardian antidote to Hegel. Ironically, one of the features of Kierkegaard's thinking that comes perhaps the closest to differentiating him from Hegel—the rejection of mediation—happens not to be acceptable to Tanabe, who embraces mediation as a vehicle both of individual salvation and interpersonal relations. Here, Tanabe chooses to side with Hegel.

An entry from Kierkegaard's journal offers a glimpse at his admiration for Hegel, concealed behind the ridicule: "If Hegel had written the whole of his logic and then said, in the preface, that it was merely an experiment in thought in which he had even begged the question in many places, then he would certainly have been the greatest thinker who had ever lived. As it is he is merely comic."[16] Are we to understand that Kierkegaard's negativity toward Hegel hinges in its entirety upon Hegel's failure to produce such declaration? If so, then only a hairsbreadth separates Kierkegaard's ambivalence from an all-out embrace. This fine line runs from Copenhagen all the way to Japan, where years later it becomes the defining factor in the Kyoto School's own uneasy relationship with Hegel.

Notes

1. THZ 11:617-21.

2. THZ 11:615, 617-21.

3. E. L. Allen, *Kierkegaard: His Life and Thought* (London: Stanley Nott, 1935), 152. Discussed in Stephen Dunning, *Kierkegaard's Dialectic of Inwardness: a Structural Analysis of the Theory of Stages* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985), 167-68, and Heidi Liehu, *Søren Kierkegaard's Theory of Stages and Its Relation to Hegel* (Helsinki: Societas Philosophica Fennica, distributed by Akateeminen Kirjakauppa, 1990), 102-3. Also see Hans Reuter, *S. Kierkegaards Religionsphilosophische Gedanken*

im Verhältnis zu Hegels Religionsphilosophischen System (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1914), 91, 92.

4. Sören Kierkegaard, *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Emanuel Hirsch and Hayo Gerdes, 4th ed., 30 vols (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus G. Mohn, 1993), 13 (GTB 612):13.

5. Kierkegaard, *Gesammelte Werke* 9 (GTB 608):9-10.

6. "*Every movement of infinity occurs with passion, and no reflection can bring about a movement. Passion is the eternal leap in life which explains the movement, while mediation is a chimera which in Hegel is supposed to explain everything and besides is the only thing he has never tried to explain.*" Italics in the original. Liehu, *Søren Kierkegaard's Theory of Stages*, 88; cf. Kierkegaard, *Gesammelte Werke* 5 (GTB 604):42, Note.

7. For a discussion of the thinkers who influenced Kierkegaard's critique of Hegel, see Reuter, *S. Kierkegaards Religionsphilosophische Gedanken*, 8, 63-74, and Niels Thulstrup, *Kierkegaards Verhältnis zu Hegel und zum spekulativen Idealismus 1835-1846. Historisch-analytische Untersuchung* (Stuttgart, Berlin, Köln, Mainz: Kohlhammer, 1972), 13-137.

8. Kierkegaard, *Journals and Papers*, paragraph 1569 II A 49, no date, 1837. Quoted after Liehu, *Søren Kierkegaard's Theory of Stages*, 17. Cf. ibid., 103.

9. Kierkegaard, *Either/Or*; Kierkegaard, *Gesammelte Werke* 1 (GTB 601):236.

10. Dunning, *Kierkegaard's Dialectic of Inwardness*, 83, 101.

11. Dunning, *Kierkegaard's Dialectic of Inwardness*, 6, 259 n. 1.

12. The emphasis is on "*re*working." The most obvious Hegelian influences on Kierkegaard are structural. Kierkegaard employs "dialectic" more as a formal scheme to describe the world than as a reflection of how the world works. For a discussion of the range of views on the subject, see Dunning, *Kierkegaard's Dialectic of Inwardness*, 256-59 nn. 12-13, 15, and 1.

13. Kierkegaard, *Krankheit zum Tode* (*Sickness onto Death*), *Gesammelte Werke* 20:41-62 (especially 41, 46, 47, 62). Analysis after Kesselring, *Die Produktivität*, 158-59.

14. Dunning, *Kierkegaard's Dialectic of Inwardness*, 4-5.

15. THZ 11:613; Laube, *Dialektik der absoluten Vermittlung*, 202.

16. *The Journals of Søren Kierkegaard*, trans. and ed. Alexander Dru (London, Oxford University Press, 1951), paragraph 497, 1844. Quoted after Liehu, *Søren Kierkegaard's Theory of Stages*, 96.

Conclusion

The ambivalence of the Kyoto School towards Hegel can be traced back, in part, to the disparity of their respective historical situations. Hegel's world was shaken by the French Revolution of 1789, the first in a series of upheavals that unraveled the aristocratic and religious fabric of European societies and leveled them into modern democracies. The dawning of the new era was accelerated by the Industrial Revolution of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that reshaped the socioeconomic conditions in Europe and played a role in toppling the traditional perceptions of society, history, God, and human destiny. But, although Hegel witnessed the beginnings of the great transformation, he could not anticipate its full magnitude. He remained thoroughly grounded in the old era, standing at the peak of a long, homogeneous tradition that at that time was still intact enough to permit optimism about the progress of reason and freedom in history. In consequence, Hegel's scheme radiates trust in our capacity to understand ourselves and the world, and confidence in society's ability to develop the best forms of morality and government. In contrast, the Kyoto School received its impetus from the clash between two mutually foreign intellectual traditions. Straddling both, it set its goal in forging a philosophy that would satisfy strict Western standards, yet uphold distinctive Japanese concerns and sensibilities. During its formation, it had to deal with the turmoil of the Meiji era, Japan's changing attitude toward the West, and later, a controversial war and the country's defeat. It was also picking up the echoes of Europe turning increasingly anti-metaphysical and pessimistic, defensively introspective, and self-negating. In this confluence of factors, it was natural for Nishida and his disciples to look back to Buddhism, rediscover "nothingness," and wrap their budding philosophy around it. It was perhaps equally natural for them to draw upon anti-Hegelian currents in European intellectual circles and to amplify them with their own anti-rationalist preconceptions. Each of the three thinkers did it in his own way. Nishida sought to establish himself as Japan's leading thinker *through* Western philosophy. He drew upon Hegel as a major resource in his attempt to construct his own metaphysical system, Japan's first. Despite his ambition to prove its superiority over the Hegelian model, Nishida was generally

open to Western thought, took in good ideas where he could find them, and was not loath to express occasional appreciation toward his sources. Nishitani was less original but more radically self-assertive. Hegel's reliance on reason served him as a foil; mystical investigations of Eckhart and Schelling were his inspiration. As to Tanabe, he looked up to Hegel more openly than Nishida and Nishitani, adopting the dialectical technique as a defining factor in his own thinking. In comparison with his two colleagues, his reading of Hegel was perhaps the most creative. Yet, he censured him no less severely.

Behind differences of personal and philosophical agendas, the three Kyoto philosophers present a unified front with respect to Hegel. They are particularly unanimous in what they reject: dogmatic Christian theism, the promotion of being to the central category of reality, and rigid rationalism. Their refutation of Hegel is triumphant and scathing. And yet, their critique rings hollow. These ostensibly Hegelian features are in fact nowhere to be found in his philosophy. With respect to theism, Hegel's thinking, no less than that of many of his predecessors, is in fact rooted in the Christian tradition. But absolute spirit is Hegel's own invention that does not function in the manner of a theist entity. The second imputation is even more problematic. Hegel interprets being as dependent on consciousness in which it is reflected. In his view, the failure to recognize that dependency is a mark of a lower form of mind. On higher planes of consciousness, being is progressively relativized until it disappears as a separate entity. Hegel's perspective is the very opposite of the fixation with unqualified being that the Kyoto School attributes to him. Indeed, it resembles the view of the Japanese philosophers themselves. Only the experience of nothingness, they believe, gives the affirmation of life the requisite depth. One appreciates being in proportion as one realizes its relative nature. Any other perspective is "object logic." To recognize, in the depths of one's self, that being is a creation of nothingness—of consciousness, in Hegel's case—is, for *both* the Kyoto School and Hegel, synonymous with the achievement of ultimate wisdom. Finally, on the point of rationalism, the Kyoto philosophers fulminate against Hegel for presenting dialectic as the logic *of reality*. Logic and reality, they say, are the twain that shall never meet. What they overlook is Hegel's underlying assumption of the speculative (mirror-like) unity of consciousness and the empirical world. Undoubtedly, they have the right to question that assumption; but by doing so, they cast doubt upon their own notion of ultimate reality. If one is judged to be impossible, so should the other. Both are equally inaccessible to ordinary reasoning, hence equally unprovable.

What the Japanese philosophers decry the most vociferously as Hegel's errors are the opposites of his actual postulates; the latter they put quietly to work in their own philosophy. This maneuver points to a misreading of Hegel's thought, unless one is inclined to presume it is intentional. Be that as it may, it allows the Kyoto School to profit from Hegel both negatively, by scoring victories over its own projections into his thought, and positively, by exploiting his

ideas. In the latter category belong many of the points which the Kyoto School rejects in Hegel, yet of which it is equally culpable: the cunning of reason, the privileged position of spirit over nature, or the absolutization of the state. This convergence is not accidental. It is symptomatic of the extent to which Hegel and the Kyoto School share their vision of the absolute as the keystone of reality, and discredit the ability of ordinary reason to understand the world. Both hold that while on one level, conceptualization makes reality more understandable, on another it necessarily distorts it. In comparison with this commonality of outlook, the question of whether the absolute is construed as spirit or as nothingness is of secondary importance. However, the same cannot be said of the view each, Hegel and the Kyoto School, holds about the process through which the absolute comes to be defined with regard to its opposite, the relative. Here, their ways part dramatically. Hegel is an untiring relativist. His is the way of patient self-reflection. Following the evolution of our thinking from primitive to cultured, and with it, the progressive refinement of reality, Hegel never loses sight of the subjective determination of the "external" world. By seeing the subjective and the objective forever blended together, he shows us the infinitely complex nature of reality. His interest in subjectivity is metaphysical. To mistake it for narrow rationalism, as the Kyoto philosophers do, is symptomatic of a blind spot that affects also their own thought. Nishida, Nishitani, and Tanabe do not put subjectivity to work the way Hegel does, and make scanty allowance for human fallibility. They look at the world through the prism of absolute nothingness, and take at face value the distorted, absolutized images produced in the process. What they construe as pure experience, primal actuality, or existential self-doubt are often their exact opposites. For example, Tanabe glorifies religious practice as a means of suppressing the ego, and lays down self-denial as the basis of his meta- or anti-philosophy. But since he has no personal record of religious practice and uses humility as a form of self-promotion, his pontifications lack credibility.[1] We find similar pretense in Nishitani's praise of Japan as a "selfless nation," for there is a strong suspicion that he utters it from the position of nationalistic pride and his personal contempt for the West.[2] Since the two, relative being and absolute nothingness, are intertwined—for fundamentally, they are one—a misrepresentation of one has repercussions for the credibility of the other. The absolute used as an expedient to promote finite concerns raises the suspicion of being yet another logical construct. The philosophy built around it bears the stamp of the discursiveness that it was intended to supplant. The Kyoto School's bitter attacks against Hegel signal no less an opposition to his way of thinking than frustration with its own failure to produce a viable philosophy that breaks out of what they perceive to be the Hegelian mold.

Hegel is not infallible. His philosophy has its own blind spots. Discoveries in natural sciences since his time have eclipsed or invalidated many of his theories, such as—an oft-quoted example—those based on his explorations in phrenology. A gradual devaluation of the notion of progress and the advent of multi-

culturalism in the Western world have undermined the credibility of the optimism of his philosophy of history and his political views. His faith in spirit's control over human destiny has been put to test by the secular, materialistic currents of modern thought. And yet, in many areas Hegel's thought has retained, or even gained in, actuality. In the matter of perhaps the greatest importance to the Kyoto School—the pursuit of the absolute as the subject-object unity in the depths of one's own consciousness—his views have proven their staying power despite the School's objections. Whose perspective is correct in this one crucial area—Hegel's or his critics'?

The universal nature of thinking differentiates it from a particular object—from the objective or, as Hegel also calls it, the natural (*das Natürliche*). The difference between the two is overcome in reflection, which elevates the object to universality. Hegel limits the capacity to universalize objects to the Western mode of reflection. In his view, "Oriental" thinking takes the opposite tack:

> [C]ertainly, spirit arises also in the Orient, but it is so that the subject, individuality, is not a person; it is determined to go under in the objective. There, the substantive state [*Verhältnis*] reigns supreme. Substance is represented there partially as transsensory, as thought, and partially in a more material way. It follows that the status [*Verhältnis*] of the individual, the particular, is merely something negative against substance. The highest bliss attainable for such individual is the eternal one that is simply the absorption in this substance, the extinction of consciousness, and so the obliteration of the subject and with it, also of the difference between substance and subject. The highest state [*Verhältnis*] is thus non-consciousness.[3]

The Kyoto thinkers should have little reason to take offense at these pronouncements. They themselves advocate, in a manner similar to that described by Hegel, the absorption of the subject in the object. They regard such psychological outflow as a form of self-negation and as a proper way to approach the absolute. What Hegel considers to be a sign of enslaving particularity in the Orient, for the Kyoto School is the greatest freedom: the freedom from oneself. But the divergence of their views on this point is only apparent. The Kyoto School's absorption in "substance" is secondary to absorption as such. By losing itself, the subject rids itself of its narrow egoity. It can then grasp itself, while remaining physically individual, as universal. In this view, the Kyoto School philosophy implicitly fulfills Hegel's condition of freedom. For its part, beneath its "rational" appearance, Hegel's discourse comports with the Kyoto School's postulate of the selfless nature of *jikaku*. As the following pronouncement suggests, Hegel would have no difficulty in accepting that postulate: "When I am dependent on a drive or an inclination, I belong to another; and insofar as this is *my* drive and *my* inclination, I am a particular, not a universal. . . . But the will that is free consists in this, that its content is universal; in that universal I have my being [*Wesen*], my essential being."[4] The pursuit of personal needs and goals

binds the individual and seals its finitude. Freedom lies in the infinite "being in and for itself." Hegel understands this term as a state of spirit's sovereign repose in itself that is a mark of the absolute. Contrary to the Kyoto School's negative interpretation, the pronoun "itself" does not imply clinging to one's ego. To be in and for itself is to have discarded all that determines and limits the individual to a "me," clearing the way for the subject-object unity within consciousness that has become perfectly self-referential. It is a state of immediate, egoless being reached through a double negation. As such, it comes close to meeting the Kyoto School's definition of absolute nothingness, just as "absolute knowledge" is Hegel's equivalent of *jikaku*. The difference between the two is largely a matter of perspective and nomenclature, not of substance. Entrenched in their distinctive terminology and literary style, the Kyoto Scholars overlook the possibility that their fundamental assumption is compatible with Hegel's—a possibility acknowledged in the symmetry of the School's own *soku* formula, but controverted through their relentless setting of nothing against being. Nishida is quite correct when stating: "But absolute nothingness does not simply mean that there is nothing; it is rather the ultimate in noetic determination, it means the essence of spirit. It is both absolute nothing and absolute being; it transcends the limits of our understanding."[5] Hegel himself would not have said it better.

Notes

1. Nakano, "Kaisetsu," 457.
2. NKC 4:56-57, 286. Selfless nation: *muga no kokka* 無我の国家.
3. *Einleitung in die Geschichte der Philosophie*, 227. Hegel seems to be referring principally to the Indian mindset.
4. *Einleitung in die Geschichte der Philosophie*, 234.
5. NKZ 5:451. The essence of spirit: *kokoro no hontai* 心の本体.

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