

Relocating the figure of *Jikaku* (Self-Consciousness) in Nishida's  
*Intuition and Reflection in Self-consciousness (Jikaku ni okeru Chokkan  
to Hansei)* [自覚における直観と反省] (1917)

Montserrat Crespín Perales (Open University of Catalonia – UOC, Barcelona – Spain.  
Research Group: ALTER – Crisis, alterity and representation.  
<http://grupalter.wordpress.com/> ). [mcrespin@uoc.edu](mailto:mcrespin@uoc.edu)

### Introduction

In this essay, I will propose an interpretation that pretends to relocate some aspects regarding NISHIDA Kitarō's<sup>1</sup> analysis of self-consciousness (*jikaku*-自覚)<sup>2</sup>. I will focus this study in his first period of philosophical production, in which I am particularly interested. This election is not casual and responds to an intentional and specific purpose. Since I began my research and my familiarity with Nishida's texts and most commonly accepted interpretations, I missed a more profound analysis of his first period works, from *Zen no Kenkyū* [善の研究] (1911) to *Hataraku mono kara miru mono e* [働くものから見るものへ] (1927).

It is difficult to enter in the debate about the demarcation of the philosopher's stages. But accepting, for the purpose of this short essay, this period from 1911 to 1927, in my opinion there is still an analytical lack and, as a result, a need for a completion of the study of Nishida's first period works. Or, at least, this is the panorama, in my view, that we find in the majority of European and Western secondary literature. Normally, the best studies published

---

<sup>1</sup>This paper gives Japanese names in the traditional order -surnames first-. To prevent confusion, when a person's full name is given, the surname will appear in uppercase letters.

<sup>2</sup>It is out of the scope and intention of this paper to discuss about the multiple translations of *Jikaku*. Suffice to mention that other translations different from self-consciousness, that it is the term that will be used here, are available. For example, "self-awareness", in French translations of Nishida's works, as in TREMBLAY, Jacynthe, "Introduction de la traductrice", in NISHIDA, Kitarō, *L'Éveil à soi*; Trad. Jacynthe Tremblay, Paris: CNRS, 2003, pp. 9-51 and in Spanish, as can be found in HEISIG, James W., *Filósofos de la Nada. Un ensayo sobre la Escuela de Kioto*; Barcelona: Editorial Herder, 2002, pp. 79-80; "self-realization" in WALDENFELS, Hans, "Absolute Nothingness. Preliminary Considerations on a Central Notion in the Philosophy of Nishida Kitarō and the Kyoto School", *Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol. 21, No. 3/4, 1966, p. 363, or self-perception ("autopercepción" in Spanish) as it can be found in the work of the Mexican professor Agustín Jacinto ZAVALA. Professor John C. MARALDO expresses the particular problems that can be found in *jikaku* as a complex notion. Maraldo indicates that Nishida uses the term *jikaku* in *Intuition and Reflection in Self-consciousness* as the specific translation of Fichte's philosophy and, in general, in German idealism, of the concept *Selbstbewusstsein*, that rightly fits with "self-consciousness".

in Western languages, all present excellent interpretations about Nishida's philosophy, but centered in his mature period and texts. Even if they summarize some capital ideas that appear for the first time in his initial essays, finally these writings are put aside and discarded as fragmentary, with ideas not yet completed, appearing only as rough drafts or as seeds that can be better identified in its matured form in later Nishida's philosophical production. This is, of course, an optional methodology and only another point-of-view, a line to enter inside Nishida's philosophy as good as any other. But, as I am particularly interested in an analysis that can be defined maybe as hermeneutical and, perhaps, more focused in an historical perspective, I think that, as a propaedeutic step, prior it is necessary to know well the initial yarns that helped to began Nishida's mosaic of ideas. And, after that, as a second move, we can try to interpret Nishida's mature thoughts and philosophical works counting with the entire constellation of ideas at hand and from a genetic perspective.

Being fixed this framework for the analysis, in the following pages I will try to relocate Nishida's first approximations about self-consciousness in its proper process of formation as a philosophical notion and as an instrumental term key for understanding his thought. And secondly, I will try to incorporate or reincorporate the notion as can be understood in modern and contemporary philosophical literature.

**The theorization of self-consciousness in *Intuition and Reflection in Self-consciousness* (*Jikaku ni okeru Chokkan to Hansei*) [自覚における直観と反省] (1917)**

Revising the capital letters of the historical process of self-consciousness, we realize that is one of the theoretical foundations that have been search (and not yet perfectly found) for centuries. The trajectory of the term in the history of modern and contemporary philosophy shows that the acceptance or refusal of the notion and his potential is not homogeneous or uniform. It is precisely this subjacent disaccord that makes the notion more enigmatic and interesting and, of course, a still open question for philosophy and for philosophical quest today.

In his article, "Fragments of a History of the Theory of Self-Consciousness from Kant to Kierkegaard"<sup>3</sup>, the German philosopher Manfred FRANK (1945- ) maintains that if we want to draw a schematic sketch of the history of the notion self-consciousness inside modern

---

<sup>3</sup> FRANK, Manfred, "Fragments of a history of the theory of self-consciousness from Kant to Kierkegaard", *Critical Horizons*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 2004, p. 53.

European philosophy, we realize that “self-consciousness” can be define as a minimal common factor. Philosophers as Descartes, Kant or Fichte used the notion as a first principle from which to make possible the deduction of all the propositions that rightly claim validity. Or, in fact, we can say, the propositions that have to be demonstrated as valid and, we can add, universal. Nonetheless, the incontestability of a strong foundation for the process of valid, firm and subsistent propositions is not an easy philosophical task. And it is full with critical reactions. The first one refers to the justification itself: it is difficult to affirm precisely the thing that one is searching. It is difficult to prove the incontestability of the validity of the propositions, if the first principle, named self-consciousness, is not clear enough.

Scholars as Frank, interested in the historical study of German classical philosophy, or others as Dieter HENRICH (1927- ), are doing a great task to picture again a forgotten history of self-consciousness. Also they try to reshape the problems inherent to the notion and the bitter replies that began with German Romantics, as Hölderlin and Novalis, that soon attacked the notion and tried to put self-consciousness not as a principle, but as a derivation of a major principle, named the “Absolute”. In my opinion, rethinking the history of the notion and, as a result, the philosophy of subjectivity in our present time, is necessary but will not be complete unless we consider the form of expression of the same battle of ideas in Japanese Philosophy around the end of XIX century and, in prominent form, in the works of NISHIDA Kitarō during the XX century.

By now, we can say that the centralization of “self-consciousness” (*jikaku*-自覚) in Nishida’s second major work, *Jikaku ni okeru Chokkan to Hansei*, begins when the philosopher puts the “self-consciousness” as the basis of his system of reality.

After the publication of *Inquiry into the Good (Zen no Kenkyū)* [善の研究] (1911), his philosophy, built around the axis of “pure experience” (*junsui keiken* -純粹經驗), soon asked the thinker to revise his first system. It is then when Nishida reconsiders to center his system on self-consciousness, that, although present in his first major work, was eclipsed by the centrality of “pure experience”. Nishida seems to search a notion that can replace the unitarian principle of “pure experience” or “direct experience” (*chokusetsu keiken* -直接經驗) and clean up the psychologism that shadowed around his first conceptual framework. “Pure experience” or “direct experience” sustains irregularly some epistemological, as well as ontological, ideas, which built *Zen no Kenkyū*. In *Jikaku ni okeru Chokkan to Hansei*, constructed as a kind of work in progress, if we consider the aggregation of essays from 1913

to 1917, the date of publication of the book, is evident how Nishida is trying to rethink and search a tentative to solve some gaps around *Zen no Kenkyū*.

For example, it is a common critic that *Zen no Kenkyū* does not solve the prevalence of the psychological component of “pure experience”. The psychological component is reflected in the whole system and results in a method that fails to explain the process and especially, the role and function of reflective thought inside it. For that reason, the system of reality that one can find in that work it is insinuated, in draft form, but not explained with all the consequences of his dialectical procedure.

It is necessary to demonstrate the relation between unity and differentiation. And it is evident to the reader of *Zen no Kenkyū* that Nishida is not able to explain the movement from the differentiation to the higher unification becoming in pure experience. Seen from the perspective and definition of pure experience, the reflective thought (reflection) appears as the desegregation of pure/direct experience. Correlatively or co-dependently, reflection plays, too, the movement of transition departing as part of the formative development of reality. A transition from the unified pre-reflective and pre-judicative state, characteristic of pure experience, to what is differentiated and obliged to turn around itself (reflect) and occupy the position for a major impulse capable of completing the dialectical process. That is, from the differentiated and multiple “real”, to a kind of higher unity present in the idea of the good.

Nishida is, at best, throwing some interesting ideas, but he cannot explain coherently this differentiation process neither the process of the unification. And, as a result, leaves the big question open. A question that can be exposed in the words of John C. MARALDO when refers to this interrogation unresolved by Nishida: “How can pure experience develop into reflective thought that would seem to interrupt and interpret it from an external vantage point?”<sup>4</sup>

Nishida will try to save this philosophical problem, terminological and procesual, characteristic of his first philosophical system, centering his task in the notion of self-consciousness. And, doing so, he tries to reunify what appears in *Zen no Kenkyū* as disunited - that is, the immediate experience (intuition) with reflective thought (reflection). Now is necessary to indicate that in *Jikaku ni okeru Chokkan to Hansei*, the notion of self-consciousness is not a notion that appears always in the same shape and with the same conditionings. The progressive addenda are evident in the book and permeate around the

---

<sup>4</sup> MARALDO, John C., “Nishida Kitarō”, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2010 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL : <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2010/entries/nishida-kitaro/>

notion itself that is constantly reevaluated, interrogated and corrected along the pages. He does so precisely trying to demonstrate and prove the validity of the concept or accepting its final inefficacy as an epistemological and metaphysical radical. In fact, Nishida explains and describes in detail that the notion and the entire philosophical struggle, can be followed reading this collection of essays, as an action continuously reevaluated that, at the end, he admits as a tactic that failed<sup>5</sup>. In the first preface on 1917 and on the second one, on 1941, Nishida delineates the changes on perspective as well as the relocations that the notion of “self-consciousness” suffers along the book<sup>6</sup>.

**The initial problem: Is it possible to found the internal connection between intuition and reflection in self-consciousness?**

We have commented that the initial questioning of the philosophical inquiry of Nishida in *Jikaku ni okeru Chokkan to Hansei* begins as a rethinking progress about the different dimensions that form reality from the perspective offered by the system of self-consciousness. Self-consciousness, as central notion as well as the resultant re-questioning about the dimension of reality, compounds a philosophical standpoint that can be understood as ontological. We can do it if we read “ontological” in the same manner commonly used in modern and contemporary philosophy, remembering that the origin of the term ontology referred to a specific part of metaphysics different from theology, cosmology and rational psychology<sup>7</sup>. However, the clear delimitation and differentiation suffered from a process that converted ontology and metaphysics almost as synonymous philosophical concepts. It is necessary to note that Nishida does not refer to “ontology” in the book and is not pointing directly to metaphysics as well. But, considering that he refers to the inquiry about what it “is”, reality, and that wants to offer, first of all, a new approach and theory of reality, this inquiry, we can suppose, is primary ontological. Additionally, as the philosopher is trying to offer a new theorization about reality “from” a system of self-consciousness, this new theorization

---

<sup>5</sup> NISHIDA, Kitarō, *Jikaku ni okeru Chokkan to Hansei* in NISHIDA, Kitarō, *Nishida Kitarō Zenshū*; ABE Yoshishige to Henshū, Vol. 2, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1965, pp. 11-13. From now on, we will cite from the English translation pagination indicating, in brackets, the pages of *Nishida Kitarō Zenshū* edition. As: NISHIDA, Kitarō, *Intuition and Reflection in Self-consciousness*; Translated by Valdo H. VIGLIELMO with TAKEUCHI Yoshinori and Joseph S. O'LEARY, New York: State University of New York Press-SUNY, 1987, pp. xxiii-xxvi (NKZ2-pp. 11-13).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. xix-xxvi (NKZ2 - pp. 3-13).

<sup>7</sup> See FERRATER MORA, José, "On the Early History of 'Ontology'", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Sep., 1963), pp. 36-47.

links the ontological and the epistemological questions.

With this in mind, we can say that Nishida's intention is to build his theory of reality in a systematic form, although he does not define and does not concretize what is under the term "system"<sup>8</sup>, interweaving in it an ordered set of rules and principles that have to be strongly based on self-consciousness as central philosophical ground.

The book opens with an introduction that includes the sections 1 to 3 entitled, "Self-consciousness: some problems" (*Jikaku no igen · hodo hodo no mondai* - 自覚の意義・程々の疑問), wrote during 1913. These sections are fundamental to understand the conceptual frame and the initial definitions of the two terms involved with self-consciousness, intuition (*chokkan*-直観) and reflection (*hansei*-反省). More or less, we can resume the definitions provided by Nishida as follows:

- Intuition: is the consciousness of intact/non-interrupted progression of reality as it is; a consciousness where subject and object are not yet divided and where the subject who knows and the object that this subject knows are the same thing.
- Reflection: is the consciousness that, out of the intact progression, turns around<sup>9</sup> itself and looks to itself.

That is: Nishida is explicating two faculties of the same consciousness. The consciousness forms, and is a constitutive part of, reality. For Nishida, there is only one reality but it can be viewed (as in a perspective) as an undifferentiated all, or as a unity from which some components have been abstracted and individuated as a condition for knowledge. Nishida is not referring to two types of consciousness: there is one single consciousness that allows to be considered from two different views:

- From intuition: when consciousness is seen from the point-of-view of its co-belonging with the indeterminate *continuum* that forms reality.
- From reflection: when consciousness is seen from its co-necessity with the subject's capacity of knowledge and requires differentiating certain facts and

---

<sup>8</sup> This lack of clear definition about what is the meaning of "system" is noted too by Wilkinson, in his comparative analysis about western philosophy and Nishida's thought. See, WILKINSON, Robert, *Nishida and Western Philosophy*; Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2009, p. 66.

<sup>9</sup> Referring here to the form "turns around" is not a rare use of a terminological term and not in relation with reflection as "*re-flectio*". In fact, from the Latin word *epistrophe* derived from the Greek term, refers directly to "turn" and was used by the Neo-Platonists (Plotinus, for example) to describe properly the process of "turn around" itself of the rational beings, a process commonly referred as "reflection". See, MARBACK, Richard C., "Rethinking Plato's Legacy: Neoplatonic Readings of Plato's Sophist", *Rhetoric Review*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Autumn, 1994), pp. 30-49 and HENRICH, Dieter, *Between Kant and Hegel. Lectures on German Idealism*; Edited by David S. Pacini, Cambridge-London: Harvard University Press, 2003, pp. 247-248.

phenomena that forms part of the indeterminate *continuum*. So, the reflective consciousness abstracts and separates different qualities of reality itself, to order in knowledge the manifold.

Nishida explains this question in the text as follows:

*Intuition* is a consciousness of unbroken progression, of reality just as it is, wherein subject and object are not as yet divided and that which knows and that which is known are one. *Reflection* is a consciousness which, standing outside of this progression, turns around and views it. (...) But how, since we can never go outside the sphere of actual intuition, is such reflection possible? How can reflection be combined with intuition? And what is the significance of intuition for reflection?<sup>10</sup>

Although Nishida is defining the terms, intuition and reflection, separately, taking the right meaning of the text demonstrates that he is referring only to “the” consciousness (singular) and not referring to “two” different consciousness. The difference resides in the point of view and the functions of one unique consciousness. It is precisely this singularity of consciousness or, put differently, an odd quality, not divisible, what is problematic here. Because defending that we are talking about one unique consciousness, we must defend as well, that this consciousness is, functionally, twofold. So, the questions that arise once we read Nishida’s definitions of intuition and reflection are:

- If it is not possible for the subject to go out the “actual” sphere of intuition, how can be justified “reflection”?
- If is possible to justify reflection, how and when reflection and intuition are combined?
- If we can find how and where the combination between reflection and intuition is feasible, how does contribute intuition to reflection?

### The necessary justification of reflective activity in consciousness

How can we justify the role of reflection? How and where reflection and intuition are combined? What is the contribution of intuition to reflection? In short: how and where do connect reflection and intuition?

Nishida suggests that is “in” “self-consciousness” (*jikaku*-自覚). This internal connection between reflection and intuition is effective in the place of “self-consciousness”. To give an answer to the “how”, he must justify, first, reflective activity. Regarding reflective

---

<sup>10</sup> NISHIDA, *Intuition and Reflection in Self-consciousness*, cit., p. 3. (NKZ2-p.15).

activity, Nishida explains that is in self-consciousness where the subject (the “I”) converts his own and particular activity as his “object” of thought. With reflective activity, the subject-I can turn around action and convert this reflective activity about “itself” in an object for “reflection”. Also, each act of this subject, inserted in the process of reflection, involves a progression, an endless sequence of “itself”. Consequently, reflection constitutes the process of self-consciousness and the development of subject, expressing and manifesting the intrinsic nature of consciousness.

Nishida’s terminology and the explicative mode about reflective consciousness summarized above, clearly denotes the influence of German idealism. And, in concrete, the obligation for the interpreter to advert how necessary is to locate Nishida’s intention through the light of some capital ideas and terminology of Johann Gottlieb FICHTE (1762-1814). Nishida itself recognizes this fichtean guide and the denotation of the outline of his own notion of self-consciousness in the 1917 preface text. There, he mentions that his conceptualization of “self-consciousness” is close to Fichte’s transcendental Ego and his *Tathandlung* (that is, the union of fact and act “in” consciousness)<sup>11</sup>. Although it is clear enough the influence and terminological lending from Fichte’s *Science of Knowledge* (1797), especially the First and Second Introductions<sup>12</sup>, we can say as well that Nishida is not only paraphrasing or rearranging major fichtean thesis. In fact, we can see, reading the 1917 preface, that the conception of *jikaku* possesses a “proximity” to the fichtean *Tathandlung* but is not equal to. Curiously enough, we know that Nishida arrives to the term but not following a direct line, but an indirect one.

The curve path to Fichte is mediated by the lecture and analysis of Josiah ROYCE (1855-1916) essay, “The one, the many, and the infinite”<sup>13</sup>, included in *The World and the Individual* (1900). In his work, Royce interprets, criticizes and dialogues with some thesis of F. H. BRADLEY (1846-1924) and specifically with the British idealist derivation verbalized

---

<sup>11</sup> Ibidem, p. xix. (NKZ2 - p. 3). In Fichte, the neologism *Tathandlung* wanted to cover the identity between agent and fact. For that reason, some commentators as the Spanish Félix DUQUE translate the term by “action of fact” that reveals the relation between act and fact. Duque, in fact, exposes *Tathandlung* with the following Cartesian-like sentence: *Ergo cogitat, ergo est*. See, DUQUE, Félix, *Historia de la filosofía moderna: la era de la crítica*; Madrid: Ediciones Akal, 1998, pp. 209-210, n. 400.

<sup>12</sup> Nishida reads the following edition: FICHTE, Johann Gottlieb, *Erste und zweite Einleitung in die Wissenschaftslehre und Versuch einer neuen Darstellung der Wissenschaftslehre*, Fritz Medicus (Ed.), Leipzig: Eckardt (Meiner), 1910.

<sup>13</sup> ROYCE, Josiah, *The World and the Individual. Gifford Lectures First Series. The four historical conceptions of being*; New York and London: Macmillan & CO., 1900, pp. 473-588.



in Bradley's *Appearance and Reality* (1893)<sup>14</sup>. But it is important to notice that in *Jikaku ni okeru Chokkan to Hansei* we do not find a complete philosophical dialogue between the Japanese thinker and the British or American idealism. It is certain that Nishida affirms that he relocates his “self-consciousness” thanks to his knowledge of Royce<sup>15</sup>. But the concrete formulation about Royce's ideas is not developed in *Jikaku ni okeru Chokkan to Hansei*, but elsewhere, in a collection of essays, *Thinking and Experience (Shisaku to taiken)* [思索と体験] (1915) and, in particular in his essay “Logical and mathematical understanding” (*Ronri no Rikai to Sûri no Rikai*) [論理の理解と数理の理解]<sup>16</sup>. There, he analyzes and interprets in great detail some thesis suggested by his lecture of the American philosopher. We can say that some epistemological reflections are connected with the interesting debates between logic and mathematics of the time (and some of the actors of these debates are present along the pages of Nishida's text: Henri POINCARÉ (1854-1912), Heinrich RICKERT (1863-1936), Richard DEDEKIND (1832-1916) and Georg CANTOR (1845-1918), between others).

The fact, though, is that the connection that Nishida makes between Fichte and Royce helps him to rearrange and begin a new explicative path for “self-consciousness”, in terms of the intern interrelation between intuition and reflection.

Maybe for that reason is logical to find that Nishida's first explicative step begins with a close attention to reflection, as an operation and I-act (in fichtean sense). We will center now our discussion precisely at this point: self-reflection and the limits of self-consciousness assertion.

When Nishida begins his analysis, he soon has to give a clear description about what is this reflective I-consciousness (*jiko*-自己). And here appears Royce “map of England metaphor”. For Nishida, the metaphor can represent well how the reflective I-consciousness it is a unification process with no-end that re-presents or maps the kind of “turn around to itself” movement that is an infinite one:

---

<sup>14</sup> See BRADLEY, Francis Herbert, *Appearance and Reality*; London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1916.

<sup>15</sup> For good comparative analysis between Royce and Nishida's ideas, consult: KIM, Ha Tai, “Nishida and Royce”, *Philosophy East and West*; Vol. 1, No. 4 (Jan., 1952), pp. 18-29 and MARALDO, John C., “Self-Mirroring and Self-Awareness: Dedekind, Royce, and Nishida”, in HEISIG, James W. (Ed.), *Frontiers of Japanese Philosophy*; Nagoya: Nanzan Institute for Religion & Culture, 2006, pp. 143-163.

<sup>16</sup> NISHIDA, Kitarō, “Ronri no Rikai to Sûri no Rikai” [論理の理解と数理の理解] in *Shisaku to taiken* [思索と体験]; Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2006, pp. 54-72. (NKZ1- pp. 250-267). There is a French translation in: DALISSIER, Michel, IBARAGI, Daisuke, NISHIDA, Kitarō, “Compréhension logique et compréhension mathématique. Présentation, texte original et traduction”, *Ebisu*, N. 31, 2003, pp. 115-159.

The self's reflection on the self, its reflecting (in the sense of mirroring) itself, cannot be brought to a halt at this point, for self-reflection consists in an unending process of unification, and, as Royce saw, a single project of reflecting the self inevitably generates an unlimited series, just as, if one wished to make a completely adequate map of England on the surface of that country, each realization of this plan would immediately generate the project of another map including the previous one within itself in a never-ending process; or just as an object placed between two bright mirrors must project its image infinitely<sup>17</sup>.

Royce illustrates his theory about the foundation and limitations of the representational system using the example of the map of England that, as we can read on the above citation, Nishida uses for his own purposes. With the map analogy, Royce pretends to reply critically to Bradley's<sup>18</sup> ideas. If Bradley indicates that every system of representation collapses when has to explain "identity" inside "diversity", Royce adds difficulty to the philosophical argument. Royce explains that any system of representation bears with a kind of development that it is infinite and it is particular, regarding diversity inside the thing that it is being represented unitarily (like it happens with the map or with self-reflection of the I):

Absolute exactness of the representation of one object by another, with respect to contour, this, indeed, involves, as Mr. Bradley would say to us, the problem of identity in diversity; but it involves that problem only in a general way. Our map of England, contained in a portion of the surface of England, involves, however, a peculiar and infinite development of a special type of diversity within our map. For the map, in order to be complete, according to the rule given, will have to contain, as a part of itself, a representation of its own contour and contents. In order that this representation should be constructed, the representation itself will have to contain once more, as a part of itself, a representation of its own contour and contents; and this representation, in order to be exact, will have once more to contain an image of itself; and so on without limit. We should now, indeed, have to suppose the space occupied by our perfect map to be infinitely divisible, even if not a *continuum*<sup>19</sup>.

It seems that the question of self-identity, that sustains the whole infinite and

---

<sup>17</sup>NISHIDA, *Intuition and Reflection in Self-consciousness*, cit., p. 4 (NKZ2-p. 16). Original passage in: ROYCE, op. cit., pp. 504-505.

<sup>18</sup> Nishida does not mention Bradley in *Jikaku ni okeru chokkan to hansei* but we can hypothesize about some share common philosophical traits. For example, both try to overcome the dichotomy between realism and empiricism. This philosophical affirmation can fit with some nishidian postures, for example when Bradley affirms that reality is one (monism) and that reality is based on a sole idea of experience (metaphysical idealism). We find that some scholars pointed about this possible comparative between Nishida and Bradley, as it does David A. DILWORTH. Dilworth also unites Bradley and Nishida with the conception of philosophy as an "all sentient" that presented A. N. WHITEHEAD (1861-1947) in his *Process and Reality: an Essay in Cosmology* (1929). Whitehead reshaped Bradley's idea trying to clarify the theory of experience in relation with immediacy or "prehension" of the actual events of experience, tending to overcome dualisms in metaphysics. See DILWORTH, David A., "Nishida Kitarō: Nothingness as the Negative Space of Experiential Immediacy", *International Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 13, Nr. 4, p. 471, n. 16.

<sup>19</sup> ROYCE, *The World and the Individual. Gifford Lectures First Series. The four historical conceptions of being*, op. cit., pp. 504-505.

continuous process of self-reflection, it is what Nishida takes from Royce's thesis. That is because what underlies inside the continuous process, endless, of reflection, it is the type of infinity that composes and, at a time, composes itself, inside the dynamical correspondence (duplicity) between the self-reflection and the subject's identity (or self-identity, as a self-reflection itself):

Reflection is an event within the self, by which the self adds a certain something to the self, a knowing of the self which is also a process of self-development. Self-identity, correctly understood, is not static identity, but dynamic development, and it is in this deployment of self-identity that the notion of an irreducible individual history finds a basis<sup>20</sup>.

For that reason, if reflection is an "event" within the self, a "happening" that adds something to the "I", it is correct to indicate that it is an incessant process that forces the infinite self-development. In the same way that the metaphor of the map functions in Royce's text, to represent means the obligation of a representation of its own contour and contents to be truly self-representative. And the reflective knowledge about the "I" consists in an incessant process of self-assurance (self-development). This question obliges Nishida to affirm the following: that self-identity cannot be understood as something static. It is necessary to understand self-identity as an internal and dynamical process able to express the individual history (個人 歴史-*kojin rekishi*). That is, the traits that define the particular characteristics of the subject (and, we can add, a consequent idea of progress).

At this point, it can be useful to link this philosophical explanation about reflection as an "event", following Nishida, with the mark of contingency that is a characteristic point when we talk about reflection from this view. If reflection is an "event" inside the "I", the meaning of this type of eventuality, or this kind of happening that adds and posits something continuously to the "I", is telling us that all reflection is dynamical and, at the same time, a successive action continuously searching for "provisory" determinations.

Another philosopher and, in my opinion, a good interpreter of Nishida's ideas, ODAGIRI Takushi, offers an interesting reading about the problem of self-reflection. As he maintains, self-reflection can be considered as a kind of transversal problem present on the whole nishidian philosophical context. Odagiri accentuates precisely the "contingency" or "indetermination" that accompanies all reflection. Eventuality, the "happening" or occurrence, refers to a space that belongs to the indetermination and contingency that

---

<sup>20</sup> NISHIDA, *Intuition and Reflection in Self-consciousness*, cit., p. 4. (NKZ2 - p. 16).

accompanies all act of reflection. It is not the case that with contingency, we can reduce reflection to a mere “possibility”, a possible and common derivation for the meaning of contingency. The case is to state the dialogical relation between determination-indetermination connatural to every act of reflection and to the subject itself.

If, as Nishida postulates, reflection in general builds a net of events that are being added constantly with the incessant course of the development of self-consciousness, to affirm the contingent space means to open the path to save the theoretical perspective about self-consciousness from the risk of an absolutization. That is, while it is possible to affirm that Nishida is presenting a philosophy of the subject, this acceptance of contingency, and, of course, the acceptance of human limitations and a relocation of a self-consciously life, pretends to go beyond the theoretical force infringed and the danger of a conviction of a centrality of human life and the “I” as self-empowerment<sup>21</sup>. With this recognition that is, fundamentally, ethical, subject cannot fall into the objectivated subjectivity typical of modern philosophy.

As Odagiri explains, each reflexive judgment escapes ever from its absolute and complete determination:

We tend to think of the content of our thought as cognitively transparent, but there is good reason to doubt that such is the case. (...) At any moment, I may have to revise my judgments and change my beliefs. The “world map” [Royce] analogy is incapable of adequately representing this “open” structure of self-reflection<sup>22</sup>.

Recognizing the open, fallible and contingent character of self-reflexivity or making clear this recognition, the categorical character of the subject it is denied. From the introspection or the re-cognition that is, by nature, open, it cannot emerge an absolute image of the subject. The subject will be an approximation to an incomplete projection of the subject about itself (about his self-knowledge). The image is incomplete, fallible, but, also, an aspiration as a practical duty -to aspire to the completeness and perfectibility.

Summarizing now what we have said, it is clear that Nishida is trying to synthesize the

---

<sup>21</sup> This is one good argument that defenders of the subjectivity as a philosophical principle are explaining in order to defend the centrality of subject again, after the attacks of contemporary thought. The rejection of an old philosophy of the subject does not mean, necessary, the negation of the centrality of subjectivity. See: HENRICH, Dieter, “Subjectivity as Philosophical Principle”, *Critical Horizons*, Vol. 4, no. 1, 2003, pp. 6-27.

<sup>22</sup> ODAGIRI, Takushi, “From Self-Reflexivity to Contingency. Nishida Kitarō on Self-Knowledge”, in HEISIG, James W., UEHARA, Mayuko (Eds.), *Frontiers of Japanese Philosophy. Origins and Possibilities*; Nagoya: Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture, 2008, p. 88.

central position of subjectivity as is found in Fichte, that is, the central figure of self-consciousness, in order to provide a epistemological solid base that it was not truly clarified with “pure experience” use. But, it is the solidity of the self-consciousness as infinite process of self-development what the philosopher takes partially from Royce to show the dynamical character of both, consciousness and reality. With this interpretative movement, Nishida saves part of his philosophy of self-consciousness from reifying subjective identity and convert it into an isolated, abstract and death principle.

Also, Nishida wants to dissociate expressly his theories from the conceptual explanations of psychology<sup>23</sup>. Nishida’s self-consciousness is not attending to an “I” chronologically separated (one “I” first and a posterior “I-reflective” analyzed as mental states temporally different). He thinks self-consciousness as an identical consciousness but dynamical, in-discontinually-continuity. Self-consciousness is a basic fact of consciousness that, far from being seen only as a chronological link (what establishes only a “separation” between before and after); it is the condition of possibility of the concatenated a posteriori order that is the only perspective that psychology can explain.

The different consciousness states that psychology chooses as its object of analysis, can be distinguished and isolated if and only if, exists the unifying self-consciousness. It is this unifying consciousness what unites the center of consciousness with different mental estates circumferential from a chronological and serial (consecutive) point of view. For that reason, the kind of identity that Nishida seems to defend, is not an identity based on the self-consciousness of a first-I and a second-I that later reflects about itself. He is defending the idea of an “I” in which the I-thought (reflected) and the I-that-thinks (intuited) are simultaneously identical. Therefore, we cannot find a duality between what is thought and the act of thinking. Contrary to that, we have a transcendental unity of the “I” that, only seen this way, can be understood as a regulative ought (*Sollen*):

In any case the identity in self-consciousness of the first self and the self reflecting on it is not the identity grasped by psychology when it fixes them both as objects of thought. Instead the self which is thought and the self which thinks it are immediately identical, and self-consciousness is consciousness of the transcendental unity of the self. This unifying consciousness underlying the two consciousness in question takes the form of an internal “ought” (*Sollen*)<sup>24</sup>.

---

<sup>23</sup> NISHIDA, *Intuition and Reflection in Self-consciousness*, cit., p. 4. (NKZ2 - p. 17).

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 4. (NKZ2 - p. 17).

The internal “ought” (*sollen*), in Nishida’s words, practical but derived from its epistemological origin, helps to understand, in its completion, reflection as self-knowledge and comprehension of the progressive and infinite construction of one’s own identity and, in correspondent process, of reality. As rightly comments Michel DALISSIER<sup>25</sup>, the notion of reflection (*hansei* - 反省) includes two complementary and inseparable aspects that are unisonous. If we take a look to the denotation of Nishida’s conceptualized reflection, reflection is a double-activity, in a sense that means the reflective action “about” something (*wo hansei suru* - を反省する) –ourselves-, but at the same time a reflective action “for” something. That is, as the infinite and unifying development of the internal “ought”. In conclusion: a “practical necessity”, genealogically fichtean, as we can read at the *Science of Knowledge* (1797), that Nishida uses systematically (but not always explicitly quoted) in the book:

Intellectual intuition is the only firm standpoint of all philosophy. From thence we can explain everything that occurs in consciousness; and moreover, only from thence. Without self-consciousness there is no consciousness whatever; but self-consciousness is possible only in the manner indicated: I am simply active. Beyond that I can be driven no further; here my philosophy becomes wholly independent of anything arbitrary, and a product of iron necessity, insofar as the free reason is subject to the latter: this standpoint, because I *may* not go any further; and transcendental idealism thus appears at the same time as the only dutiful mode of thought in philosophy, as that mode wherein speculation and the moral law are most intimately united. I *ought* in my thinking to set out from the pure self, and to think of the latter as absolutely self-active; not as determined by things, but as determining them<sup>26</sup>.

The fichtean fact-and-act philosophy intertwines epistemology and practical philosophy (ethics). This kind of philosophical orientation it is of great help for the Japanese philosopher and his philosophical project moved by the aspiration of overcome the modern subject fragmentation. That is, the fragmentation, somehow the limitation of Kantian critical philosophy, of a subject that is divided between the competences whether to knowledge, whether to act, whether to sense.

The key issue resides in elucidate if Nishida can demonstrate and to what extent, what it seems his main regulative rule: that if the subject is one with experience, any kind of fragmentation is only a product of the conventional foreshortening of language. The conventional foreshortening of language consists in the use of the “analysis”: that is, the kind

<sup>25</sup> DALISSIER, Michel, “The idea of the Mirror in Nishida and Dôgen”, in HEISIG, James W. (Ed.), *Frontiers of Japanese Philosophy*; Nagoya: Nanzan Institute for Religion & Culture, 2006, pp. 100-102.

<sup>26</sup> FICHTE, Johann Gottlieb, *Science of Knowledge, with the First and Second Introductions*, HEATH, Peter, LACHS, John, Edited and Translated, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991, p.41 (I, 467).

of reflective exam done by separating into parts the unified subjectivity and, after that, “reunificating” the parts into interrelations –constructing a kind of subjectivity of the aftermath. And this subjectivity of the aftermath represents no other thing than another dual object-subject structure.

### Self-consciousness circularity: the limits of its assertion

We have seen by now some lines about the contextualization of Nishida’s conception of self-consciousness and how can be understood as part of the general history of philosophy and, specifically, with the preponderant importance for philosophical modernity.

In this sense, Fichte and his conceptualization of self-consciousness functions as the intellectual portico to understand how Nishida configures his own notion about this speculative figure. Certainly, Kant, Fichte and, by extension, the German and some British and American idealists, and Nishida, are trying to find the solidity of self-consciousness, a kind of foundation that can help to deduce, from one unique principle, certain valid, firm and subsistent propositions about the subject. However, self-consciousness and its undeniable connection with self-reference can derive in theoretical paradoxes or, at least, into a perilous prison of concatenated arguments *ad infinitum*.

We can read the fichtean theory of science as the attempt to decipher the “enigma machine” of self-consciousness. The continuous movement of self-consciousness is, primarily, self-referent, because, as happens with the self-referentiality of a sentence, it is always referring to itself. It seems that Nishida inherits the preoccupation that Fichte demonstrates when he tries to avoid the danger of self-reference always present in some explicative models of self-consciousness. We have to remember that one of the risks about the self-reference of self-consciousness consists in defend that the subject of acting cannot be, itself, an “object” to consciousness<sup>27</sup>. The fact is that the only possible way to go out the inherent impossibility is non other than realize that, being the active subject built around the consciousness of itself, and remembering that the condition of possibility of reflective action signifies “re-flecting” about oneself, the self-reflectivity cannot be untied from existence and, consequently, not

---

<sup>27</sup> NISHIDA, *Intuition and Reflection in Self-consciousness*, cit., p. 5. (NKZ2 - p.19).

untied from the meaning of any existential judgment. But, for Nishida, it would be a kind of judgment that refuses a closed necessity because contingency shadows all reflective activity and conforms existential self-reference as process. That is: as a successive action of events responsible of the development of consciousness.

We can presume that it is this kind of active consciousness philosophy what Nishida defends. And maybe this is his possible solution to go out the self-consciousness explicative paradoxes. Because there is an apparent impossibility, at the same time, hermeneutical, ontological as well as epistemological, to affirm without doubt that it is possible to go out the objectification of the subject. This impossibility is clear if self-consciousness is understood as the action of the “I that reflects about the ‘I’”. The objectification seems to lock the subject always inside the prison of the duality structures.

The original self-reference of the subject in Fichte, a thesis implicitly or explicitly accepted by Nishida, guides the subject (for example, regarding perceptions and representations, as it happens with the Kantian “I think”) and is implied in the fact that is a subject in-endless-process –a transitional and developing one<sup>28</sup>.

We can also say that Nishida, accepting some capital ideas of fichtean philosophy, is admitting what altered the base of identity on modern philosophy and wants to overcome the problem of the subject reification within temporal axis. With Fichte, subjectivity and the construction of personal identity is no more a question restrained in a static identity because it has to response to the change and to freedom. If there is a reverse accent on subject that began with Fichte, and it means that we cannot allow a simple equivalency between identity and immobility (objectification), the new subjectivity that is defending Nishida is one that must be understood as process. A process but not only in an epistemological or cognitive level, but, in a reciprocal and dialogical relation, correlative with ethical and moral levels, as system of values.

From this point of view, subjectivity and freedom are synonymous and this is what, in my opinion, is marking Nishida own exposition of ideas. For him, it is important to emphasize a conception of subject that is always inside a process of construction and in reciprocal action and, we can add, affection, because the subject is interrelated with the inner

---

<sup>28</sup> HENRICH, *Between Kant and Hegel. Lectures on German Idealism*, cit., p. 251: “Moreover, self-reference is not even identical to the reflexive relationship of the mind, our description of this relationship as continuous notwithstanding. Original self-reference, as Fichte and all the existentialists would say, not only leads to but also already implies a process. This is tantamount to claiming that original self-reference is a kind of developing of mental life, which can also include and explain the moral and active aspects of human life”.



and outer faces of the individual (subject with the world and, of course, intersubjective, with the “Thou” and social dimensions). And this is the recognition about the dynamical nature of self-consciousness.

Nonetheless, there is a common problem for Nishida as well as for Fichte –they have to answer about the circularity and the limitations of theories that pretend to defend the assertion of self-consciousness so profoundly based on the act of reflection. For this reason, is convenient to revise some arguments suspicious to incur in this kind of circularity. Following the methodological dialogue that Nishida maintains along the book with Fichte’s ideas, this will help us to prove if the theoretical perspective chosen by the Japanese is or not coherent or, maybe, is falling too in the common paradoxes and limitations of some theories about the consciousness.

First of all, we can read how Nishida explains the usual obstacles of self-consciousness theories based on reflection:

Fichte argues that to be conscious of the self we must distinguish between the thinking self and the self which it thinks; and yet if we do this, this thinking self must become the object of yet another thinking self, and so on infinitely, so that we finally cannot explain the fact of self-consciousness; (...)<sup>29</sup>.

Here Nishida is making a direct allusion to the common paradoxes detectable in some explicative theories about self-consciousness when the theories begin with reflection, self-knowledge or with the aspiration of completeness (an explanation without fissures, we can say). For this purpose, is clear and helpful to follow the description that Henrich<sup>30</sup> does to expose these self-consciousness paradoxes in Fichte. A problem detected, as we have read, by Nishida itself, as we have seen with the quote. And this question will be especially useful to check the motives that subvert self-consciousness and discard the potentiality of the notion. When self-consciousness as activity finally evades any complete explanation and become only an activity without agent or a thinking faculty without the subject that thinks<sup>31</sup>.

Following the classification of Henrich, the meaning and validity of self-consciousness can be impugned taking into consideration the inherent contradictions that appear commonly linked with this philosophical figure:

---

<sup>29</sup> NISHIDA, *Intuition and Reflection in Self-consciousness*, cit., pp. 6-7 (NKZ2-p.21)

<sup>30</sup> HENRICH, *Between Kant and Hegel. Lectures on German Idealism*, cit., pp. 246-262.

<sup>31</sup> NISHIDA, *Intuition and Reflection in Self-consciousness*, cit., p. 7 (NKZ2 - p. 21)

(a) The circularity of self-consciousness when it is analyzed from reflective activity. If it is assumed that reflection explains the mechanism of self-consciousness from its epistemological point of view, this assumption ties self-consciousness with reflection and obliges to see the reflective action as a subsidiary activity of knowledge prior to the “I”, in this case, as the “object” of reflection itself. In this situation, this kind of theory of self-consciousness forces to the acceptance of a first rule: that the knowledge of the “I” precedes reflection, because I cannot present something about I have no completely certain knowledge. The argument is, then, circular, and moves this first presumption to a second one that ends, too, in a contradiction.

(b) Self-consciousness paradox about the original self-knowledge of itself. Affirming that reflection helps us to arrive to a conceptual knowledge of the “I”, this kind of assumption presupposes necessary that there is an original self-knowledge about “oneself”. And, being accepted that point, we must assume simultaneously that there is an epistemological equality between “what is” our “self” and our effective “I”. The problem here is that, to acquire my self-knowledge, I need, previously, a formed idea about “what I am” and, consequently, I need to presuppose what I am looking for. And this kind of movement constitutes a formal and logical mistake, a hermeneutical circle difficult to break.

(c) The paradox of the completion of self-consciousness. Following Henrich, this is the most common difficulty arising with the theories of self-consciousness. Normally, when we refer to “self-consciousness” to mean the knowledge of somebody about his or herself, is evident that we add, to this ordinary signification, the fact that the self-conscious person has a kind of “original knowledge” about what really “is” he or she and, also, knows that he knows what he or she “is”. It is precisely this need for completion what compels to an endless return, an infinite circle –and we are again in the first and second paradoxes.

We cannot solve the paradoxes but, still, self-consciousness remains central. So, how can be explained the “fact” of self-consciousness?

As Nishida explains, he was too compelled to lay the foundations of self-consciousness introducing the “intellectual intuition” that is, by nature, as polemic as self-consciousness and, as is well known, refused by Kant<sup>32</sup>. Nishida explains this point as follows:

(...) but nevertheless the fact of the self-consciousness remains, and can only be explained as

---

<sup>32</sup> See the fichtean defense against powerful Kantian arguments on part 6 of the “Second Introduction to the Science of Knowledge”. In FICHTE, op. cit., pp. 42-62 (I, 469-491).

the merging of subject and object in what can only be called an intellectual intuition, an immediate and basic fact of consciousness which cannot be further explained<sup>33</sup>.

We have to remember the last sentence “basic fact of consciousness which cannot be further explained”. Although Nishida mentions only in rough draft form that, for him, intellectual intuition is the “evaluative consciousness” and as value-focused, it remains on “ought-to-be”, opening the theoretical space to consider intuition not as a passive comprehension, but a spontaneous one and active. And this reminds the defense of intellectual intuition in Fichte words:

This intuiting of himself that is required of the philosopher, in performing the act whereby the self arises for him, I refer to as intellectual intuition. It is the immediate consciousness that I act, and what I enact: it is that whereby I know something because I do it. We cannot prove from concepts that this power of intellectual intuition exists, nor evolve from them what it may be. Everyone must discover it immediately in himself, or he will never make its acquaintance. (...) Everyone, to be sure, can be shown, in his own admitted experience, that this intellectual intuition occurs at every moment of his consciousness<sup>34</sup>.

Comparing both quotations, it seems clear that Nishida is summarizing the resolution of the problem that Fichte gave. But this do not mean that Nishida is subscribing all fichtean thesis, that is, that the self-consciousness as immediate consciousness or immediate experience phenomena remains, *per se*, unexplained or that is shunning any possible explanation that can be “expressed”. No: it can be intuited the constant and actual process of the “I”. But it is also evident that Nishida cannot give a coherent explanation about the relation between intuition and reflection “in” self-consciousness. To some extent, we are caught in the dual net between reflection and intuition. So, what Nishida offers with the help of some ideas directly inspired in idealism, is that we have an approximation about the comprehension of self-consciousness. But to approximate does not means to arrive.

In fact, we face with a great chiasm where the theoretical construction, that is, the mere logic or reasoning categorically ordered, and the value that arise from self-consciousness as acting and as content of the “acting” are interweaved. From the side of self-consciousness as acting and as content of “acting”, there is no cut between epistemological and ethic and moral instances. But we cannot say the same on the reason side that orders categorically the plurality of things present and experienced by the subject.

---

<sup>33</sup> NISHIDA, *Intuition and Reflection in Self-consciousness*, cit., p. 7. (NKZ2 - p. 21).

<sup>34</sup> FICHTE, op. cit., p. 38 (I, 463-464).

At the end, it seems that we are caught again in the separation between a self-consciousness that is unisonous correlative (interdependently formal and material, theoretical and practical, objective and subjective...) and a kind of self-consciousness ideation as the shell that allows the rational regulation of oneself and the world. We cannot go further and response here, but we have to let open some questions: is it possible to avoid the separation, the crossed disposition of the subject? And, is there a relation between meaning (as theory) and existence (as praxis)?

### Some concluding remarks

Much more must be said regarding self-consciousness. And, particularly, how the notion is shifting along *Jikaku ni okeru Chokkan to Hansei* from its initial central position, to a renewed sense of pure experience, later on, as representing the transition from the pure system of thought to the experiential system, making pure experience and intuition synonymous; and, later on, at the end of the book, self-consciousness centrality is almost deleted under a system of will that Nishida envisaged as the concept that can demonstrate, without fissures, the internal unity of thought and experience, object and act<sup>35</sup>.

The “absolute will” (*zettai ishi*-絶対意志) provides the clarification of the transtemporality of will and its character as intentional activity, ethic and moral, and, at the same time, the space for the recognition of the own subjectivity beyond the private physical time. During this strict period, Nishida sees “will” as consciousness and allows him to understand it as transtemporal, transcognitive and an open view to defend a plenty subjectivity where to know is to act and to act is to know. Although there is a second subjectivity, the ordinary one, which cannot refuse the functional abstractive task, merely classificatory, of emotion, will and cognition. The will is the universal principle that moves (and is a motive for subject as well), and the form that particularizes personal experience:

But if will is a datum of consciousness, past will and present will are equally so. In will there is

---

<sup>35</sup> Although in 1941, Nishida accepts that “will” was, as well, a failed notion. See NISHIDA, *Intuition and Reflection in Self-consciousness*, cit., p. xxv-xxvi: “The notion of absolute will, which is the final position of this work, may remind some readers of my present position of “self-identity of absolute contradiction”, but it is still very remote from it. I used the limit concept of the Marburg school to discuss the internal unity of thought and experience, and object and act, but the true final position, from which the problems could have been solved, though hinted at from various angles, continued to elude me, so that the work remained inconclusive” (NKZ2 - p. 12).

no temporal distinction; like thought it is a consciousness which transcends time. Its unity is deeper than that of thought, and it lies at the foundation of thought. The universal which orders concrete experience is not a concept but a motive, not thought but will. Will is the form of every autonomous, self-developing experiential system. Intuition of the will underlies intellectual unity and the order of time<sup>36</sup>.

Giving now some concluding remarks about what we have seen regarding self-consciousness, we can say that this paper, at least, pretend to comment some annotations about the notion and the initial formulations found in Nishida's philosophy. One of the intentions of this paper was to relocate Nishida's *jikaku* to facilitate further analysis that can enrich new currents and interpretations about self-consciousness. It is of special importance to give the opportunity to confront Nishida's ideas about self-consciousness with the classical (Fichte and the post-Kantian idealists) and contemporary theories of self-consciousness that are reintroducing in new light the subsequent principle of subjectivity<sup>37</sup>.

For that reason, it continues to be important to walk through the first period works if we want to understand Nishida's analysis of self-consciousness on his later works, when the notion is enrich with socio-historical perspectives [with the "active intuition" (*kōiteki chokkan*- 行為的直観) or the "historical body" (*rekishitekishintateki jiko*- 歴史的 身体的 自己)] that, obviously, are not so explicitly present in his first period, but yet appear in its first genetic form that must be rethought.

If it is right to indicate the distinct meaning of "*jikaku*", as a word, and, in parallel, in philosophical texts, is also accurate to do not close discussion pointing at this distinction. As ISHIHARA Yuko comments in her article about "self-awareness" (id. self-consciousness) in Nishida's later works, although the Japanese word denotes a sense of deep understanding of a particular matter that affects directly the self, this difference is not a strong argument sufficient to close the possibility of an inclusion of Nishida's ideas inside the current debates dealing with self-consciousness<sup>38</sup>. Precisely, it is the contrary: we enrich our perspectives. Because the critical views that Nishida introduces when he analyzes the scope of self-consciousness and, also, the common problems regarding the exam of "self-consciousness" vagueness and limits of assertion that we find in his philosophy as well, allows us to re-examine

<sup>36</sup> Ibidem, p. 131 (NKZ2 - pp. 263-264).

<sup>37</sup> As demonstrates, for example, Dieter FREUNDLIEB, confronting and discussing the uncritical acceptance of the "death of subject" and the still potentiality of old postmodern thesis. See FREUNDLIEB, Dieter, "Why Subjectivity Matters: Critical Theory and the Philosophy of Subject", *Critical Horizons*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2000.

<sup>38</sup> ISHIHARA, Yuko, "Later Nishida on Self-awareness: Have I lost myself yet?", *Asian Philosophy*, Vol. 21, No. 2, May 2011, p. 201.

in a wider perspective questions that are still waiting to be responded. The question, in fact, is open when we have to deal with the possibility of two types of self-consciousness (objectified, consciousness of oneself as an object, or non-objectified, consciousness of having a perspective of one's experience) and the contemporary philosophy (Gallagher, Zahavi, Bermudez and others) that continues trying to link, as did Nishida, consciousness as mode of unity (intuition) or as a mode of differentiation (reflection).

## References

- BRADLEY, Francis Herbert, *Appearance and Reality*; London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1916.
- DALISSIONIER, Michel, IBARAGI, Daisuke, NISHIDA, Kitarō, “Compréhension logique et compréhension mathématique. Présentation, texte original et traduction”, *Ebisu*, N. 31, 2003, pp. 115-159.
- DALISSIONIER, Michel, “The idea of the Mirror in Nishida and Dōgen”, in HEISIG, James W. (Ed.), *Frontiers of Japanese Philosophy*; Nagoya: Nanzan Institute for Religion & Culture, 2006, pp. 99-142.
- DILWORTH, David A., “Nishida Kitarō: Nothingness as the Negative Space of Experiential Immediacy”, *International Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 13, Nr. 4, pp. 463-483.
- DUQUE, Félix, *Historia de la filosofía moderna: la era de la crítica*; Madrid: Ediciones Akal, 1998.
- FERRATER MORA, José, “On the Early History of ‘Ontology’”, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Sep., 1963), pp. 36-47.
- FICHTE, Johann Gottlieb, *Erste und zweite Einleitung in die Wissenschaftslehre und Versuch einer neuen Darstellung der Wissenschaftslehre*; Fritz Medicus (Ed.), Leipzig: Eckardt (Meiner), 1910.
- FICHTE, Johann Gottlieb, *Science of Knowledge, with the First and Second Introductions*; HEATH, Peter, LACHS, John, Edited and Translated, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- FRANK, Manfred, “Fragments of a history of the theory of self-consciousness from Kant to Kierkegaard”, *Critical Horizons*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 2004, p. 53-136.
- FREUNDLIEB, Dieter, “Why Subjectivity Matters: Critical Theory and the Philosophy of Subject”, *Critical Horizons*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2000, pp. 229-245.
- HEISIG, James W., *Filósofos de la Nada. Un ensayo sobre la Escuela de Kioto*; Barcelona: Editorial Herder, 2002.
- HENRICH, Dieter, “Subjectivity as Philosophical Principle”, *Critical Horizons*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2003, pp. 6-27.
- HENRICH, Dieter, *Between Kant and Hegel. Lectures on German Idealism*; Edited by David S. Pacini, Cambridge-London: Harvard University Press, 2003.
- ISHIHARA, Yuko, “Later Nishida on Self-awareness: Have I lost myself yet?”, *Asian Philosophy*, Vol. 21, No. 2, May 2011, pp. 193-211.
- KANT, Immanuel, *Critique of Pure Reason*; Translated and Edited by Paul GUYER and Allen W. WOOD, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- KIM, Ha Tai, “Nishida and Royce”, *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (Jan., 1952), pp. 18-29.
- MARBACK, Richard C., “Rethinking Plato's Legacy: Neoplatonic Readings of Plato's Sophist”, *Rhetoric Review*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Autumn, 1994), pp. 30-49
- MARALDO, John C., “Self-Mirroring and Self-Awareness: Dedekind, Royce, and Nishida”, in HEISIG, James W. (Ed.), *Frontiers of Japanese Philosophy*; Nagoya: Nanzan Institute for Religion & Culture, 2006, pp. 143-163.
- MARALDO, John C., “Nishida Kitarō”, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2010 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.),  
 URL : <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2010/entries/nishida-kitaro/>
- NISHIDA, Kitarō, *Jikaku ni okeru Chokkan to Hansei* [自覚における直観と反省] (1917) in NISHIDA, Kitarō, *Nishida Kitarō Zenshū* [西田 幾多郎全集]; ABE Yoshishige to

Henshû, Vol. 2, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1965.

NISHIDA, Kitarô, *Intuition and Reflection in Self-consciousness*; Translated by Valdo H. VIGLIELMO with TAKEUCHI Yoshinori and Joseph S. O'LEARY, New York: State University of New York Press-SUNY, 1987.

NISHIDA, Kitarô, "Ronri no Rikai to Sûri no Rikai" [論理の理解と数理の理解] in *Shisaku to taiken* [思索と体験]; Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2006 (also in NISHIDA, Kitarô, *Nishida Kitarô Zenshû* [西田 幾多郎全集]; ABE Yoshishige to Henshû, Vol. 1, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1965, pp. 250-267).

NODA, Matao, "East-West Synthesis in Kitarô Nishida", *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 4, No. 4 (Jan., 1955), pp. 345-359.

ODAGIRI, Takushi, "From Self-Reflexivity to Contingency. Nishida Kitarô on Self-Knowledge", in HEISIG, James W., UEHARA, Mayuko (Eds.), *Frontiers of Japanese Philosophy. Origins and Possibilities*; Nagoya: Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture, 2008, pp. 73-92.

ROYCE, Josiah, *The World and the Individual. Gifford Lectures First Series. The four historical conceptions of being*; New York and London: Macmillan & CO., 1900.

SUARES, Peter, *The Kyoto School's Takeover of Hegel. Nishida, Nishitani, and Tanabe remake the philosophy of Spirit*; Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2011.

TREMBLAY, Jacynthe, "Introduction de la traductrice", in NISHIDA, Kitarô, *L'Eveil à soi*; Trad. Jacynthe Tremblay, Paris: CNRS, 2003, pp. 9-51

WALDENFELS, Hans, "Absolute Nothingness. Preliminary Considerations on a Central Notion in the Philosophy of Nishida Kitarô and the Kyoto School", *Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol. 21, No. 3/4, 1966, pp. 354-391.

WARGO, Robert J.J., *The Logic of Nothingness. A study of Nishida Kitarô*; Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005.

WILKINSON, Robert, *Nishida and Western Philosophy*; Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2009.