

Chapter 6

Heidegger and Nishida's Transformations of Transcendental Reflection



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1 Introduction

Philosophical inquiry is characterized by a kind of distance. From our default state of being caught up in the everyday dealings, philosophical reflection allows us to take a step back and question our relationship to them. Transcendental reflection too, insofar as it is a specific kind of philosophical reflection, opens up this distance. Differences aside, for both KANT and HUSSERL, transcendental reflection involved abstracting from our straightforward engagement with the world and thematizing the conditions of possibility for our knowledge and experience of the world.

But if transcendental inquiry is characterized by such theoretical abstraction, it carries the risk of losing touch with our straightforward practical engagements with the world. Both Kant and Husserl struggled with this problem. On the one hand, they wanted to maintain the distance necessary for philosophical inquiry by way of abstraction. On the other hand, such abstraction carries the danger of relegating philosophical inquiry to the purely theoretical realm cut off from our practical lives. In this essay, I would like to focus on two philosophers, both influenced by Kant and Husserl, who confronted this problematic and proposed alternative ways of understanding philosophical reflection: Martin Heidegger and Nishida Kitarō 西田幾多郎. Rather than simply rejecting Kant and Husserl's views, they provided alternative accounts of philosophical reflection that transform certain aspects of their transcendental reflection, or so I will argue.

Such an interpretation is based on a more general thesis regarding their relationship to transcendental philosophy. It is my view that, at certain periods of their thought, both Heidegger and Nishida were working within a transcendental framework. This view is certainly not without controversy, though perhaps less so for Heidegger than Nishida. In Heidegger scholarship, it has come to be recognized

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that, at least during the Marburg period (1923–1928), Heidegger was still largely working within the framework of transcendental philosophy.¹ A similar case could be made for Nishida. However, while it is widely acknowledged that the early Nishida critically engaged with neo-Kantians and FICHTE as well as HEGEL and Kant, the extent to which Nishida's ideas of *jikaku* 自覚 and *basho* 場所, both developed in the period of this engagement, are continuous with the transcendental tradition is still a matter awaiting clarification. I have attempted elsewhere to pave the way towards filling this lacuna in the scholarship, specifically in the context of comparing Heidegger and Nishida's critical engagements with the transcendental tradition.² Instead of reiterating the whole discussion here, this paper will attempt to shed light on this issue by showing how their views of philosophical reflection are transformations of transcendental reflection, specifically as understood by Kant and Husserl.

In the following, I will begin by outlining Kant and Husserl's respective accounts of transcendental reflection. Then, I will turn to Heidegger's hermeneutic method employed in *Being and Time* (1927) and Nishida's chorological method (I adopt John KRUMMEL's rendering of "*basho*" as "chōra") developed around the time of his essay, "*Basho*" (1926). The aim of this article is to show how their views of philosophical reflection can be understood as transformations of transcendental reflection as traditionally understood, rather than simply as alternatives. In the conclusion, I will indicate some of the important points where their transformations resemble and differ from each other.

2 Kant on Transcendental Reflection

Reflection, as generally understood in philosophical discourse, is the turning back of consciousness onto itself. But reflection can be further distinguished into various kinds depending on *how* it turns back onto itself and *what* is thematized as a result. A typical kind of this turning back of consciousness onto itself is introspection, or "inner sense" (*innere Sinn*) as Kant calls it in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (hereafter *Critique*). While we use our outer sense to represent objects that are external to us, it is with inner sense that we represent to ourselves our own mental states. According to Kant, whilst distinguished *vis-à-vis* the forms required for providing representations (*space* for outer sense and *time* for inner sense), both senses give us representations of "objects" in a broad sense. Just as outer sense gives us representations of external objects, inner sense provides representations of ourselves as objects. But this is not the only way we can become aware of ourselves. As Kant says, "this [i.e.

¹A prominent work that contributed greatly to this recognition is a collection of essays co-edited by Crowell and Malpas (2007).

²I have provided an account of this in my Ph.D. dissertation, *Transcendental Philosophy and its Transformations: Heidegger and Nishida's critical engagements with transcendental philosophy in the later 1920s* (2016). This paper is based on parts of this dissertation.

inner sense] presents even ourselves to consciousness only as we appear to ourselves, not as we are in ourselves" (B152–153).³ What Kant is alluding to here is the distinction between ourselves as objects ('as we appear to ourselves') and ourselves as subjects ('as we are in ourselves'). Inner sense makes us aware of ourselves only in the former way but not the latter. Since inner sense, in a similar vein to outer sense, makes us aware of ourselves as objects and only as objects, Kant designates such consciousness of ourselves as "merely empirical, forever variable" (A107). Let us call this kind of reflection (introspection or inner sense) "empirical reflection" as others have done⁴ since it is consciousness turning back onto itself and takes itself as objects for further empirical investigation (e.g. it inquires about the real properties of my perception, its causal origins, etc.). We can also call this reflection, more specifically, "psychological reflection" as it is in psychology that this kind of reflection is typically employed to investigate the real properties of the mind.

In the appendix to the *Transcendental Analytic* of the *Critique* titled, "On the Amphiboly of the Concepts of Reflection," Kant introduces a different kind of reflection to empirical or psychological reflection (A260–263/B316–319). He calls it "transcendental reflection" (*transzendente Überlegung* or *Reflexion*) and gives the following characterization:

The action through which I make the comparison of representations in general with the cognitive power in which they are situated, and through which I distinguish whether they are to be compared to one another as belonging to the pure understanding or to pure intuition, I call *transcendental reflection* [*transzendente Überlegung*] (A261/B317).

Since this definition is not so straightforward, some explanation is fitting. Kant believed that a specific kind of reflection is required prior to making any sort of judgment. As he says: "all judgments, indeed all comparisons, require a *reflection* [*Überlegung*], i.e. distinction of the cognitive power to which the given concepts belong" (A261/B317). What he is referring to by reflection here is not the empirical reflection that we have seen earlier but what he calls transcendental reflection. Let us say, for instance, that we make the statement, "This cup is blue." Kant is saying that, in order to be able to make this judgment and, indeed, in order to even be able to compare the two representations "cup" and "blue," we must first deliberate and work out which cognitive faculty, i.e. understanding or sensibility, each belongs to. In other words, it is only because we come to know through deliberation that cups are sensible objects to which color concepts can apply that we are able to make this statement in a meaningful way. Transcendental reflection, according to Kant, is thus the deliberation of representations with regard to the cognitive faculty to which they belong.

But then, how exactly is this different from empirical reflection? Kant explains:

³I follow the standard practice of referring to the pages of the Academy Edition. These are given in both the English and the German versions on which I draw.

⁴E.g. Schnädelbach (1977) and Mohanty (1985).

Reflection (reflexio) does not have to do with objects themselves, in order to acquire concepts directly from them, but rather is the state of mind in which we first prepare ourselves to find out the subjective conditions under which we can arrive at concepts (A260/B316).

Again, what Kant is referring to with “reflection” here is specifically “transcendental reflection” and not any other kind. For we have seen that empirical reflection is indeed concerned with some kind of “objects themselves,” i.e. our own mental states. Instead of taking a domain of objects with a view to determining its properties, transcendental reflection inquires into the a priori *subjective conditions* for the possibility of representations with a view to determining its source, i.e. whether it belongs to understanding or sensibility.

Transcendental reflection, understood in this way, is in accordance with the oft-quoted definition of transcendental knowledge given in the Introduction to the *Critique*:

I call all cognition *transcendental* that is occupied not so much with objects but rather with our mode of cognition of objects insofar as this is to be possible a priori (A11–12/B25).

Transcendental knowledge is not a priori knowledge of objects themselves but a priori knowledge of our *cognition of* objects. Some have given expression to this distinction by resorting to the terminology used by the neo-Kantians, Nicolai HARTMANN and Theodor ADORNO: *intentio recta* and *intentio obliqua*. In the context of distinguishing transcendental inquiry from all first-order inquiries, for example, Steven Crowell (2013) makes use of this terminology:

First-order inquiries – whether empirical like physics and psychology or a priori like mathematics and metaphysics – are carried out in an *intentio recta* and they establish the real properties of their objects. Transcendental critique, in contrast, asks how it is possible that such first-order thinking *can* yield knowledge, and it deals with objects and their properties only in a reflective *intentio obliqua* concerned with what makes them cognitively accessible (11).

Whatever else the terms may signify, I take it that Crowell with some others (e.g. Mohanty 1985: xviii) has used the term *intentio recta* to basically denote our consciousness of objects (whether they be physical, psychical, mathematical or metaphysical) while using *intentio obliqua* to signify the consciousness of the subjective aspects of cognition or, more precisely put, the *subjective conditions* for the possibility of our cognition of objects. I add the latter qualification since psychological reflection also inquires into the subjective aspects of cognition yet is a version of the *intentio recta* insofar as it is an investigation into the mind understood as some kind of an object or entity existing in the world. *Intentio obliqua*, in this context, specifies a second-order consciousness that looks into the subjective conditions of our cognition of objects. The important observation to note is that, whether it be reflection, knowledge, critique, inquiry or anything else, whenever the qualification “transcendental” is added, it means that the concern is not so much with objects themselves but with the a priori subjective conditions for the possibility of our knowledge of objects. In this sense, the transcendental essentially designates a second-order discourse.

The second-order status of transcendental reflection is crucial as it highlights what is unique about transcendental inquiry, specifically in the way it creates the distance to our straightforward engagement with the world. Transcendental reflection creates this distance, not by moving our attention from external objects to an object within, namely the mind (like psychological reflection does), but by inquiring into the a priori conditions of the possibility of our knowledge of objects. I will argue in the following that, despite differences, this second-order status of transcendental reflection is also common to Husserl's transcendental-phenomenological reflection.

3 Husserl on Transcendental-Phenomenological Reflection

Before turning to Husserl's discussion of transcendental reflection, it is helpful to first examine the main differences between Kant and Husserl's transcendental philosophies. To begin with, they were working with rather different basic transcendental questions. Kant was interested in the specific question: *How is synthetic a priori knowledge possible?* Husserl's question, in contrast, was: *How does meaning manifest in consciousness?* Husserl's interest was not limited to synthetic a priori knowledge and the problem of cognition but was more generally geared towards our experience of objects and the structures of intentional consciousness. And in this way, phenomenology widened the scope of transcendental philosophy to encompass our experience in general.

Let us now examine their differences in more detail. Husserl was quite clear in many of his writings that while Kant was no doubt the father of transcendental philosophy, he fell short of realizing its true import because he lacked the phenomenological method. As he says in a famous lecture held on 1 March 1924 in Freiburg in celebration of the bicentenary of Kant's birth titled, "Kant and the Idea of Transcendental Philosophy":

[A]ny philosophy whatsoever, taken as a systematic whole, can assume the form of an ultimately rigorous science only as a universal transcendental philosophy, but also only on the basis of phenomenology and in the specifically phenomenological method (Hua VIII: 230–231/10).⁵

In *Ideas I*, Husserl introduced the *phenomenological epoché*, a method of "bracketing" the existence of objects (and the whole world) in order to thematize the phenomenological given in full clarity. Such bracketing was to be clearly distinguished from a denial of or skepticism regarding the existence of objects and the world. It is rather the suspension of the general positing character of our "natural attitude." While we generally believe that things are simply there, existing apart from us regardless of

⁵For citations from works by Husserl and Heidegger, I have given the pagination from the original German first followed by a slash and pagination from the English translation, wherever available.

our existence (a characteristic feature of the natural attitude), the phenomenological *epoché* leads us to “bracket”, i.e. put out of operation, such a universal belief.

Once we have bracketed the belief in the existence of objects and the world, the phenomenological givenness of intentionality, i.e. the meaningful structure of experience, can be fully thematized. And this thematization of the purified field of intentionality, which is now illuminated as having a noesis-noema structure, is called the *phenomenological reduction*. In the 1924 lecture, Husserl regards the phenomenological reduction as “the most fundamental of all methods” (Hua VIII: 234/12) and insists that transcendental philosophy necessarily be grounded by it:

It is to develop in ultimate philosophical self-consciousness the method of phenomenological reduction, through which the concrete thematic horizon of transcendental philosophy – transcendental subjectivity in its true sense – is founded, and simultaneously with it the mode of work appropriate only to it, the ordering of the problematics arising from the intuitive origins is discovered (Hua VIII: 237/15).

Husserl argues that, despite his discovery of subjectivity’s synthesis and having practiced, “in his own naivete, genuine intentional analysis,” Kant was unable to develop a concrete analysis of consciousness precisely because he had failed to execute the phenomenological reduction. In positing the thing-in-itself, which Husserl regards as one of the “‘metaphysical’ stock elements of the critique of reason,” Kant was still somehow holding on to our naive belief in objects existing independently of us.

While Husserl reproaches Kant for lacking the phenomenological reduction in this lecture and takes this to be his fatal flaw, the failure to recognize the phenomenological reduction, in fact, entails a failure to see a more basic feature of the phenomenological method, namely phenomenology’s appeal to *intuitive evidence* and demand for *descriptions*. Indeed, Husserl’s criticism of Kant in the *Crisis to European Sciences and Transcendental Philosophy* (hereafter *Crisis*) revolves around this point in relation to what he calls Kant’s “regressive method” or, as he writes more specifically, “the obscurities of the Kantian philosophy, about the incomprehensibility of the evidences of his regressive method” (Hua VI: 116/114). Kant’s inquiry begins with the fact of certain scientific knowledge and moves on, in a regressive way, to the a priori subjective conditions that make such knowledge possible. Accordingly, as Husserl puts it in the 1924 lecture, Kant’s regressive method asks:

[U]nder which forms of concept and law must an objective world (a nature) stand in general, which is supposed to be experienceable as one and the same world for all cognizers in the synthesis of possible experience? (Hua VIII: 280–281/51).

The problem with such a method, as Husserl sees it, lies not in the regressive method as such, for this is something that all transcendental inquiries share, in his eyes, insofar as it proceeds from our experience or our cognition of objects to the subjective conditions of possibility for such experience or cognition. According to Husserl, far from being problematic, the regressive method is necessary for any transcendental undertaking.

The problem with Kant's method, then, is that he does not have a way of providing sufficient evidence for the transcendental conditions. In other words, the forms of intuition, the categories of thought and transcendental subjectivity, all of which constitute the transcendental, are reached by transcendental arguments that bear no intuitive evidence. Husserl observes that this was due to Kant's limited conception of "intuition." For Kant, the only kind of "intuition" that could be a possible candidate in providing evidence for such conditions was "inner perception" or "inner sense." But inner perception was a way of representing our mental states as objects in an analogous way to how external perception represents external objects. As we have already seen, such a way of perceiving ourselves cannot capture us in our transcendental constitution. In this way, Kant leaves us with an unattractive choice between empirical or psychological intuition on the one hand and, what Husserl dubs, "mythical concept-formation" on the other.

If Kant had not been bound to the naturalistic psychology of his time and had allowed himself to seek the proper intuitive method, the regressive method would have looked completely different. As Husserl puts it, it would have been "not a mythically, constructively inferring [*schliessende*] method, but a thoroughly intuitively disclosing [*erschliessende*] method, intuitive in its point of departure and in everything it discloses" (Hua VIII: 118/115–116). This appeal to intuition, moreover, goes hand in hand with the descriptive method of phenomenology. These two defining features of phenomenology are encapsulated in the brief definition of phenomenology that Husserl offers in *Ideas I*: "phenomenology is, in fact, a *purely descriptive* discipline, exploring the field of transcendently pure consciousness by *pure intuition*" (Hua III: 127/136). At this point, then, we can identify Husserl's main differences from Kant with his insistence on the phenomenological method which is characterized by the phenomenological reduction, its descriptive nature and its appeal to intuitive evidence.

The above brief exposition of Husserl's differences to Kant puts us in a better position to understand what is distinct about Husserl's transcendental reflection. As with Kant, Husserl also saw the need to distinguish transcendental reflection from psychological reflection, i.e. the bending of consciousness back onto itself for the sake of determining its real properties. For Kant, transcendental reflection is a second-order reflection that abstracts from our experience and seeks the underlying principles that enable us to have these experiences in the first place. As we have seen, Husserl was not contesting Kant's regressive method as such. But for Husserl, such abstraction remains empty without intuitive evidence of these underlying principles. Transcendental-phenomenological reflection is accordingly carried out exclusively within the realm of intuition. Yet this is not to say that transcendental phenomenology is a first-order discipline. It is second-order insofar as it abstracts not so much from experience itself as the natural attitude that pervades our everyday experience. Thus for Husserl, what essentially distinguishes transcendental reflection from psychological reflection is that the latter remains in the natural attitude. From Husserl's perspective, Kant's transcendental reflection was inadequate as it was still operating in the natural attitude. But despite these differences, we can say that for both Kant and Husserl, transcendental reflection is a second-order reflection

that abstracts from our straightforward engagement with the world and thematizes, employing Kantian language, *the conditions of possibility* for our cognition of objects or, more generally, our experience of the world.

4 Heidegger's Hermeneutic Method

In his book titled *Hermeneutik und Reflexion* (2000), Friedrich-Wilhelm von HERRMANN argues that Heidegger's hermeneutic method is the key to distinguishing Heidegger's phenomenology from Husserl's. And he argues that this is specifically due to the *a-reflective* nature of the hermeneutic method. Accordingly, the whole book operates with the basic distinction between Heidegger's a-reflective hermeneutic phenomenology and Husserl's reflective phenomenology. Against such an interpretation, I will argue in this section that Heidegger's hermeneutic method involves a kind of reflection – what I will call “hermeneutic reflection” – and that this transforms certain aspects of Kant and Husserl's transcendental reflection.

Heidegger first develops his idea of hermeneutic phenomenology in the war emergency semester of 1919, “The Idea of Philosophy and the Problem of Worldview.” There, he outlines the idea of philosophy, or the future of philosophy as he sees it, as a pre-theoretical primordial science. Heidegger accordingly goes on to articulate the phenomenological method by which we gain access to this pre-theoretical domain of lived experience. At this point, Heidegger raises NATORP's objection to phenomenology that, despite its claim to describe lived experience, insofar as its method is reflective, phenomenology necessarily objectifies experience and, accordingly, distorts the original lived experience. Furthermore, its descriptive character is also problematic for the same reason, namely that, insofar as description resorts to language, it involves generalization and is necessarily objectifying (GA 56/57: 99–101/83–85). Heidegger takes Natorp's criticisms seriously and underscores the reflective character of Husserl's phenomenology by citing some key passages from *Ideas I*: “[b]y the reflectional *experiencing* acts alone we know something of the stream of mental processes,” (Hua III: 168/180) and, “the phenomenological method operates exclusively in acts of reflection” (ibid., 162/174). So then, if the phenomenological method is reflective in nature, the crucial question becomes: “[i]s this method of descriptive reflection (or reflective description) capable of investigating the domain of lived-experience and disclosing it scientifically?” (GA 56/57: 100/84)

On the one hand, Heidegger does not deny that reflective description can disclose the domain of lived experience theoretically. Yet, on the other hand, he denies that it can disclose the domain of lived experience in its *pre-theoretical* nature. Accordingly, Heidegger agrees with Natorp's criticism of Husserl's phenomenology insofar as its reflective method is necessarily objectifying and accordingly, prevents it from accessing pre-theoretical lived experience. But rather than following Natorp's anti-phenomenological alternative, which has “grown out of the Marburg school's fundamental position,” (GA 56/57: 102/86) Heidegger seeks an alternative method

within phenomenology. And it is at this point that he introduces “hermeneutic intuition,” a kind of intuition that *stays in* and *goes along with* lived experience. It has the “character of an appropriating event” (*Ereignischarakter*) that is non-objectifying as it simply appropriates lived experience by going along with it and making it explicit.

Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann infers from Heidegger’s rejection of Husserl’s reflective phenomenological method that the hermeneutic intuition he accordingly introduces is a-reflective or non-reflective: “[h]ermeneutic intuition is not reflection on living, but ‘the understanding of living’” (2000: 96/88).⁶ Furthermore, he takes this discovery of the pre-theoretical domain of lived experience and the accompanying establishment of a-reflective hermeneutic phenomenology as the decisive beginning of Heidegger’s method, further developed in the early Freiberg and Marburg lectures and culminating in *Being and Time* (ibid.: 97/89). Accordingly, von Herrmann compares and contrasts what he takes to be two very different conceptions of phenomenology: on the one hand, there is Husserl’s *reflective phenomenology*, which necessarily involves stepping out of the lived experience so that it can turn its reflective gaze back onto the latter as the intentional object of reflection. Heidegger’s *hermeneutic phenomenology*, on the other hand, is essentially “a-reflective” and “a-theoretical” in that it interprets lived experience by staying in and going along with it without objectifying it (ibid.: 11/11).

In an article where he discusses the problem of reflection presented by Natorp and Heidegger’s response to it, ZAHAVI has challenged von Herrmann’s interpretation of Heidegger’s hermeneutic method as a-reflective. Zahavi argues that, although Heidegger by and large agrees with Natorp’s criticisms of Husserl’s reflective phenomenology, this does not prove that his alternative method is a-reflective. Rather, he suggests that Heidegger’s hermeneutic method is the explication of a *non-objectifying type of reflection* (Zahavi 2003: 168–169). Zahavi is here operating with a distinction between two kinds of reflection, objectifying and non-objectifying, which, according to him, is a distinction made by many phenomenologists. For example, Sartre (1948) distinguished between “impure reflection,” which transcends the original experience and objectifies it as the reflected upon, and “pure reflection,” which thematizes the reflected without making it an object lying outside the reflecting consciousness. Zahavi (2003: 170) also refers to Husserl’s conception of reflection as an accentuation of primary experience or as a way of disclosing and articulating the implicit structures of lived experience. Accordingly, while reflection can certainly be reifying, it can also be a kind of accentuation without reification. In this sense, Zahavi (ibid.: 169) argues that reflection can be understood as a “higher form of *wakefulness*” and a special form of attention that articulates the implicit structures of our original experience without making it an intentional object of reflection. Furthermore, once we understand these two different notions of reflection, says Zahavi, Heidegger’s hermeneutic method can be understood as the non-objectifying kind.

⁶I have given the pagination from the original German first followed by a slash and pagination from the English translation.

As Zahavi (ibid.: 174 [note 17]) mentions, Crowell has also made the same point in the context of clarifying Heidegger's conception of philosophy and philosophical method in the early Freiberg lectures. Namely, he argues that hermeneutic intuition is "a reappropriation, rather than a rejection, of the genuinely phenomenological concept of reflection" (Crowell 2001: 137). And, more specifically, Crowell argues that Heidegger reinterprets reflection as a "specifically philosophical species of self-question" (ibid.: 151). Since going through Crowell's argument in full requires much space and it is not our aim to unravel Heidegger's conception of philosophy in these years, let us limit our discussion to some specific points that are relevant for our purposes here. According to Crowell, after Heidegger makes his first preliminary formulation of the hermeneutic method that secures access to pre-theoretical lived experience in his 1919 lecture, he subsequently develops this method in terms of *Evidenz* and formal indication in his lectures from 1921 to 1923. Now, the aim of hermeneutic phenomenology is to gain access to the "original evidence situation" that must be *uncovered* and *made explicit*. Moreover, insofar as this evidence situation is "my own," in the sense that it is not posited as something over and against me but I am implicated in it, this uncovering must take the form of an uncovering of Dasein's facticity. But then, this is just to say that this uncovering must be *reflective*, at least in the basic sense of turning the gaze back upon itself.⁷ The difference between merely living in our factual situation and coming to an understanding through the hermeneutic method must be that the latter involves a specific kind of reflection. Accordingly, Crowell tells us that the "full definition of philosophy implicates a moment of reflection, since the being who philosophizes must concern itself with its own being as being" (ibid.: 143).

At this point, then, we can say that *hermeneutic reflection*, if we can call it that, does not step outside Dasein's facticity or factic life and make it an intentional object of reflection. Rather, it is a kind of reflection whereby reflecting consciousness goes along with factic life in order to disclose its *own* situation. Jeff MALPAS also seems to be underlining this specifically reflective character of the hermeneutic method (though he himself does not speak in terms of reflection) when he says that hermeneutics is "a kind of 'wakefulness' to Dasein's factual situation" and suggests that "one should understand the hermeneutical as itself essentially concerned with a fundamental mode of *awareness* and *orientation* – as essentially a matter of finding oneself *in one's situatedness*, of finding oneself *in place*" (Malpas 2016: 14).⁸ Thus, hermeneutic reflection, in short, is the disclosing of and awakening to one's own factual situation.

Now, in what sense could we say that hermeneutic reflection is employed in *Being and Time*? In other words, *how is the existential analytic of Dasein a disclosing of and awakening to one's own factual situation*? And, how is hermeneutic reflection a transformation of transcendental reflection? To begin with, insofar as the existential analytic is the making explicit and laying bare of Dasein's pre-ontological understanding of being, it certainly discloses one's factual situation. But in what sense is the existential analytic a kind of *awakening* to one's own situation? We can find an answer

⁷Crowell (2001) also points out that formal indication is a kind of reflective method: the "method of formal indication does 'repeat' the self-interpretation of life, but it *differs* from a mere going-along-with lived life because it is an explicitly cognitive-illuminative self-recollection (reflection) and is oriented toward evident (intuitive) self-having" (127).

⁸The page number is from the online version of the article accessible from his personal website.

to this in §63 of *Being and Time* where Heidegger addresses the “methodological character” of the existential analytic of Dasein in light of what he calls the “hermeneutic situation.” Here, Heidegger tells us that the existential analytic of Dasein is that which must be “wrested” from Dasein by a kind of counter-movement to its own tendency to cover up its authentic being (SZ: 311/359). Since everyday Dasein tends to interpret itself in light of *das Man*, which is nothing but the fallen state of Dasein, the existential analytic is said to constantly have the character of *doing violence* to everyday interpretation. This is also why Heidegger claims that “Dasein is ontically ‘closest’ to itself and ontologically farthest” (SZ: 16/37). But then, this is to say that the very possibility of the existential analytic of Dasein depends on Dasein’s ontic possibility to counter one’s own fallenness from authentic self-understanding, i.e. the understanding of oneself in one’s ontological constitution. In this sense, the existential analytic of Dasein’s being is an *existentiell* possibility of Dasein to come to a proper or authentic self-understanding. This is why Heidegger can claim in the Introduction that the roots of the existential analytic are ultimately *existentiell*:

But the roots of the existential analytic, on its part, are ultimately *existentiell*, that is, *ontical*. Only if the inquiry of philosophical research is itself seized upon in an *existentiell* manner as a possibility of the Being of each existing Dasein, does it become at all possible to disclose the existentiality of existence and to undertake an adequately founded ontological problematic (SZ: 13–14/34).

Thus, the existential analytic of Dasein is an awakening to one’s factual situation *as fallenness* (from which the ontological understanding must be wrested) that also presumably motivates one *towards authentic self-understanding* (in seizing upon it as one’s own *existentiell* possibility). In this way, we can say that the roots of the existential analytic are *existentiell* in the sense that one must understand one’s own ontological constitution in one’s ontic existence in order to have a “proper” understanding of the analytic.

Finally, in what way does hermeneutic reflection transform transcendental reflection? To begin with, Heidegger’s hermeneutic reflection can be said to be transcendental insofar as it discloses Dasein’s understanding of being as the *conditions of possibility* for the being of entities and the world in Dasein’s pre-ontological understanding of being, where being is always already understood. But insofar as this pre-ontological understanding is essentially embedded in Dasein’s facticity, transcendental reflection in Heidegger’s hands is rendered into the disclosing of one’s contingent factual situation through and through. This entails that the transcendental-hermeneutic conditions it uncovers cannot enjoy the status of *universal validity* entailed in the Kantian a priori. As Cristina LAFONT has argued at length, Heidegger’s hermeneutic notion of the “perfect tense a priori,” i.e. the “always already,” transforms the Kantian notion of a priority by eliminating the implication of universal validity. For, in Heidegger, “factual Dasein’s understanding of being is itself ‘essentially factual’ and changes historically by virtue of our contingent projections” (Lafont 2007: 107).⁹ Lastly, since hermeneutical reflection awakens us to our own

⁹Cf. SZ: 85/117–118. Lafont further argues that Heidegger’s notion of the a priori as “always already” means, at most, that it is unquestionable from within by those who share the historically contingent projection. See also: (Lafont 2005: 265–284).

factical situation, transcendental reflection acquires an existentialist tone of becoming wakeful to our own situation. Thus, reflecting on Dasein's understanding of being as the condition of possibility for the being of entities and the world becomes a matter of wresting our authentic self-understanding from our fallen state and seizing upon this possibility of understanding in our own factic lives.

Thus, from the above, we can say that Heidegger's hermeneutic reflection transforms transcendental reflection in the sense that it (1) makes transcendental reflection a matter of disclosing the contingent nature of one's facticity and (2) ascribes to it an existentialist role of becoming wakeful to our own factical situation.

5 Nishida's Chorological Method

As mentioned in the Introduction, Nishida's relationship to transcendental philosophy – the extent to which he can be called a transcendental philosopher – is yet to gain clarity in the scholarship. What is clear, however, is that during the years following the publication of *An Inquiry into the Good* (hereafter, *Inquiry*) in 1911 and well into the late 1920s, Nishida developed his own position *vis-à-vis* critical engagement with the transcendental tradition. In fact, when we follow his writings carefully, we find that he was critically appropriating the transcendental method rather than simply rejecting it. Perhaps it is nowhere more evident that Nishida was explicitly following Kant's critical or transcendental method than in his pronouncement of doing “radical critical philosophy” (徹底的批評主義) in his 1928 essay, “Intelligible World”:

I seek to clarify, from the standpoint of radical critical philosophy, the basis of the formation of knowledge and to give the different kinds of knowledge their own standpoint and claim as well as their interrelation and order (NKZ V: 184).¹⁰

It was Nishida's contention that, although Kant had, through transcendental reflection, clarified the conditions of possibility for our knowledge of objects, he failed to clarify the conditions of possibility for transcendental knowledge itself. Put differently, he failed to clarify the kind of reflection that enables knowledge of transcendental knowledge, or, more simply, self-knowledge (i.e. knowledge of the structures of subjectivity). But, according to Nishida, this is where “reflection” finds its limits. He thus argues in “A Reply to Dr. Sōda” that one must seek self-knowledge *not* through reflection but in “intuition” whereby one completely nullifies oneself and gives oneself over to things (cf. NKZ IV: 309). Since there is no subject opposed to an object in intuition, this kind of pre-reflective experience is also prior to the subject-object split. Accordingly, we can see Nishida here reformulating his basic idea in the *Inquiry* to ground reality in pure experience, namely that experience prior to the subject-object dichotomy. But if this is the case, then isn't Nishida

¹⁰All translations from Japanese sources are mine. All works by Nishida are cited from the *Nishida Kitarō Zenshū* [Complete Works of Nishida Kitarō] (abbreviated as “NKZ”). The abbreviation is followed by volume and page number.

giving up transcendental reflection in favor of a kind of non-reflective intuitive experience?

I think that Nishida is not so much giving up transcendental reflection as radicalizing it. For what Nishida is doing is not dogmatically positing pre-reflective experience prior to the subject-object split but, rather, philosophically reflecting on the transcendental grounds of our experience and pointing to the pre-reflective experience prior to the subject-object split. In this sense, Nishida is radicalizing transcendental reflection *by taking it back to its pre-reflective origin*. As UEDA Shizuteru 上田閑照 (1991) says: “[i]nsofar as philosophy is a reflective discipline, reflection on the pre-reflective is a form of radicalized reflection” (368). But it must also be emphasized that, for Nishida, this pre-reflective origin is completely rid of the subject-object dichotomy to the extent that there is not even a pre-reflective “self.”¹¹ This is where the true radicalness of Nishida’s philosophical reflection lies. For Nishida, philosophical reflection must reflect on the very ground of experience, which is ultimately *selfless*.

Ueda has given an account of philosophical reflection as it figures in Nishida’s philosophy that works in favor of my interpretation above. He argues that, for Nishida, philosophical reflection must start from pre-reflective experience, which is not only understood as prior to reflection but also experienced as the “limits of reflection” (反省の限界) or the “rupture of reflection” (反省の破れ). Once this rupture is experienced, reflection and, indeed, transcendental reflection can then be employed to disclose the structures of reality.

Let us take the example that Ueda employs from one of Nishida’s early writings: *the experience of looking at a flower*.¹² For Nishida, reflection is said to take the following form: at first, there is the selfless presence of the “flower” (cf. Ueda 1994: 102).¹³ This is what Ueda calls the experience of “*kaku*” (覚), meaning “awakening.”¹⁴ Then, upon “coming back” to oneself, one reflects on this experience and says, “I” am seeing the flower. It is here that the subject-object dichotomy arises for the first

¹¹ In my article from 2011, “Later Nishida on Self-awareness: *Have I lost myself yet?*” I presented Nishida’s later account of *jikaku* in contrast to the phenomenological and higher-order accounts of self-awareness. There, I argued that Nishida ultimately challenges the phenomenological analysis (most famously offered by Sartre) that consciousness is necessarily positionally aware of an object and non-positionally (pre-reflectively) aware of itself. According to Nishida, in pure experience, one is *merely* intransitively conscious and *not* positionally aware of anything. In other words, “there *is* a mode of experience devoid of any sense of differentiation, even of a minimal sort” (206). One of the aims of the article was to show that Nishida’s philosophy has much to offer to contemporary debates on self-awareness, both in the phenomenological and analytic traditions.

¹² Nishida raises this example in his early writing, “Fragmentary Notes on Pure Experience” published posthumously. Though the exact years in which these notes were written are unknown, they were supposedly written around the time of the *An Inquiry into the Good* (1911). Cf. NKZ XVI: 267–572. See also the afterword written by Yamauchi Tokuryū (673–674).

¹³ Since it is somewhat inevitable that we employ the language of the subject-object framework in describing experience that is beyond it, I put quotation marks around the subject (I, we, me, us, etc.) and object (flower, reality, etc.) when I am speaking about experience at the level of absolute nothingness.

¹⁴ Ueda specifically describes such “*kaku*” as the awakening to one’s true mode of being in the clearing (1991: 372).

time. Furthermore, it is here that *ji-kaku* (literally, self-awakening) arises. This kind of reflection (namely, reflection *qua jikaku*) is distinct in that one has understood its non-reflective origin in the awakening experience. Thus, coming from such experience, the reflective I says: “the self is the self *in self-negation*,” or, “the self is – *selflessly* – the self” (ibid.: 102). Ueda (ibid.: 103–104, 108–113) calls this kind of reflection “big turn reflection” (大廻りの反省) since it turns back on itself through self-negation. In contrast to this, he calls the other kind that comes back to itself without self-negation, “small turn short reflection” (小廻りの短反省). Here, the reflective I simply says, “the self is the self.”

Now, if *jikaku* is a kind of philosophical reflection, as Ueda seems to be suggesting, then the pertinent question is: *what is its relation to transcendental reflection?* Ueda, in fact, identifies traditional forms of transcendental reflection as the “small turn short reflection”, which is oblivious to the self-negating moment in reflection. Accordingly, this may give one the impression that Ueda understands Nishida’s *jikaku* as a *non-transcendental* kind of reflection. But, contrary to appearances, Ueda seems to be suggesting that *jikaku* is in fact a radicalized form of transcendental reflection. Let us quote at length the passage where he makes this point most explicitly:

Instead of beginning with reflection and proceeding transcendently to a higher-order reflection (“reflection of reflection”), Nishida goes the other way around in “taking a step back by turning the light in upon oneself” [回光返照の退歩].¹⁵ First, the rupture of reflection [反省の破れ] is experienced which then gives rise to the awareness of the limits of reflection. Then, through such *awareness* [自覚] of its limits, the limits are permeated and the space of reflection expands to the pre-reflective by way of returning to its origin. From there it proceeds to reflection and then on to reflection of reflection (*now having the function of transcendental reflection*) (1991: 368 [emphasis added]).

It will help to rephrase this difficult passage in light of our earlier discussion. For Nishida, *jikaku qua* philosophical reflection differs from traditional transcendental reflection in that it begins with the “rupture of reflection” (that is, the experience of “*kaku*”). From here, philosophical reflection proceeds to reflect on the conditions of possibility for our experience. Therefore, *jikaku* is a kind of transcendental reflection insofar as it is a second-order reflection into the conditions of possibility of our experience. Nonetheless, it differs from transcendental reflection traditionally understood since *jikaku* ultimately reflects on the very limits of reflection whereby the subject-object dichotomy collapses and there is simply selfless experience.

Furthermore, Ueda (1991: 113) also writes that, for Nishida, *jikaku* is ultimately what he later calls, “place-like *jikaku*” (場所的自覚) (cf. NKZ X: 320). For Nishida, *jikaku* implicates “place” insofar as to be self-aware in the sense of *jikaku* is to understand one’s place (which entails being disclosed to one’s situated place). Nishida’s later notion of “place-like *jikaku*,” then, underlines this “place” in *jikaku*

¹⁵“*Ekōhenshō*” (回光返照) is a phrase that appears in the Zen Buddhist text, *The Record of Linji* (*Rinzairoku*). The meaning of the phrase is: turning the light in upon myself. Sasaki (2009) explains that “[t]he phrase may be said to describe the essence of Buddhist meditation – to take the mind, ordinarily occupied entirely with discursive thought and external phenomena, and direct it inward toward the source of the mind’s activities” (266).

but it does so in such a way that *jikaku* is ultimately understood as the *reflection of the place itself*. As Ueda (1991) puts it: “[*jikaku* is [...] to be disclosed to ‘one’s situated place’ (this event of disclosedness is ‘*kaku*’) and to see the self in the reflection of the clearing of the place (in the light of the clearing)” (372).¹⁶ Let us take an example. As a researcher, I am disclosed to the academic community. In such disclosedness, not only do I find my specific role as a researcher but, if my awareness deepens, I can also find myself as the “reflection” of the academic community. Put differently, I find myself as the self-determination of the academic community. This is my place-like *jikaku* as a researcher. Let us call this place-like *jikaku* “*chorological reflection*.” (Here, I am following John Krummel’s suggestion that Nishida’s *basho* is akin to Plato’s *chōra* in the sense that its essence is to withdraw and make room for things (cf. Krummel 2015: 203; see also Chap. 5 [section 3.3 and note 103]). *Chorological reflection*, then, is the disclosing of oneself to one’s situated place and finding oneself as the reflection of the place. Thus, in the *jikaku* of absolute nothingness, when the self is completely nullified, one is disclosed to the realizing “reality” and finds oneself as the place of absolute no-thingness wherein “reality” realizes itself. To employ NISHITANI Keiji’s 西谷啓治 (1982: 5) language, I find myself as the “self-realization of reality itself.”

Let me now summarize the way in which Nishida’s *chorological reflection*, based on “*jikaku*,” transforms transcendental reflection. The crucial point is the *self-negating* moment of *jikaku* where the conditions of possibility of experience are revealed through the self-negating nature of consciousness. It is worth noting that chorological reflection is not a mere theoretical method but a kind of self-awakening that finds its origin in the Buddhist practice of realizing the non-substantiality of the self. *Jikaku* is thus comparable to Heidegger’s hermeneutic reflection in the sense that they both understand transcendental reflection not as a theoretical abstraction but in terms of becoming wakeful to one’s situation. Indeed, in this sense, Nishida is engaging in a kind of hermeneutic reflection. But the two ideas also differ insofar as Heidegger did not appear to recognize the level of absolute nothingness. I will expand on this comparison in the Conclusion. For now, let us continue clarifying Nishida’s chorological transformation of transcendental reflection. In *chorological-transcendental* inquiry, one reflects on the conditions of possibility for our intentional experience, say, of looking at a flower. One then becomes aware of consciousness as the place of its manifestation. At this point, consciousness withdraws to make room for the flower to manifest itself. To be self-aware in such a mode of experience is to be disclosed to one’s situated place. But, in such experience, consciousness has not fully negated itself. It is still a relative nothingness. Thus, *jikaku* deepens further, that is, further negates itself. And in complete negation, the ultimate transcendental ground reveals itself as absolute nothingness. In such experience, “one” is disclosed to one’s place and finds oneself as the place of absolute no-thingness wherein “reality” realizes itself.

¹⁶The original reads: 「自覚とは [...] 「自己の居る場所」(自己が置かれている場所)に開かれて(開かれるこの出来事が覚)、その場所に照らされて(その開けが光になって)自己が見られることです。」.

From the above, we can say that chorological reflection (or place-like *jikaku*) transforms transcendental reflection in the sense that it (1) makes transcendental reflection a matter of disclosing oneself *qua* self-negation and (2) ascribes to it the soteriological role of awakening to the absolute no-thingness of oneself.

6 Conclusion

Both Heidegger and Nishida paid heed to the disclosedness and situatedness of our being. The basic insight at work in the two thinkers is the idea that we are not “subjects” with an internal realm that reaches out to “objects” in the external realm. For Heidegger, Dasein’s understanding of being is essentially characterized by the disclosedness of its being to the world. For Nishida, too, disclosedness to one’s place is constitutive of *jikaku*. Consequently, both hermeneutic and chorological reflection take as their starting point our essential openness to the world. Yet equally crucial is their insight that this openness is usually covered-up in one way or other. Thus for both Heidegger and Nishida, transcendental reflection is hermeneutic in the sense that it is a disclosing of and awakening to one’s situated place. Accordingly, transcendental inquiry is not a second-order inquiry that can be detached from our first-order engagement with the world. Rather, it is a second-order inquiry that takes hold of our everyday engagements to reveal our primordial way of relating to the world, which is usually covered-up. In this sense, what Heidegger said of the existential analytic of Dasein applies equally to Nishida’s early theory of *basho*: it is a way of doing violence to the everyday interpretation of ourselves. They both have the character of wresting it from its covered-up-ness.

Chorological reflection in the late 1920s, however, was not true to the hermeneutic method in the sense that it did not pay heed to the facticity and historicity of our being. Accordingly, Nishida did not clarify the ways in which we are historically and factically contingent. But this shortcoming of chorological reflection in the late 1920s was not so much an issue of chorological reflection itself. Insofar as it is a kind of hermeneutic reflection that discloses and awakens to one’s situated place, it was more a matter of time before Nishida developed chorological reflection to encompass our social and historical engagements, as he did in the 1930s and ‘40s.

Yet the more critical difference between Heidegger and Nishida becomes evident when we compare what transcendental reflection fundamentally seeks to uncover. From Nishida’s perspective, transcendental reflection must reveal its pre-reflective origin not in the pre-ontological understanding of Dasein but in the non-reflective experience completely devoid of the subject-object split. Chorological reflection radicalizes transcendental reflection by disclosing its pre-reflective origin in the selfless experience of absolute nothingness. Consequently, chorological reflection ultimately becomes the reflection of the place within itself. And here lies the true radicalness of Nishida’s chorological transformation of transcendental philosophy, which Heidegger’s hermeneutic transformation failed to see. When one follows through with chorological reflection and becomes disclosed to “reality” realizing

itself, one finds oneself as the reflection of absolute nothingness, i.e. as the place of absolute no-thingness wherein “reality” realizes itself. Therefore, while Heidegger’s hermeneutic transformation of transcendental reflection was ultimately the result of the acknowledgment of the *facticity of our being*, we can say that Nishida’s chorological transformation of transcendental reflection was the result of the acknowledgment of the *absolute no-thingness of our being*.

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