

24th World Congress of Philosophy 2018

Society Sessions organized by International Association of Japanese Philosophy (IAJP)

NISHIDA KITARŌ'S PHILOSOPHY OF ACTING-INTUITION AND ITS POSSIBILITY AS PERFORMANCE PHILOSOPHY

(C 070016 IAJP)

August 17 9:00 am – 10:50 am

Room 401, China National Convention Center

Moderator: Andrea Altobrando

Speakers: Elisabeth Belgrano, Ami Skånberg Dahlstedt, Rolf Elberfeld, Mayuko Uehara

Presentation 1

Title:

Acting-Intuition-as-Singing-Thinking or The Art of Performing-Translating through Nishida's concept of Acting-Intuition

Presenter:

Elisabeth Belgrano, PhD in Performance in Theatre and Music Drama

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to present a performative encounter between a *singing-thinking* voice and the Japanese philosophical concept of *Acting-Intuition* proposed by Kitarō Nishida (1870-1945), founder of the Kyoto School around 1913. Departing from a vocal investigation of French composer Michel Lambert's *Leçons de Ténèbres* (ca. 1664), the performer follows the embodied thoughts materializing in the very act of singing. This intuitive act complies to Nishida's view of "our active engagement with our surroundings" and "never just the passivity of pure reception" (Krummel 2015:87). In the act of singing the singer and song are shaped along with the shaping of space itself. Thus, while singing a song and a space the singer is acted upon by both space and the song. In this way, *acting-intuition-as-singing-thinking* proves to be a concrete mode of human existence in the world's dynamism, providing a non-dual platform for determining human living. In the process of singing in a space along with an audience, both singer/voice/song and listeners are involved in the intuitive act and as well as in the translation process of incorporating 'the other' as well as "developing one's identity" (Bouso 2016:112) *Acting-Intuition-as-singing-thinking* can thus be regarded as an experience of translating and transporting meaning from one place to another. It can also be used as a performance philosophical tool, for reminding us to "rethink our own linguistic categories, to reflect on ourselves at the same time as we reflect on others" (Bouso 2016:113). Applying *Acting-Intuition-as-singing-thinking*, presented as an artistic research methodology (with reference to the conference theme *Learning to be Human*), might perhaps even help us re-envisioning a sense of trust and an "eternal link among all living beings, all beings in their aliveness, this shared transience, and the possibilities for renewal that follow downfall", allowing us to "facing the im/possibilities of living on a damaged planet" (Barad 2017:75).

References

- Barad, K. (2017) What Flashes Up: Theological- Political-Scientific Fragments. In: Keller, C. & Rubenstein (Eds) *Entangled Worlds. Religion, Science, and New Materialism*. Fordham Univ. Press, New York, 2017.pp. 19-88
- Bouso, Raquel (2016). Thinking through Translation. Nishitani and Ueda on Words, Concepts and Images. In: Uehara, Mayuko (2015) *Philosopher la Traduction/Philosophizing Translation*, *Frontiers of Japanese Philosophy* 9, Chisokudō, Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture, Chisokudō, Publications, Nagoya, Japan, pp. 88-118
- Krummel, John W.M. (2015). *Nishida Kitarō's Chiasmatic Chorology. Place of Dialectic, Dialectic of Place*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis

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Presentation format:

The paper will also include live-singing as well as audio and video format.

Link to BELGRANO's Artistic Research Portfolio:

<https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/378762/378763>

Presentation 2

Title:

Suriashi – an act of formation, creation and intuition through Nishida's concept of Acting-Intuition

Presenter:

Ami Skånberg Dahlstedt, independent artist, MFA and MPhil in intercultural

Affiliation:

Artistic Director at Studio BuJi

PhD candidate at Center for Asian theatre and Dance at University of London

Artistic Research Coordinator at Nordic Summer University

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ABSTRACT

The aim of my presentation is to relate performance to Nishida's philosophy from the perspective of the performer. The walk *suriashi* is essential in my work, which now has become a PhD research project at Center for Asian theatre of Dance, University of London. Since 2014, I walk slowly in *suriashi* in different spaces, while asking

How can *suriashi* - originally a basic training method of classical Japanese theater and dance -

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become an artistic expression in itself?

How can an exclusive Japanese training method become a method for being in a space – gendered spaces in particular - while examining how bodies and immaterial/material monuments are positioned, and thereby change the view of how we co-exist in urban spaces?

I have found many vantage points where Nishida's Acting-Intuition can collaborate with performance and artistic expression. The origin of *suriashi* practice is to give the performer physical strength and mental focus to facilitate mediation of things for audiences. While the performer creates illusions/things s/he is creating a 'spaceship' of integrity for her/himself. I am curious to ask if this 'spaceship' is the same as MA 間, and what Nishida characterizes as a place (*basho*) that negates itself to give rise to, or make room for, beings?

For the Beijing conference I am proposing a co-creative performance/workshop which means that we will perform a slow walk, *suriashi*, together.

References

Uehara, M. (2018) 'Expressive Nō Theater Mask — Inquiring into Artistic Expression through Nishida Kitarō's Philosophy of Action'

Nishikawa Senrei, master of *Nihon Buyō* (1945–2012)

Krummel, J. W. M. (2018), 'On (the) nothing: Heidegger and Nishida', *Continental Philosophy Review* 51(2), 239-268.

Presentation format:

Needed: Space and data projector with speakers

The paper will also include live-walking, where I would like to invite listeners to walk with me, as well as video format.

Bio

Ami Skånberg Dahlstedt is a Swedish performer, choreographer, filmmaker and writer. Ami often creates stage work (solo, and collaborative) on the basis of her embodied life story in a particular theme. Her 90 min solo performance **A particular act of survival** received a performing arts award at Scenkonstgalan in Sweden in 2015. In April 2017 her new solo piece **The laugh of the Medusa** was shown. In Dec, 2018 her performance **Yamamba – walse for a wounded ancestor** will premiere. The slow walk *suriashi* is essential in Ami's practice, which she has studied since 2000 with her teacher Nishikawa Senrei in Kyoto, Japan. Since 2014, she walks in *suriashi* in different spaces. Ami also explores the various accents her dancing contains, where *nihon buyō* has been an important source of knowledge the last seventeen years. In March 2015, Ami was appointed coordinator, together with the visual artist Lucy Lyons, for the Nordic Summer University Study Circle 7: *Practicing Communities - Transformative societal strategies of artistic research*. The study circle is organized through Nordic Summer University, a well-established twice-yearly

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symposium. Ami is a PhD candidate at Center for Asian theatre and dance at University of London. She is a member of the Peer Review board of Journal of Artistic Research since February 2017.

Links

Studio BuJi

<https://studiobuji.com>

PhD candidate at Centre for Asian Theatre and Dance

[https://pure.royalholloway.ac.uk/portal/en/persons/ami-skanberg-dahlstedt\(1bf16849-757f-4160-b3d8-89253b0abe54\).html](https://pure.royalholloway.ac.uk/portal/en/persons/ami-skanberg-dahlstedt(1bf16849-757f-4160-b3d8-89253b0abe54).html)

Presentation 3

Title:

„Acting intuition“ in Nishida

Presenter:

Rolf Elberfeld

Affiliation:

University of Hildesheim, Germany

ABSTRACT

The movement of the acting intuition is determined by a happening out of which all activity of the individual consciousness has yet to originate. According to Nishida the happening - preceding and determining the objective consciousness - only shows itself in the performance of corporal acting. This level precedes the subject-being and can not become a direct object of observation. Moreover, it shows itself in actions of the event-like quality that Nishida took as a basis in his first work "Study of Good" (1911). On the one hand acting intuition is a creative way of movement of reality itself, even without awareness of such. On the other hand the experience of this way of movement itself can become an originator for philosophical determination. Thus, philosophical determinations are derived from self-experiencing corporal action, which distinguishes Nishida essentially from traditional conceptual thinking in Europe. One of the few schools within European Philosophy featuring a similar point of origin is Phenomenology. But in Nishida's „Phenomenology“, he is not mainly concerned with the particular phenomenon in its structure of meaning, but with place underlining each particular phenomenon, that realizes itself here and now as the self-determination of the absolute nothingness.

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The self-determination of the absolute nothingness is acting intuition, which always needs to be the happening of a concrete situation of expression. Nishida attempts to show how self-determination of the absolute nothingness emerges in every happening as the hidden origin of world. Furthermore, his thinking circles the question of how to become aware of and how to realize this happening. According to Nishida, this happens within the concrete historical worlds, which constantly keep generating new and particular constellations in a creative manner. The self-determination of the absolute nothingness is the corporal grasping or the realisation of things and of reality through itself as a creative happening. From this point of view, the outer world problem as addressed within epistemology appears to be a derivational issue. The Problem only occurs when cognition is being reduced to plain recognition of objects. Within the acting intuition people and things see and shape one another in a creative manner, so that within this corporal shaping process the origin of historicity can be seen. As everything is progressively caused from within acting intuition in a corporal and expressive manner, ever new shapes of life emerge, so that here the dimension of the historical world becomes apparent.

“What I call acting intuition is a shaping act of history. The historical present is the place-like determination within which things are created and from which they emerge. It is a matter of the self-determination of the historical nature. Through acting I see the things. But also the actions as such arise from historical nature. The acting self, therefore, adds up to a singular determination of historical nature.” (“Selfidentity of the world and continuity”, NKZ 8/1:89)

In acting intuition the person is taken in by the happening of reality in such a way that he himself becomes a moment within the place of the happening of world. In this place of action the world shapes itself, or to put it in other words: the world comes into the world. This happens only in the here and now and is at once the world of everyday realisation.

“The world of the historical present is the world of highly concrete similarity. [...] The world of real everyday occurrences is the world of acting intuition as I call it. It this lays always a center of the historical world.” (“Selfidentity of the world and continuity”, NKZ 8/1:68f)

What makes humans special is their capability of awareness towards this coming-into-the world. At that, the human becomes aware of the self-determination of the absolute nothing as the coming-into-the-world and with that becomes the self-awareness of the happening of world, through which the world in relation brings itself into the world.

“The level of contradictory self-identity of the space, that is inone and at once time and the time, that is inone and at once space, is always real as the world of acting intuition and just there world is evolving. From here the world of subjects and object is to be understood. Therefrom reality possesses depth.” (“Standpoint of acting intuition”, NKZ 8/2:123)

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Human beings are capable to be aware of the depth of the world occurrence. At the same time this makes them be aware of the realisation of reality itself. With the term “acting intuition” the motive of activity of consciousness is consolidated through a corporal acting, so that consciousness and body are no longer in opposition but are given to one another in a situational unity of a specific happening. Consciousness and body are no longer separated entities:

“The content of our self always requires action: Where body and mind are one (shinjin ichinyō), our true self emerges from itself.” (“Intelligible world”, NKZ 5:156)

Presentation 4

Title:

Facial Expression seen in Non-Facial-Expression — The Noh Theater Mask as
Screen Reflecting the Audience’s Heart

Presenter:

Mayuko Uehara

Affiliation:

Kyoto University

ABSTRACT

In the classical Japanese theatre of Noh, actors play the roles of women and the dead by wearing masks. Something quite unusual about Noh, as those who have watched a performance would notice, is that the expressions of the Noh masks will change depending on the scene. In this presentation, I wish to draw upon the logic of “acting intuition” from Nishida Kitarō’s philosophy of action, in order to consider how the Noh mask actually possesses a rich expressivity, despite being sculptured to not have an expression. My particular concern is the investigation of its mysteriousness as a medium of expression.

At the basis of Nishida’s logic is a perspective on the body which takes the mental and the physical as constituting two sides of a whole. This outlook does not correspond to a subject-object dualistic schema, whereby “I”, as the privileged subject, stands opposed to the thing, and constitutes it. According to Nishida, subjects and things (mono物) are created in a reciprocal manner. In other words, they reciprocally form and create each other. Furthermore, the creation of things requires the action of the body. What Nishida wishes to stress here is the expressive creativity of the body, which moves by way of historical reality.

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In the case of the Noh stage, can we consider the Noh mask as “thing”, as work of art, as at the same time constituting a part of the body? Let us say that we have a projection of bodily expression on the mask. What then, is the difference between such a mask and the human face? Taking up the logic of “acting intuition”, for assistance, I will consider an interconnected range of problems relating to the expressiveness of the Noh mask. These include problems of the human body, of worldly objects or “things”, of actors and spectators, and of the Noh stage and scene which encompasses all of them.