



Historical Nature in Nishida and Kimura Motomori Nature, Culture, and Education in Harmony and Struggle

This study attempts to develop an account of human responsibility for environmental problems by focusing on Nishida Kitarō's concept of "historical nature" (歴史的自然), and its extension to the contexts of culture and education by one of his disciples, Kimura Motomori (1895–1946). Historical nature is the creative ground that enables us to make things and produce knowledge in the historical world. This concept of historical nature helped Kimura to reformulate his key concept of "expression" and conceive of culture and education as "the cultivation of historical nature." Both Nishida's and Kimura's descriptions suggest that human beings maintain a certain independence from, but are in harmony with, historical nature. To further investigate the possibility of disharmony between humans and historical nature in the context of environmental problems, this study focuses on Nishida's insight into "death in life." By extending both Nishida and Kimura's thought, this study develops an account of human responsibility for the disharmonious development of historical nature resulting from the impact of human activity on the environment.

KEYWORDS: Nishida Kitarō—Kimura Motomori—historical nature—environmental problems—expression—culture—education—death in life—destruction—responsibility

Nature in Nishida's philosophy is a much-debated concept. James Heisig argues that nature is a "missing *basho*" (place)¹ in Nishida's philosophy and suggests that we "see the earth as the final *basho* that opens out into the absolute."² Meanwhile, Bret Davis indicates that Nishida's later writings focus on the dialectically self-determining world in terms of "historical nature" (歴史的自然).³ This study focuses on this hybrid concept found in Nishida's later writings and its extension to the contexts of culture and education by one of his disciples, Kimura Motomori (木村素衛, 1895–1946).⁴ Kimura began his study with the philosophy and aesthetics of German idealism, but later turned to pedagogy following Nishida's recommendation.⁵ Based on the concept of historical nature found in Nishida's thought, Kimura reformulated his key concept of "expression" and conceived culture and education as "the cultivation of historical nature." However, Kimura's formulation has been criticized as being too optimistic as it does not mention human alienation under capitalism⁶ and technocracy.⁷

This study examines the concept of "historical nature" in Nishida's and Kimura's writings to identify accounts of environmental problems. First, the study provides an overview of the interrelation of nature and history in Nishida's thought and their integration into "historical nature" in his

1. HEISIG 2016, 150–2.

2. HEISIG 2016, 237.

3. DAVIS 2020, 709.

4. For complete introductions to Kimura in English, see NISHIMURA 2012, TANAKA 2012A and YANO 2012.

5. Nishida's short work "On Pedagogy" (NKZ 7: 279–92) is considered to be addressed to Kimura. See YANO 2012, 29–32. See also ŌNISHI 2012, 280–7.

6. MURASE 2001, 179.

7. TANAKA 2012B, 33–5.

later period. Second, it examines how Kimura formed his core concept of “expression” in conversation with German idealism and in resonance with Nishida’s concept of “historical nature.” Third, it focuses on Nishida’s insight into “death in life” and develops an account of the destructiveness of historical nature and human actions in Nishida and Kimura. Fourth, it mutually extends Nishida’s and Kimura’s thinking and develops an account of human responsibility for the disharmonious development of historical nature resulting from the impact of human activity on the environment.

NATURE, HISTORY, AND HISTORICAL NATURE IN NISHIDA’S PHILOSOPHY

The interrelation between nature and history posed a problem for Nishida at an early stage. In *An Inquiry into the Good* Nishida argued that the “noumenal aspect of nature,” just like all the other parts of reality, is “the fact of direct experience in which subject and object have not yet separated.”⁸ However, what people—particularly natural scientists—usually refer to as nature is “what remains after the subjective aspect, the unifying activity, is removed from concrete reality.”⁹ Nishida refuted this assumption by demonstrating that even the purely mechanical aspect of nature is “subjective” as far as it appears to our consciousness, and by illustrating that “the unifying activity” of nature is observable in crystals, plants, and animals. Moreover, Nishida inferred that “[o]ur subjective unity and the objective unifying power of nature are originally identical,”¹⁰ because we can understand the latter using the former. In total, Nishida argued that nature is a part of “direct experience” that appears to be objective to our consciousness and has its own unifying power, whose source is identical to that of our subjective unity.

While Nishida believed in the unity of nature and human consciousness in “direct experience,” scholars contemporary to him in Germany developed a contrast between the study of nature and the study of human history. In “Natural Science and the Study of History,” Nishida compared these two

8. NKZ 1: 67. NISHIDA 1990, 68.

9. NKZ 1: 67. NISHIDA 1990, 69.

10. NKZ 1: 71. NISHIDA 1990, 72.

approaches with reference to Wilhelm Windelband and Heinrich Rickert. According to Nishida's interpretation, the study of both natural science and history reflect on "direct experience" and categorize it as individual facts; the difference is that "natural science strives to derive a general law from the facts analyzed in the temporal and spatial order, while history strives to reorganize the facts thus reflected on according to an internal order of direct experience."¹¹ Despite their methodological difference in the synthesis of facts, Nishida understood that both studies were artificial methods that produced objective knowledge, and thus, distanced from the concrete reality of "direct experience." Natural science and the study of history were separate disciplines and developed in different directions as these studies were distanced from "direct experience" in which nature (object) and human consciousness (subject) had not yet separated.

During Nishida's construction of a logic of place (*basho*), these two approaches of natural science and the study of history had yet to be separated. Nishida's "system of universals" begins with the natural world, gradually extending to the world of consciousness, followed by the noumenal world, and finally ends at the place of absolute nothingness.¹² Both the world of nature and the world of history are "the world of epistemological objects," although the former represents the Kantian "perceptual consciousness," while the latter represents what Nishida calls the "self-awakened consciousness."¹³ Nishida argued that "nature is inset (於てある) in history,"¹⁴ because the world of history appears for the deeper consciousness that approaches self-awakening. Meanwhile, since the world of history is still an epistemological object, Nishida argued that "the true self does not live and die in the world of history" but "dwells in the noumenal world, which is conceived by further delving deeper into the depths of consciousness in general and into the meaning of self-awakening."¹⁵ By resolving the dichotomy of the epistemological object and subject into an event of self-awakening,

11. NKZ 1: 291.

12. For a clear summary of this process, see HEISIG 2016, 42–3.

13. NKZ 4: 132.

14. NKZ 4: 265.

15. NKZ 4: 132.

the noumenal world is finally open to the place of absolute nothingness, where subject and object are no longer separate.

After the inquiry into the depths of absolute nothingness, Nishida's later writings argued that it is impossible for the self-awakened self to stay in the place of absolute nothingness. This is because the event of self-awakening shows that the place of absolute nothingness has already ceased to be nothingness and has begun its "self-determination" into the self-awakened self, a being. Nishida identified this beginning of "the determination of absolute nothingness marked by self-awakening" with "the self-determination of the eternal now." The eternal now always stays fresh by erasing "the infinite past and the infinite future" in every instance and ensuring time "always begins without ceasing."¹⁶

Because of "the self-determination of the eternal now," the self-awakened self cannot dwell in eternity, but must be born, live, and die in the temporal world. Nishida rendered this temporal world as historical: "The immediate and concrete world to us is historical. As a historical thing, the individual self is born and dies in this [historical] world."¹⁷ This historical world is not an epistemological object that stands against the epistemological subject, but a place in which we live from birth to death. Since we know that we will not live for eternity in the historical world, we believe that we would be outside of the historical world before our birth and after our death. However, Nishida's later writings rendered it impossible for us to exist outside of the historical world. We can only live and ask within the historical world: "What generates the self? Where are we born from? Where are we dying away?"¹⁸

Nishida's answer to these questions, found in his later thought, is "historical nature." In "The Identity and Continuity of the World," Nishida argues that time begins from "the ground (地盤) of the eternal present," when one generation replaces another in the historical world.¹⁹ Nishida calls this ground "the natural ground of history,"²⁰ or "historical nature."²¹ Historical

16. NKZ 5: 144. Nishida refers to Eckhart and Augustine for the concept of "the eternal now." See TAKAYA 2020: 126.

17. NKZ 5: 259.

18. NKZ 5: 260.

19. NKZ 7: 58.

20. NKZ 7: 62.

21. NKZ 7: 63.

nature is not outside of the historical world, but lies at the ground of the historical world, and creates another generation in the historical world. It is not an epistemological object as the world of nature was in Nishida's earlier writings, but has its own creativity, by which we are born in the historical world.

Nishida contrasts historical nature as the creative ground of history with nature conceived as a necessity in modern science and argued that the latter is a product of the former.

The true concept of nature is that the present determines itself and that things are born from [the present]. I believe that *natura* in Latin and *φύσις* in Greek meant that. The idea that nature is a mere necessity should be attributed to modern science. Yet, behind this idea of nature for [modern] science lies [the fact] that things are born [from the present]. [For, the idea of] nature as a necessity is conceived by the repetition of identical generations, as mentioned above.²²

According to Nishida, the idea of nature as necessity is conceived when identical generations are created repetitively from historical nature. In this sense, the idea of nature as a necessity is a particular product of historical nature. However, Nishida does not mention artificial activities in this process; it is modern scientists who conceive the idea of nature as a necessity by observing the generations and discovering repetitive patterns in them. What role, then, do human activities play in the creation of historical nature?

Nishida's later writings identify human activities with "action-intuition" (行為の直観). In *Logic and Life*, Nishida illustrates this with the proposition that the human being is "the animal that makes tools."²³ In this case, we make things using tools (action) and observe the things that are made as a result of our actions (intuition). Actions bear results to be intuited, while intuitions suggest which actions should be taken further for our purpose. Nishida attributes this collaborative function of action and intuition to our ability to distinguish objects from ourselves. We can make tools because we can detach them from our body; we can intuit the results of our actions because we can distinguish them from the actions that caused them.

22. NKZ 7: 63.

23. NKZ 8: 10.

Before we make things using tools, we make tools by utilizing the body as a tool. We have an “art” (技術)²⁴ for utilizing the body as a tool, but we do not make the body. Then, who makes the body a tool for us? Nishida answered that this is the task of historical nature:

It is already artistic that eyes see things. This is an art of historical nature.... We understand our bodies not from the inside, but from the outside. The mind is not [found] in the brain. The movements of the skeleton consist of levers, hinges, and spirals. The eyes are akin to darkrooms. In addition, these are natural movements. Nature is a skillful artisan. We can never do anything but through the art of nature.²⁵

Nishida renders historical nature as the “artisan” that makes eyes the tools for seeing. Eyes are particular tools generated by historical nature and provide a condition for our ability of action-intuition. We make tools by using our eyes as a tool, and further produce things using the tools that are thus made. We cannot act and intuit without the art of historical nature, but we can utilize the products of historical nature as tools and implements to create further products. Therefore, our capacity for action-intuition is always conditioned by the art of historical nature, but accumulates into “culture,” which Nishida renders “a continuation of historical nature.”²⁶

Meanwhile, we not only make things, but also develop knowledge by making tools. Although most animals have developed their own eyes, we are the only animal that understands our eyes through an analogy between darkrooms and the mechanism of our eyes. This illustrates that we understand the body by analogy, with the tools that we make using the body. By making tools, we develop the knowledge that while we are physically determined, we can utilize the body as a tool. In Nishida’s words, “the human existence is physical but more than the so-called body,” because we “own the body as a tool.”²⁷ As the owners of the body, we develop the self-knowledge that our existence is more than the body made by historical nature.

In summary, the historical nature that figures in Nishida’s later writings signifies the creative ground of the historical world in which we are born,

24. NKZ 8: 22.

25. NKZ 8: 26.

26. NKZ 8: 33.

27. NKZ 8: 22.

live, and die. It is the “artisan” that makes the body, so that we make tools and things through our action-intuition and develop the knowledge of ourselves as the owners of the body. Although our action-intuition is always conditioned by the art of historical nature, it is a *human* activity, as long as we “own” the body as a tool to make more tools and things than those initially provided by historical nature. These activities accumulate into human culture, which develops in the same direction as the art of historical nature. Human culture is always conditioned by and in harmony with historical nature, producing an increasing number of things and tools.

EXPRESSION AND HISTORICAL NATURE IN KIMURA’S PHILOSOPHY

Nishida’s concept of “historical nature” as the creative ground of the historical world provided a clue for Kimura to develop his key concept of “expression” (表現). Kimura’s earlier definition of expression was “to press the inner on the outer,” as suggested by the verbs “*ex-press*” in English and “*aus-drücken*” in German.²⁸ Through his close reading of Kant, Fichte, and Hegel, Kimura attempted to develop a further account of human free will in terms of the activity of expression.

In “One Strike of the Chisel,” Kimura illustrates the activity of expression in terms of art. He argues that there is an activity of expression peculiar to the human being, when a sculptor strikes the sculpture once with the chisel. The sculptor has an idea of the finished product in her inner self, but it is unrealistic until expressed on the outer material. This is because human will is finite, so that it cannot produce the material on which it can express itself. The activity of expression is contrasted to “the absolute ability of emanation in Genesis,”²⁹ by which God produces the material the moment He wills it. The finitude of the human will requires not only one strike, but also the second, third, and endless strikes in the following activity of expression.

In “Will and Action,” Kimura extends the context to action in general, especially moral actions. He is unsatisfied with Kant’s account of how, in

28. KIMURA 1997, 173.

29. KIMURA 1997, 128. Note that Tanabe uses the word “emanation” in his criticism of Nishida. See TANABE 1930, 309.

terms of real action, the free will of human beings is compatible with the necessity in nature. He agrees with Fichte that the outer world at issue is not nature as necessity but the material resisting the practical self. However, Kimura underlines a more positive meaning of the material and the body than Fichte, arguing that they are means for the human will to gain reality in the world common to others.³⁰

Through these writings, Kimura attempts to identify nature not with causality from which the human will needs to be liberated but with an essential means for the human will to express itself. After his attempts to defend the human free will, Kimura is dissatisfied with the identification of nature with the material as a mere means for the practical self. For instance, Kimura criticizes Fichte's evaluation of nature as a non-self:

For Fichte, nature (non-self) is an *obstacle* for the practical self. On the other hand, it is the *material* and *substantial holder* itself who overcomes this obstacle and forms itself in expression. For Fichte, nature was what played only those two roles and never meant anything else.... Yet, does nature nurture human beings? Is it not just an obstacle, but what encourages the activities of life, invites, makes suggestions to, enlightens, and even coaches human beings? Is it not the mother earth that bears and raises culture for human practices, as well as for all [other] living things?³¹

Kimura's representation of nature as the mother earth that nurtures culture resonates with Nishida's historical nature as the artisan that conditions human action-intuition.³² The resonance is also evident in Kimura's short lecture on Nishida's concept of historical nature a year after the publication of *Logic and Life*, in which Kimura describes historical nature as "the world with the historical environment which makes the activity of action-intuition possible."³³ Kimura's encounter with the concept of historical nature and his sudden—and unwilling³⁴—turn to pedagogy urged him to consider

30. Tanabe's writings influenced Kimura on the significance of the body in moral actions. See MONZEN 2019, 54–64.

31. KIMURA 1937B, 4. Dotted words in Japanese are translated in italic.

32. Another possible source of influence on Kimura is Schelling's *On the Essence of Human Freedom*. Tanabe conducted a seminar on this work in 1928, though it is not clear whether Kimura attended it. See OTABE 2010, 172, 178–9.

33. KIMURA 1937A, 10.

34. Kimura's diary says that pedagogy is "a mass of depression" in his heart. See KIMURA

that the outer in the real world should be more than the material and that his concept of “expression” needed to be developed further.

In “Body and Mind,”³⁵ Kimura proposed a new formulation of expression. Expression is “the activity of expressive life,”³⁶ and this expressive life consists of the inner and the outer as its two elements. The outer is not mere material but “the expressive environment which by itself (*mizukara*) addresses (語りかける) our expressive will.”³⁷ The inner is “the expressive subject” that “responds (応うる) to the addressing outer”³⁸ by “formatively determining the outer back.”³⁹ The “interaction” (交渉) between the inner and the outer,⁴⁰ that is, the subject and the environment, is the entire activity of expressive life.

Kimura illustrates the activity of expressive life through the concept of geographical features “addressing” the human will in expressive interactions:

There is no mere land but a particular hillside, a plain, a mountain ridge that blocks human routes, or a slope that leads to the ocean or a river. The land has its own features (相). Virgin land is certainly not created by human beings. Nevertheless, the land with its own features entices and addresses the human will. Land and human beings are in expressive interaction.⁴¹

Kimura argues that the activity of expressive life begins not with the human will but with the addresses made by a particular expressive environment. The land addresses the human will with its own features, and the human will conceives an idea to be expressed in response (e.g., painting a picture of the hill, opening a road through the mountain, or building a factory alongside the seashore). The responses of human beings develop new features in the land and derive more messages from it. Expression is not merely a process of the realization of human will but an interaction between the addressing environment and the responding subject.

1997, 203.

35. Nishida highly praised this work. See Nishida’s letter #2952 in NKZ 22: 224–5.

36. KIMURA 1997, 16.

37. KIMURA 1997, 21.

38. KIMURA 1997, 23.

39. KIMURA 1997, 24.

40. KIMURA 1997, 23.

41. KIMURA 1997, 22.

Although individual subjects cannot entirely comprehend and predict how expressive interactions will grow, Kimura emphasizes that we as the subjects have our own freedom at the moment of expression. This is because we are self-awakened (自覚的) in our responses to the environment. According to Kimura, individual subjects are free to negate (or abandon) any idea before expressing it as a response to the addressing environment. When we express an idea, we decide to negate the possibility of negation of the idea and actively affirm it. Because of this process, known as the “double negation,”⁴² we are aware of ourselves expressing the idea and are able to “have a duty (義務) and take responsibility (責任)”⁴³ for our responses to the environment.

In summary, Kimura’s later formulation of expression as “the activity of expressive life” encompasses the whole span of interactions between the addressing environment and the responding subject. The individual subjects are parts of the interaction, but are marked by their self-awakening and enjoy their own freedom of expression. As “the peaks of creative self-awakening,”⁴⁴ the individual subjects maintain an asymmetrical tension with the activity of expressive life as a whole.

This asymmetrical tension between the whole and the individuals is reflected in Kimura’s description of the relationship between historical nature and human beings:

In this interaction between the inner and the outer, historical nature moves on and continues to be (成って行く) by itself. The individual subject is inside this historical nature and self-awakeningly participates in this activity of expressive life. [In other words,] the individual human being self-awakeningly does what one should do, being inside something that continues to be so long-lasting (悠久) that its end cannot be seen (見究める). Therefore, culture is not the work of the human being to conquer nature in opposition to it, but in its deep essence to self-awakeningly form the historical reality from the inside, and to cultivate (育成する) the historical nature from the inside. *Cultura* in its deep meaning is to cultivate (耕作する) historical nature—that

42. KIMURA 1997, 29–30.

43. KIMURA 1997, 190.

44. KIMURA 1997, 29.

is, *agricultura*. Education is a branch of *cultura* in this sense and, in essence, an attempt to cultivate the human being in particular.⁴⁵

Kimura largely identifies historical nature with the activity of expressive life, and defines it as the interactions between the inner and the outer, that is, the subject and the environment. Human beings are part of the interaction as the responding inner. Yet, as human responses are marked by self-awakening, human presence in historical nature is not mere involvement but active participation. Although historical nature “moves on and continues to be” by itself, human beings strive to support, advance, and anticipate the whole activity “from the inside.” This human participation in the activity of expressive life is called “culture,” which Kimura defines as “the cultivation of historical nature.”⁴⁶ Education is a branch of culture, or in Kimura’s later formulation, “the cultivation of the cultivator”⁴⁷ of historical nature.

In summary, Kimura considerably developed his concept of expression after encountering Nishida’s concept of historical nature. Kimura went beyond the previous dichotomy of the inner and the outer and reformulated the concept of expression as the entire interaction between the addressing outer and the responding inner. In this framework, culture and education are in harmony with historical nature, as long as they are projected in the same direction as the becoming of historical nature.

DEATH IN LIFE IN NISHIDA’S AND KIMURA’S THOUGHT

Both Nishida’s and Kimura’s descriptions of historical nature suggest that human beings exist in harmony with their historical nature. In Nishida, historical nature is the artisan that creates the body by which human beings make more tools and things and produce more knowledge than what historical nature initially provides. In Kimura, historical nature is the activity of expressive life in which human beings self-awakeningly participate by striving to advance this activity further than its natural becoming.

45. KIMURA 1997, 31–2.

46. For the Latin word *cultura*, Kimura refers to Cicero’s *Tusculanae Disputationes*, II, V. See KIMURA 1941, 50.

47. KIMURA 1941, 51.

In both descriptions, human beings maintain independence from historical nature to the extent that we “own” the body as a tool (Nishida), and as we are “self-awakened” in our actions (Kimura). Yet, in both descriptions, human actions are conditioned by and addressed in historical nature, so that they accumulate into culture as a continuation (Nishida) or the cultivation (Kimura) of historical nature. As far as culture develops in the same direction as historical nature, it is difficult to consider the possibility that human beings would come into disharmony with historical nature.

To investigate the possibility of disharmony between human beings and historical nature in Nishida and Kimura, this section of the study focuses on Nishida’s concept of “death in life,” and develops it into an account of the destructiveness of historical nature and human actions. In *Logic and Life*, Nishida presented a proposition to which Kimura does not pay much attention: “Health in its true sense includes illness, and life in its true sense includes death. Death is essential to life.”⁴⁸ Nothing can be said to be in good health unless it can fall ill. Nothing can be said to be alive unless it dies. Living things, including human beings, always carry the possibility of death in life.

Nishida’s insight into “death in life” can be developed as a perception of destruction in creation. Historical nature as the ground of the historical world is creative because it creates another generation from itself, but it does so by destroying the preceding generation. Historical nature is creative because it can destroy what has been created. However, historical nature does not destroy the historical world as a whole, because its destruction is immediately followed by its creation. Historical nature maintains its creativity by repeating the process of destruction and creation.

Human actions conditioned by historical nature can also be destructive. Human creativity is conditioned by historical nature, but human beings develop the self-knowledge that human existence is more than the body created by historical nature. We know that we own the body as a tool and make things and tools by using the body. Nishida argues that this self-knowledge enables human beings to know their own death and utilize it as a tool.

48. NKZ 8: 13.

While we see ourselves as objects, we are always more than the objectified world. Herein lies our existence as a human being. Only human beings know [their own] death. Only humans [can] commit suicide.⁴⁹

Just as human beings know that their existence is more than the body made by historical nature, they know that their non-existence is more than death found in life. Just as human beings own and utilize the body as a tool, they own and utilize their own death as a tool. Action-intuition represents human creativity, while committing suicide represents human destructiveness. Both human creativity and destructiveness are conditioned but not totally determined by historical nature.

Unlike destruction by historical nature followed by creation, human destruction through suicide cannot be followed by human creation in action-intuition. Suicide destroys the body by which humans make things and observe results in the historical world. Human beings cannot perceive the results of their suicide because they no longer have the body (tools) to do so. Human suicide is more destructive than death in general because it leaves human action-intuition incomplete with the environment, with which we become one after death. Nishida states that “we return to the environment when we die,”⁵⁰ and that “the environment in its true sense is the place from which we are born and to which we die, that is, the world.”⁵¹ Human beings cannot create anything after death, but leave the task to the environment. Human suicide illustrates a case of disharmony between human beings and historical nature.

Although it is possible to derive a disharmony between human destructiveness and the creativity of historical nature from Nishida’s argumentation of suicide, another step is needed to consider the disharmony between human creativity and the creativity of historical nature. Since environmental issues today are considered to be caused by human actions, they are the cases where human creativity in action-intuition turns out to be destructive to historical nature. This possibility can be pursued in Nishida by investigating the meaning of action-intuition at the time of death. While we live in a succession of action-intuition during our lives, the succession ceases at death.

49. NKZ 8: 15.

50. NKZ 8: 15.

51. NKZ 8: 17.

Unlike suicide, death is essentially included in life and is not destructive by itself. However, our current knowledge of environmental issues makes it doubtful whether our action-intuition is completed at death. We act in various ways: we utilize electricity, dispose plastic bags, and emit greenhouse gases. Yet, we do not see all the results of these actions while we are alive. This means that we do not complete our action-intuition, but leave many results incomplete with regard to the environment. The results of our incomplete creation can turn out to be destructive to historical nature.

Along with Nishida's insight into "death in life," "the activity of expressive life" in Kimura can also be considered to include death. The interactions between the addressing environment and the responding subject are creative because they include the death of the existing forms of the environment and the subject. The environment addresses the subject, thereby destroying its current form and creating it anew by instilling it with new ideas. Similarly, the subject's response destroys the existing form of the environment and creates its new form according to the idea. The activity of expressive life maintains itself as creative by immediately following destruction with creation.

Meanwhile, human beings self-awakeningly participate in the "destruction in creation" of historical nature. We intend to support, advance, and anticipate the "destruction in creation" to attain more creation in historical nature. However, Kimura affirms that human beings cannot exactly see the end of the development of historical nature. There is always a risk that human actions intended to motivate creation turn out to cause destruction in historical nature. Although destruction is included as an element in the creative activity of expressive life, human beings can advance it further than its natural becoming. Therefore, there is a possibility that human actions, intended to be creative, can be destructive to and cause disharmony with historical nature.

Kimura is more concerned with our doing too little than doing too much in historical nature. According to Kimura, we "foresee the coming form of this [historical] nature as the idea and form it according to the idea"⁵² in the expressive interactions with the addressing environment. The human will is in harmony with historical nature when it conceives an idea, because the idea is not our own invention but "born from the earth of historical

52. KIMURA 1997, 83.

nature,”⁵³ including ourselves. Yet, we can feel “guilty”⁵⁴ when we are awakened to the finitude of our actions to realize the idea. Therefore, we are frustrated with our attempts to identify the existing form of historical nature with its foreseen form as an idea. Despite the finitude of human actions, Kimura believes in the goodness of human will and actions, and searches for salvation in what he names “agape” in contrast to the “eros” of human will. Kimura identifies this salvation with that of historical nature, which endlessly bears the idea but never attains it to become identical with it.⁵⁵

In summary, Nishida’s insight into “death in life” suggests that historical nature maintains its creativity by including death as destruction in itself. While destruction is immediately followed by creation in historical nature, human beings cannot follow death as destruction with action-intuition as creation. This incompleteness of human action-intuition is identified as the source of disharmony between human beings and historical nature. Similarly, death as destruction is also found in Kimura’s formulation of expression as “the activity of expressive life.” Human beings self-awakeningly participating in such activity can accidentally advance destruction further than its natural becoming and cause disharmony with historical nature. Nevertheless, Kimura believes in the goodness of human will and actions and their salvation as long as the foreseen idea is born from interactions in historical nature.

CONCLUSION: ANTHROPOCENTRISM REVERSING ITSELF

This study aimed to search for an account of environmental problems by focusing on Nishida’s and Kimura’s concepts of historical nature. Although both Nishida and Kimura argue that human actions and culture develop in the same direction as the development of historical nature, they also suggest that human beings maintain a certain independence in historical nature because they “own” their body as a tool (Nishida) or “self-awakeningly” participate in the development of historical nature (Kimura). This independence can foster a disharmony with historical nature when human

53. KIMURA 1997, 83.

54. KIMURA 1997, 67.

55. KIMURA 1997, 84.

beings leave their action-intuition incomplete at death (Nishida) and unintentionally advance destruction in historical nature because of their finite will and actions (Kimura). Environmental problems are the disharmonious development of historical nature that is caused by the incompleteness and finitude of human actions in historical nature.

This study also aimed to develop an account of human responsibility for environmental problems through the mutual expansion of Nishida's and Kimura's thinking. In Nishida, environmental issues that will outlive ourselves require the extension of our action-intuition after death. We are required to "intuit" the results that have not yet appeared and to "act" accordingly. We know the environmental problems that will outlive ourselves: plastic debris drifting in the ocean, radioactive waste accumulating in power plants, and the hastening of global climate change. While these fragments of knowledge are produced through our action-intuition, they are waiting as things that have not yet been "intuited" as the result of our actions that stimulate further "actions."

This extended action-intuition corresponds to the concept of "foreseeing the idea" in Kimura. Kimura believes in the goodness and capacity of the human will and actions to "foresee" the coming form of historical nature as an idea and to form historical nature according to this idea. Although Kimura is mainly concerned with the finitude of human will and actions in the realization of the idea, environmental problems represent the possibility that human beings can cause more destruction than the natural becoming of historical nature in the realization of the idea. We have caused environmental problems through the realization of ideas—plastic debris and waste by building a sterilized interaction with the environment, radioactive waste by planning massive energy generation, and global climate change by dreaming of mass production, transportation, and consumption. Kimura's belief in the goodness of human will and action is valid, as long as human beings always respond to the addresses of the environment that is incessantly transformed by human responses. We are responsible for self-awakeningly responding to the disharmonious and harmonious addresses of the environment.

The mutual extension of Nishida's and Kimura's thought suggests that we are responsible for environmental problems because we have a certain independence in historical nature. Both Nishida and Kimura can be criticized as anthropocentric because they presuppose that the human being is the

only animal that makes tools (Nishida) or that self-awakeningly participates in the development of historical nature (Kimura). However, this emphasis on human uniqueness does not mean the privileging of human beings. Nishida suggests that human beings can destroy themselves by committing suicide because of their ability to utilize death as a tool. Kimura suggests that human beings are awakened to the finitude of their will and actions and driven towards the search for salvation. These negative moments in their thought imply that their anthropocentric presuppositions are turned inside out to make them feel humiliated for being human. We cannot be proud of being the most creative animal, but we must be ashamed of being the most destructive animal.

When considering this humiliation, we realize that we can neither create nor destroy anything without the aid of historical nature. We do not know whether our creativity will sufficiently follow our destruction. Culture as the cultivation of historical nature is not always in harmony with historical nature but risks causing unintended destruction. Education as the cultivation of the cultivator of historical nature risks causing disharmony with both historical nature and the cultivator. Nevertheless, we are still responsible for maintaining the expressive interaction in historical nature even when we become aware of disharmony in the expressive environment.

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