

**Review of Kiyokazu Nakatomi's,
 "Philosophy of Nothingness and Love (Building a New World of
 Philosophy), Lap Lambert Academic Publishing, Germany, 2016"
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In his book, the Japanese philosopher Kiyokazu Nakatomi aims at merging two current trends that are often unrelated to each other: oriental religious traditions and occidental philosophy. This objective draws him inevitably near to Nishida.

Out of this emerges the connecting theme which is Nishida's nothingness, a real negative cover on all that exists and even includes the being and its existence, since, according to the oriental stand, nothingness is not emptiness but fullness. It is, in a certain manner, pregnant of the being, a source of reality and "a source of creation" (p. 19). Therefore, the starting point of this reflection is the buddhist-taoist concept of "the path" and besides, the entire first part of the book consists of an in-depth analysis of this idea and its correlative implications, without hesitating nonetheless to expound the analogies with modern philosophical theories such as Nietzsche's nihilism, Bergson's creative evolution or Heidegger's existential anxiety that binds Dasein to nothingness. Without hesitating also to demonstrate the analogies with modern scientific theories, it is suggested that at the occurrence of the Big Bang, a kind of preliminary nothingness emerged in the universe, similar to the first chapter of the Bible, when God created light from darkness. This persisting nothingness also appears in the perception of the human being as negligible dust in the ladder of the cosmos; "misery, vanity and desperation of us, humans living in the dark and cruel universe" (p. 241), of which the author analyses the evidence in the Bible and in Pascal's belief, and this gives an interesting buddhist view on Pascal's stance.

According to Nakatomi, evolution of the universe can be defined around *Sunyata* (or *Kû* in Japanese) and that means, the fundamental non-existence of things, as entities are independent of each other and they do not really have their own existence. Here is then a position that could also closely correspond to the reflection of Simondon and underlines the relationship between things and not the classical hylomorphism of Aristotle. On the other hand, in this process that moves from nothingness to state of being, there where "phenomena keep on undergoing an endless process of changes, which does not halt even for a moment" (p. 123) or where "human life flows, passes and never comes back" (p. 125) and "where no living creature possess a body that never changes its form" (p. 133), the author, who is not so far from Heraclitus and Engels, could have benefited from the usage of the occidental concept of "dialectics of nature". Regarding the area of the human consciousness, Nakatomi binds with elegance oriental nothingness and the

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affirmation of Socrates “I know that I know nothing” as well as Descartes’ doubt. For the author, ontology that supports occidental philosophy and assumes that all is founded in the existence of things, that finds its peak in contemporary phenomenology, leads to an impasse: “European philosophy has clung to this infinitesimal area of existing phenomena so it should not come as a surprise that it has been in a prolonged state of impasse” (p. 399).

Thus, the facets of occidental philosophy would be, in the end, just microscopic tesserae of a vast and global metaphysical vision that would also be that of oriental nothingness? Not at all, and it is here that lies the second major idea of Nakatomi’s work: the permanent creation of being from nothingness is love, in a concept that does not exclude occidental views, or even christian views. Here the author refers to the theories of Kierkegaard and Bergson. Paradoxically he deciphers in the same manner Nietzsche’s proposals: despite his virulent attacks on christianity, Nietzsche’s proposals, according to Nakatomi “ended in failure, Nietzsche himself unconsciously turning into a missionary” (p. 367). Love includes benevolence that is rooted in the teachings of Confucius: “benevolence *sensu largo* basically means love of the people” (p. 430), “Confucian holiness, Christ’s cross and Buddha’s mercy are all expressions of universal love of all people” (p. 465). “The cross of Jesus Christ is the summit of the philosophy of love” (p. 484), concluded Nakatomi, and this end is quite original in a piece of work mainly devoted to the analytical account of buddhist or oriental theories. Finally, the author quotes the case of Ayako Miura for whom the “awakening to nothingness” (p. 515) ended in her conversion to christianity. More specifically Nakatomi’s (and Nishida’s) concept of “nothingness” fits both the Western (mainly static) Platonic world outlook (applied *from without*); and the Aristotelian basic Potentiality/Actuality theory, and, generally – his dynamic and cyclic (*from within*) approach to the real world. Thus “nothingness” is close to his central notion of *Dynamis*.

Even if they do not apparently share the religious orientations of the author, many occidental philosophers today would undoubtedly appreciate this original attempt that seeks to define the place of their philosophy in the close relationship between nothingness and source of love.