

**Hisaki HASHI: *Das Paradoxon in der Philosophie – Zum Aufbau der humanistischen Welt***

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Hashi Hisaki, the author of this interesting book, is founder of the Association for Comparative Philosophy and Interdisciplinary Education (<http://kophil-interdis.at/wb/pages/home.php>). Since 1995 she has taught at the Department of Philosophy at the University of Vienna, Austria.

The present book is written in German, as it is based upon Hashi Hisaki's philosophy lectures at this university. It elaborates upon intercultural dimensions of a wide scope of problems, linked to the concept of paradox, starting from the famous classical "liar paradox" and then analysing various paradoxes exemplified in the works of Plato, Kant, Hegel, Klein, Reininger, Nagarjuna, Hanfezi, Dogen, and Nishida. The main goal of the work is to illuminate the creative function of paradoxes, and to show that it can raise in readers a vivid interest in independent and critical thinking. At the same time, it represents an inexhaustible source of integrative thinking and acting in our daily life.

This stimulating and thought-provoking book is structured into twelve chapters, beginning with an introduction, in which the author sheds light upon the significance of the topic through the lens of contemporary life, which is permeated by an infinite flow of information and artificial intelligence. In this context, the author exposes the urgent need for establishing new forms and levels of critical thinking and autonomous decisions. In her view, the studying and mastering of paradoxical thinking modes can positively influence our thought, enriching it through novel patterns of reasoning.

In the following parts of the book, Hashi Hisaki offers motivating analyses and explanations of the paradoxes included in various important philosophical works written by some of the most influential European and Asian philosophers.

This core part of the book opens with her interpretation of the classical Epimenides paradox, also known as the "antinomy of the liar", in which a classical binary truth value leads to a contradiction. The author shows that in our concrete

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life, we are frequently (and often unconsciously) confronted with similar phenomena of “lying”, positioning us into a sphere “between appearance and reality” (p. 15). The chapter clearly shows that an insight into the multifarious possibilities of interpreting this classical riddle can enable us to gain a deeper comprehension of complex situations we encounter in our daily lives.

In a similar way, the book elaborates upon other well-known models of paradoxical thinking, beginning with the paradoxes of space (Hegel) and time (Reininger), which are then compared with the classical Indian paradox of time and space as presented by the most influential classical Indian logician Nagarjuna.

The author then proceeds to Plato’s paradox of the “one”, which is tackled through its comparison with Aristotle’s principle of the excluded third and explained through interpretations of Plato’s “Parmenides dialogue”.

In the next chapter (Chapter 7), Hashi studies the concept of paradox on a higher level of discursive logic, i.e. through Kant’s antinomy of pure reason. At the beginning of this chapter the author explains the specific nature of such paradoxes, expressed through antinomies. Again, the model is studied through the comparison with the principle of the excluded third; in the final section of the chapter, the author focuses upon the first and third antinomies of pure reason.

The next study of paradoxical thinking takes us to Ancient China. Here, the reader is acquainted with the classical Chinese model that can be found in the work of the legalist thinker Han Fei. His paradox, which represents a well-known segment of traditional Chinese philosophy, is treated in connection with human life as an expression of ontic reality.

Before returning to Hegel’s philosophy, the author offers us an extensive analysis of the linguistic dimensions of the paradoxical model, based upon the Zen-Buddhist dialectical surpassing of dualistic thought.

The author shows in the next chapter that similar approaches were also sought in the scope of Western philosophy, exemplified by Hegel’s dialectical thinking and his attempts to establish a model of “excluded contradiction”. In this context, Hashi Hisaki points to the fact that dialectical thought has been widely neglected in the present era of “total digitalization” (p. 90). Hence, Hegel’s model represents a powerful alternative to the principle of excluded third, which is in Hashi’s view a core of our “dead thinking” (p. 91).

The notion of contradiction also remains the focus of our attention in the next chapter, i.e. Chapter 11. In this readers can learn about Nishida Kitaro’s classification of this notion. Nishida, who belongs to the crucial pioneers of the Kyoto School of modern Japanese philosophy, has integrated the concept of contradiction into the central parts of his theoretical system; through his model of surpassing

and overcoming contradiction, he has immensely contributed to a widening and transformation of global philosophy.

In the last chapter, Nishida's thought, particularly his idea of the "self-identity of absolute contradictions", is placed into a contrastive dialogue with the philosophy of the Austrian scholar Hans-Dieter Klein and his prototype of "being and liberation from contradictions". This comparative perspective confronts the reader with two different, but essentially related modes of dialectical thinking. While Klein understands the absolute as the *monas monadum* (which can be equated to God), Nishida sees the absolute as nothingness (*mu*) and as a dimension of the limitlessness, which includes both goodness and evil, the absoluteness and the relativity, whereby both anti-poles are continuously overcoming and developing one another.

The book concludes with an afterword, in which the author sums up the main ideas of the work and reveals the significance of the paradox for a more complex, interculturally enriched global philosophy.

The book is relevant for students and experts in comparative philosophy, but also for a wider interested readership. The chapters do not structurally build upon one another, which means that the particular contents are not interconnected in a strictly successive way, but rather in a holistic one. Even though numerous internal references are implied in the overall body of text, each chapter represents an independent, coherent unity of knowledge and learning. This arrangement makes a more flexible reading possible: the reader can start with the study of any chapter which he or she finds most appealing. As soon as readers understand the main ideas of the entire work, they might take time to contemplate on their relevance for the contemporary world and for the shaping of new forms of reasoning, which are urgently needed in our globalized societies.

Even though in some parts the text is relatively difficult to understand, it offers potentially fruitful encounters across different philosophical traditions. The structural arrangement of different chapters represents a specific path of comparison, in which we cannot risk a danger of assuming that one tradition has offered the final answer to the central problems of the inquiry. Their mutual complementarity, however, doubtless represents an important contribution to the awareness of the fact that, in our current world, genuine philosophy is necessarily intercultural by its very nature.