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What exactly is Takeuchi Yoshimi's logic of Asian resistance?

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Abstract

Literary Critic and Sinologist, Takeuchi Yoshimi, provides post-colonial and decolonial studies a logic of resistance that seeks to destabilize the colonialist projects of Western modernity without repeating its structural logic. In this regard, Takeuchi's logic of resistance functions as a dialectical lens into the "emancipatory traps" of Western modernity that frame the victim–victimizer paradox by turning negativity into a method of generating heuristic possibilities. But in this pursuit to look for alternative sites for mining theoretical possibilities, Takeuchi returns to the origins of Chinese modernity for imagining a proper logic of Asian resistance, that which could be deployed as a resource for negating the imperial gestures of modernist thought while affirming the positive kernel of the Enlightenment with the hope of bringing forth a global world that is continuously transformed by the cultural particulars themselves. The goal of this article is to further elucidate Takeuchi's logic of Asian resistance and to discuss how this logic can be read as having the potential to correct Nishida Kitarō's and the Kyoto School's failed attempt to overcome modernity.

Introduction

Takeuchi Yoshimi (竹内好) (1910–1977) has become one of the most important figures for post-colonial and decolonial studies in Asia. What many of these scholars are finding useful, however, is his theoretical account of resistance (*teikō* 抵抗) that seeks to displace the logical structures of Western modernity and its imperialist attitude toward the Orient. Takeuchi, who is both a Literary Critic and Sinologist, wrote the bulk of his work during the post-1945 Shōwa era of Japan with the aim to restore what was lost in the history of the human spirit by resolving the hidden paradox constitutive of modern power relations that repeats the violence between victim and victimizer. Instead of merely reproducing modernity, even through mimetic acts of resistance like Japan had done in its course to modernize, Takeuchi argues that a logic of Asian resistance must see through the "emancipatory traps" of Western modernity by deploying negativity in a way that refuses to cathect an Asian equivalent of liberation, with any sense of a utopian connotation. The release from the subjugation of the victim–victimizer relation, rather, can only occur through turning negation into a method that will generate heuristic possibilities. And in this pursuit to look for alternative sites for mining theoretical possibilities, Takeuchi returns to the origins of Chinese modernity for imagining a proper logic of Asian resistance, that which could be deployed as a resource for negating the imperial gestures of modernist thought while affirming the positive kernel of the Enlightenment with the hope of bringing forth a global world that is continuously transformed by the cultural particulars in dialogical mediation. The goal of this article is to further elucidate Takeuchi's logic of Asian resistance and to discuss how this

logic can be read as having the potential to correct Nishida Kitarō's and the Kyoto School's failed attempt to overcome modernity.

The mimetic function of modern resistance

The way Takeuchi Yoshimi characterizes modernity must be assessed in light of the 1911 revolution that resulted in the end of China's last imperial dynasty. But what is significant about the 1911 revolution is that it was not just an attempt to eliminate the grip of feudalism with the overthrow of the Qing government and thereby terminating the 4,000 years of Chinese monarchy, it also represents a new way of thinking about anti-modernist trends within Japanese intellectual history.[1] As Takeuchi suggests, the 1911 revolution signifies an event that is both modern and pre-modern because it sought to form a nation-state (which is symbolic of modernity) while expressing doubt and suspicion about the modernist narratives of history. Resolving these tensions were a feature of Nishida Kitarō's philosophy as well, and much of the Kyoto School's philosophy for that matter, except that for Takeuchi, their logics were unable to fully settle these issues, especially during the wartime symposiums where it was apparent that the Kyoto School participants failed to resolve the aporia between anti-colonialist encroachment and their own complicit gestures in Japan's attempt at empire building. Nonetheless, Takeuchi seeks to rehabilitate the desire for overcoming this dualistic tension in the attempt to put forth a new logic of Asian resistance in the lecture "Asia as Method" ("Hōhō to shite no Ajia" 「方法としてのアジア」) (1960).[2] But what motivated Takeuchi to develop a logic of Asian resistance to begin with?

Takeuchi was both personally attached to China and resentful toward the US and Americanism. For Takeuchi, the latter represented a continuation of European imperialism while the former represented a new vision of literary narratives that carries the stamp of political resistance. Drawing on Lu Xun's work, Takeuchi would begin to reconfigure the relationship between literature and revolution in a way that could create a different type of discourse impervious to the traps of modernity. In the influential essay "What is Modernity?" ("Kindai toha nanika" 「近代とは何か」) written in 1948, Takeuchi would make visible the cultural and strategic differences between Japan and China in their relationships to the West by criticizing Japan's blind acceptance of Westernization, which he deems responsible for Japan's own history of colonial expansion that led to the Fifteen-Year War (1931–1945), as well as by highlighting the forms of resistance embodied by Lu Xun and the Chinese revolution. The centerpiece of this particular essay is more or less to set up the theoretical preconditions for the logic of "overcoming modernity" by exploring the master–slave dialectic that was made famous by Hegel many years prior. What is important to keep in mind here is that Takeuchi's working through of this dialectic happens mostly on the level of signification, which carries material effects, but nonetheless brings to bear on the problem of epistemological dualities. While there are many (seemingly digressional) themes throughout this essay, such often ends up bringing the discussion back to the logical movement of the master–slave dialectic. One of these themes Takeuchi raises is the history of capitalism and its relationship to Westernization.

Takeuchi introduces the link between capitalism and modernity within the first few pages of "What is Modernity?" where he describes "Oriental modernity" as one of a mimetic imitation of Western modernist structures. One of the structures that was internalized was the system of capitalism, particularly, with its connection to European self-expansiveness:

> Europe's invasion of the Orient resulted in the phenomenon of Oriental capitalism, and this signified the equivalence between European self-preservation and self-expansion. For Europe this

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[1]Interestingly, Japan Studies scholar Richard Calichman argues that Takeuchi's attempt to resuscitate Chinese literature represents a resistance against modernity itself because it resists the very conventions of Japanese scholarship (2004, pp. xx–xi).

[2]This lecture was presented in 1960, but then published in 1961 (Chen 2012, p. 317).

was accordingly conceptualized as the progress of world history and the triumph of reason. The form of invasion was first conquest, followed by demands for the opening of markets and the transformation to such things as guarantees of human rights and freedom of religious belief, loans, economic assistance, and support for educational and liberation movements. These very transformations symbolized the progress of the spirit of rationalism…. The European invasion of the Orient produced resistance there, a resistance that was of course reflected in Europe itself…. Resistance was calculated, and it was clear that through resistance the Orient was destined to increasingly Europeanize. (Takeuchi 2005, pp. 55–56; TYZ 1980 vol. 4, 131–132)

What Takeuchi is pointing to here is the behavior of European colonialism *qua* self-expansion, that which functions similar to Marx's logic of capital in the sense that it must expand itself in order for Europe to remain itself (Murthy 2009, pp. 110–111). Takeuchi (2005) furthers this point when he says: "Europe's capital seeks to expand markets while its missionaries are committed to expanding the kingdom of God" (p. 55; TYZ 1980 vol. 4, p. 131). While it is true that Takeuchi does not provide any deeper analysis of the logic of capital à la Marx, Europe nonetheless had "brought over to the Orient its modes of production, social institutions, and the human consciousness that accompanies these, [thus] new things were born in the Orient that had never previously existed" (Takeuchi 2005, p. 54; TYZ 1980 vol. 4, pp. 129–130). More importantly, however, is to note that European colonial expansion, with its link to capitalism, would culminate in the universalization of the frames of evolutionary progress and human rationality in a way "that through resistance the Orient was destined to increasingly Europeanize." It is precisely this reason why, as Takeuchi (2005) writes, "the direct moment that produced this self-consciousness [of the Orient] was the invasion of Europe" (p. 54; TYZ 1980 vol. 4, p. 129).

But again, as Takeuchi (2005) reminds us, "in order for Europe to be Europe, it was forced to invade the Orient" (p. 55; TYZ 1980 vol. 4, p. 131). This is because the narrative of world history that assumes the West to be its *telos* drives its expansion process by means of a self-reflection weighed down by nostalgia, with a desire for wholeness or unity generated by self-preservation (Calichman 2004, p. 188). Here, Takeuchi begins to abandon any appeal to the logic of capital, claiming instead that underneath the process of self-expansion is the problem of alienation, or self-division rather, which has a healing process that is the very act of self-reflection itself. In other words, Europe could only become Europe through a *telos* of self-realization, that which depends on the self-reflection of itself by means of self-reflection upon the Other – by what the Other is not; and so it is only through the negation of the outside (in this context, Asia) where the notion of the West can be made visible, and where, more importantly, the Orient begins to realize itself as modern. This is what Takeuchi (2005) is getting at when he writes: "Oriental resistance was merely the essential element that made world history all the more complete" (p. 56; TYZ 1980 vol. 4, p. 131). Or, to put it another way, Oriental resistance continued European modernity not only because "Oriental resistance was reflected in Europe" (Takeuchi 2005, p. 56; TYZ 1980 vol. 4, p. 133) but also because "the history of resistance is the history of modernization" (Takeuchi 2005, p. 57; TYZ 1980 vol. 4, p. 134). The act of resistance itself is what "gives rise to movement and is thus the moment that completes history" (Takeuchi 2005, p. 63; TYZ 1980 vol. 4, p. 143). Even within the defeat of the Orient is the reproduction of modernity because the Orient's very own recognition of defeat objectifies universal reason and linear progress. Hence it is the case that, as Takeuchi (2005) says, "if reason were to reveal itself, it would do so only in resistance, that is, in the rejection of this image. In other words, the revealing of reason would take place only in an absolute sense of defeat" (p. 58; TYZ 1980 vol. 4, p. 135). This view here, according to Takeuchi (2005), explains why contemporary liberation movements in the non-Western world often take on the aspects of European hegemony where such movements often reverse the cultural hierarchy because they exist as the shadow image of European domination (pp. 72–73; TYZ 1980 vol. 4, pp. 158–159). As a result, these particular liberation movements can be thought of as more European than Europe itself because they further mask the dominant epistemological categories baked into their discourse.

What Takeuchi is drawing our attention to more broadly however is the dualistic tension between East and West that continuously renews itself within the structural logic of the European imagination.

While "Europe and the Orient are oppositional notions" (Takeuchi 2005, p. 58; TYZ 1980 vol. 4, p. 136), Takeuchi (2005) writes, "the ability to judge these formal differences, first of all, belongs to modern Europe" (pp. 58–59; TYZ 1980 vol. 4, p. 136), precisely because "everything belongs to Europe" (p. 59; TYZ 1980 vol. 4, p. 137). But here is where Takeuchi (2005) begins to explicitly diagnose the problem (of this duality) more on Hegelian grounds:

> In Europe not only matter moves but spirit as well. Spirit is not the shadow of matter, nor is matter the shadow of spirit; rather it seems that each is a substance in the sense of a subject of self-movement. The self-movement of spirit certainly seems recognizable, as there is an incessant activity of going beyond oneself, such that no concepts ever stop at the place of concepts…. Perhaps the concept of progress burst out of this movement in the form of self-representation. No such self-movement of spirit existed in the Orient; that is, spirit itself did not exist. Of course there was something resembling spirit that existed prior to modernity, as for example in Confucianism and Buddhism, but this was not spirit in the European sense of development. (2005, pp. 60–61; TYZ 1980 vol. 4, p. 140)

As Takeuchi (2005) is wanting to emphasize here, the arrival of Oriental modernity therefore began with the Orient's own self-reflection upon its relationship with the European spirit, but then the completion of modernity began with the very instance of the Orient's own mimetic resistance to the European spirit because "resistance in the Orient is the historical moment at which Europe becomes Europe" and that "without resistance Europe would be unable to realize itself" (p. 63; TYZ 1980 vol. 4, p. 143). To frame it another way: like Hegel's master–slave dialectic, the enslaved Orient develops its own self-consciousness through being recognized as a self-conscious spirit that moves and acts in response to the Other, by Europe's image of itself and Other (and of course *vice versa*). Hegel (1977) himself elucidates the movement of this dialectic logic when he writes:

> A self-consciousness, in being an object, is just as much "I" as "object". With this, we already have before us the Notion of *Spirit*. What still lies ahead for consciousness is the experience of what Spirit is – this absolute substance which is the unity of the different independent self-consciousness which, in their opposition, enjoy perfect freedom and independence: the "I" that is "We" and the "We" that is "I". It is in the self-consciousness, in the Notion of the Spirit, that consciousness first finds its turning point, where it leaves behind it the colourful show of the sensuous here-and-now and the nightlike void of the supersensible beyond, and steps out into the spiritual daylight of the present. (pp. 110–111)

Inversely, Oriental resistance also constitutes a hyper-reality by which the Orient becomes enslaved because any act of negation plays into the formation of self-consciousness as well given that the very source behind the struggle for life and death between master and slave lies in seeing the Other as a threat to itself. Hegel (1977) captures this reversed movement of the dialectic and the desire generating the need to be recognized and seen as another subject in the following words:

> It is in fact something other than self-consciousness that is the essence of Desire; and through this experience self-consciousness has itself realized this truth…. On account of the independence of the object, therefore, [self-consciousness] can achieve satisfaction only when the object itself effects the negation within itself; and it must carry out this negation of itself in itself, for it is *in itself*, the negative, and must be *for* the other what it *is*. Since the object is in its own self negation, and in being so is at the same time independent, it is consciousness…. [Thus] Self-consciousness achieves its satisfaction only in another self-consciousness. (pp. 109–110)

At this point, it seems as if any real resistance is impossible because any act of negation inevitably reproduces the structures of modernity. Takeuchi's discussion of the "honor student culture" serves

to clarify this impossibility even further because it illuminates how the backward, inferior students will always end up imitating the superior honor students and thereby re-assert the latter's structural logic. This is because "the backward students learned a lesson from the defeat and will now follow the example of the honor students and become clever" (Takeuchi 2005, p. 69; TYZ 1980 vol. 4, p. 152). The backward students imitating the honor students here exemplify the deep-rooted inferiority complex these students (or any national or cultural particular) are motivated by. Essentially, then, there is no real difference between the master and the slave within this context because both are enslaved to their mimetic other. Takeuchi (2005) explains this even further when he says: "The slave refuses to recognize the fact that he is a slave. He is a true slave when he thinks that he is not a slave. And he reveals the full extent of his slavishness when he becomes a master, for at that time he subjectively views himself as no longer a slave" (p. 72; TYZ 1980 vol. 4, p. 158). But if both students – and if both Japan and the West – are enslaved, then how do we arrive at a happy state of consciousness? That is, how do we arrive at a proper logic of Asian resistance if Oriental resistance itself reconstitutes Western modernity?

This is where Takeuchi's logic of resistance can begin to be read more in line with Nishida's concept of absolute contradictory self-identity (*zettai mujun-teki jiko dōitsu no ronri* 絶対矛盾的自己同一の論理) and logic of *basho* (場所),[3] but framed within the language game of Hegel's dialectics.[4] For Takeuchi, both China and Japan represent servitude, but while Japan is unable to think of an alternative to Western modernity, China is a slave filled with potential precisely because they have nothing (Murthy 2008, p. 24). Looking to Lu Xun's awakening from despair for insight into forming a proper transformative resistance, Takeuchi maintains that the slave in the parable "*The Wise Man, the Fool, and the Slave*" represents an authentic avenue of resistance because he overcomes his existential crisis by facing the nothing beneath him, only to find an alternative path out of the master–slave duality after realizing the true nature of his own servitude – that there is no path outside of servitude. Takeuchi (2005) writes:

In other words, salvation for the *slave* consists precisely in nonsalvation, in dreaming without awakening. From the *slave*'s standpoint, the pursuit of salvation itself is what makes him a *slave*. If therefore he were to be awakened, he would have to experience the "most painful thing in life," the fact that there is "no path to follow" – the self-awareness that he is a *slave*. And he would have to endure this fear, for he would lose that self-awareness were he to give up and seek salvation instead. In other words, having "no path to follow" means that one is awakened from a dream, whereas the presence of such a path is proof that one is still dreaming. The "most painful thing in life," awakening from a dream, occurs when the *slave* rejects his status as *slave* while at the same time rejecting the fantasy of liberation, so that he becomes a *slave* who realizes that he is a *slave*. This is the state in which one must follow a path even though there is no path to follow; or rather, one must follow a path *precisely because* there is no path to follow…. Despair emerges in the resistance of following a path when there is no path, while resistance emerges as the activation of despair. (p. 71; TYZ 1980 vol. 4, p. 156)

The causal chain here is one of despair arising from the existential crisis the slave faces in realizing there is no path, in the realization that there is nothing there, but then resistance arises from putting

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[3]Note that these logics are linked by the effort to clarify the actions of the historically active self that are related to questions of morality, religion, science, and art. Therefore, both of these logics, for Nishida, are thought to be the most capable for articulating the structure of religious awareness – particularly, Buddhist views of enlightened awareness – that bears significance on the social historical world. For more on understanding the basis of Nishida's logic from beginning to end, see "Concerning My Logic" ("Watashi no ronri ni tsuite" 「私の論理について」). (NKZ 1965 vol. 12, pp. 265–266).

[4]To what extent Takeuchi himself was informed by Nishida is very much debated. Although Takeuchi himself denies being influenced by Nishida in any serious way (Uhl 2003, p. 379), Christian Uhl maintains that Takeuchi's reading of Lu Xun is linked to Nishida's philosophy not by way of politics, but by way of literature (Uhl 2009, p. 233). In fact, as Uhl (2003) argues, Takeuchi frames politics and literature as a kind of contradictory logic of self-identity in the engagement of overcoming modernity (pp. 430–31). For more on the theoretical connections between Nishida and Takeuchi in English, see Uhl (2009, pp. 207–37), but for a more extensive discussion, see Uhl (2003, pp. 378–439).

despair into action. Such a view is reminiscent of Nishida's concept of absolute contradictory self-identity, which seeks to illustrate the logical structure of historical creativity with this idea that the true self, via the realization that its identity is an absolute contradiction, creates the sociohistorical world from an action-intuition that transcends rational, discursive thought:

> The true self acts from an inmost depth that is the place of the contradictory identity, the dynamic interpenetration, of its own immanent and transcendent planes of consciousness. Intuition always has this significance of dynamic, historical expression. Now intuition becomes active precisely because it is mediated by its own negation. It is expression through negation – a structure that transcends the ordinary dialectic of judgement. (Nishida 1987, p. 84; NKZ 1965 vol. 11, p. 417).

Just like how Lu Xun represents a new form of resistance, like a slave who develops a new trajectory of life after all other trajectories have failed, Nishida's absolute contradictory self-identity points to a new historical form of (religious) being and creativity, that which emerges after the negation of all conceptual possibilities of cathecting the "I." Expressing the heart of Zen Enlightenment, Nishida asserts the Dōgen view of religious awareness that equates saṃsāra with nirvāṇa where the realization of things as they are *is* Enlightenment (see Yusa 1987, pp. 71–74). And yet Takeuchi would duplicate this same structure of thought by casting Lu Xun as a true Enlightenment thinker who embodies a Chinese over-coming of Western modernity and that the true path to resistance to slavery is the death of calculated resistance to slavery itself.

One could of course read this through the framework of Hegel's master–slave dialectic as well, where the power of death functions in the service of self-consciousness' true freedom. Hegel argues that the fight for recognition is a fight to the death, and while the fear of death itself is what initially turns one's self-consciousness into a slave and the other into a master, in the end, however, death will function as a source for the slave's freedom because the slave can only achieve a true self-consciousness only when its own alienated nature and fear of death in the struggle for life and death are negated. In fact, this is one of the more common interpretations of Takeuchi's master–slave discussion, which was most likely made popular by Richard Calichman (2004) who first put forward this reading of Takeuchi's view of life and death:

> In dialectical fashion, what is negated is at the same time preserved, lifted up and internalized in what Takeuchi – doubtless alluding here to Hegel, who remains however unnamed throughout the essay – refers to as the "self-movement of spirit".… What this suggests is that spirit's subla-tion of matter involves death that is not a death in the radical sense, that is, death as absolute and irrecoverable loss; rather it signifies the theological dream of life, or immortality, conceived in this context as presence. To this end death is not denied but instead incorporated, made to serve a higher and more sublime goal. Grounded upon death through and through, the spiritualization that is representation yet marks its overcoming (the death of death) in the form of the ideal object. (pp. 177–78)

This is not necessarily a problematic reading of Takeuchi's narrative frame in "What is Modernity?," because after all, the comprehension of the state of conflict itself, and its corrective, does mostly reside at the level of signification in the form of literature and politics, and the mimetic rivalry existing between two opposing consciousnesses in particular is perhaps better read through Hegel's master–slave dialectic than Nishida's subject–object discussion.[5] It may even turn out that Takeuchi had

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[5]However, this point can be challenged by looking at Nishida's discussion of how political and cultural conflict arises from particulars privileging abstract rationality over the logic of religion (*qua* logic of absolute contradictory self-identity). According to Nishida, departing from this standpoint of abstract rationality reproduces the binary between the individual and the universal because it objectifies its own particular standpoint and thus negates universality and promotes the

Hegel more in mind with all of this, but the concept of death is particularly interesting here because it is not just "the death of the other" that "gives it life, preserves it as such" (Calichman 2004, p. 8); rather, it is the death of the self itself in the face of the nothing that is generating new possibilities – a standpoint that falls more in step with Nishida's logic of "place" (*basho*) than with Hegel's view of life and death. Recall that Nishida's *basho* of absolutely nothing is not an opposite to being, as often presumed in Western thought, but the empty place (*basho*) out of which new life possibilities emerge (and die). In fact, interestingly enough, Calichman himself discusses the influence Nishida's concept of *basho* had on Takeuchi's notion of the instant as the self-determining activities expressed within the situatedness of the here and now (see Calichman 2004, pp. 107–108), but then he fails to elaborate how Nishida's *basho* refers more to the groundless structuration of oppositional categories – e.g., forms and non-forms, subjects and objects, reality and irreality – that represent not just the place out of which all is created and uncreated (and live and die), but the very conditions of all (infinite) possibilities. Within Takeuchi's move to find a point outside of history for which to illuminate a proper logic of resistance is perhaps an unconscious appeal to Nishida's concept of *basho* as a logical structuration of all oppositional categories.

The broader point here is that Takeuchi's concept of resistance in "What is Modernity?" can be read not only within the sphere of generating possibilities from a place outside of history,[6] but also within a sphere that seeks to move beyond the master–slave dialectic, because one of the conditions of negativity is that its effect cannot be objectified or reified. This is especially true because rationalism and reification are associated with the project of Western imperialism, and resistance *qua* negativity functions as that which stirs the possibility to transcend them. The possibility of creating something new therefore demands a moment within an empty place where its actions are not supported by any particular content (Murthy 2012, p. 31). A proper vision of historical time, as Takeuchi sees it, is not an unfolding of self-conscious spirit or substance fueled by some internal development or structure in space, like any literalist reading of Hegel, but a rupture in the fabric of space-time where there are infinite moments or instances that can serve as the possibility for meaningful resistance. If Takeuchi is a full-on Hegelian, then Takeuchi would be more Hegelian than Hegel himself and then of course would fail to find a way out of Western modernity by virtue of mimicking the logical movement of the Hegelian dialectic. But the reality is that Takeuchi is concerned with overcoming the notion of historical progress and universal reason, both of which are features of a Hegelian view of history and not that of Nishida's or the Kyoto School's logic of historical creativity; and as Takeuchi thought, if there is a way to overcome the logical structures of modernity, then we would have to approach it from the standpoint of an East-West binary and with an intervention drawing from an East-West dialectic – a dialectic that was likely (unintentionally) borrowed from Nishida and the Kyoto School, a point that will be discussed later on in this article.

The re-assertion of the Asian particular

Within the discursive bounds of political correctness, it is likely that the courts would judge Takeuchi as a right-wing figure.[7] In the later thought of Takeuchi, for instance, particularly the "Asia as Method" lecture, since the central aim is to assert a new kind of Asian particularism against the thick walls of Western hegemony, it may seem as if Takeuchi is not much more than a right-wing reactionary. But if we position Takeuchi within the broader debates of intellectual history, we will find that such a charge does not really hold, especially since he is more concerned with finding a way out of the binary between Left and Right as formulated by the logical structure of modernity

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conditions for an emergence of "racial egotism" (民族利己主義) to advance on a world stage (see NKZ 1965 vol. 11, p. 461; NKZ 1965 vol. 12, pp. 398–399, 404).

[6]Not just Western history, but Eastern history as well.

[7]For a more detailed discussion on this, see Ge (2014, pp. 113–31). In fact, interestingly enough, Takeuchi confessed that if Tosaka Jun were alive during the post-War period, he himself would be judged by Tosaka as a supporter of Japanese ideology (Murthy 2009, p. 108).

rather than upholding a certain position on the political spectrum itself. Takeuchi does not espouse any progressive view of history like with the case of Marxism nor is he re-affirming the values of the Kyoto School's right-wing (nor those supporting "Japanism" for that matter); instead, Takeuchi is looking to overcome these two polar extremes caught up in mimetic rivalry by appealing to a third position that functions more as a method of negativity rather than a position filled with positive content. To get a sense of where Takeuchi was going with developing a logic of Asian resistance, particularly within "Asia as Method," let us first turn to his essay "Overcoming Modernity" ("Kindai no chōkoku" 「近代の超克」) (1959), which reexamines the wartime symposium that goes by the same name.

Resistance through the sublation of war and peace

As discussed briefly already, there is a limit to positioning Takeuchi as a wholly Hegelian thinker, which becomes even more visible when we read "Overcoming Modernity," where some of the core philosophical principles found within the Kyoto School surface as Takeuchi's logical frames. Within this reexamination, Takeuchi seeks to rescue one of the legacies of this symposium by illustrating why it is important to rethink its central aporia. What is notably called the "Greater East Asia War," which was one of the original themes of the "Overcoming Modernity" symposium, was the attempt to liberate the East and Southeast Asian countries from Western colonial invasion, but what Takeuchi remarks in this piece is the real failure of the debates at this symposium to bring to light the aporia underlying the Pacific War's duality between Japan's colonial control and their anti-colonial stance. Takeuchi (2005) writes:

> In a way, the "Overcoming Modernity" symposium represented a condensed version of the apor-
> ias of modern Japanese history. Faced with the urgent task of interpreting the idea of eternal war-
> fare at a time of total war, the symposium marked the explosion of such traditional oppositions as
> those of reactionism and restoration, reverence for the Emperor and exclusion of foreigners, iso-
> lationism and the opening of the country, ultranationalism and "civilization and enlightenment,"
> and East and West. It was thus correct to raise these issues at the time, all the more because they
> aroused the concern of the intelligentsia. That the symposium produced such poor results is
> unrelated to the raising of these issues itself, but rather stems from the symposium's failure to
> dissolve the war's double nature, that is to say, its failure to objectify the aporias of modern
> Japanese history *qua* aporias…. Combined with the postwar atrophy, the disappearance of
> these aporias prepared the intellectual ground for Japan's colonization. (pp. 145–46; TYZ
> 1980 vol. 8, p. 64)

For the critics of the war, "Overcoming Modernity" corresponds to an ideological defense of Japanese militarism, but upon a closer reading, as Takeuchi (2005) tells us, it becomes "impossible to extract the substance of 'overcoming modernity' from the records of the symposium alone" because "a rereading of the symposium now reveals it to be oddly empty of intellectual content" (p. 104; TYZ 1980 vol. 8, p. 4), thus allowing "it to be read all the more arbitrarily" (p. 117; TYZ 1980 vol. 8, p. 23). Takeuchi mentions that it is also common for these critics to lump the "Overcoming Modernity" symposium with another symposium that took place around the same time – "The World-Historical Standpoint and Japan" – but these same critics, according to Takeuchi (2005), would end up reading it in a way that "expresses a linear viewpoint while representing philosophically an ideological judgment" (p. 109; TYZ 1980 vol. 8, p. 10). In other words, the critics have reduced and simplified the symposiums to be nothing more than the official slogans for Japanism by means of conflation as they frame their discussions within the logical structure of European modernity itself. The war ended the way it did because such was the historical destiny of the world spirit and those who are determined to challenge this stance are cast as apologists or sympathizers of Japanism. The postwar framing of these symposiums, as a result, have been presented as a *fait accompli* in terms of the general thrust toward discarding the very idea of "overcoming modernity," even though the symposiums never

reached a resolution, and the participants could never agree on what constituted modernity. But even if the critics have a point, as Takeuchi admits, the notion of resistance still must be resuscitated from the "Overcoming Modernity" symposiums; and to understand what is at stake in all of this, above all, one has to separate the idea of "overcoming modernity" and the symposium of "Overcoming Modernity" itself and to challenge the frame "that 'overcoming modernity' represents war and fascism" (Takeuchi 2005, p. 112; TYZ 1980 vol. 8, p. 16).

Where is the logic of resistance found in the "Overcoming Modernity" symposiums? Takeuchi brings our attention here to the ideas of "total war," "eternal warfare," and the "ideals of 'nation-founding.'" Within the "World-Historical Standpoint" symposium in particular, the vocabulary is such that it represents a deep understanding of the total war situation because it was both a move away from historicism and a remonstration on the modernist theories of developmentalism as it sought to negate the twin notions of "civilization and enlightenment" (Takeuchi 2005, p. 116; TYZ 1980 vol. 8, p. 21).[8] But the Kyoto School participants in this symposium are said to best articulate the logical relationship of these concepts when describing the East-West opposition as a war until the end – meaning, a "total war arises when modernity reaches an impasse, that is, total war represents the overcoming of modernity" (Takeuchi 2005, p. 132; TYZ 1980 vol. 8, p. 45).[9] For Takeuchi (2005), and for the participants at the symposiums, eternal war and eternal peace in and of themselves are empty notions because they represent impossibilities given the nature of humanity, but if we take them as contradictory opposites and sublate them into a third position, then a new idea of war as being creative and constructive emerges (p. 133; TYZ 1980 vol. 8, p. 46). This is all to say that "this oppositionality disappears when we realize that war is essentially guidance"[10] and that "something new will be established" (ibid.)[11] thereafter. By drawing on the Kyoto School's illustration of total war, Takeuchi is thinking like the Kyoto School thinkers, except that he distances himself from them by claiming that the "Kyoto School…merely expounded official thought [of the ideology behind Japanese colonial invasion]" (Takeuchi 2005, p. 134; TYZ 1980 vol. 8, p. 48) at the wartime symposiums; and yet Takeuchi re-asserts the Kyoto School line against Western modernity and its drive for colonial expansion in the attempt to revitalize a logic of resistance from the theoretical discourses on "overcoming modernity."[12] Interestingly, such a view parallels Nishida's own argument against Western imperialism and the need for Asian resistance in the controversial piece "Principles of the New World Order" ("Sekai shin-chitsujo no genri" 「世界新秩序の原理」).[13] While Nishida was not present at the symposiums, his ideas on "overcoming modernity" were, which can be seen as the theoretical backdrop for the discussion at the "World Historical Standpoint" symposium:

> The nineteenth century involved self-realization at the level of nations, that is, imperialism. Each nation considered that its historical mission was to strengthen itself by subjugating others. But this is still far from the self-realization of the nation's world-historical mission…. (Nishida

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[8]The Japanese Romantic School were fiercely opposed to Western ideas of "enlightenment and civilization" (Takeuchi 2005, p. 116; TYZ 1980 vol. 8, p. 21).

[9]This is a quote Takeuchi took from Shigetaka Suzuki.

[10]This is a quote Takeuchi took from Iwao Kōyama.

[11]This is a quote Takeuchi took from Masaaki Kōsaka, who maintains that the creative destruction of war always gives birth to something new.

[12]Christian Uhl raises an interesting point about how Takeuchi seems to release the Kyoto School from bearing responsibility for the war here but then goes on to accuse them of being overly abstract, dogmatic, unrealistic, and wholly ineffective (Uhl 2003, p. 419). But such speaks to how Takeuchi's mimetic resistance to the Kyoto School falls into the logical trap of the Kyoto School and ends up reproducing their fundamental standpoint.

[13]This particular piece has been criticized by scholars for providing a logical justification for Japan's plan for world domination (i.e., the propaganda slogan of "all eight corners of the world under one roof" (八紘一宇) and the absolute role of a "bansei-ikkei" Emperor (万世一系) in resistance to Western colonial powers). However, there is a lot of ambiguity in this text as well that tells us that one can read this piece in the opposite manner. For more on how to rescue the legacy of Nishida's political philosophy, see Goto-Jones (2003, pp. 514–36).

1996, p. 100; NKZ 1965 vol 12, p. 427) Up to now, East Asian peoples [*minzoku*] have been oppressed under European imperialism and regarded as colonies. We were robbed of our world-historical mission. It is now time for East Asian peoples to realize our own world-historical mission. Each people [in East Asia] must transcend itself to form a particular world [of East Asia] and thereby carry out the world-historical mission of the East Asian peoples. This is the principle of the formation of the East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. (Nishida 1996, p. 102; NKZ 1965 vol. 12, p. 429)

This is not to suggest that we should think of Takeuchi as a crypto-Nishida theorist, but what this does suggest is that we can read him as putting forth a new logic of resistance that potentially resolves the limits of the old logic left behind by Nishida and the Kyoto School. It is perhaps fair, in this regard, to position Takeuchi somewhere between Hegel's and Nishida's dialectical logic, but perhaps closer to Nishida's dialectical logic and his particular attempt to overcome modernity.[14]

Now what this all suggests as a broader point about a theory of resistance, and Asian resistance in particular, is that the concept of total war cannot be reduced to the historical narrative that takes military wars to be that of mere events of destruction and hostility in the interest of acquiring world domination (because such an impulse is actually an expression of Western modernity according to Takeuchi and many Kyoto School thinkers); instead, the concept of total war above all refers to the spiritual (or ideological) fight for preserving the idea of one's cultural particular as a resistance against Western modernity and what (new things) might be created out of a total war. Nishida (1996) himself also alludes to this point in "Principles of the New World Order," particularly in terms of the process of creating a global world:

Today's world, I believe, should be considered the epoch of global self-realization. Each nation must realize its own world-historical mission, and together they must constitute [what I will call] the world-historical world. This is the historical project of the present.... When strong nations come into conflict in a global space, violent world struggle is inevitable. The only way to solve this struggle is for each nation to realize its world-historical mission; each nation must develop itself, yet at the same time it must negate itself and reach beyond itself to participate in building a global world.... Instead, [we must recognize] every nation/people is established on a historical foundation and possesses a world-historical mission, thereby having a historical life of its own. For nations/people to form a global world through self-realization and self-transcendence, each must first of all form a particular world in accordance with its own regional tradition. These particular worlds, each based on a historical foundation, unite to form a global world. (pp. 100–101; NKZ 1965 vol. 12, pp. 427–428)

But while it is clear that Nishida has a particular imagining of this future global world, Takeuchi, on the other hand, leaves the future global world more wide-open – only to be viewed through the lens of (Asian) resistance. This is because, according to Takeuchi, the symposiums in the end failed as a debate of ideas, partly due to neglecting the Chinese Incident as part of the vision of total war.[15] "While the Kyoto School was able to explain this eternal warfare on paper, they were incapable of resolving it," Takeuchi (2005) writes, and "perhaps it was possible to conceptually transcend the 'inferior oppositionality between war and peace' through a philosophy of 'absolute nothingness,' but this was not the issue" (p. 135; TYZ 1980 vol. 8, p. 49). So, then what was the issue? And why did the Kyoto School's effort at overcoming modernity fail? The central issue, for Takeuchi (2005), is that

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[14]What Nishida's dialectical logic refers to here is the dialectic of place, where the creative formation of historical reality occurs as a result of a bilateral movement between thesis and anti-thesis within a non-reified place, never to be resolved within a temporal synthesis. See Shultz (2012, pp. 319–38).

[15]The Chinese Incident, which is also called the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, was a battle between China's National Revolutionary Army and the Imperial Japanese Army, but it generally signifies the beginning of the Second Sino-Japanese War.

the Japanese "people have tried to forget it [the Chinese Incident] without understanding the double structure of the Pacific War – or going back even further, the double structure of the Meiji state" (p. 136; TYZ 1980 vol. 8, p. 51). But the question is now how does Takeuchi manage to resolve the Chinese Incident and the double structure of the Pacific War, or perhaps even the double structure of the Meiji state, through a logic of Asian resistance?

Asia as the method of resistance

While the essay "What is Modernity?" establishes the conditions of possibility for re-thinking resistance, the essay "Overcoming Modernity" establishes the place for which resistance needs to begin. But what the lecture "Asia as Method" establishes is the method by which Asia asserts its own resistance to Western modernity in order to undermine its universality and thereby create something new. Takeuchi (2005) here is not interested in providing an explicit program or recipe by which to subvert Western modernity, but rather advancing a method to negate modernity itself by rallying Asia to "re-embrace the West" and "change the West itself in order to realize the latter's outstanding cultural values on a greater scale" (p. 165; TYZ 1980 vol. 5, p. 115). The task, or the "method" (*hōhō* 方法) as Takeuchi calls it, is perhaps this return to what was lost during the Enlightenment, that which led to the derailment of European modernity into a state of barbarism (Lo 2014, p. 32) and to begin anew by means of a cross-cultural dialogue that starts at the level of the cultural particulars. But what makes this piece, in conjunction with the other essays discussed thus far, the most significant in terms of the legacy Takeuchi has built for himself and for Asian Studies as a whole is this question, as Weber (2018) puts it, "who represents Asian thought and activity"? (p. 32). The previous essays discussed in this article at this point were the building blocks for this search to define "Asianism," and so in order to answer this question of "who represents Asian thought and activity," we have to see what Takeuchi means exactly by "Asia as method."

As briefly mentioned already, what was left unanswered from the "Overcoming Modernity" symposiums were the questions of China and the Chinese Incident (in addition to the double structure of the Pacific War). For Takeuchi (2005), Japan and China represent two different historical narratives that serve as "representative types of Oriental modernization" (p. 152; TYZ 1980 vol. 5, p. 96). Now, of course, Takeuchi (2005) acknowledges that "there existed many other possibilities and paths of modernization," and at one point in time even, Japan could have been a model of modernization following the Meiji Restoration, but "in the end, Japan failed by going in the very opposite direction" (p. 153; TYZ 1980 vol. 5, p. 96). But one of the marks of distinction between them, according to Takeuchi, is what Tagore observed and how he was subsequently perceived in each respective country: that is, from Tagore's perspective, Japan was an imitator of the sort of modernization taking place in the West, particularly in its use of military force; and while in China, Tagore's viewpoint here was interpreted as an expression of anger, in Japan, on the other hand, his viewpoint was interpreted as "nothing more than the complaint of a poet from a weak nation" (Takeuchi 2005, p. 159; TYZ 1980 vol. 5, p. 105).

Furthermore, Chinese modernization on the whole was something quite different as well. Beginning around 1919 (as opposed to Japanese modernization that began in 1868), China approached modernization with less adaptability because of "the presence of strong and durable Chinese elements," and then after modernization began, China would end up destroying "all remaining structures and produced a spontaneous force from within" (Takeuchi 2005, p. 160; TYZ 1980 vol. 5, p. 107). Takeuchi tells us that there are historical reasons as to why all of this occurred in this way, but what is most significant to note here is the spiritual force behind China's type of modernization, that which cleared the way for a spiritual victory over Japan. To clarify this particular point, Takeuchi begins with a discussion of Dewey's experience in both China and Japan. Taken from Dewey's *Letters from China and Japan*, Takeuchi (2005) mentions how Dewey described Japan as aesthetically refined and a place filled with amicable people, while China, on the other hand, was disorganized and filthy, and yet it was China who facilitated a modernization that was truly internally

generated (pp. 154–56; TYZ 1980 vol. 5, pp. 97–101). Why? Dewey claims that "while Japan appeared on the surface to be quite modernized, the roots of this modernization were in fact shallow" (Takeuchi 2005, p. 154; TYZ 1980 vol. 5, p. 98), which is why, as Takeuchi (2005) remarks, "Japan is in some ways more western than the West" (p. 161; TYZ 1980 vol. 5, p. 109), whereas in China, there was spiritual energy behind its chaos that represented a greater potential for asserting a unique type of modernization. Dewey here is referring to the May Fourth student movement as this "emergence of a new spirit and modernity in China" (Takeuchi 2005, p. 155; TYZ 1980 vol. 5, p. 100) because it succeeded to force "the government [of Japan] to submit to the demonstrators' demands" (Takeuchi 2005, p. 155; TYZ 1980 vol. 5, p. 99). Japan tried to force China into accepting the treaty (called "the Twenty-one Demands") in 1915 that would essentially turn it into a colony of Japan, but the Chinese resisted and was successful in its opposition.

But then there is the Chinese Incident in particular and the relationship Japan has had and continues to have with the Chinese. When Japan surrendered unconditionally to the Allied Powers, it was a surrender to the United States alone, not to China. For Takeuchi, this refusal to admit defeat by China represents the deep-seated hatred the Japanese has for them. Such also can be seen when Japanese soldiers arrived on Chinese soil during the war. While in China, Takeuchi (2005) comments that the Japanese soldiers saw nothing, precisely because "they refuse[d] to problematize themselves" (p. 163; TYZ 1980 vol. 5, p. 112). Japanese soldiers, along with many civilians under the protection of the Japanese military, would end up wreaking violence in China as a result. What this suggests theoretically for Takeuchi is that such a foreclosure to negate oneself is not only what drove the Japanese to refuse to accept defeat (because such maintained its own self-declared superiority) but is also what continues to drive Chinese resentment against the Japanese. In fact, even today, as Takeuchi holds, Japan has yet to truly apologize for the crimes it committed against China, and so it is in this particular sense, one can still view Japan as being at war with China (Takeuchi 2005, p. 164; TYZ 1980 vol. 5, pp. 112–113).

This is where Takeuchi begins to finalize his logic of Asian resistance. That is, "the main point about Japan's modernization," Takeuchi (2005) says, "is that it was introduced externally as a western type. Chinese modernization, however, was forged on the basis of its own ethnic-national characteristics, and this is what allowed China to modernize more *purely*" (p. 164; emphasis mine; TYZ 1980 vol. 5, p. 113). What Takeuchi means by "purely" here is significant. From Takeuchi's (2005) view, "purely" refers to a particular kind of resistance that "discerns the limits of the West" (p. 165; TYZ 1980 vol. 5, p. 114), that which stands against the homogenization of the world. The route to a "purer" modernization via resistance, as Takeuchi (2005) argues then, is to "change the West in order to further elevate those universal values that the West itself produced" (p. 165, TYZ 1980 vol. 5, p. 115) by enacting a "rollback" or "turn-around" (*makikaeshi* 巻き返し) of cultural values that would create a new type of universality. Such a view resembles Nishida's concept of the "global world" (*sekaiteki sekai* 世界的世界), where each cultural particular is to bring forth something new, that which is non-European, to the world stage, but that will both be mediated by Europe and transform it at the same time. It is important to mention here that Nishida's contradictory logic, which functions as the condition of possibility for the development of a proper "global world," articulates a kind of particular–universal relationship where each particular realizes its universality via self-negation, and not through objectification. Nishida further clarifies this contradictory logic structuring the road to a new global world.

One [including Japan] must not conflict with other subjects as a subject, but must be enveloped by other subjects as the world. And one must organize a one world united in a state of self-contradictory unity. I think that herein lies Japan's mission as a constructor of East Asia. Opposing other subjects as a subject, denying other subjects and trying to build oneself up – these are nothing other than imperialism. This is not the Japanese spirit. (NKZ 1965 vol. 12, p. 349).

But neither is Nishida's road to a new global world comparable to Western modernity forcing other cultural particulars to universalize in light of their own structural logic because all particulars must move from within the contours of an absolute contradictory self-identity: in other words, the cultural particulars of the world must engage in mutual self-negation by cooperating in a transformative, dialogical way in the service of realizing universality. Likewise, Takeuchi's view of "overcoming modernity" requires nothing less than this realization of universality among the Asian particulars in self-negation (*qua* absolute contradictory self-identity), which, similar to each particular needing to realize its own world-historical mission à la Nishida, requires each Asian particular to have their own cultural values. Here, Takeuchi (2005) is deploying negation as the very method of resistance itself – negation *qua* 'problematizing oneself' and the other (i.e., self-negation) – in order to manifest "the process of the subject's self-formation" (i.e., absolute contradictory self-identity) (p. 165; TYZ 1980 vol. 5, p. 115). Such a process should not be viewed within the frame of cultural values in substantive form because, as Takeuchi (2005) writes, "it is impossible to definitely state what this [method] might mean" (ibid.), and so the method of negation itself is performed solely in the interest of generating new cultural and political possibilities with the aim to overcome the logical traps of Western modernity, which includes its theories of emancipation that on the surface appear to be in the best interest of Asia.

Conclusion

There are many reasons why we study Takeuchi's logic of resistance, but the more important reason, as Anderson (2012) tells us, is that his ideas provide us with the ethical material for decolonizing projects and generating heuristic possibilities (p. 449). Or to put it more in the context of Asian studies, Takeuchi is searching for a logic of Asian resistance that leads to political and cultural "transcendence" not found in Western modernity. Here we can see where Takeuchi's work can be paired with many contemporary high-powered thinkers such as Dipesh Chakrabarty and Enrique Dussel that seek to "overcome" the problem of the "emancipatory traps" of Western modernity through a logic of resistance that takes place at the periphery. In *Provincializing Europe* (2000), for instance, Chakrabarty argues how Europe operates as a mythical figure that is taken to be the original site of modernity in the historical development of capitalism among non-Western countries (pp. 3–6). But since this particular view of the imaginary Europe is built into the social sciences, according to Chakrabarty (2000), the only way to resist and address this colonizing project is by delegitimizing Europe both as a locus of power and as a referent through pluralizing normative horizons of those cultural particulars existing on the margins while rejecting the totalizing thought of the Enlightenment (pp. 42–46, 249–55).

Latin American philosopher, Enrique Dussel, presents a similar critique of European modernity and a similar view on how to disrupt its discursive structure. What Dussel (1994) calls the "myth of modernity" (*mito de la modernidad*) is this assumption that modernity is a pure European invention beginning in Northern Europe by Enlightenment philosophers instead of being located in the history of geopolitics, which otherwise would position modernity as a by-product of the Spanish colonization of the Americas (pp. 7–8). The central problem, for Dussel (1994), is that the myth of modernity has masked the sacrificial violence that was done in the name of civilizing the "barbaric" as the global north sought to impose capitalist modernity onto the global south (pp. 11–20). Similar to Chakrabarty's project to provincialize Europe, Dussel also seeks to decenter European modernity and replace it with what he calls a "transmodern pluriversalism" (*pluriversalismo transmodernidad*) where a cross-cultural dialogue (on the basis of epistemology) takes place among the victims of modernity in the service of empowering their cultural identities (see Dussel 2012). But note that there are already attempts to synthesize Takeuchi's thought with other left-wing thinkers like Tosaka Jun and Karl Marx (see Murthy 2008, 2009).[16] Murthy (2008), for instance, has argued that while Takeuchi's discourse on

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[16]Japanese Marxist Hiromatsu Wataru would also espouse a view resembling Takeuchi's, where he rehabilitates the central aim articulated in the "Overcoming Modernity" symposiums except that he frames resistance more in the likes of Miki Kiyoshi's system of Asian cooperatives that seeks to overcome the twin evils of capitalism and colonialism.

resistance and modernity are salient, they could also be better served with other theorists who further develop a Marxist critique of capitalism because such thinkers "penetrate the deeper structures of colonial domination" (p. 24).

At the same time, however, we cannot forget that Takeuchi has been criticized as well, particularly by Naoki Sakai, Richard Calichman, and Lawrence Olson on grounds of promoting a new kind of nationalism, with moments of flirtation with totalitarian thinker Mao Zedong.[17] Perhaps there is some truth to these criticisms because the concept of nationalism is certainly crucial for the efficacy of Takeuchi's method of Asian resistance. On the surface, Takeuchi does appear to be some sort of hardline nationalist in the sense that he affirms the cultural value of "patriotism" and the "independence of a country" within the broader scope of Asian resistance; but then again, such a reading also mistakes what Takeuchi means by nationalism to begin with. For Takeuchi, nationalism actually refers to a lack of consciousness or a refusal to take responsibility for war and military aggression; and so in any bloodstained country, nationalism becomes an indispensable action for challenging the status quo and constructing history, which in the context of Japan, involves paying the price for allowing ultranationalism to have occurred on its soil (see Nakajima 2014, pp. 143–52).

But what Calichman is launching against Takeuchi's theoretical discourses is formulated more on the basis of something much deeper: that Takeuchi's resistance to Western universality is all too informed by an oppositional logic that privileges Japanese, and in larger sense, Asian particularism that ends up failing to "call into question the meaning of these terms themselves" (Calichman 2004, p. 62). Calichman (2004) links this problem to his whole-part relation, where resistance only leads to a "reorganization of the terms contained therein" and "not in an overcoming of the whole-part relation itself" (p. 62), that which "results in a serious confusion on his part between the notion of particularly (which ultimately confirms the universal) and that of singularity (which infinitely exceeds or escapes it)" (p. 64). In other words, what Takeuchi ignores "is the fact that this colonial logic of the West is entirely capable of appropriating such a gesture of particularist resistance, that the whole-part relation remains essentially unchanged by the mere expansion nor fortification of the part" (Calichman 2004, p. 62) and that such a confusion leads to what Sakai (1997) maintains about Takeuchi's theory of resistance: that in this reversal of the West is the very accomplishment of Asia's universality that ends up rendering Takeuchi back into the modernist trap because "he believes that monistic history is, after all things are considered, an inevitability and that consequently, the universal emancipation will be realized not by the West but by the Orient," because "in history, he says, the true subject is the Orient." (p. 174). What we find significant here is that Calichman and Sakai read Takeuchi more as a Hegelian than a Nishidian, which makes it appear that "Takeuchi's notion of resistance is at a certain point unable to rid itself of what Nietzsche called *ressentiment*, that is to say, a kind of reactivity in which the slave endures the master's dominance only the better to triumph over him in the end, thus confirming his own slave values as superior" (Calichman 2004, p. 64). If Takeuchi is indeed a true Hegelian, then we can read him as falling prey to the trap of emancipation set up by modernity, only to repeat its basic structural logic by implicitly affirming Asian particularism as the "true subject of history" as it seeks to dethrone Western universalism, precisely because he is unable to find a way out of the East-West duality operating on the level of signification.

In defense of Takeuchi here, however, if we read him more as someone who brings Nishida's logic of *basho* and absolute contradictory self-identity into the domain of signification (i.e., into the field of literary theory, and then into politics), then it is hard to imagine any true subject of history like Asian particularism recurring to Western universalism at any moment in time because there never was nor can there ever be a final point in history where one achieves a substantive universality – only the constructed illusion of one. The universal Takeuchi is seeking to negate is a modernist construction that was introduced by the West, meanwhile Nishida's view of the universal can only be the expression of

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[17]For a scathing critique of Takeuchi's literary career, see Olson (1981, pp. 319–48).

all particulars working out their self-identity by means of confronting their bottomless contradictions within a non-reified place. Per Nishida's paradoxical logic, and if we were to read Takeuchi's logic of resistance through this aperture, a proper universal identity can never be accomplished by a Nietzschean *ressentiment* that could end up resorting to a new kind of domination because such depends on the construction of a substantive "I," whereas a proper universal in the Nishidian world can only be self-contradictory such that it must be expressed through the relentless acts of self-negation in the service of both staving off the other's as well as one's own colonial impulses.[18] Nishida himself hints as such when clarifying the concept of the co-prosperity sphere in a conversation he had with Japanese military personnel, Satō Kenryō, about the role and position of the Japanese Emperor in the building of a new world order:

> Oh, it is imperialism! For it to be a co-prosperity sphere, everyone in the sphere must be satisfied, [otherwise], it is not a co-prosperity sphere. If [Japan] arbitrary decided on the composition of the sphere and if it coerced the other members, then that would violate the free will of all regions [including Japan], and that would not be a co-prosperity sphere. (NKZ 1965 vol. 12, p. 471)[19]

We have to keep in mind that Nishida's logic here does not subscribe to a zero-sum game, where each winner is at the expense of another's loss, and if we are correct to read Takeuchi more in this vein, then neither Nishida nor Takeuchi introduces a view of "overcoming" that allows for a cultural hierarchy to ever be reified in its return as a repressed form.[20]

   Of course, this reading of Takeuchi should not be taken as a glorification of all of his ideas either. After all, it is hard to redeem Takeuchi in terms of his kind treatment of Mao Zedong. History has certainly shown Mao Zedong to be one of the most violent tyrants the world has ever seen, which only speaks to the lack of critical insight Takeuchi truly has at the end of the day. The more relevant question, however, should be along the lines of how to read Takeuchi and for what purpose: that is, if we read Takeuchi's logic of resistance somewhere between Hegel and Nishida (but closer to Nishida), as I have tried to suggest throughout this article, then we will constantly find new insights into the logical traps of modernity, spaces for theoretical syntheses, as well as new ways of imagining theoretical possibilities. Like Takeuchi's re-reading of Lu Xun, Takeuchi's texts themselves are not dead, but *alive*, which will reveal to us not just the limits of Western modernity, but the limits of Nishida's and the Kyoto School's attempt to overcome it as well, including what all of this will mean for the cultural particulars approaching the future global world.

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[18]We have to recognize, however, Nishida's own gestures toward colonial ventures in his affirmation of the state and its involvement in asserting Japanese particularism. While the verdict remains to be seen on whether or not the logic Nishida puts forth is sufficient to fully destabilize the colonializing aspects of modernity, we cannot deny there are certain moments in his writings where Nishida himself looks complicit with Japanese militarism. But the biggest mistake in Nishida's work is that he does not go far enough in developing a logic of resistance, perhaps because he does not fully enter the field of signification and its relationship to (social-economic) power. For an earlier critique of Nishida's logic and its potential collaboration with wartime ideology, see "Is the 'Logic of Nothing' Logic? Regarding the Method of Nishida Philosophy," Tosaka Jun 1996 vol. 2, pp. 340–48.

[19]Nishida would then further clarify that if it were a true co-prosperity sphere, others would ask Japan to create it for them, and if that is not the case, then there can be no talk of a Holy War (NKZ 1965 vol. 12, p. 471).

[20]There is a real difference between Hegel and Nishida, which is derived from the latter's critique of the former. Calichman and Sakai fail to discuss this at length, but demonstrating this difference will reveal to what extent Takeuchi succeeds to overcome the traps established by Western modernity.

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