

Abstract English

In this dissertation I thematise the act of photographing with a special emphasis on the seeing, which constitutes this act. In order to cast a light on this subject, I refer to the early philosophy of Martin Heidegger as well as to the Japanese philosopher Kitarō Nishida. Having Heidegger's 'Pragmatism' and 'Apriorism' as my point of departure, I first develop a hypothesis of a tension between the passivity and the activity of photographic vision. On the one hand, photographers depend on already existing entities and contexts, in which entities appear to us 'first and foremost'; on the other hand, photographers possess an 'a priori knowledge' regarding framing, which helps them to activate photographic vision in the right moment and under the right circumstances. Alongside the idea of a modification of sight from a practical interest (,Umsicht') to the theoretical one (,Hinsehen'), I also discuss photographic seeing with reference to Heidegger's idea of the phenomenological reduction. Before photographers use their cameras to prepare for the actual shot, they modify their understanding of the being of the encountered entities, i. e. they perform a phenomenological-photographic reduction. The first part of the dissertation ends with the inclusion of the theme of authenticity, through which several further sub-themes are made relevant for the discussion of photographic practices, such as individuation, moods as well as the moment of vision. In the second part of the dissertation I refer to Nishida's philosophy as the main conceptual framework, in which photographing can be investigated in an intercultural manner. I first refer to the notion of pure experience (純粹經驗) to suggest that the photographic act occurs prior to the division of 'subject' and 'object'. Nishida's non-dualistic thought is then further applied to the field of photographing by discussing the Japanese philosopher's theory of the logic of place (場所的論理). In this framework I analyse relevant 'places' of photographing—the camera, the photographer, the photographic situation—as well as their relationship to one another. Finally, my attention is devoted to Nishida's later work and his notions of the historical world (歴史的世界) and body (身体). I discuss the dialectical determination of inwardness and outwardness of a historically situated photographic act. The visibility of photographers, their bodily movements when photographing, as well as the possibility of an individual expression of the world itself, belong to the themes that are discussed in this final section of the dissertation.

Keywords: Heidegger – Nishida – Phenomenology – Photographing