

Article

Phenomenological Transcendence and Dialectical Transcendence: Heidegger and Miki

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Abstract: This paper focuses on the concept of transcendence in order to investigate the relationship between Heidegger's phenomenology and Miki Kiyoshi's dialectic. Miki studied under Heidegger at the University of Marburg from 1923 to 1924. During this time, Heidegger transitioned from his hermeneutics of facticity to the transcendental problem of temporality. Miki's works, such as "The Study of the Human in Pascal," "The Marxian Form of Anthropology," and "The Logic of Imagination" reflect Heidegger's thoughts in hermeneutics, rhetoric, and transcendentalism. Miki developed his own dialectical transcendentalism, incorporating Heidegger's ideas into his logic of imagination in rhetoric.

Keywords: dialectic, imagination, phenomenology, transcendence

Miki Kiyoshi studied under Heidegger at the University of Marburg from mid-October 1923 to 20 August 1924, for approximately ten months.¹ During this period, Heidegger was transitioning from the "hermeneutics of facticity" to the transcendental problem of "temporality," following his move from the University of Freiburg to the University of Marburg. The lectures Miki attended were the winter semester lecture

¹ Miki went to Heidelberg as a student in May 1922 and returned from Paris in October 1925. In a letter to Löwith dated 18 June 1923, Heidegger mentioned that the "Japanese man" in Heidelberg was expected to come to Marburg in the winter. While in Heidelberg, Miki wrote to Ken Ishihara on 20 September 1923, stating, "I will remain here until mid-next month and then move to Marburg." Heidegger had assumed the position of Extraordinary Professor at the University of Marburg on October 1 of that same year, meaning Miki arrived in Marburg about half a month later. On the other hand, in a letter to Mori Gorō dated 31 July 1924, Miki wrote, "In twenty days I will leave here for Paris." Heidegger's letter to Löwith dated 21 August 1924, also states, "Miki departed yesterday. He will not return." Letters 46 and 58, in Martin Heidegger / Karl Löwith, *Briefwechsel 1919-1973*, ed. by Alfred Denker (Freiburg/München: Karl Alber, 2017), 94, 113; Miki Kiyoshi, Letters 2 and 36, in *Miki Kiyoshi Collected Works*, vol. 19 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1966-1968), 219-220, 291 (in Japanese).

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“Introduction to Phenomenological Research” in 1923/24 and the summer semester lecture “Fundamental Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy” in 1924.² The former sought to elucidate the meaning of phenomenology by tracing it back to Aristotle, then to Husserl, and finally to Descartes, while the latter sought to elucidate Aristotle’s “Rhetoric” as what is known as the “hermeneutics of everydayness.” Following the publication of *Dilthey-Yorck Correspondence* at the end of 1923, Heidegger began to clarify the transcendental connection between the concepts of temporality and historicity in his 1924 July lecture “The Concept of Time” and thereafter.³ As the background of the importance of Greek philosophy and Christian philosophy he had studied in Japan, and in experience of the transition from the Neo-Kantian school to phenomenology in German philosophy, Miki witnessed the emergence of Heidegger’s hermeneutic and transcendental phenomenology.

As a result, the dialectical transcendental thinking of Miki is significantly influenced by the process of the emergence of Heidegger’s hermeneutic and transcendental phenomenology. In “The Study of the Human in Pascal” (1926), “The Marxian Form of Anthropology” (1927), and “The Logic of the Imagination” (1937–1943), Heidegger’s interpretation of rhetoric and the ideas of transcendental phenomenology are still clearly evident. Miki develops his own dialectical transcendentalism by deconstructing and incorporating motifs from Heidegger’s phenomenological transcendentalism, including hermeneutics and rhetoric.

In this paper, I will focus on the concept of transcendence to investigate the relationship between Heidegger’s phenomenological and hermeneutical ontology and Miki’s dialectic. What Miki discovered at the intersection of Heidegger’s phenomenological and hermeneutical transcendence and his own dialectical transcendence is the transcendental logic of the imagination in rhetoric.

² Martin Heidegger, *Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung*, GA 17 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1994); Martin Heidegger, *Grundbegriffe der Aristotelischen Philosophie*, GA 18 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2002). Furthermore, in a letter dated 1 August 1925, addressed to Mori Gorō, Miki reported that he had also reviewed the winter semester 1924/25 lecture notes, ‘Plato—The Sophist’ (GA 19). “A friend in Marburg sent me a typewritten copy of Heidegger’s lecture notes on Plato, so I’ve been studying them in my free time. There doesn’t seem to be anything particularly new beyond what I expected, but it’s still quite interesting.” Miki Kiyoshi, letter no. 45, in *Miki Kiyoshi Collected Works*, vol. 19 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1966-1968), 308–309.

³ Martin Heidegger, “Begriff der Zeit (Vortrag 1924),” in *Der Begriff der Zeit*, GA 64 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2004), 105–125. About the influence of the “Dilthey-Yorck Correspondence” on Heidegger’s concept of historicity, see my article below; Motoki Saito, “Our Common Interest in Understanding Historicity: Reading Heidegger’s ‘Dilthey-Yorck Correspondence,’” in *Dilthey-Studies*, 35 (2024), 29–50 (in Japanese).

The Ontology of Life as Anthropology

In a letter dated 9 December 1923, addressed to Mori Gorō, Miki reported that Heidegger criticized the naturalism remaining in Husserl's phenomenology and was attempting to phenomenologize Dilthey's human sciences.⁴ This reflects Heidegger's criticism of Husserl and his evaluation of Dilthey in his lectures of 1923/24. According to Heidegger, consciousness must "exclude" (*Ausschaltung*) all natural positings (*Natursetzung*) and be "free" from them. Husserl calls this "freedom" as "transcendental." This explicitly reveals Husserl's intention to ensure "absolute academic rigor" to the "transcendentally pure consciousness" in *Ideas I*. However, despite this "transcendental exclusion of all nature," Heidegger asserts that the "Being" of this consciousness itself is the "individual singularity of the stream of experience." It is precisely this oversight of the individual singularity of the stream of experience that leaves a naive naturalism of abstraction in transcendental phenomenology.⁵ Heidegger's criticism here forms the basis of the later controversy surrounding the "Britannica Article."

On the other hand, as can be seen in expressions such as "stream of experience" and "singularity," Heidegger discerns in the Being of consciousness the "possibility of existence" that Dilthey experienced as "life in history."⁶ Husserl criticizes Dilthey's "historicism" as "extreme skeptical subjectivism" in his 1911 article "Philosophy as a Rigorous Science," but according to Heidegger, Dilthey is not a relativist.⁷ Rather, Heidegger highly evaluates Dilthey's understanding of history and states that "psychology," which serves as the foundational science of the human sciences, is "anthropology" as the "science of human existence."⁸ This statement appears at the end of the lecture 1923/24, which discusses Heidegger's unique connections between "uncanniness (*Unheimlichkeit*)," "care (*Sorge*)," "time,"

⁴ "Heidegger is attempting to establish a phenomenology of the human sciences (*Geisteswissenschaft*) that departs from the Naturalism tendencies still present in Husserl's phenomenology. Regardless of how deeply he has advanced in this direction, the endeavor itself is interesting. His view that Husserl's *Logical Investigation* carries more weight than his *Ideas* is also interesting. Heidegger respects Dilthey and has also advised me to study Dilthey fundamentally." Miki Kiyoshi, letter no. 5, in *Miki Kiyoshi Collected Works*, vol. 19 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1966-1968), 224–25.

⁵ "This purified problem setting is nevertheless still naturalistic." Heidegger, *GA 17*, 80–81.

⁶ Heidegger, *GA 17*, 92.

⁷ Edmund Husserl, "Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft" (1911), in *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1911- 1921)*, *Husserliana XXV* (Dordrecht / Boston / Lancaster: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1987), 43.

⁸ According to Helene Weiss' notes, it was stated that "Psychology as the originary science of the human sciences is the science of life, that is, the science of human existence (anthropology)." Heidegger, *GA 17*, 321.

and “historical philosophy,” and it must have made a particularly strong impression on Miki, who was advised to “study Dilthey fundamentally” by Heidegger.

At the beginning of “Pascal,” Miki states that “*Pensées*” is “anthropology” as the “science of human existence.”⁹ Of course, this differs from Heidegger’s position in *Being and Time*, which excludes “anthropology” including psychology and Christian theology from the analysis of Dasein.¹⁰ What Miki is concerned with is the “ontology of life” as Dilthey’s “anthropology.”

The Hermeneutics of Fundamental Experience as Destruction

But Miki still emphasizes Heidegger’s ontology of being. In his 1923/24 lectures, Heidegger also seeks to investigate the categorical interrelationships in human existence that go beyond Dilthey’s “historical narrative.”¹¹ To investigate the origin of these categories in human existence, Heidegger introduces the concept of “fundamental experience (*Grunderfahrung*)” in his 1924 lecture.¹² Beneath categories and concepts lies the fundamental experience, and it is through language that categories and concepts are produced from this fundamental experience.

In a letter dated 14 May 1924 to Mori Gorō, Miki states that the purpose of interpretation is to investigate the “fundamental experience” that gave rise to concepts and that it is to understand the internal relationship between fundamental experience and language through expression.¹³ This

⁹ “What we encounter in *Pensées* is not the study of consciousness or the mind, but rather the study of the concrete human being, that is, anthropology in the literal sense. Anthropology is the science of human existence. It studies this existence in its ‘mode of being’. We generally call such a discipline ontology; therefore, anthropology is an ontology. My main intention was to treat *Pensées* as a living ontology.” Miki Kiyoshi, “The Study of the Human in Pascal,” in *Miki Kiyoshi Collected Works*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1966-1968), 4.

¹⁰ Heidegger, *GA 2*, 61–67.

¹¹ Heidegger, *GA 17*, 279.

¹² “The conceptuality considered in the fundamental concepts is the fundamental experience that gives things, not the theoretical grasping of things. What is experienced within fundamental experience is expressed toward something. What is thus experienced and what is established from this perspective is articulated and becomes alive within expression.” *GA 18*, 18.

¹³ “I believe the purpose of Interpretation generally lies in clarifying the ‘*Grunderfahrung*’ that gave birth to the concept. The goal of interpretation is to determine ‘what he encountered.’ His concept must surely have arisen from the fundamental experience of something fundamental. I must deconstruct the concept to grasp this *Grunderfahrung*. Thus, one might also say that Interpretation is Destruction. When one grasps this fundamental experience oneself, one can determine the *Möglichkeiten* for expressing this fundamental experience in words. And by clarifying which one of these *Möglichkeiten* he followed in constructing his concept, one can understand the inner relationship between the fundamental experience and its expression — this,

faithfully follows Heidegger's "fundamental experience" as presented in the 1924 summer semester lecture.¹⁴ Additionally, Miki states that the "interpretation" that grasps the "fundamental experience" is the "destruction (*Destruktion*)" of the "concept," which reflects the discussion on "destruction as the method of interpreting Dasein" in the 1923/24 lecture. While phenomenology aims for transcendental freedom through the "execution" of "natural positing," the ontology of Dasein aims for "freedom from inherited possibilities and traditional forms."¹⁵ However, since Dasein possesses the unique tendency of "obstruction-itself (*Sich-selbst-verbauen*)," the "interpretation of Dasein" must carry out "deconstruction (*Abbauen*), destruction (*Destruktion*)" of the traditional categories formed under this tendency.¹⁶ This destruction exposes traditional categories and concepts as inappropriate, rooted in the narrowed-down experience of Dasein, and enables a return to the fundamental experience of existence free from other academic disciplines. It is this "hermeneutics of the fundamental experience as destruction" that Miki introduces into his own "ontology of life."

This point is clear in his description of methodological consciousness in "Pascal."¹⁷ Miki does not allow himself to be constrained by disciplines such as psychology or geometry but instead traces Pascal's concepts back to the fundamental experiences underlying them, interpreting the internal connection between concepts and fundamental experiences. Miki's analysis, extending from "fallenness," "self-escape," "anxiety," and "death" to "boredom," which evokes not only Heidegger's *Being and Time* but also his later theory of boredom, can be regarded as Miki's unique hermeneutic achievement grounded in Heidegger's methodology. In his 1923/24 lectures, Heidegger criticizes Descartes' fundamental experience as "I am a thinking thing (*sum res cogitans*)."¹⁸ In contrast, Miki finds positive significance in Pascal's "fundamental experience," because Pascal criticized Descartes as "useless and uncertain."¹⁹

I believe, is the purpose of interpretation." Miki Kiyoshi, letter no. 26, in *Miki Kiyoshi Collected Works*, vol. 19 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1966-1968), 269.

¹⁴ Mori Ichiro, "Grundexperience als Work: Heidegger and Miki," in *Gendaishiso*, 46:3 (2018), 295-314, esp. 296-299 (in Japanese).

¹⁵ Heidegger, *GA* 17, 112.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 117-118; cf. 113.

¹⁷ "In interpreting Pascal, I consciously employed a single method ... Where a concept is given, the task of interpretation is to clarify its fundamental experience; where fundamental experience is given, it is to clarify its concept." Miki, "The Study of the Human in Pascal," 4.

¹⁸ Heidegger, *GA* 17, 312.

¹⁹ Miki, "The Study of the Human in Pascal," 45. Miki later reflected, "While contemplating *Pensées*, I felt the scholarship I had learned from Professor Heidegger come alive." Miki Kiyoshi, "Wanderings through the World of Books," in *Miki Kiyoshi Collected Works*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1966-1968), 429. Moreover, since his Freiburg days, a photograph of Pascal's death mask had been placed on Heidegger's desk alongside one of Dostoevsky. Karl

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However, Miki further finds “dialectic” in Pascal’s own method of interpreting human existence.²⁰ This dialectic is not a formal, superficial, or abstract logical operation. The contradictions in human beings have “rich content” that goes beyond abstract categories, and therefore their “concrete existence” can be specifically recognized through dialectical synthesis.²¹ But, according to Miki, what is synthesized in Pascal’s dialectic is “supernatural fact.”²² For Miki, the hermeneutic and dialectical synthesis of the transcendental fact of life is the truth of the ontology of life. It is noteworthy that Heidegger had already asserted “fundamental dialectic (*Urdialektik*)” in his 1923 lecture.²³ Fundamental dialectic is, so to speak, a return to the undifferentiated origin of life and an examination of the mutual mediation and emergence of the historical world and the transcendental dimension. Of course, Heidegger later shifted entirely to hermeneutics and never revisited dialectic. But Miki, who engages with the dialectical tradition of the Kyoto School, can be said to return to Heidegger’s earliest ideas by deepening hermeneutics in his own way.

Rhetoric as Post-Hermeneutics: The Transcendental Logic of Imagination

Following “Pascal,” the articles “The Structure of Questions” (1926–27) and “The Basic Concepts of Hermeneutic Phenomenology” (1927) also contain abundant content from Heidegger’s two lectures given in 1923–24.²⁴

Löwith, “Der europäische Nihilismus” (1938/1940/1948/1953/1957), in *Weltgeschichte und Heilsgeschehen: Sämtliche Schriften, Band 2: Zur Kritik der Geschichtsphilosophie*, (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzlersehe Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1983), 517; Paul Hühnerfeld, *In Sachen Heidegger. Versuch über ein deutsches Genie* (München: Paul List Verlag, 1961), 55; Heinrich Wiegand Petzet, *Auf einen Stern zugehen. Begegnungen mit Martin Heidegger. 1929–1976* (Frankfurt am Main: Frankfurter Societäts-Druckerei, 1983), 90–91. This death mask of Pascal is also impressively described in the 1925/26 winter semester lecture “Logic: The Question Concerning Truth,” which discussed Kant’s “Schematization of the Pure Concepts of Understanding.” Heidegger, *GA* 21, 361–362.

²⁰ “The interpretation of human existence must possess a special structure. This is what some call the dialectic in Pascal ... Even in Pascal, dialectic is nothing other than the method for correctly identifying human existence.” Miki, “The Study of the Human in Pascal,” 149–150.

²¹ “Life can only be fully interpreted from the standpoint of unifying and synthesizing contradictions.” *Ibid.*, 153–154.

²² “What synthesizes and unifies the contradictions of reality is still fact, but above all, it is *supernatural* fact ... The understanding of life can only be complete when it is interpreted in relation to the transcendent. Therein lies the deepest mystery of life.” *Ibid.*, 189–190.

²³ “Fundamental Dialectic” is “the process of thinking, in its active state,” the “transformative relationship of constitutive interconnection in the mutual relationship between the objective and the subjective”—that is, the “constitutive interconnection, categories, and principles” of both—prior to all theoretical and logical premises. Heidegger, *GA* 59, 136.

²⁴ Mori, “Grundexperience als Work: Heidegger and Miki,” 299–306; Mine Hideki, “Heidegger and young Miki,” in *Kwansei Gakuin Jimbun Ronkyu (Humanities Review)*, 68:3 (2018), 1–21 (in Japanese).

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However, Miki also introduces Heidegger's hermeneutic structure into his own interpretation of Marxism. In "The Marxian Form of Anthropology," three stages are outlined: "fundamental experience," "anthropology," and "ideology."²⁵ The first stage determines the second, and the second determines the third. However, the dual relationship between "logos" and "experience" from the second to the third stage develops dialectically through a "mediation" similar to Kant's "schema." Although Miki's unique dialectic is incorporated into the transition from the second stage to the third stage, the "anthropology" of the second stage corresponds to what is known as the "hermeneutics of everydayness" based on Heidegger's 1924 lecture on Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, and the third stage generally corresponds to "historical science" based on the historicity of Dasein.²⁶ Therefore, Miki's interpretation of Marxism can be said to be grounded in Heidegger's hermeneutics of facticity, everydayness, and historicity.²⁷

However, the scope of the hermeneutics of everydayness extends through dialectical transcendentalization to the "logic of imagination." In "Philosophical Anthropology" (1933–37), Miki depicts the structure of dialectical thinking, maintaining the duality of subjectivity and objectivity.²⁸

²⁵ The first stage, "fundamental experience," is the "experience that produces the Logos"; the second stage, "anthropology," is "human self-interpretation (*Selbstausslegung*)"; and the third stage, "ideology," is "human self-understanding (*Selbstverständigung*)." Miki Kiyoshi, "The Marxian Form of Anthropology," in *Miki Kiyoshi Collected Works*, vol. 3 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1966-1968), 5, 9, 11–12, 17–18.

²⁶ In his 1924 lectures, Heidegger defined rhetoric as the hermeneutics of Dasein. "Rhetoric is nothing other than the domain in which the self-interpretation of Dasein is performed explicitly," and "rhetoric is nothing other than the interpretation of concrete Dasein, the hermeneutics of Dasein itself." Heidegger, *GA 18*, 110. Subsequently, in *Being and Time*, Aristotle's rhetoric is termed "the first systematic hermeneutics of the everydayness of mutual being." Heidegger, *GA 2*, 184. In his August 1927 article "Marxism and Materialism," Miki translates 'Jeweiligkeit' as 'banality.' This should be understood not as the existential category of 'Jemeinigkeit' (individuality) in *Being and Time*, but rather as a conceptual definition of everyday things derived through the interpretation of Aristotle's 'to kat hekasta' in the 1924 lectures. Miki's insight that *hekaston*—present despite separation yet vanishing from everyday life precisely because it is too familiar—can be described as the 'commodity' in modernity is indeed prescient. Miki Kiyoshi, "Marxism and Materialism," in *Miki Kiyoshi Collected Works*, vol. 3 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1966-1968), 59-60.

²⁷ Tosaka Jun harshly critiques Miki's "human studies as almost a direct import from Heidegger's ontology," yet accurately points out that "Miki's philosophy, as a modern historical philosophy, was not Marxist from the outset." Tosaka Jun, "Mr. Miki Kiyoshi and Miki's Philosophy," in *Tosaka Jun Collected Works*, vol. 5 (Tokyo: Keiso Shobo, 1967), 106–107.

²⁸ "Yet since the ground of being is conceived as nothingness in relation to being, the consciousness of such a ground is the consciousness of nothingness. Thus, human subjectivity manifests itself in the consciousness of nothingness. The transcendence from object to subject in man does not mean that we are consciousness and the world lies outside this consciousness. A mere transcendence over consciousness cannot be called true transcendence. Rather, as subjects, we transcend the object, the world, in its very being; and the world is transcendent for us precisely because there is already a transcendence to the subject within us. The transcendence

The subject transcends the world as the object by transcending “Nothingness,” which is the basis of the subject. As stated in “Hermeneutics and Rhetoric” (1938), this dialectical thinking is “active self-awareness” or “active intuition” that aims to unify logos and pathos, and possesses the technical ability to express and create the “world,” including “society.”²⁹ Miki’s “The Logic of Imagination” focuses mainly on technology from chapter one “Myth” and chapter two “Institution” to chapter three “technology.” But it is recognized for its originality that in chapter four “Experience,” Miki is, depending on Heidegger’s Kant-Book, extends it to Kant’s third critique. Here what is more noteworthy is the logic of “rhetoric.” Because the logic of rhetoric is assumed to be unfinished part of “language” in “The Logic of Imagination.”

Rhetoric is not only logic, grammar, and philology, but also transcends hermeneutics, which deals with “written language.” Rhetoric is an active thought that concretely and ethically constructs the world and society through “spoken language.”³⁰ Because the “language” of rhetoric “transcends the hermeneutic position of internalism,” which aims at the “totality” of “ego or experience,” and has a transcendental character that leads to the “idea (form)” of “society” through its expressive acts.³¹ Miki regards this de-hermeneutic transcendental logic of rhetoric as a “transcendental” “imagination” that forms the “idea” of “the event ‘between’ me and you.”³² Miki writes: “The logic of rhetoric must fundamentally be the logic of imagination.”³³

At a glance, it may seem that Miki is simply dialectically synthesizing opposites such as logos and pathos, understanding and experience, ethics and technology, action and intuition, and Being and Nothingness. However, while Heidegger reduces the hermeneutics of everydayness to the negative concept of “idle talk (*Gerede*),” Miki discovers in rhetoric the power to continually create new forms through speech in response to an unstable world that is threatened by Nothingness. Heidegger certainly saw logos in its function of world-disclosure as “letting-be-seen,” but his opposition to

inherent in human existence itself is the very source of the world’s transcendence, its worldliness, and the source of the object’s objectness. Human self-conscious existence is impossible apart from such transcendence. One might say that the world opens and reveals itself to us in the consciousness of nothingness. As one who has transcended into nothingness, man is the subject.” Miki Kiyoshi, “Philosophical Anthropology,” in *Miki Kiyoshi Collected Works*, vol. 18 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1966-1968), 266–267.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 147, 161, 303.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 320, 329–330; Miki Kiyoshi, “Hermeneutics and Rhetoric,” in *Miki Kiyoshi Collected Works*, vol. 5 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1966-1968), 140–143.

³¹ Miki, “Hermeneutics and Rhetoric,” 154–155.

³² *Ibid.*, 155–156.

³³ *Ibid.*, 151.

propositional logic there narrowed the scope of ethos in the hermeneutics of everydayness and, in turn, distracted from the transcendental character latent in ethos. Indeed, in Heidegger's later thought, including the concept of "*Geviert*," we can find an extension of ethos as re-dwelling in the world with others. Miki, however, had already planned to transcendentalize ethos, which early Heidegger had overlooked. And this idea is in line with Gadamer's transcendental philosophical hermeneutics. We create the world together with others according to ethos we can share in a transcendental sense, and through this, we continue to re-dwell in the world by repeatedly achieving fusion of horizons. The dialectical thinking of Miki opens up the logic of this transcendental creative power latent in rhetoric, that both discloses and mediates everything in the world.

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