The human being : when philosophy meets history. Miki Kiyoshi, Watsuji Tetsuro and their quest for a New Ningen

Brivio, C.

The Human Being: When Philosophy Meets History

Miki Kiyoshi, Watsuji Tetsurō and their Quest for a New *Ningen*

Chiara Brivio

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The Human Being: When Philosophy Meets History

Miki Kiyoshi, Watsuji Tetsurō and Their Quest for a New *Ningen*

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Ad melioram

Let my shoes lead me forward, please bring me some luck

Jenny Wilson

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Abbreviations

KHZ	*Kawakami Hajime Zenshū*, 36 vols., Tokyo, Iwanami Shoten, 1982-1986.
MKZ	*Miki Kiyoshi Zenshū*, 20 vols., Tokyo, Iwanami Shoten, 1966-1986.
TJZ	*Tosaka Jun Zenshū*, 6 vols., Tokyo, Keisō Shobō, 1966-1979.
WTZ	*Watsuji Tetsurō Zenshū*, 27 vols., Tokyo, Iwanami Shoten, 1962-1992.

Conventions

Japanese names follow the standard Japanese convention of having the family name followed by the given name (e.g. Miki Kiyoshi, Watsuji Tetsurō).
Translations from the original texts are mine when otherwise stated.

Introduction

> All efforts to escape the grimness of the present into nostalgia for a still intact past, or into the anticipated oblivion of a better future, are vain.[1]

This thesis started as an investigation into the 'how' and the 'to what extent' two twentieth-century Japanese philosophers, Miki Kiyoshi (1897-1945) and Watsuji Tetsurō (1889-1960), contributed to the ideology of the Japanese wartime regime. Their backgrounds were very different; Miki was an intellectual who spent part of his life studying Marxism and who took a very innovative approach in the understanding of the concepts of 'dialectics' and 'class'. Watsuji was a conservative intellectual who strove to design a new national character in the face of the crisis that he perceived 'Western modernity' had brought to Japan. In a sudden turn of faith, in the 1940s, Miki and Watsuji's philosophical systems eventually coincided, when they both came to support Japan's imperialist enterprise. The main questions therefore were how it was possible that two such different standpoints could philosophically and politically merge in such a fashion and to what extent they were bankrupted when Japan was defeated in August 1945. On a methodological level, this question was reflected in the enigma of whether philosophy and intellectual history were too intertwined to be clearly separated or whether, on the other hand, there was a need for a new methodological tool that could have overcome them both.

I will therefore argue that the answer to these questions has to be found in how the concept of the 'human being' (*ningen*) was theorized and developed by Miki and Watsuji throughout their careers. I will argue that their idea of 'medianity' that underpins their elaboration of *ningen* is the most profound and fundamental flaw that brought their systems to collapse together with the regime in 1945. [2] I will also demonstrate that victory did not only fail to militarily and historically concretize, but also philosophically. The 'faith' that Miki and Watsuji showed in the moral destiny of Japan and that was embodied in the idea of the *escaton* qua victory in the Second World War did not materialize in the way they had envisioned it. Thus, their philosophical systems were destined to failure for two reasons: the human being they created was a representation of what the Japanese nation meant to them and,

[1] Arendt 2004: xxvii.

[2] I have coined the neologism 'medianity' since I could not find any other word that could convey the same meaning. Medianity is not strictly a 'medium' or a 'milieu' but it rather describes the condition by means of which the human being finds himself in 'between' totality and infinity, as in Miki, or totality and particularity as in Watsuji. Since it is a precise ontological location that I have not found expressed in any other thinkers, I had to invent a new word.

furthermore, it was spatially and temporally grounded in a Japanese locus projected towards a visionary future of victory. The Second World War, with the atmosphere of crisis that it brought along, bankrupted Miki and Watsuji's expectations and ideas.

Politically, this Japanese human being was reflected in the Japanese imperial enterprise and, in Watsuji's case, even in the political environment of the postwar period. Despite Miki and Watsuji's personal and intellectual differences, their theorization of *ningen*, their faith in the *escaton* and their idea of medianity made them to politically come together. I will demonstrate that what they failed to do was to stop their systems from going down the road of ultranationalism and imperialism. Instead, they simply went along with it.

In order to support my hypothesis on a methodological level, I will have to employ both intellectual history and philosophy and subsume them in the history of philosophy. As a matter of fact, neither of the two will prove to be sufficiently complete for me to argue that ideas and history could collapse together. On the one hand, intellectual history, with its thrust on the contextualization of the production of a given author, could not fully answer the question of whether author and production could collude with historical reality. On the other hand, the scope of philosophy does not necessarily include the historical milieu or the historical impact certain ideas had. Thus, by sketching the historical and intellectual development of the idea of *ningen* in Miki and Watsuji, I will attempt to address the issue of how it is possible to solve the problem of the relationship between philosophy and history. In regard to the particular historical circumstances of the Second World War, this issue is even more pressing if we want to understand how intellectuals actively participated in the creation of the 'banality of evil' of WWII.

State of the Field

In 1994, Pierre Lavelle's published an article on the political thought of the father of modern Japanese philosophy and founder of the Kyōto School, Nishida Kitarō (1870-1945) (Lavelle 1994). The article sparked quite a debate amongst scholars around the extent to which Nishida's thought, and that of his students, Tanabe Hajime (1885-1962) and Nishitani Keiji (1900-1990), could have contributed to the ideology of the Japanese wartime regime. A number of critics agreed with Lavelle's position that Nishida was essentially guilty of having

supported the government, whilst others proposed the thesis that his religious thought and his philosophical contribution were more important than his politics. The focus gradually shifted from an analysis of the most theoretical and philosophical aspects of the Kyōto School that dealt with the influence of Buddhism towards a more political interpretation of their ideas. Maraldo calls this divide a one 'between intellectual historians (nearly all denouncing the school) and mostly appreciative theologians and philosophers of religion' (Maraldo 2006: 376). Only recently, Goto-Jones has taken a difference stand and sought to demonstrate that Nishida's philosophy was a political one from the start of his career in 1911 (Goto-Jones 2005a).

My choice of focusing on Miki and Watsuji, rather than on Nishida or his two most famous followers, was dictated by the fact that Miki and Watsuji's concept of the human being presented some striking similarities that were not evident in the production of the other Kyōto School philosophers. In addition, the scholarship on Miki and Watsuji is not as extensive as that on the other members, especially in languages other than Japanese. Methodologically, the few scholars who have studied Miki and Watsuji have usually followed the divide described above. Thus, Miki's involvement with the Shōwa Research Association (*Shōwa Kenkyūkai*) a government think-tank led by the then Prime Minister Prince Konoe Fumimaro, was, until recently, confined to research which specifically dealt with the history of the braintrust. Since Watsuji's conservative political orientation was never put into question, the discussion gravitated around the 'extent' to which Watsuji contributed to the nationalist ideology of the Japanese government.

Only recently, in Japan, there has been a revival of 'Miki studies', with three monographs and one edited volume published in four years (Uchida 2004; Machiguchi 2004; Tsuda 2007; Kiyoshi *et al.* 2008). If compared to the few books that appeared in the 1960s and 1970s, these ones, with the exception of Uchida, engage more thoroughly with Miki's involvement with the Shōwa Research Association. It might be a sign of the changing political climate in Japan, where Miki's support for the wartime nationalist regime is not seen anymore as a 'stain' in his intellectual career, but rather as an issue that needs to be dealt with. Different from Japan, in Europe and America only a handful of scholars have dedicated parts of their works to Miki. A few examples are Harootunian, Goto-Jones and, to a limited extent, Fletcher (Harootunian 2000a: 293-357; Goto-Jones 2005a: 104-9; Goto-Jones 2006; Fletcher 1979 and 1982). Watsuji's case is somewhat more nuanced, since some scholars see him as a fervent supporter of the regime (Bellah 1965; Harootunian and Najita 1988: 711-74; Sakai 1997; Harootunian 2000a: 250-92), some have tried to assess his work

in the light of his overall production (Kosaka 1997b; Mine 1998; Arisaka 1996b), whilst others have been quite apologetic (Kōsaka 1962; Yuasa 1981; Berque 1994; LaFleur 2001).

Many issues arise when dealing with political philosophy, in particular when produced in such a context as the one of the Second World War. Notwithstanding, I believe that there has been a major problem in the way the philosophy of the Kyōto School has been approached so far. All the studies mentioned above mainly focus on the question of 'collaborationism'. Nonetheless, the relationship between intellectual history, philosophy and the production of ideas has yet to be properly problematized. Even a very recent publication from Nanzan University that specifically engaged with Miki and Watsuji did not address this problem at all (Sōgen Hori and Curley 2008). Instead, this volume's contributors continued along the lines of the 'philosophers of religion'.

Thus, especially in the cases of these two thinkers, the issue should not reside in their alleged collaboration, their alleged *tenkō* or their alleged political innocence (and, I would argue, *naïveté*).[3] Rather, the issue should be how they both shifted in the direction the Japanese government was heading towards. The 'divide between intellectual historians and philosophers of religion' will never be bridged if research will continue to stubbornly entrench itself on these two polarizing positions. Furthermore, not asking the fundamental question of how a given idea in a given philosophical system can transform itself into a political weapon disregards the important role intellectuals had in shaping the ultranationalist ideologies of the past century with their gloomy political and historical outcomes.

Innovations

In order to solve this enigma, I have decided to approach the study of the concept of the human being in Miki and Watsuji both from the standpoint of intellectual history and philosophy. By tracing the internal development of three fundamental elements, medianity,

[3] *Tenkō* is a word that denotes the abjuring of one's own faith in favor of another one. It was first used to describe the Japanese Christian who, in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, were forced by the Tokugawa government to abjure their faith by stepping on sacred images (*fumie*). In the interwar period it was used to indicate those Marxist intellectuals who, willingly or through coercion, had embraced the Japanese nationalist ideology.

Angst and religion, which are the theoretical underpinning of the concept of *ningen*, I will show that my approach has more to do with history of philosophy than with intellectual history or philosophy alike.

To Miki and Watsuji 'medianity' represents the ontological as well historical location of the human being, where the *ningen* finds itself clustered between totality and infinity in Miki and totality and particularity in Watsuji. The theorization of an all-encompassing human being as 'median' that represents the unity of subject and object, logos and pathos, body and mind, aimed at overcoming the epistemological division between 'subject' and 'object'. This human being had the particular characteristic of being underpinned by history and praxis in Miki (then poiesis) and history and climate in Watsuji. Nevertheless, it was precisely its grounding the particular history and in a particular climate of Japan that prevented it from undergoing a complete renovation capable of evolving into another kind of possible 'history' if not the one of the Japanese nation.

Secondly, Miki and Watsuji developed medianity as a way to respond to the intellectual and spiritual crisis that they perceived as pervasive of Japanese society between the 1920s and the 1950s. The historical crisis was sparked by the uncertain political atmosphere that followed WWI and that gave way to the rising of ultranationalism in Japan.[4] Miki saw it reflected in the 'irrational forces' that took over in the form of fascism (MKZ X: 400-2). Watsuji considered it in terms of the dangers that 'Western' modernity and 'Western' capitalism presented to the pure and 'traditional' Japanese culture. He moreover re-witnessed it in the Japanese defeat in 1945 and in the subsequent American occupation that lasted until 1952. Hence, both thinkers interpreted the crisis (or crises) of their time as a sign of the deep and profound historical change that was investing Japan in that period. Thus, medianity not only emerged as a mean for renovation on a philosophical level, but also as a product and an attempted solution to the historical context in which it was born. Yet, if we have to listen to Gramsci who said that, in the time of crisis: 'the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear', then it is clear that medianity could have not proven to be a powerful tool in contrasting ultranationalist tendencies (Gramsci 1971: 276). As a matter of fact, we could consider medianity as a 'morbid symptom' of the empire to come.

Thirdly, and most importantly, there is the element of religion that appears quite strongly in Miki and Watsuji's systems. Miki and Watsuji believed that the Japanese victory

[4] In this respect, Japan, Italy and Germany have a lot of history in common, despite the specific characteristic that each fascist movement took in these countries.

in the Second World War would have materialized in the form of an intellectual *escaton*. At the end of the war, a new, renovated, Japanese *ningen* would have guided the whole of Asia vis-à-vis the European and the American one. The faith that they showed in their nation and their conviction that this was the destiny that Japan was morally entitled to is precisely what caused their idea of the human being to be miserably crushed under the blow of history. It is quintessentially a problem of religious faith, albeit not in sense of theology, but rather in the sense that Miki and Watsuji believed in a religion of the human being with all that that entails, including predestination. Nevertheless, Miki and Watsuji's *escaton* slightly differs in its historical realization. Miki died in September 1945 and was not able to witness the American occupation of Japan and the intellectual and physical reconstruction of his country. His idea of the renovated human being thus died with him and remained, in its characterization, a religious *escaton*.[5] Watsuji, on the other hand, survived the war and went on writing until his death in 1960. Since his ideals were defeated together with Japan in August 1945, he had to propose another model of *ningen* that could face the new challenges of the postwar period. He thus decided to cling to the idea of *betweeness* (*aidagara*) or inter-relationality of human beings. The failure of his *escaton* in 1945 subsequently gave birth to another form of *escaton* that should have seen Japan rising in the new geo-political environment of the Cold War. Watsuji's *escaton* took a political form as well as a religious one, further hampering the possibility of acknowledging the mistakes of the past.

These three elements form the kernel of Miki and Watsuji's philosophical innovations and, together, they reduced their systems to rubbles. I will hence demonstrate how their internal interplay, together with the external force of the historical context, doomed Miki and Watsuji's entire philosophical enterprises to a destiny of bankruptcy. In this way, I attempt to show that it is possible for philosophical systems to clash with history in its unfolding.

[5] I am not aware of any Japanese intellectual who, in the postwar period, continued the work that Miki had started in his lifetime. This is the reason why I affirm that his human being 'died' with him.

Structure of the Work

The work is divided in six main chapters. Chapter 1 deals with methodology and contextualizes the production of Miki and Watsuji both historically as well as philosophically. I will show, in more detail, why the methodological approaches that have been so far employed in the scholarship on the Kyōto School refrain from addressing the most important questions that should be asked when dealing with these Japanese intellectuals.

Chapter 2, 'The Birth of *Ningen*', traces the origin of the concept of *ningen* in Miki and Watsuji in the late 1920s. In this part, I will show how the influence of Pascal set the standard for Miki's elaboration of the human being and the extent to which Heideggerian philosophy contributed to the creation of such an idea. I will furthermore take into consideration Watsuji's human being in the context of two of his prewar major books: *Climate* and the first volume of *Study of Ethics*. The aim of this chapter is thus to demonstrate that, in the first part of their careers, Miki and Watsuji elaborated a similar concept of the human being that took the shape of medianity.

Chapter 3, '*Ningen* and Society', mainly focuses on the relationship between the philosophy of the *ningen* and Marxism. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, the thrust of Miki and Watsuji's systems became 'society', in particular in the way it had been theorized in Marx's writings. Here I will reflect on Miki's original understanding of Marxist philosophy, his idea of the *basic experience* (*kiso keiken*) and the first creation of a societal human being that eschews the concept of 'class'. I will moreover compare the work of the Hungarian Marxist intellectual Georg Lukács with Miki's writings. I will thus demonstrate that Miki's 'humanistic Marxism' already contained the seeds of his national human being to come. As for Watsuji, I will analyze his intellectual debate with the Japanese Marxist philosopher Kawakami Hajime on the subject of violence and one of his major pieces on Marxism. Since Watsuji's human being had, by this time, already been described as Japanese society, I will reveal how Watsuji's dismissal of Marxism was dictated by his conservative orientation and, at the same time, by the threat that Marxism posed to his *ningen*. In addition, I will engage with the criticism that the Marxist intellectual Tosaka Jun addressed to both Miki and Watsuji.

Chapter 4, '*Ningen* and the National Character', brings together Miki and Watsuji on the subject of the formation of a Japanese national character in mid-1930s and at the beginning of the 1950s. I will show that Miki's concept of *ningen* transformed itself from 'society' to the 'Japanese nation' similtaneously with his interest in philosophy of history. In this respect, I will investigate Miki's attempt to deal with the problem of national temporality through the concept of the *kairos*. This level of criticism will be brought about in conjunction

with Walter Benjamin and Ernst Bloch's critiques of fascist time. In the case of Watsuji, I will consider two of his postwar works, one on philosophy of history and the other on Japanese history, where Watsuji searched for the causes of the defeat in WWII. In the postwar period Watsuji did not essentially modify his thought. He strove to redefine a new Japanese national character that could have faced the challenges of the post-1945 world. Despite the political bankruptcy of his idea prewar idea of his *ningen*, he still had faith in his vision for a succeful and powerful Japan in the postwar historical context.

Chapter 5, '*Ningen* and Modernity', contextualizes the works of Miki and Watsuji in the framework of modernity through the concepts of technology and of the 'reverence to the emperor' in the late 1930s and in the 1950s. Miki further expanded his concept of the human being by transforming it into the *homo faber*, or the active, technological *ningen* that coincides with militarized Japan in the midst of the war. He elaborated a theory of technology characterized by the idea that Western, 'mechanical' technology needed to be sublated with the Eastern technology of the 'spirit'. I will show how the renovation of the *ningen* in such a context pushed Miki to grant to the Japanese human being a position of superiority towards the rest of the world. I will draw a parallel between Watsuji's two works on the Japanese ethical thought, one written in 1944 and the second one 1948. In both pieces Watsuji tangently deals with the problem of *ningen* in the form of the reverence to the emperor as the embodiment of the *betweeness* between the emperor and his subjects and, subsequently, the emperor and its citizens. Similar to Miki, Watsuji was highly critical of the decay that he saw Western modernity contaminating Japan. I will demonstrate that Watsuji, by resorting to the idea of reverence, sought to preserve the alleged 'cultural tradition' of his country. Both in the prewar and postwar period, Watsuji equated the figure of the emperor with the Japanese nation and he constructed his human being as the realization of the *betweeness* between the emperor with his subjects or citizens.

Chapter 6, '*Ningen* and Ideology', focuses on Miki's contribution to the Shōwa Research Association and Watsuji's most highly political works *The Way of the Japanese Subject* and *The American National Character*. In the effort of tracing back Miki and Watsuji's political ideas to the philosophical core of their production, the *ningen*, I will show how Miki and Watsuji came together and how their philosophies conflated with the ideology of their time by means of the framework of the *escaton*. I will demonstrate that the complete faith that Miki and Watsuji had in the Japanese nation resulted in the bankruptcy of the idea of *ningen* concurrently with the military loss of WWII.

In the conclusion, I will argue that the systems that Miki and Watsuji created could have not being modified in the course of their careers, since they were already doomed from their early stages. The nexus between society, nation and empire entrapped in the human being was therefore predestined to blossom in this fashion. In this context, I will propose further questions that will have to be remitted to another work.

I. NEW CHALLENGES FOR OLD DISCIPLINES

> Die Arbeit an der Philosophie ist eigentlich mehr die Arbeit an Einem selbst.[6]
>
> Is scholarship still an ecclesiastic practice?[7]

Intellectual History and Philosophy

Methodologically, this thesis aims at bridging intellectual history and philosophy by means of a return to history of philosophy. My objective is to show that the idea of *ningen*, as elaborated in the philosophy of Miki Kiyoshi and Watsuji Tetsurō, colluded with the historical period of the Second World War. In other words, by following the unfolding of a philosophical system both synchronically as well as diachronically, I will show that the interplay between history and philosophy is crucial in the understanding of the development of a given idea. Thus, rather then being interested in the 'what', as a philosopher would be, or in the 'why', as an intellectual historian would say, I am more concerned with the 'how'.

History of ideas, intellectual history and history of philosophy are like three faces of the same dice. The subtleties that separate them are often very volatile and it is without doubt that these three disciplines share more than what divides them. Nevertheless, the discipline of the history of ideas seems to have replaced the classic 'history of philosophy', on the basis that its eclecticism enables the historian or the interpreter to study different subjects with a synergic approach. Yet again, nowadays the definition of 'history of ideas' is challenged on the ground that ideas could be interpreted as atoms capable of an independent life, leaving little room to the interpretation of the context that surrounds them.

It is perhaps for this reason that the term 'intellectual history' is sometimes preferred to 'history of ideas'. The former could avoid the problem of a 'personalization' of ideas by making intellectuals and their historical context the object of study. Kelley explains the recent shift in these terms: 'The history of ideas may seem to bridge the gap between the ideal and the real, but this is an illusion to the extent that these ideas are already ('always already') incarnate in conventional language' (Kelley 2002: 2). There is therefore uneasiness towards what these methodologies are concern with and what is, in reality, their object of study.

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[6] Wittgenstein 1996: 5.
[7] Harootunian and Miyoshi 2002: 10.

After the publication of the works of Wittgenstein and J.L. Austin on the philosophy of language and on the 'performativity of language', after Foucault has called for an 'abandonment of the history of ideas' in favour of his archaeological description and after Derrida's 'absolute readability' that gives the text its own autonomy through the medium of writing, it appears that the three disciplines mentioned above are losing ground (Foucault 1972: 138).[8] This has also been noted in a recent article by Parsons, who expresses his dissatisfaction with the current state of the history of ideas as a discipline *per se* as well as in its academic manifestations (Parsons 2007: 698). He calls for a more 'inclusive' approach on a theoretical, methodological and cross-cultural level (Parsons 2007: 698). As much as I sympathize with Parsons' woes, I think that if we were able to find a comprehensive method that could analyze certain historical phenomena that happened in different geographical locations, there would be no need for 'inclusivity'.[9] In this case, the answer might come from a return to the history of philosophy, since its attention to the historical unfolding of philosophical concepts serves the function of geographically and temporally encompassing their internal and external aspects.

In the particular case of Miki and Watsuji, their theorization of the human being was a child of their time. As explained in the introduction, the spark came from dissatisfaction with the status of European epistemology on the one hand, and, on the other, in reaction to the *Angst* that Miki and Watsuji felt towards the historical crisis that had invested Japan in those years. I believe that, if it had not been for the 'crisis', their human being would have never taken the form of 'medianity'. Medianity has to be here understood as a condition of 'median' or 'betweeness', where the *ningen* finds itself trapped between two existential poles that do not allow for it to free itself and to develop in a different fashion than a 'Japanese' one. The human being is historically and ontologically trapped in this way of existence. Thus, it appears that the *ningen* cannot blossom as a 'universal' category, but that it is blocked in its

[8] See the works of the 'second' Wittgenstein, e.g. the *Big Typescript* (1969) on the role of philosophy and the *Philosophische Untersuchungen* (1953) for his theories on the *linguistic games* and on philosophy as a 'non-foundational science'. Austin published his *How to do things with words* in 1962, where he elaborated the concept of *performative sentences* and of their *illocutionary forces*, in which language is described as 'action' and not only as 'utterance'. Derrida's innovative theory on deconstructionism and on 'grammatology' as the new transcendental philosophy is developed in *De la grammatologie* (1967). Foucault developed the idea of the 'achaeology' in his *L'anchéologie du savoir* (1969), where he states that 'discontinuity' becomes the operational concept of history. Thanks to this, the subject loses his fundamental role as founder of knowledge.

[9] I am here leaving aside questions of 'canon' formation on purpose. Whether Japanese, Chinese, Korean and Indian philosophies should be included in the canon of Euro-American philosophy is a compelling issue that, nevertheless, cannot be directly addressed in the course of this study. For an example on the 'location' of Japanese philosophy see Goto-Jones 2005b.

particular historicity.[10] Historically, this particularity is the one of the Japanese nation. Intellectually, it is mirrored in the quasi-religious faith that Miki and Watsuji showed towards the destiny they thought Japan was entitled to. As a consequence, the history of WWII and the history of *ningen* became sealed and subsequently bankrupted together. Miki and Watsuji failed their human being in the moment they created it and in the moment they showed their faith towards the *escaton* of victory in the Second World War. There was no other path to follow if not the one of support for the ultra-nationalist government, since, philosophically as well as historically, the very same ontological condition of *ningen* predestined it to imperialism.

This issue is even more pressing when thinking that in the fields of Area or Asian studies post-colonialism, post-modernism, gender studies and all the other Derridean spin-offs, in conjunction with the breakthrough opened up by Edward Said and his *Orientalism* (1978), have become mainstream. The validity of these approaches, which have the great merit of having shaken academia of its old Euro-American centric way of doing scholarship, is not in question here; rather there is room for doubt about whether it is possible to employ them 'universally'. For example, it is difficult to see how they would function in the context of Miki and Watsuji's philosophies without these being fundamentally manipulated in their original meaning and intent. Indeed, there has been an attempt of employing feminist theory to Watsuji's idea of *betweeness* in order to transform it into a global principle of 'ethics of care' (see McCarthy 2008). In this case, the fact that *betweeness* was the product of a conservative intellectual who was prone to racist remarks towards the Jews and the Chinese and who supported the Japanese imperial enterprise in East and South-East Asia is almost completely disregarded. What is left of Watsuji's system is solely the idea that human beings are ontologically constituted by a net of ethical relations that supposedly abide to a moral prescription of caring for others.

In another instance, since Miki's critique of Western capitalism and modernity could function as an act of resistance towards Western imperialism, it has been proposed that Miki was a post-colonial intellectual *ante litteram* (Uchida in Miki 2007: 243). Yet again, such a statement jettisons Miki's active participation in the government think-tank that provided the intellectual backdrop for the Japanese military campaigns during WWII. It is true that Miki was highly critical of European and American imperialism, but what he did was to theorize the creation of another kind of colonial empire under the Japanese leadership. Philosophical

[10] In this case I believe that Miki and Watsuji's historicity could be compared to Heidegger's historicity or the 'destiny' of the *Dasein*.

works need to be contextualized in their own historical, political and intellectual period and in light of the given author's overall production if we want to assess their real, rather than imagined, contributions to various fields.

In this way, by including the philosophy of the 'human being' into the history of philosophy, it would be possible to shed at least some light on the thorny question of how intellectuals contributed to the creation of nationalist ideologies. Nevertheless, I believe that such an analysis could only be employed in periods of so-called 'historical crisis', because it is in this historical convergence that the conditions for philosophy and history to be united are fulfilled. At least in the instance of the Second World War, history and philosophy did collude.

Methodology before

Some of the works published on the Kyōto School over the years have, to some extent, fallen into what Skinner's calls *mythologies* (Skinner 1969). Skinner and Dunn have affirmed that the problem of the interpretation of a given text is always a matter of context and that certain historians try to explain past histories by means of present paradigms and categories (Dunn 1968: 98; Skinner 1969: 7). Despite the fact that Skinner and Dunn's approach has been criticized for being a kind of 'reductionism' where ideas come to constitute their own context rather than being part of a wider one, their approach proves to be a useful insight into the analysis of how scholarship has been undertaken with regard to Japanese philosophy.[11]

Following the distinction between philosophers of religions and intellectual historians outlined in the introduction of this work, the former group of scholars have, to some extent, recreated the myth of 'coherence' in their studies. In other words, they have conceived their task as 'to supply or find in each of these texts the coherence which they may appear to lack' (Skinner 1969: 7-16). Such an approach risks to disregard the role of the given author as the performer of his own 'speech-acts', as well as to remit the exegesis of the text to a future interpreter.

In the specific case of Nishida, Yusa Michiko and Ueda Shizuteru have claimed that he was a firm opponent of the Japanese military expansion in Asia during the Second World

[11] For a critique of Skinner and Dunn see Diggins 1984.

War (Yusa 1995; Ueda 1995). Their argumentation is mainly based on Nishida's personal correspondence and not on documents that were published for a public audience. From the standpoint of a methodological critique, this is the major problem of Yusa and Ueda's works. They have selected their sources on the basis of what they thought Nishida's overall religious philosophy should have consisted of and they have come to the conclusion that he could have never been 'downgraded' to the level of ultranationalist ideologue. The same has happened in Watsuji's case, in regard to which scholars such as Yuasa, Nagami, Dilworth and LaFleur have argued that Watsuji's idea of *kū* (vacuity), since it is a Buddhist principle, eschews problem of political collaborationism (Yuasa 1981; Nagami 1981; Dilworth 1974; LaFleur 1978). Yet again, they strove to find coherence in certain parts of Watsuji's production and overlooked the most politically charged ones. In the name of a Buddhist idea that is, in their eyes, inherently benevolent, they sought to demonstrate that Watsuji could have never taken part in the 'evil' of the Japanese empire. The fundamental problem with these analyses is that they overlook the overall productions of both philosophers and, in some cases, they fail to contextualize them. As we shall see in the course of this work, the elaboration of the concept of vacuity in Watsuji is not as 'Buddhist' as some would like it to be. Rather, Watsuji himself, in the course of his career, put forward contrasting views on the political and religious function that Buddhism should have played in Japan.

In the case of Miki, the best example of the mythology of coherence is the condoning of his participation in the Shōwa Research Association in favour of a positive assessment of his Marxist ideas or his theorization of 'anthropology' (Shimizu 1976; Arakawa 1968; Uchida 2004). Despite the fact that Uchida does extensively contextualize Miki's thought in the framework of the development of the 'rentier-state capitalism' in Japan and in Miki's internal struggle for a definition of the relationship between individual freedom and coercion, he fails to touch upon the phase of the Shōwa group.[12] In this instance, the effort to provide coherence to Miki's work is based on the idea that his intellectual speculations of Marxism overshadow his political contributions to the ideology of the Japanese regime.

[12] I still consider Uchida's book as the most comprehensive and sophisticated study of Miki Kiyoshi that has so far appeared, both in Japanese and other languages. Nevertheless, towards the end of the book, Uchida appears to be quite torn between Miki's philosophy and Miki's politics and he opts for not covering the Shōwa Research Association period. Instead, he directly jumps to *Shinran*, a book that Miki started writing during his time in prison between 1943 and 1945 and that remained unfinished. Only in the collection of pieces that he curated in 2007 and that specifically deals with Miki's involvement with the think-tank, he proposes the theory of the 'post-colonial, intellectual of resistance' (Uchida in Miki 2007: 234-58).

The mythology of parochialism represents another conventional feature in the study of the Kyōto School.[13] Scholars such as Peter Dale, Pierre Lavelle and Bernard Faure argue that Nishida and his disciples not only were complicit with the Japanese ultra-nationalist regime during the wartime period, but also that they philosophically and ideologically justified its military enterprises. In their analyses, words such as 'imperialist', 'ultra-nationalist', 'fascist' are often found (Dale 1986, Lavelle 1994, Faure 1995). The fundamental problem is that these scholars confide in the assumption that every kind of fascism or imperialism has the same historical and intellectual characteristics. Thus, they fail to problematize 'imperialism' and 'fascism' in the first place. It follows that they never put into question the intellectual specificity of the Kyōto School either and it could be argued that the criteria that they apply perpetuate Said's dichotomy between 'pure knowledge' and 'political knowledge' (Said 1995: 9).[14]

Finally we have a third trend that, in one way or the other, manages to overcome the mythologies that Skinner described. Goto-Jones, Harootunian and Sakai have approached the Kyōto School in different ways and with different results (Goto-Jones 2005a; Harootunian 2008; Harootunian 2000a; Sakai 1997). In his study of Nishida, Goto-Jones argues that Nishida's attempt to 'speak the truth to power' ultimately failed. He does not consider him an ultra-nationalist; rather he contextualizes Nishida's production from its early stages until

[13] The third kind of mythology, the one of parochialism, arises especially in the case of the encounter with an 'alien' text (Skinner 1969: 24). It is certainly true and hermeneutically obvious that in the interpretation of a piece of work the interpreter approaches the text with a baggage of familiar criteria and paradigms which are provided by his own culture. Skinner affirms that, in applying those paradigms, the interpreter might 'see' familiar discourses where there are not. In this way, the historian may find an 'apparent *reference* of some given statement in the classic text' or, on the other side, he might 'unconsciously misuse his vantage-point in describing the *sense* of a given point' (Skinner 1969: 24-27, emphasis in the original).
In this respect, Skinner is in stark contrast to the hermenentics, such as Gadamer and Ricoer, who argue that the interpreter approaches the text with a certain amount of 'prejudices' that are necessary to the process of understanding (see Gadamer 2004: 269). The core question is how we can understand and interpret a text without letting these prejudices bias our understanding. To Gadamer, the interpreter needs to appropriate them in order to restore the alterity of the text (Gadamer 2004: 271). The focal point is the role of the reader, because it is the reader that can understand a text other than what the author meant at the time he wrote it. Gadamer describes the process of 'fusion of horizons' as the one that occurs in a historical or culture encounter, and he argues that the same happens in the encounter between the reader and the text. The process of understanding is therefore a 'productive activity' (Gadamer 2004: 296). Ricoeur re-interprets this concept in light of his description of the idea of tradition. According to Ricoeur we, as human beings, aspire to the fusion between the 'horizon of expectations' and 'space of the existence' (a theory developed by Reinhart Koselleck and similar to Gadamer's *Horizontverschmelzung*), since our ontology is described as 'l'être-affecté-par-l'histoire'. In this projection towards the horizon of the future we feel the efficacy of the past and our 'being affected' by it in the circle of hermeneutical understanding (Ricoeur 1985: 320).

[14] Said highlighted the political implications that a research, for example, on the literature of the Soviet period might have had on the scholarship itself and defined it 'politicla knowledge'. On the other hand, a study of French, British and Italian literature was not supposed to have such implications and therefore represented 'pure knowledge'.

Nishida's death by using Skinner and Austin's theory of the 'speech-acts'. Nishida thus becomes an ineffective intellectual of dissent, whose words were either manipulated by the Right or failed to reach their designated interlocutors. Harootunian, on the other hand, is quite critical of the Kyōto School as a whole, and especially of Watsuji. He locates the cause of the ideological *impasse* between the school and the Japanese government in the Kyōto School's failed attempt to 'overcome modernity'. Instead, he argues that they were 'overcome by modernity'. Sakai, on the other hand, analyses Watsuji and Tanabe's productions in the framework of comparative philosophy and post-modernism, stressing in particular the parallel and relationship between Heidegger and Japanese philosophy. What these three works manage to achieve is to apply a 'method' to the study of the Kyōto School.

Nevertheless, in the case of this thesis, none of these approaches could fully answer the question of how the *ningen* as an idea became part of the rheoric and ideology of the Japanese empire.

Three Methods

As explained in the introduction, the current status of the scholarship on the Kyōto School is staged in the rift between philosophers of religion and intellectual historians. In terms of methodology, we have seen how parts of this production have fallen into the categories of the Skinnerean mythologies and how others have managed to avoid them. Thus, what is the most suitable method that can be employed in addressing the question of 'how' these Japanese intellectuals contributed to the ideology of the wartime regime?

The heart of the matter could not be fully addressed through a Marxist critique of capitalist modernity. As a matter of fact, such a critique would eschew the link between Miki's first elaboration of the *ningen*, influenced by Pascal and Heidegger, and his subsequent Marxist production of the 'basic experience' and of a Japanese philosophy of history. Moreover, an explanation would need to be found for the how Miki ended up joining the Shōwa Research Association and creating an imperial human being. Yet, from the standpoint of a Marxist critique, Miki failed. He failed to put forward a coherent critique of capitalism, of class struggle, and of reification. Nevertheless, the 'real' failure lies somewhere else.

Miki failed in his Marxist enterprise because he created a concept of *'ningen*-class' that did not comply with the standard elaboration of 'class' as in Lukács or Marx. His *ningen*-class was a societal element that was based on the idea that the solution of the reification (*butsuka*) of consciousness did not come from the element of 'totality' in the form of the proletariat, as in Lukács, but rather from society as a whole. He linked the idea of reification to the one of 'authentic existence' of the Heideggerian *Dasein* thus undermining one of the basic principles of Marxism that is class struggle.[15] Yet, this *ningen*-class functioned organically in the grand scheme of his overall production. It represented the development of the idea of the human being from a very theoretical elaboration towards philosophy of praxis. Marxism provided Miki with the practical side of the *ningen* that he was in need for. The failure of Miki's philosophy resides precisely in having bound the human being to the specificity of Japanese society and then to the Japanese empire. Thus, if every philosophical phase is contextualized in light of the whole of Miki's production, the Marxist phase functions as a piece of the puzzle. Marxist ideological critique could help in understanding 'what' went missing Miki's system, but it would not expose 'how' that could be functional in the framework of the collusion of philosophy with history. In particular, it would not address the issue of whether Miki's philosophy was defeated together with his country in 1945.

Secondly, the intellectual historians' approach that analyzes the intention of the author presents a valuable mean to describe the 'why'. In this instance it could be argued that the 'illocutionary force' that is present in Watsuji's speech-acts brought him to be critical of the regime, whilst remaining a mainstream conservative intellectual.[16] One suitable example might be the lectures that Watsuji delivered to the Navy Academy in 1943. The former, *The Way of the Japanese Subject*, gravitated around the idea that sacrificing one's own existence in the name of the emperor represented the most sublime act of loyalty and reverence.[17] Watsuji writes that 'to happily die for the emperor' and 'not to die until the enemy is defeated' are two expressions that indicate that one is still being attached to his own life (WTZ XIV: 296-7). Instead, he says, in order to get rid of one's own 'ego', the standpoint

[15] For a discussion of Miki's 'humanistic Marxism' see Chap. 3 and for analysis of Miki's link between capital and the masses as a cause of imperialist expansion see Chap. 6.

[16] The concept of 'illocutionary force' is used by Skinner in studies of political theories and history of ideas (Skinner 1969: 49). Skinner tries to propose a 'return' to the author rather than focussing on the 'text' itself. Skinner strongly advocates for a shift from the problem of 'perennial questions' and 'universal truth' that have to be found in the classic texts, towards what that author meant at that time, what he meant by saying that and what were the conditions of that performance. It is not possible to learn from a classic author because 'there are no perennial problems in philosophy' (Collingwood, quoted in Skinner 1969: 50).

[17] *Nihon no shindō* and *America no kokuminsei*. In 1944 they were published together as a pamphlet for the Iwanami Shoten series 'Wartime National Library'. For a detailed analysis of both pieces see Chap. 6.

must be the one of 'transcending life and death' (WTZ XIV: 297). The latter, *The American National Character*, is a discussion of what Watsuji thought being the main features of the Anglo-American national characters. He describes them as being 'machine civilizations' that were on the verge of a 'nervous breakdown' because of their alleged lack of moral strength (WTZ XVII: 455-81). Watsuji's critics have seen these passages as his ultimate endorsement of the ultra-nationalist ideology, when he called for young marines to go and die in the name of their sacred emperor and when he harshly criticized the Anglo-American powers. Nevertheless, according to the illucotionary force of his uttered-actions, we might argue that Watsuji's words might be judged according to another parameter. In other words, it might have been the case where he was actually warning the top-brass of the Navy that the war was lost and that these cadets should have not been sacrificed. [18] His speech-acts, therefore, were not flawed but they failed to provide a meaningful contribution to the political situation he was then facing.[19]

Nonetheless, even if we had to consider this method, it would still not clarify how Watsuji's system came to conflate with the ideology of the wartime period. Instead, it suggests that Watsuji accepted to deliver a speech to the Navy Academy, instead of the Army, because he was possibly attempting to save Japan from total destruction.[20] It is quite obvious that Watsuji failed, regardless his real intent. He failed because his idea of the ultimate sacrifice in the name of the emperor was tied to the way his *ningen* had been created. To die for the emperor, in the scheme of Watsuji's political philosophy, meant to die for a sacred and divine ruler who represented an 'empty' Absolute Totality. The human being, in a dialectical relationship with this totality, was genuinely pushed to obedience thanks to a noematic resedue that totality had maintained in the particular. The *ningen* qua *aidagara* embodied this ethical principle of betweeness where society was harmoniously regulated and normatized. There was therefore no need for coercion. Thus, the standpoint of the 'transcendence of life and death' has to be seen in this context where absolute devotion represents a cultural as well as political characterization of the Japanese human being. On the other hand, the criticism of Great Britain and the United States is simply a perpetuation of Watsuji's idea that 'Western' modernity was inherently immoral and that it had contaminated the 'purity' of Japan. As in

[18] LaFleur argues along these lines, arguing that 'Watsuji's intentionality may have been much less the prediction of Anglo-American "breakdown" than a necessary veiled disclosure of flawed thinking on the part of Japanese policy makers and a warning to those who would be able to grasp the subtlety of what Watsuji meant' (LaFleur 2001: 7).

[19] A similar kind of argument is found in Goto-Jones' analysis of Nishida's speech-acts (Goto-Jones 2005a).

[20] It is commonly believed that Army was the most aggressive and vocal instigator of the creation of the Japanese empire, whilst the Navy was more moderate (see Ōhashi 2001).

the case of Miki, here the lectures to the Navy represent another piece of the puzzle that is necessary to understand to which extent Watsuji's system was bankrupted by the war.

A third, philosophical approach, would simply reiterate the kind of issues that we have explored above in the analysis of the fallacies of the philosophers of religion. First of all, their approach side-steps the problem of political responsibility since it affirms that the philosophical contribution of these Japanese philosophers greatly outdoes their political roles. As a consequence, the production of the Kyōto School is interpreted in a-historical perspective, where the abstraction of concepts enables scholars to overlook the political and historical context in which they were produced. It is the 'text' only approach that baulks the process of contextualization. Needless to say, it is important to assess the major intellectual and philosophical innovations that these thinkers introduced, but it does not entail that it could explain how, yet again, intellectuals ended up joining governmental think-tanks, associations and brain trusts.

Even Sakai's post-modern, comparative approach that attempts to sketch influences, similarities and differences between the Kyōto School thinkers and its European counterparts in conjunction with the study of issues of 'translation', could not fully satisfy our need of understanding this history-philosophy relationship (Sakai 1997: 40-71). The influence that European philosophy exercised on Miki and Watsuji's intellectual formation is undeniable.[21] It nonetheless could not stand as a possible methodological answer to the issue we are here taking into consideration.

Thus, the questions that have been so far asked to the philosophy of the Kyōto School have not sufficiently problematized the interplay between history and philosophy, which is the reason behind the bankruptcy of Miki and Watsuji's thought. In this case, history of philosophy might represent the most suitable method that we have left to properly and critically address this issue.

[21] I agree with Sakai when he writes that it is almost impossible to understand the Kyōto School without being acquainted with the history of European philosophy (see Sakai 2008).

History of Philosophy

If this thesis wants to demonstrate that history and philosophy colluded in Miki and Watsuji's thought, it needs to explain how their idea of medianity was doomed from the start. We have previously given three reasons for the failure of their human being; here we will address this problem from a methodological standpoint.

Miki and Watsuji created a human being that was ontologically a median. This position of the human being, in the 1940s, became mirrored in the geo-political situation of WWII. Miki and Watsuji felt that Japan covered a 'median' position between the colonial powers and the colonized countries and that its mission would have been to adibe to its 'moral destiny' of victory in the Second World War. This represents the *escaton* that Miki and Watsuji firmy believed in and were waiting for. Miki defined it in terms of Japan 'attaining self-awareness' of its own condition and Watsuji in terms of Japan fulfilling its role of liberator of 'ten million Asians' (MKZ XVII: 533; WTZ XVII: 442). Their semi-religious belief in the *escaton* of the war, that should have been historically concretized in a Japanese victory, stands as the 'how' they contributed to the wartime ideology. The *ningen* they had elaborated, from its early stages, had been temporally and spatially trapped in the particularity in a Japan in crisis that was struggling to 'overcome' modernity by means of technological and mechanical development.

In this case, the philosophy they theorized was already historical in the sense of historicity but un-historical from the standpoint of historical reality. Miki and Watsuji meditations on the human being lost touch with the reality of history in the moment they abandoned themselves to the theological principle of the *escaton*. The various stages of the development of the *ningen*, between the 1920s and the 1950s, expose this conceptual and theoretical flaw. In other words, by creating an idea of the human being that was already grounded in the historical specificity of a real, but imagined, nation-state, Miki and Watsuji could do nothing else but to harvest it in the completion of the history of this state. The *escaton* qua victory in the war is what bankrupted history as well as philosophy because, in its unfolding, it abided to an internal logic of success that was divorced from the real and external logic of failure. The disconnection between these two necessary factors caused for both to be united in the judgement of history. Miki and Watsuji refused to recognize historical reality and refused to interrupt the course of their philosophies. This must be regarded as their greatest philosophical and political failure.

In terms of philosophy of history, this process is, internally, mirrored in the logical maturation of the concept and, externally in the paradox of the historical context that fathered

it but that, at the same time, was uncritically excluded from its development. History and philosophy touch in the moment when Miki and Watsuji declared their faith in the historical mission Japan was entitled to. They called it the 'destiny' of Japan. By pronouncing and believing in this mission, they certainly merged with the imperial ideology that was then calling for the occupation of Asia in the name of a divine figure. Thus, the atmosphere of *Angst* that pervaded Japan in the interwar and postwar period is the background that must be taken into account. The 'human being' as an idea was born, lived and crushed together with Japanese history. These two elements are the *condition sine qua non* for each other to exist. There would have not have been a medianity if it had not been for the historical context and another historical context would have probably not given birth to such an idea.

This is the 'how' Miki and Watsuji ended up being failed by their own philosophies. And it is also the 'how' Watsuji continued to believe in the same kind of political *escaton* in the postwar period. To him the post-1945 years were felt as another time of anxiety and uncertainty because the role that Japan should have played was not clear yet. He therefore hung to betweeness and convinced himself that the emperor had transformed himself into a symbolic figure that, nevertheless, still retained that sacred allure towards its citizens. Until now, nobody had interrogated the texts or the contexts or the authors in order to understand how such a process could have been possible. Probably because the instances where history and philosophy come together are few and difficult to interpret. The historical context of the Second World War is highly unmatchable, both for the horrors it witnessed as well as for the outcomes it had. Thus, the history of philosophy could help in contemplating how intellectuals could have gone as far as creating systems that were so symbiotically tied to their context that it baulked a process of their critical engagement with it. It does not mean that philosophical ideas are not the products of their own historical contexts; rather it points at the fact that the collusion between the two cannot be always convenient for those interpreters who struggle to make sense of history.

II. THE BIRTH OF *NINGEN*
Founding the Human Being in the 1920s-1930s

> Toutre notre dignité consiste donc en la pensée.[22]
>
> In no other place in philosophy but with the awakeners [Pascal, Lessing, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche] is the mystery of man, the wealth of his possibilities, the manifold nature of his particular secrets, brought into focus.[23]

This first chapter focuses on the genesis of the concept of the 'human being' in Miki Kiyoshi and Watsuji Tetsurō's philosophies. The introductory part concentrates on the very first stages of Miki and Watsuji's careers, before and after they embarked on their journeys to Europe in the mid-1920s. In the context of our research on medianity, this historical period is crucial since it here that both intellectuals provide the first definition of what the *ningen* is and what its characteristics are. Thus, if a thorough analysis of the concept of *ningen* is to be provided, its birth and early development need not to be overlooked. The encounter with European philosophy sparked a deep reflection from Miki and Watsuji's side on the subject of human existence and on its possible manifestations. Therefore, they were both pushed to revisit their previous meditations of German and French philosophy as they had elaborated them in Japan towards what they felt were their manifestations in their European context. The outcome of this exercise of contextualization of foreign intellectual influences gave birth to the concept of *ningen* in the form of medianity.

In the early 1920s, during his sojourn in Germany, Miki noticed the climate of *Angst* that was pervading German society after WWI. He realized that the main philosophical school of Neo-Kantianism was being overshadowed by the existential philosophy of Martin Heidegger (1889-1976). As a consequence, history was beginning to be analyzed not only as a category for historiography, but, most of all, as the embodiment of the reality of human existence. These two concepts of history *qua* historicity of existence and *Angst* are cornerstones of Miki's philosophy that will remain constant throughout his career. The seeds of their theoretical development have to be found in Miki's first major book: *The Concept of*

[22] Pascal: 209.
[23] Jaspers 1995: 40.

the Human Being in Pascal (*Pasukaru ni okeru ningen no kenkyū*, 1926).[24] Yet, there are other themes here expressed that will be developed and refined in the course of Miki's life. The topics of consciousness, time and dialectics as the methodology of human existence are all here mentioned for the first time. They will later reach full bloom in the mid and late 1930s, when the human being will become historicized and contextualized in relation to philosophy of history and philosophy of technology.

On the other hand, Watsuji reached notoriety in Japan for his studies on Western philosophy, such as *A Study of Nietzsche* (*Niichie kenkyū* 1913) and *Søren Kierkegaard* (*Zēren Kierukegōru* 1915).[25] These two works were the first ones to provide a full and deep understanding of both thinkers in Japan (LaFleur 1990: 236). Therefore, he differentiated himself from Nishida Kitarō, Tanabe Hajime and Miki himself, who were influenced by the works of Rickert (Yuasa 1981: 40).[26] Nevertheless, it is in his work *Climate: An Anthropological Study* (*Fūdo: ningengakuteki kōsatsu*), published in 1935, that Watsuji first elaborated his concept of the human being as being underpinned by both history and climate in its fundamental structure. This trend continues in the first volume of *Study of Ethics* (*Rinrigaku*, 1937), where the 'betweeness' of the human being is posited at the centre of human existence, giving more relevance to the social structure of a community rather than to its relationship with nature and climate.

At this stage, the chapter will take two different trajectories. On one hand, it will show the affinities between Miki and Watsuji's concept of the human being in the theoretical elaboration of medianity. On the other hand, the second part of the chapter will reveal how, in a later phase, Watsuji's elaborations start taking a direction towards political philosophy, whilst Miki appears to focus on the more philosophical and theoretical aspects of his theory of human existence. It will be important to consider the influence Heideggerian philosophy had on both thinkers, since they openly acknowledge the importance his thought had in the formation of their systems. By analyzing *The Concept of the Human Being in Pascal, Climate,* and *Study of Ethics* together with other works, I therefore attempt to sketch the genesis and the subsequent development of the concept of *ningen*.

[24]Now in MKZ I: 1-191.
[25] Now respectively in WTZ I: 1-391 and WTZ I: 393-679.
[26] The translation of Rickert's *Gegenstand der Erkenntnis* (*The Object of Cognition*) appeared in 1916 and featured an introduction by Nishida Kitarō himself (Yusa 1998: 51).

Before Europe

Miki Kiyoshi's interest in the concept of the human being started during his sojourn in Germany between 1922 and 1924 and continued in Paris during 1925. Nevertheless, his encounter with European philosophy happened much earlier. Miki enrolled at Kyoto University in 1917 in order to study philosophy under Nishida Kitarō, who at that time was considered the most important philosopher in Japan (Yusa 1998: 49). He graduated in 1920 with a thesis on Kant's critical philosophy and its relationship with philosophy of history (*Hihan tetsugaku to rekishi tetsugaku*, Uchida 2004: 170)[27]. According to Uchida, Miki's interest in the formation of the categorical imperative in Kantian philosophy is a sign of his early engagement with philosophy. Concepts such as 'individual freedom' and 'historical formation' of the human being appear here for the first time and they will remain a constant motive until his death in 1945 (Uchida 2004: 170 ff). To Miki, individual freedom as historical freedom takes place in the process of socialization with other human beings in history (Uchida 2004: 171-2). History is therefore an essential component of existence and freedom is defined as: 'a concrete concept […] that I call *real freedom.* Real freedom is, most of all, human freedom' (MKZ II: 44). The concreteness of the human being and its historicity are therefore already present in Miki's first philosophical piece.

The historical context might even have contributed in shaping the underlying motive of this text. The Taishō period (1912-1926) was certainly a period of lively intellectual debates and relative freedom although, as many have suggested, it also laid the foundation of the subsequent Shōwa absolutism (1926-1989).[28] Katō underlines the fact that intellectuals in this period were working under enormous pressure from the system itself and that, therefore, they cannot be labelled as 'real' liberals.[29] The only liberals were thus Marxist and Communist thinkers, who called for a total abolishment of the imperial system (Katō 1974: 224). Uchida describes this period as a period of vitality but also of political turmoil that might have contributed to the development of Miki's ideas on the questions of freedom and on the relationship between state and individual.

The uncertainties of the Taishō period were mirrored in the debate on *minponshugi* or 'democracy' that sparked after different political demonstrations took place in Tokyo between

[27] Now in MKZ II: 7-68.
[28] On the so-called 'Taishō demokurashi' see Harima 1969, Duus 1982 and Hoston 1992.
[29] In 1925 the government promulgated the Peace Preservation Law. This law aimed at targeting every individual, political party or intellectual who was speaking out again the emperor system. This is the first sign of the decline of democratic reforms in Japan.

1905 and 1914 (Duus 1982: 415).[30] Although calling for a society of 'consensus', the liberal intellectuals were never able to provide a suitable solution for the political and social problems Japan underwent in that decade. It is in this political and intellectual environment that Watsuji wrote *Two Ways of Breeding Democracy* (*Minponshugi oiku no nihō*), an article that deals with the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the overthrown of the Tsarist regime.[31]

According to Watsuji, democratic ideas are not at all a threat to the *kokutai*, as some politicians would like people to think (WTZ XX: 344).[32] Instead: 'The danger is the *lack of understanding* (*murikai*) and *intemperance* (*musessei*)' (WTZ XX: 344, emphasis in the original) in addition to the fact that the *isms* (*shugi*) are often subjected to radicalization (WTZ XX: 347). Watsuji is bringing Great Britain as an example of a democratic system with a monarchy. Nonetheless, Watsuji also argues that Japan and Britain are not the same case study. For example, the Japanese Imperial family is of an unbroken descent (*bansei ikkei*) that realizes its unique history in the spirit of the Japanese democracy (WTZ XX: 344).

On a more political level, Watsuji argues that the suffrage, even as a difficult concept to understand, has to be awarded to the people. Furthermore, the reforms of the capitalist and the union systems have to be put forward together with a massive campaign of education focussed on the welfare of 'public life' (*kōkyō seikatsu*) that would prevent society from retreating back to 'egotism' (*rikoshugi*) (WTZ XX: 348-9). Surprisingly, Watsuji thinks that the conservatives pose a real threat because their refusal of accepting political and social reforms could cause 'explosions' (*bakuhatsu*) and 'riots' (*konran*). This is the reason why they should be banned (*tsuibō serarenebanaranu*) (WTZ XX: 349).

As it is possible to see here, Watsuji is not opposing the implementation of European-style democratic reforms in Japan. He is stressing the fact that 'educating' the masses could be a valuable solution for the imperial family to safeguard the *kokutai* and to prevent a violent revolution. This represents another characteristic of the Taishō period, when intellectuals were engaging in a debate with the masses over the role of socialism and democratic rights.

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[30] *Minponshugi* literally means 'government for the people' and it is usually distinguished from *minshūshugi* (sovereignty of the people). Yoshino Sakuzō (1878-1933), one of the leading 'Taishō liberals', often uses the term *minponshugi* when calling for an improvement of the democratic policies in Japan (Katō 1974: 223).

[31] Originally published in the journal *Shin Jidai.* Now in WTZ XX: 344-350. Quotations are from the *Collected Works.* In the same year, Watsuji wrote other two articles on the question of democratic reforms in Japan. They are: *Construction and Distruction. [An Answer] To Morita Sōhei* (*Kensetsu to hakai. Morita Sōhei kun ni atau*) published in the November issue of the journal *Shinchō*, and *A Rejection of the Idea of Danger* (*Kiken shisō wo haisu*), published in January 1919 in *Taiyō*. They are both included in WTZ XX, respectively in 351-54 and 355-65.

[32] The term *kokutai* is of difficult translation. Literarily, it means 'body of the nation' or 'essence of the nation'. During the interwar years it became the motto of the imperial official doctrine or *tennō ideorogi*, characterized by strong nationalistic tendencies.

Moreover, this article addresses the problem of Communism in the aftermath of the October Revolution in Russia, when Watsuji feared that such a revolution could have taken place in Japan as well. It highlights here, for the first time, the complicated relationship Watsuji had with Marxism and with capitalist modernity that will be further explored in the next chapter.

In what is defined as Watsuji's *tenkō* or 'conversion', Watsuji 'rediscovered' Japan between 1918 and 1919, when he published *Restoring Idols* (*Gūzō saikō*) and *Pilgrimage to Ancient Temples* (*Koji junrei*).[33] Along this line of 'rediscovery', in 1920 appeared *Ancient Japanese Culture* (*Nihon kodai bunka*).[34] In a second preface of *Restoring Idols,* that Wastuji wrote in 1937, he admits that it is easy to see throughout the book the path that took him from 'experience and thought' (*taikei to shisaku*) towards 'art and culture' (*geijutsu to bunka*) passing through 'thought and art' (*shisaku to geijutsu*) (WTZ XVII: 3). With these words Watsuji is showing the reader the development of his thoughts, that went from an early interest in existential philosophy in the direction of cultural studies with the publication of the *Idols* and the *Pilgrimage*.

William LaFleur argues that the sudden turn Watsuji had has to be read in the context of the Taishō period. Watsuji was trying to prove that the Taishō should have been an era of deep changing if compared to the previous Meiji (1868-1912) and the signs of his 'belonging' to the Taishō culture must be found in his revaluation of Buddhism as a cohesive factor in Asia (LaFleur 1990: 243). To Watsuji, the international spirit of the Nara period (710-794) was embodied in the fact that labourers from China, Korea and Japan had come together on Japanese soil to build the Buddhist temples that characterize the old imperial capital. This point must be considered with a particular eye. In his later works, such as *Study of Ethics* and *The Imperial Cult and its Tradition* (*Sonnō shisō to sono dentō*, 1943), Watsuji clearly shows his support for the role that Japan should have covered in Asia during the Second World War. Here, the idea that Japan had already figured itself as the centre of East Asia in the eighth century, albeit only culturally, shows that Watsuji's thought never came short of supporting the exceptionalism of Japan.

In this phase both Miki Kiyoshi and Watsuji Tetsurō were influenced by the historical period they lived in, although in different ways. Watsuji openly spoke about the issue of democratic reforms and focused on his 'native Japan'. Miki, on the other hand, showed his early interest in Kantian philosophy and on the relationship between individual freedom and

[33] Now respectively in WTZ XVII: 3-284 and WTZ II: 1-192.
[34] Now in WTZ III: 1-305.

coercion. Miki will have soon abandoned Neo-Kantianism during his trip to Germany, while Watsuji had already left it aside.

The European trip: Miki Kiyoshi in Marburg (1923-24)

Miki Kiyoshi arrived in Heidelberg in 1922 in order to study under Heirich Rickert (1863-1936) (Yusa 1998: 51). The economic situation in Germany in the interwar period was not favourable to Germans but certainly it was to foreigners. In 1923, due to the growing inflation, the German mark was worth almost nothing and for Miki and the other Japanese students in Germany this meant a huge opportunity to buy books at cheap prices (MKZ I: 423). The ongoing economic and political instability was also reflected in the philosophical and cultural environment Miki encountered in Heidelberg and Marburg.[35] Miki describes the atmosphere as one of *anxiety* (*fuan*) regarding not only 'existence' per se, but also related to the concept of 'history'. It is in this respect that Miki notices that many young students were reading Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Dostoyevsky and that in academia increasing attention was dedicated to: 'Life as *historical* (*rekishiteki)* life and not simply as a way of living' (MKZ I: 437). The concept of history came to be deeply bound to historical reality as a form of existence and Martin Heidegger's philosophy of *Angst* and 'reality' is probably the best example of the cultural situation of those years (Aeba 1990: 209).

In 1923 Miki decided to move to Marburg, knowing that Heidegger had just been appointed there.[36] The decision to move to Marburg signs his abandonment of Neo-Kantianism and his immersion into existentialism. In a letter to Tanabe Hajime from 1923 Miki writes:

> It is becoming increasingly important for me now to start my work independently. The questions related to the foundations of the *Geisteswissenschaften* (*seishinkagaku*) that I have been occupied with until now have started becoming the focus of my interest from a completely different point of view. I will momentarily abandon such things as the critic of different epistemological theories and I would

[35] In 1922 Walter Rathenau, the German minister of foreign affairs, was assassinated. This was also a concern for the political stability of post-WWI Germany.
[36] Miki explains his decision to move to Marburg in these terms: 'I decided to move from Heidelberg primarily in order to study under him (Heidegger)' (MKZ I: 419).

> like to develop my own questions starting with the study of more concrete things
>
> (MKZ XIX: 222)

During his two years in Marburg Miki read Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and *Nicomachean Ethics* with Hans Georg Gadamer (1900-2002) and he studied the *Physics* in Heidegger's seminars (MKZ I: 420). Karl Löwith (1897-1973) was also appointed as tutor of Miki. The fact that Miki studied Aristotle in depth is very important. As a matter of fact, if we look at the genesis of Heidegger's *Being and Time*, namely the seminars held in Marburg on Greek philosophy and on medieval Christian theology, we are able to focus on the Heideggerian path that could be retraceable in certain passages of Miki's *Pascal*.

Hedegger's lectures in the winter semester of 1923 dealt with the 'phenomenological research' and with the beginning of modern philosophy with Descartes (Kisiel 1993: 276). During these lectures Heidegger explored the concept of Being in Greek philosophy, with a special attention to Aristotle.[37] According to Ardovino, in 1923 Heidegger was already talking about 'hermeneutics of facticity' as 'hermeneutics of being', and terms such as 'ontic' (factual) and 'ontological'(existential) had already taken shape as they would have been in 1927 with the publication of *Being and Time* (Ardovino 2005: 87-8). Thus, it is possible to argue that Miki already came to know those concepts before 1926 and integrate them into his study of *Pascal.*

In these lectures Heidegger provides a new 'phenomenological' interpretation of Aristotle.[38] In particular, Heidegger is linking the *phainomenon* ('that is which is shown per se') to the *logos* ('speech'). By doing so he is directly connecting the factuality of the phenomenon to its use in the world. Through this direct link, the phenomenon becomes an expression of life (Lazzari 2005: 146). Heidegger's aim here is to reconstruct the word 'phenomenology' from the Greek to the interpretation of Edmond Husserl (1859-1938). As explained above, by focusing on the *logos* or on the 'speech' in connection with the phenomenon, Heidegger is trying to prove that human beings live and have always lived in the realm of speech. Since the word *logos*, in Aristotle, is comprehensive of both meanings of 'covering' and 'uncovering' for Heidegger this is a proof that human beings can be deceived by language and live in a world of deception (Kisiel 1993: 279-80).

[37] Heidegger was planning a book on Aristotle but the book was never published. Instead, his seminars on Greek philosophy are considered the foundation of his existential analytic of *Being and Time* (Kisiel 1993: 311).
[38] Miki writes in a letter to Hani Gorō in November 1923: 'Heidegger's interpretation of Aristotle is extremely original [*originell*] and interesting' (MKZ XIX: 223).

Even more importantly, Heidegger discusses the threefold theory of the *pseudes* (false) as expressed in the *Metaphysics*. According to Heidegger, false-things, false-speech and false-human are all connected by the falseness of language, in its 'facticity' that is constantly reiterated by the human beings (Kisiel 1993: 280). This is a crucial point because Miki would directly link the Aristotelian concept of the pseudo-human as interpreted by Heidegger to the concept of 'imagination' as a source for error for the pseudo-human being in Pascal (MKZ I: 28-9). In addition, Miki the discourse on Aristotle's *pseudes* returns with force some years later, in relation to Miki's studies on rhetoric, language and technology.[39]

In February 1924 Miki writes to his friend Hani Gorō (1901-1981):

> I would like to reflect on the layered structure of the three phenomena: **Zeichen, Symbol, Sprache** [sign, symbol, language] and on their internal relationships. Thus, I want to understand even more the **Sprache** as the original stage of the **historisches Dasein** [historical Being][40]
>
> (MKZ XIX: 248; German in the original)

Miki continues:

> The core of the philosophy of history is not the theory of values as Rickert and others thought. Isn't it rather a question of **"Ich und seine Umwelt"** [the self and its world-around]?
>
> (MKZ XIX: 249; German in the original)

This passage is significant because it shows the real break that happened in Miki's thought when he realized that Neo-Kantianism was not providing the answers he desired to the question of the human being and the world and the historicity of existence. The shift is from the theory of values towards a 'human being and the surrounding world'.

In one of his last letters to Hani from Marburg, from June 1924, Miki describes his encounter with Historicism through the reading of Ernst Troeltsch's (1865-1923) *Der Historismus und seine Ueberwindung* (*Historicism and its Overcoming*). Miki says:

> I generally think that the focus of the theories on history should not be the historical *sciences* (*kagaku*) […] In truth history is not the historical sciences. What should matter for us the most is the *historicity of existence* (*sonzai no rekishisei*). Our *world* carries the historical nature in its fundamental structure. In other words, what is called historicity is the basic structural category of existence.

[39] See Chap. 5.

[40] The word *Dasein* has a long history in German philosophy. For Hegel the *Dasein* was the abstract being, 'the being with a determination', what remains when the becoming is taken out. Therefore the *Dasein* belongs to the doctrine of being. For Heidegger the *Dasein* is 'Being-there' as the 'possibility' of enquiry about entities regarding their Beings. I believe that, since Miki was studying under Heidegger at that time, when he is describing the *Dasein* he is doing it following Heidegger's definition.

> Therefore, history, before becoming a matter for the *epistemology* (*ninshikiron*) of the historical sciences, must be nothing else than this very same *interpretation of existence* (*sonzai no kaishaku*)
>
> (MKZ XIX: 275, emphasis in the original)

History is thus, first of all, a history of existence and not a sterile historical science. Existence becomes the focus of the interpretation of history as it is best exemplified in the following part of the same letter. Here Miki is talking about a third shift in his study that led him to read Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Simmel together with Dilthey, and to affirm that their spirits were close to the Romantic spirit. It follows:

> My idea of 'Romanticism' [**Romantik**] has dismissed all the heroic [**heroisch**] tendencies and has penetrated into ordinary things [**alltäglich**]. My 'Romanticism' [**Romantik**] descends into the heart of things [**Sache**] leaving the world of ideas [**Ideenwelt**]. I will start from the problem of the interpretation [**Auslegung**] of the **Dasein**. Thus, historicity becomes my core question. Insofar as I value historicity, I am a Romantic too [**Romantiker**]
>
> (MKZ XIX: 276; German in the original)[41]

The above passages highlight the definite change in Miki's thought. His research seems to have found its natural overcome in the study of history as 'historicity', meaning the history of the *Dasein*. The focus shifts towards ordinary things and ordinary life together with the historicity of the *Dasein*. Therefore, Miki appears to have found fertile soil for his deepening interest and development of the concept of *ningen*. The problem of historical existence represents a theme that will never abandon Miki's intellectual life until his death in 1945. His engagement with such a philosophical theory puts him together with other philosophers, both European and Japanese, who were struggling to redefine human existence in the face of the historical crisis of the post-WWI world.

[41] I thank Christian Uhl for the translation of this passage.

The Discovery of Pascal: Miki Kiyoshi in Paris (1924-25)

Miki moved to Paris in August 1924 and he remained in the city until his return to Japan in October 1925 (Yusa 1998: 67). There, he found a copy of Blaise Pascal's (1623-1662) *Pensées* (1657-1662) and he expressed his impression with these words: 'the knowledge that I learnt from Heidegger seemed to take life while reading the *Pensées*' (MKZ I: 429).[42] Again:

> I would read this book in the quietness of the night, in solitude and loneliness, hiding from other people, and tears would often flow from my eyes without control (*hitorideni*)
>
> (MKZ I: 429)

The reading of the *Pensées* prompted Miki to write a book on Pascal that was subsequently published in 1926 with the title *A Study of the Human Being in Pascal*.[43] In his treaty, Miki analyzes not only Pascal's masterpiece, but also other important pieces, such as the *Entretien de Pascal avec Saci sur Épictète et Montaigne* (1655), the *Discours sur les passions de l'amour* (1653), the *Mémorial* (1654), *Les provinciales* (1657) and the *Potestatum numericarum summa* (1654).

In the introduction Miki explains the most important points of his research and how he conducted his analysis. First, he does not want to look at the 'religious ideas' (*shūkyō shisō*) explained in the book, but rather at Pascal's 'observations on the human being' (MKZ I: 4). Secondly, contesting the idea that Pascal's book should be read according to psychology, Miki affirms that what we encounter in the book is 'a study of the human being as a concrete thing, or, *anthropology* (*antoroporogi*) in the literally sense of the word' (MKZ I: 4). Since anthropology is the discipline related to human existence, it follows that it can be interpreted as a 'theory on existence' (*sonzairon*) which represents Miki's project in the reading of the *Pensées* (MKZ I: 4).

Miki explains that his work of interpretation aims at the clarification of the concept of 'basic experience' (*kiso keiken*) (MKZ I: 5). His strategy is then the one of a 'middle path' (*chūyō*); in other words his strategy relies on: 'understanding the experience in the concept and the concept in the experience' (MKZ I: 5). Finally, the book is divided in six chapters that, as Miki says, stand as independent texts, although they are all functional to the structure of the book as a whole (MZK, I: 6). Uchida Hiroshi considers the concept of the 'basic experience' in *Pascal* as one of the most fundamental concepts in Miki's philosophy. He traces it back to

[42] Iwasaki says that the special 'charm' (*miryoku*) of Miki's *Pascal* relies exactly in 'exploring Pascal's thought by bringing in the intellectual inspiration acquired under Heidegger' (Iwasaki 2005: 137).
[43] The book was first serialized in the journal *Shisō* during 1925 published as a volume in 1926.

the Heideggerian *Grunderfahrung* as expressed in the paragraph 45 of *Being and Time* (Uchida 2004: 202).[44] Miki consciously employs Heidegger's concept of 'interpretation' when explaining the concept of 'basic experience' in Pascal, therefore linking his theory of existence to Heidegger's 'ontological research'. Nonetheless, what is the 'basic experience' in Pascal? The original experience in the *Pensées* is a religious one; it's a relationship between man and God. Yet, this is not the centre of Miki's inquiry. Miki is actually turning Pascal's theory upside down; he is studying the human being *qua* human being and not as the creation of a divine entity. Here, for the first time, Miki begins to give shape to the 'religion' of the human being, where the centrality of the relationship between man and God is substituted by the centrality of the study of *ningen*.

I agree with Uchida when he affirms that Pascal's 'human being' becomes *Dasein* (Uchida 2004: 203). This happens because Miki takes appropriation of the categories of time, death, and world as expressed in *Being and Time*. If, in Heidegger, the *Dasein* is a 'being-towards-death', in Pascal death is the limitation of the human life but it also represents its longing for the infinite (God). Death as negative limitation is therefore turned into a positive concept as re-appropriation of our own Being as the Being-towards-death implies. We will see in the following paragraphs how the Heideggerian 'world' would be combined with the Pascalian idea of nature and how 'time' will become very important for Miki's analysis of the *Pensées*.

[44] Here Heidegger describes the ontological research as a way of interpreting, having interpretation its own *pre-possession* (*Vorhabe*), its *pre-view* (*Vorsicht*) and its *pre-conception* (*Vorgriff*) (Heidegger 1962a: 284). These preconditions form together the 'hermeneutical situation' that needs to be clarified if we want to proceed with the ontological research. This process will not take place unless we make clear the basics of the 'hermeneutical situation' in accordance with and *within* the 'basic experience' of the 'object' to be opened (Heidegger 1962a: 284).

An Analysis of the Human Being in Miki: Medianity (1)

'The study of Pascal really aims at analyzing and interpreting human existence (*ningenteki sonzai*)' (MKZ I: 11). It follows:

> Roughly, our existence is 'existence in nature'. In nature, our existence is the one of the 'median' [**milieu**] (*chūkansha*)[45]
>
> (MKZ I: 11, French in the original)

According to Pascal, man finds himself in nature as caught between totality and infinity:

> Un néant à l'égard de l'infini, un tout à l'égard de néant, un milieu entre rien et tout. […] également incapable de voir le néant d'où il est tiré, et l'infini où il est englouti
>
> (Pascal 72)[46]

In his interpretation of Pascal's passage, Miki argues that the condition of medianity does not happen accidentally but that it belongs to the inevitable situation of the human being that: 'carries his destiny on his shoulders as a creature of God' (MKZ I: 12). The fundamental prescription of the human being is to live *together* with the world and to experience fear, sorrow and anxiety related to the limitation of its existence (MKZ I: 13-4).

Miki argues that the relationship between the existence of the world and the condition of the human being is so direct that when we 'experience' the world (in the sense of feeling, grasping etc.), we feel ourselves. Hence, in the very moment we 'possess' (*shoyū suru*) the world, we possess our own self (MKZ I: 15). 'Existence signifies first and primary a unique kind of possessing' (MKZ I: 15). This passage is highly significant. As a matter of fact, Pascal is indeed referring to the world as a world of connections, although he speaks in rather different terms. The world is necessary to study the human being because it is impossible to study the whole from the point of view of the particular. Men need air to breath, clothes to cover them, food to live. Thus, we have to start our inquiry from the question: 'why do men need these things?' If all things are caused and cause, in order to understand the whole it is necessary to study the particular and vice versa (Pascal 72). Pascal does not talk about 'possession'. This concept might have been easily mutuated from Heidegger's 'readiness-to-

[45] Karaki affirms that the concept of the 'median', although of early elaboration, is at the basis of Miki's thought (Karaki 2002: 42).

[46] There are two different systems for the redaction of the *Pensées*: the Brunschvicg and the Chevalier. The only difference between the two is that the Brunschvicg's one is not continuous and contains drafts and double redactions (Bausola in Pascal 2000: 533). Although the edition I use follows Chevalier's numeration, in the quotations I decided to stick to the Brunschvicg's, since Miki quotes according to this one.

hand' (*Zuhandenheit*).[47] The concept of appropriation as used by Miki could refer to the 'instrumentality', in the sense that the World is not only a 'simple presence', but that things are given to us with a certain aim, their functionality. Their 'readiness-to-hand' represents their true essence. Since the *Dasein* has a project in the world, things are given to it precisely with this function (Heidegger 1962a: 95-8).[48]

Miki affirms that the human being is surrounded and limited by the environment and it represents a 'median' between nature and God. Although it might appear here that this is not fundamentally connected to Heidegger's idea, it is to a certain extent because it is linked to the idea of projectuality. Therefore, Being-in-the-World becomes ontological constituency and, from my point of view, Miki is adding to the Pascalian idea of 'nature' a significance of 'possession' of the self as openness. This does not imply that Miki's interpretation of Pascal is not original. Rather, it is highly interesting that Pascal's original idea of 'nature' and 'world' becomes a constitutive element of the ontology of human existence. I think this has happened because Miki's interpretation is lacking a religious ground, particularly a Christian one. This has allowed Miki to discard the human being from its relationship with God and, instead, to focus on the problem of existence per se. The relationship with Heideggerian philosophy is, by all means, very important. By saying this I do not mean that Miki simply took Heideggerian concepts and applied them to Pascal. There is a process of contextualization from Miki's side. As Miki himself specified (see quote above), he felt he could have used all that he had learnt from Heidegger in his reading of the French philosopher. Therefore, the absence of a Christian perspective and the influence of Heideggerian philosophy have produced an original and unusual view of Pascal's ideas.

Later on Miki defines existence (*sonzai*) as 'real existence' seen in the context of material existence. On the other hand, existentiality (*sonzaisei*) is 'the mode of existence in the sense that this existence has been emphasized or in a superior sense […] Pascal calls the latter 'soul' [**âme**]' (MZK, I: 16).[49] The formal determination of the soul is to be a 'median'

[47] In Heidegger, the *Dasein*'s authenticity relies on leaving the realm of They (*Man*) that is representative of the falling (*Verfallenheit*) into the realm of inauthenticity (Heidegger 1962a: § 38). Moreover, Being as Being-in-the-world is the fundamental state of the Being. Being-in-the-world means that the *Dasein*concretely lives in a world that opens a certain amount of possibility the *Dasein* has to relate to. Given this assumption, man lives *in* the world as a 'can-be' (*Seinkönnen*) because of the amount of openness that is being disclosed to him by the world (Heidegger 1962a: 76-9).

[48] This passage is taken from the final edition of *Being and Time*. Although not available to Miki in this format, the idea of *Zuhandenheit* was already present in Heidegger's thought, although in a prototype form, from 1923 (Kiesel 1993: 330).

[49] V.H. Viglielmo translates *sonzaisei* as 'manner of existence' (Dilworth *et al.* 1998: 301). I believe that 'mode of existence' would be more appropriate in this case because it reminds the reader of the proximity between Miki and Heidegger.

therefore implying that medianity permeates both existence as well as existentiality (MZK, I: 16-7). To Pascal, if the human being had to leave its condition of 'median' then it would depart from humanity, and since this would represent an ontological contradiction Miki affirms that medianity could only be an ontological and not an epistemological concept (Pascal 378; MKZ I: 17).

The innermost determination of human existence finds its location in the condition of fear (*kyōfu*) and trembling (*senritsu*) where infinite and nothingness merge together in an unsolvable enigma (MKZ I: 18). Thus, the task is for the human being as median to find the '*tadashiki chūkan*' or 'le juste mileu' (MKZ I: 18; Pascal 82). 'Every existence is existence in the middle. This [median] is the infinitely vast and the infinitely small in every degree of existence (in every degree there are two infinities: the small and the vast)' (MKZ I: 103). [50] The infinite is therefore what causes the movement of anxiety that Miki defines *the fundamental experience* (*konpon keiken*) of the human being (MKZ I: 104). By feeling the vastness of its own existence the human being feels the trembling and the anxiety of its condition. 'Even the human being is a median existence (*chūkanteki sonzai*) between totality and nothingness' (MKZ I: 109). The human intellect is not capable of understanding the beginning and the end of things. Due to this fact, God must be seen as all-comprehensive and all-embracing entity (MKZ I: 109). The most important part here is the impossibility of the human being to understand the mystery of its existence. In Miki, as explained above, this should not be seen as a reference to Christianity. On the contrary, it is a way for him to undertake the major enterprise of philosophically clarifying the causes of the pervasive presence of *Angst*. As we shall see in the following sections, Miki will find the Pascalian concept of the 'wager' as a possible solution to this conundrum.

[50] Miki reckons that Pascal's mathematical studies on the infinite developed in *Potestatum numericarum summa* might have influenced his inquiry into the human being (MKZ I: 101).

An Analysis of the Human Being in Watsuji: Medianity (2)

Watsuji developed a similar idea of the human being as a 'median' in his *Climate*. The book was first serialized in *Shisō* between 1928 and 1934 and then published as a volume in 1935.[51] *Climate* was written as a reaction to Heidegger's *Being and Time* that Watsuji had read during his sojourn in Berlin in 1927. In the introduction Watsuji writes:

> A temporality that is not grounded in spatiality is not yet a real temporality. This is where Heidegger stops because his *Dasein* is nothing else than a simple individual. He understood human existence as being the existence of a single human being. […] When human existence is grasped in its concrete duplicity, temporality and spatiality eventually are in their reciprocal unity. Even historicity, which is not concretely expressed in Heidegger, reveals its truth. At the same time, this historicity is clarified in its reciprocal union with climate
>
> (WTZ VIII: 1-2)

The main critique that Watsuji addresses to Heidegger is the focus on the temporality of the *Dasein* that does not take into consideration the spatiality of the human being.[52]

Watsuji starts his analysis by defining the concept of 'cold'. He argues that, if we feel cold, it is because this is an 'intentional experience' (*shikōteki taiken*). We, as subjects, already possess this structure in ourselves (WTZ VIII: 8). 'Feeling the cold' and 'the cold air' exist as transcendental existences already inside the intentional relation that it is established between us and the environment. Watsuji says:

> We ourselves are already in the cold. In this respect, our mode of existence is 'ex-sistere' (*soto ni dete iru*), as Heidegger emphasizes, and in this case it becomes intentionality
>
> (WTZ VIII: 9)

In Heidegger the term intentionality takes the meaning of transcendence and it points at the relationship between the human being and the world. As it is clear here, Watsuji agrees with Heidegger when he defines the basic structure of existence as already 'being-outside' (*soto ni deru*) or 'Being-in-the-world'. Nevertheless, Watsuji goes a step further. He argues that the ontological structure of the *soto ni deru* already exists as being-with-others, before being an existence within things (WTZ VIII: 10). Since we all share the same existential structure, we are able to experience the 'cold' together.

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[51] The book was actually written between 1928 and 1929.

[52] Martin Heidegger subsequently found the analysis of the *Dasein* that he had provided in *Being and Time* incomplete. The texts published in the following years focus on a discourse that tries to comprehend the Being as the rethinking of the existence of thought itself. The critics define this period as the 'turn' (*Kehre*) (Vattimo 1998: 99-101).

At this point Watsuji's concept of *betweeness* is finally explained:

> The [being-with-the-others] is not an *intentional relationship*, it is the *betweeness*. Therefore, the fact of discovering ourselves in the cold principally means discovering ourselves as betweeness
> (WTZ VIII: 10; emphasis in the original)

Yuasa Yasuo, Mine Hideki and Kaneko Takezō have pointed at the relationship between Husserl's concept of 'intentionality' and Watsuji's (Yuasa 1970: 113-5; Mine 2002: 49-55; Kaneko 1966: 453-5). Kaneko says that, if we look at Watsuji's *The Philosophy of Practice in Early Buddhism* (*Genshi bukkyō no jissen tetsugaku;* 1927), we could already find the concept of intentionality.[53] In the book Watsuji focuses on the 'silence of the Buddha' and what this implies for the practice of Buddhism.[54] He sees in all the answers given by the different Buddhist sects still an opposition between subject and object, between the self and the outside world (Yuasa 1970: 114). According to Watsuji, the path towards the knowledge of truth is to grasp this experience by getting rid of these oppositions and comprehend the 'law' (*dharma*) in the no-self (*muga*) (Yuasa 1970: 114). As Yuasa points out, the problem relies in the fact that Watsuji interprets the theory of the five *skanda* (the five elements that constitute the being) as 'categories' in the Kantian sense. In fact, Watsuji even argues that the non-self is the unifying transcendental conscience to which the categories correspond (Yuasa 1970: 114). Besides, Watsuji identifies the self (*keiga*) as the point of view of 'nature', and the no-self as the 'point of view of the intrinsic intuition', because, as Watsuji says, the experience of feeling the beauty of a flower is the same as the way of existence of the flower itself (WTZ V: 123-4). Moreover: 'for the first time the feeling as an existing psychological thing is understood' (WTZ V: 124). It is in this passage, Kaneko says, that Husserl's 'phenomenological reduction' appears (Kaneko 1966: 453).

The important thing to notice here is that Watsuji interprets a Buddhist concept such as the 'no-self' by means of a philosophical theory. Although considered a work in between *Climate* and *Study of Ethics*, *The Philosophy of Practice in Early Buddhism* reflects some of the issues present in the other books as well. I believe that there is one important question that remains unsolved even in *Climate*. It is the fact Watsuji wanted to overcome Husserl's phenomenological method on an inter-subjective level. Mine argues that the intentionality in Watsuji should not be regarded as a phenomenological concept. He talks about a 'common

[53] Now in WTZ V: 1-293.
[54] The 'silence of the Buddha' refers to the fact that Shakyamuni, the historical Buddha, never replied to metaphysical questions. In the history of Buddhism, different schools have interpreted the silence in different ways (e.g. the inadequacy of the ordinary language).

intention' (*kyōdō shikō*) or as a concept alien to the 'individual conscience' of a phenomenological theory (Mine 2002: 51). Since it is 'common' it cannot be 'individual'. The point is that Watsuji, by talking about intentional relationship between man and nature, is somehow still implying a differentiation between subject and object related to the intentionality of the conscience. As a matter of fact, by assuming an existing psychological entity, Watsuji is implying an eidetic reduction as in Husserl's phenomenology.

Nevertheless, in order to avoid this problem on an inter-subjective level, Watsuji states that the *betweeness* is not an intentional relation, but rather a kind of ontology. By making the *aidagara* ontology Watsuji falls into a critical error that he will not be able to solve even in *Study of Ethics*. In fact, the movement of the Absolute Negativity (*zettaiteki hiteisei*), first expressed in *Climate* and then fully developed in *Study of Ethics*, is three fold. The double negation of the 'individual' and 'totality' takes place as the starting point. Then, it is followed by the third movement of the Absolute Negativity (like the Hegelian *Aufhebung*) in which the individual is subsumed in the total. This implies, as Kosaka Kunitsugu has extensively argued, an ontologization of the Absolute as 'totality' that represents the *condition qua non* for the existence of the individual as it is (Kosaka 1997: 258-9). Therefore, the *aidagara* is the basic ontological structure of the human being prior to the human being itself. As it will be further analyzed, the Absolute will be individuated in the state.

In *Climate*, nature is intrinsically linked to the concept of climate, since climate aims at making the human being understand how to protect itself from the 'tyranny of nature' (*shizen no bōi*; WTZ VIII: 12). Man self-understands in climate, because through the experience our ancestors have left us we are today capable of dealing with the environment surrounding us (WTZ VIII: 13). Thus, it is not possible to separate climate from history on the basis of the fact that the climatic phenomenon appears in the historical self-comprehension of the human being. 'History apart from climate does not exist as much as climate does not exist apart from history' (WTZ VIII: 14). Kōsaka Masaaki has tried to link Watsuji's hermeneutical spatiality to the one of Heidegger. He affirms that Watsuji created a hermeneutic of a 'cultural space' (*bunkatekina kūkan*) from the hermeneutics of time in Heidegger (Kōsaka 1964: 20). Watsuji's attempt was to overcome Heidegger. At the same time, Watsuji was not moved by a logical motive; what lead him to criticize Heidegger's temporality was the 'experiences' he made in his journey throughout Europe (Kōsaka 1964: 19). The effects that climate concretely has on human being made Watsuji realize that temporality was not important unless subsumed in spatiality. The critique of Heidegger is therefore addressed not only on an abstract level, but also on a concrete one.

Betweeness as Innovation

Watsuji looks at the human being as a concept related to both the 'individual' (*kojinteki*) and the 'social' (*shakaiteki*) (WTZ VIII: 15) and specifies that his concept of the 'human being' does not correspond to the English 'man', the German 'Mensch', or the Greek 'anthrōpos'. All these terms presuppose the individuality of man, while, in his view there is also: 'the union of the human beings or society as community' (WTZ VIII: 14-5). Human existence is the realization of the movement of 'absolute negativity' (*zettaiteki hitesei*) (WTZ VIII: 15). Spatiality and temporality represent the two elements of the fundamental structure of human existence by means of their undividable unity (*sōsoku furi*) and cannot be analyzed separately.[55] Hence, when they are both understood in their basic structure, the structure of the human relationality becomes clear (WTZ VIII: 15). The communities of human beings are not static in their social structures, they are the realization of the movement of negation that has made history possible. The spatial-temporal structure of human existence appears to us in its unity of 'historicity and climate' (*rekishisei, fūdosei*) (WTZ VIII: 15). There is no community which is not based on the spatial structure of the subjective human existence and, on the other hand, temporality would not become historicity unless it is grounded in the social existence (WTZ VIII: 16). The double structure of finitude and infinitude is directly linked to history and climate; history in its infinite past and the climate as limitation of the potentiality of human beings. It follows that: 'history is climatic history and climate is historical climate' (WTZ VIII: 16).

Betweeness is situated in the transcendental dimension of the ex-sistere as a 'climatic' being-outside. Since the 'climate' is part of our essential structure, it follows that our understanding of it relies in its 'concreteness'. In other words, we see the world as being 'in front of us' with a certain range of possibilities given to us in the 'tools' (*dōgu*) that are outside (WTZ VIII: 19). According to this interpretation, the 'finalistic relationship' (*tame no kankei*) between man and tools defines what is the 'first moment of the objective existence'.

As it has been underlined in Miki, in Watsuji there is a direct connection to Heidegger as well. The projectuality of the *Dasein* is in relation to the tools that are in the world with a certain finalistic existence. The *Dasein* as *Seinkönnen* makes use of the 'in-order-to' significance of the equipment to realize its authentic existence. The difference between Heidegger and Watsuji relies on this basic theoretical shift. In Heidegger, even if the equipment is apt to our aim, the most important point remains its 'readiness-to-hand'. The

[55] The term *sōsoku* is the unity between elements that are sharing the same essence or nature. I translate *sōsoku furi* as a non-divisibility in the ontological unity.

equipment opens the totality of meanings that the *Dasein* will then decide to disclose in its project of authenticity (Heidegger 1962a: 95-6). In Watsuji the theoretical level is somehow substituted by a degree of concreteness. In line to what he had previously stated in the introduction, the aim of his critique to Heidegger is to show how 'abstractedness' cannot concern any discourse on the human being. 'Tools' are being used by human beings not because of an abstraction of their ontology, rather because they are *concretely* being used as methods of survival. The question of the concreteness of the Heideggerian *Dasein* here remains unsolved. The facticity of the *Dasein* is, in Heidegger's view, concrete. Nonetheless, in Watsuji's analysis, it represents solely another effort to alienate the human being from its material and corporeal existence.

In *Study of Ethics* the analysis of human existence is further developed. It has to be specified that *Study of Ethics* does not focus anymore on the relationship between the human being and its environment but rather on the relationships and interactions between men. *Study of Ethics* is a philosophical research in the realm of ethics, which for Watsuji is at the basis of society. It was published in two volumes, respectively in 1937 and 1949. [56] The book still stands as a critique of what Watsuji defines the subject-object dichotomy of European philosophy and this critique is, yet again, mostly directed towards Heidegger. The criticisms of 'individualism' gains more strength in this later book. Concepts such as 'totality' and 'family' are further elaborated, although they do not conceptually differ from their version in *Climate*.

Watsuji states that his concept of the human being already owns in its structure the character of 'publicity'. In fact, *ningen*, in Japanese, is formed by two ideograms meaning 'man' (*hito*) and 'between' (*aida*) (WTZ X: 16-8). The *aidagara* or 'betweeness' therefore becomes the determination of human beings in the sense that in their relationship the societal 'relationality' is created (WTZ X: 17). Ethics (*rinri*) is therefore the whole net of relations. The system of the *rin* dictates all the forms of practical interactions that are immanent in the human beings. According to Watsuji, the 'way of the *rin*' can be inferred by experience and thus it assumes noematic significance (WTZ X: 12-4). Since ethics regards the relationships between people, studying ethics would mean studying human beings and their relations. Ethics represents, for Watsuji, the ruling of social existence (WTZ X: 13). Most importantly,

[56] Some critics consider another edition from 1942 as a third or 'middle' volume. In reality, in 1942 Watsujirewrote the last two parts, the ones on the community and the state, of the first volume from 1937. These parts are all included in his *Collected Works.* The first volume of *Study of Ethics (Rinrigaku jō)* is in volume 10. The second volume (*Rinrigaku ge*) is included in volume 11. The parts rewritten in 1942 are in WTZ XI: 415-434. Watsuji had already published his first study of ethics in 1934, although under the title of *The Study of Ethics as Anthropology* (*Ningengaku toshite no rinrigaku*) (now in WTZ IX: 1-185).

Watsuji defines this particular relationality as 'practical' or, better, as 'practical, active relationality' (*jissenteki, kōiteki kanren*) which is directly bound to the concept of 'world' (*yo no naka*). Watsuji translates Heidegger's *in-der-Welt-Sein* with *yo no naka* or *seken*. Since this world is a communal world, it follows that it takes the meaning of a common existence or a society as subject (*shutai*), as Yoshizawa points out (Yoshizawa 1994: 151). Additionally, world is defined as 'the human existence as historical, climatical and social' (WTZ X: 22).[57] As we can see here, the ideas come directly from *Climate* and further developed.

In a second philological attempt, Watsuji explains that his concept of *ningen sonzai* means grasping the self as betweeness, since *son* qualifies as 'intentional object' and *zai* as 'the social locus of the world' (WTZ X: 24-5). *Sonzai* is hence the equivalent of a communal existence. Human existence tucks in itself two moments, as described above. They are the 'public' and the 'individual' moments, which belong to a single, eternal dialectical movement. Individuality negates totality and vice-versa. The dynamic feature of this movement is the 'mode of existence' of the particular as well as its 'becoming' (WTZ X: 22). The movement of negation pushes the individual's egotic aspect to self-negate and to return to the original principle of humanity, which is the 'Absolute Negativity' (*zettaiteki hiteisei*) or 'absolute totality'(*zettaiteki zentaisei*) (WTZ X: 26-7).

> The principle of the human existence is *negation in itself*, in other words, it is precisely the *absolute negativity*. Both the individual and the totality are 'emptiness' in their true reality, therefore emptiness is the *absolute totality*. From this principle, namely from the emptiness self-emptying [*kū ga kūzuru*], human existence develops as the movement of negation. The negation of the negation stands as the real movement of the absolute totality that returns to itself. Hence, it indeed represents morality
>
> (WTZ X: 26; emphasis in the original)

The dialectical movement is, in itself, the negation of the negation by means of which the unity of the totality is restored. Watsuji argues that the Absolute Negativity is absolute because it is grounded in 'vacuity' (*kū*) (see WTZ X: 106-25).[58] As already mentioned above, Kosaka has challenged this view on the basis that the totality is the basis for the emergency of

[57] Earlier in the book, Watsuji explains that his idea of the 'world' as inter-relational was inspired by Karl Löwith and by his definition of the German word *Welt* (WTZ X: 19). In fact, Löwith's critique of his teacher Heidegger was directed towards the concept of 'tools'. In contrast to the Heideggerian idea of *Welt* as 'readiness to hand', Löwith juxtaposed a *Welt* as constitutive of 'human relations'.

[58] *Kū* is a concept originated in Buddhism. It is fully developed in the philosophy of Nāgārjuna, the founder of the 'Middle School' or Mādhyāmika. According to Nāgārjuna, everything is originated from the 'conditioned coproduction', by means of which all things are the cause and the effect of the other. Since they do not constitute independent ontological entities and they are grounded in vacuity, Nāgārjuna reaches the conclusion that even the samsara and the nirvana coincide.

the individuality. In fact, if absolute totality and vacuity were to be equal, none of the two should posses its own ontology. Nevertheless, in Watsuji the totality is the *ground* from where individuality emerges and returns; totality is the *condition sine qua non* for the individual to exist.

Watsuji conflates the vacuity as expressed in the Buddhist tradition with the Hegelian sublation. If he had employed vacuity in the Buddhist acceptation of the word, he would have referred to the 'conditioned coproducted'. Instead, in his system totality is the cause and the aim of the individual. The method is Hegelian, with the Absolute dividing in 'in-Itself', 'other-than-Itself' and 'for-Self'. As Satō said, the fact that Watsuji could not have accomplished certain results without having used Hegel's methodology or phenomenology, should not be seen in derogative terms. On the contrary, it could be said that: 'Open up still another range of issues […] [the fact that Watsuji used them] relates to the new way of understanding space, time, and matter in the 20th century science' (Satō 1996: 8). The individual goes back to the totality that, in Watsuji's political philosophy, is embedded in the state. Furthermore, as already elaborated in *Climate*, the human being is a historical-climatic shaped human being. History represents the characteristic of infinitude and the human being self-realizes in it because it represents its past that underpins its present existence. 'Everydayness' is therefore the point of departure for the analysis of the human being. The *aidagara* exists as an a priori and it is the locus of the everyday where the relationality between men takes place. As it happened in for the Absolute Negativity, even the betweeness becomes ontologically shaped here, being the fundamental structure of the human being.

The everyday was also the point of departure of Heidegger's existential hermeneutics. Nevertheless, the two philosophers conceptually parted on the interpretation of death in relation to the human being. By making the betweeness the locus of existence, Watsuji implies an ontologization of the relationality per se. This move does not *permit* a being-between but rather, it *forces* an ontological system of relations upon the human being. This leads to further developments in his philosophy that are controversial. For example, as he already stated in the introduction of the *Climate*, Watsuji reiterates his critique that Heidegger had focussed only on *Dasein* as representative of one individual. Therefore, even the Heideggerian notion of the Being-towards-death is criticized on the basis of individuality. Every human being is alone when confronting death and this death, according to Watsuji, is

only a temporal possibility in the future (WTZ X: 232-3).[59] Since temporality is also understood as 'self-detachment' in Heidegger, for Watsuji this means that: 'The essence of temporality is a *temporalization* (*Zeitigung*) in the *unity of self-detachment*' (WTZ X: 232; emphasis and German in the text). This furthermore means that it can bring about the distinction between authenticity and inauthenticity of the *Dasein*. According to Watsuji, this is precisely the point where temporality reaches its peak, meaning when it becomes a fundamental part of the 'individual' that goes even deeper than its consciousness. Since temporality is in relation to the individual 'time', it means that the totality of the human beings has been left out (WTZ X: 233-4).[60]

Watsuji argues that Heidegger has not taken into consideration the death rituals. They are not only a part of the everydayness of the *Dasein*, albeit they are fundamental in the totality of society. For example, the Buddhist rites that are celebrated forty-nine days after the death are an attempt by the community to keep its structure united. Even with the death of one of their members, the roles inside society should remain eternal. This represents the vitality and force of the totality, which, with its supra-individual force, comprises the whole community together (WTZ X: 234). Practical rites serve the function of uniting the community in order for the individuals to overcome the sorrow of a loss. Whilst Heidegger was focussing on the *Dasein* on a transcendental-philosophical level, Watsuji was interested in a concrete, I would say, 'cultural' human being. This discrepancy represents the basis for any of Watsuji's critique of Heidegger and European philosophy.

Miki and Watsuji therefore developed a very similar concept of the human being in the first part of their intellectual lives. Both defined it as a 'median' or as a 'betweeness' and both related it to the concept of 'nature'. The accent is on the 'concreteness' of this human being. In Miki's view, the discourse started from a material human being seen in a religious perspective. Watsuji looked at the Heideggerian *Dasein* from a 'historical-climatic' point of view. The central characteristic of their 'human being' was its relationship with the world and with the environment.[61] Nevertheless, there are some differences between Miki and Watsuji's

[59] Watsuji starts his analysis by considering three moments: 'being ahead of oneself', 'already being in', and 'to be by the side of', which are the three moments of the 'care' (*Sorge*) in Heidegger. They are all linked to the concept of temporality of the *Dasein* that for Watsujirepresents, as already mentioned above, Heidegger's mistake *par excellence* (WTZ X: 232).

[60] The critique to the individual temporality is directed to the whole phenomenology, from Brentano on. Nevertheless, Watsuji considers Heideggerian philosophy the one that finalizes the connubium individual-time.

[61] Sakai Naoki argues that Miki Kiyoshi was the first Japanese intellectual to redefine the concept of the 'human being' in a Heideggerian perspective. He affirms that the 'betweeness' of the human being is a derivate from the 'Being-thrown-in-the-World' by Heidegger and sees in Watsuji's *aidagara* a link to Miki's elaborations (Sakai 1997: 76).

human being. For example, the *basic experience* of Miki's man is a condition of *Angst* and uncertainty that marks its fundamental condition. In this respect, Miki is very close to the Heideggerian idea of the *Geworfenheit*. On the other hand, Watsuji's human being is seen in its societal aspect and in its 'inter-relationality' both with the environment and the other human beings. Thus, Watsuji's idea is very close to Löwith's idea of the 'World'.

It could be possible to argue that the *anxiety* Miki found in the human being described by Pascal is mirrored in his own interpretation of him. Watsuji, on the contrary, as a reaction to the condition of anxiety found in Heidegger, elaborated a system that could have been overcome by subsuming individual experiences in an all-embracing totality.

Miki Kiyoshi: a New Human Being

The 'wager' is without doubt the core of Pascal's methodology and Miki almost entirely devotes the second part of *Pascal* to the analysis of this concept. Pascal used the wager to address the sceptics and those who could not believe in the existence of God because it could not be materially proven. He argued that, despite the fact that it is not possible to prove neither not to prove God, we are already embarked in the process of 'choosing'. The wager leverages on the idea that the choice of the Christian God will automatically promise eternal life, otherwise the loss will be none (Pascal 233). Miki is keen to stress the concept of the human 'will' in the wager argument. For this reason, he is able to describe it as an 'ontological' (*hontaironteki*) one, due to the fact that it becomes deeply entangled with the human aspect of religion (MKZ I: 66). Miki argues:

> The shift from an ontological argument as a formal argument in favour of the wager as a proof of will leads to the reality of God from the idea of God. Thus, the wager is a *practical* (*jissenteki*) argument (MKZ I: 66; emphasis in the original) [62]

Miki explains why he considers it as a 'practical argument'. First of all, because the person who knows the anxiety and lives self-consciously cannot be 'indifferent' (*mutonchaku*) or 'neutral' (*chūritsuteki*) to the wager, since the wager is rooted in the

[62] As Miki specifies, this part is a translation from Lachelier, *Notes sur le pari de Pascal* (see Lachelier 1960: 111).

religious anxiety that represents the impossibility of demonstrating God rationally and theoretically (MKZ I: 66-7). The *anxiety* becomes then the *basic experience* Miki is seeing in Pascal.[63] Since Miki was not a Christian, his interpretation of the wager has to eschew the centrality of the theological argument regarding the existence of God. Rather, what interested him the most was to demonstrate that it is the human will that chooses to bet regardless whether there is a God or not. Secondly, Miki's proposal that the argument of the wager is a practical one further stresses the importance and the centrality the human being had in his system. In this context, 'the reality of God' could be substituted with the 'reality of the human being'.

In addition, the wager is directly connected to the concept of death, which is necessarily interwoven with the basic determination of the human being (MKZ I: 49). Man cannot rationally explain it, but death is perceived in its 'absoluteness' (*zentaisei*) and, because of this, man has no control over it (MKZ I: 52). The significance of death is related to its capacity to shake all the 'evidences' that we have and to make the human being inquiry even more on the question of its existence (MKZ I: 52). According to Miki:

> Our life, in concrete, does not possess an equal necessity. On the contrary, the wisdom (*chie*) of death resides in the ability to teach that each one of us is nothing more than another 'possible' mode of existence
>
> (MKZ I: 53)

Yet, if we doubt the necessity of life in itself, at that point its 'possibility' is made clear. Hence, the awareness of death has to be understood in the contest of life being aware of its own existentiality (MKZ I: 53). Specifically: 'death does not manifest its significance simply by being relative to life; rather, its significance lies in making [life] possible' (MKZ I: 53). Death is also linked to the concept of the *divertissement* (*igi*) and to the condition of misery of the human being (MKZ I: 123). In Pascal, misery and grandeur represent the two opposite poles of the Christian existence that are underpinned by the dooming presence of the original sin. Originally, grandeur was part of man's nature, but after the decadence what is left

[63] Not accidentally, Miki quotes Nietzsche in saying that Pascal was 'the first of all Christians' ('der erste aller Christen', MKZ I: 70). It would be interesting to compare Miki's idea of the basic experience qua anxiety to Lucien Goldmann's philosophy of tragedy, since both thinkers centred their analyses on the concept of the wager. Nevertheless, if Goldmann's Pascal appears in his *Le die caché* (1959) in the framework of the 'genetic structuralism' (a combiantion of Lukács and Piaget), in Miki Pascal is rather considered in an existentialist fashion. Cohen argues that Goldmann saw Marxism as resembling religion as that his concept of 'totality' might stand as figurative of a 'hidden God' (Cohen 1994: 280). I think that, in this instance, Miki and Goldmann are not that far apart, since they both created systems that were very close to theology, and they both substitued God with the human being. In addition, they were both trapped in the paradoxes such philosophical speculations entailed (for Goldmann see Cohen 1994: 277 ff. and for Miki see Chap. 4 and 5 of this thesis).

to him is the mere aspiration to eternal life (Bausola 2003: 44). In Pascal, Miki says, the divertissement plays a key role since it represents the 'technique' of life and the fundamental phenomenon of human condition, beyond representing a self-evasion of life itself (MKZ I: 23-4). Nevertheless, there is an internal contradiction lying behind the concept of divertissement. On one hand, it has to help human beings divert from their life and keep them reflecting on their own insecurity. On the other hand, it creates a vicious circle of insecurity by constantly stimulating a desire for fame and affirmation. Hence, it underpins the movement of life that becomes 'evilly eternal' (MKZ I: 24). In addition to that, since the divertissement is a self-escape from life, in turns life becomes a phenomenon of desperate escape from the idea of death (MKZ I: 55). 'Le divertissement nous amuse, et nous faits arriver insensiblement à la mort' (Pascal 171).

In a comparison between Heidegger and Pascal's ideas of death and their relation to Miki's theorization, Akamatsu states that they are conceptually apart (Akamatsu 1994a: 108). In Pascal, the human being as a Christian believer lives and dies in Jesus Christ, in remembrance of the experience of the martyrs (Akamatsu 1994a: 108-9). In Heidegger, death is a solitary event that solely regards the *Dasein.* On the base of this distinction, Akamatsu argues that Miki grasped Pascal's concept of death according to Heidegger's existentialism and that this limited his understanding of Pascal's thought (Akamatsu 1994a: 109). Miki poses the accent on 'death' as the 'possibility' of life. In Heidegger, the concept of the 'Being-towards-Death' means that the *Dasein* anticipates the possibility of its own death as a possibility. The *Dasein* as *Geworfenheit* lives its existence in the realm of the 'They' as an inauthentic life. The possibility of the authenticity is given by the *Dasein* realizing that its existence is impossibility because of its finitude. Death is discovered in the moment when the *Dasein* understands that this is the possibility of every impossibility of 'being-towards-something'. It represents the total 'can-be'. The possibility of nothingness (*Nichtigkeit*) is 'the existential anticipation of the total Being' (Heidegger 1962a: 321).

In Miki, the accent is posed on the 'possibility' of death as the realization of life rather than as the end of it. I argue that precisely because Miki's interpretation of Pascal is a non-religious one, the Christian part of Pascal's book is left out. This does not constitute a limitation or a mistake. It rather represents a conscious choice. It is a choice in favour of concreteness and 'contextualization'. As it has happened before with the concept of the 'grasping' of nature, I believe it is the same with the concept of death. It provides the Christian, hopeless human being in this world and awaiting for the afterlife, a possibility of living the totality of life away from the concept of the degradation linked to the original sin.

The degree of hope that Miki offers to his *ningen* is part of his scheme of the creation of a religion of the human being. By overlooking the theological implications of Pascal's meditations, Miki set the standard for his anthropological understanding of the human condition. Rather than being 'theo-centric', Miki's philosophy was 'anthropo-centric', always in relation to the contextualization of Pascal's thought in his intellectual milieu[64]. The same conflation of Heidegger and Pascal is restated in the discussion of the concept of 'error' (*gobyū*).

In Pascal, error is 'that condition by means of which things are veiled' (MKZ I: 29).[65] This condition is not only related to the material world, but it also concerns human existence. In fact, it is a mode of existence peculiar to existence itself. Human beings have to deceive and cover the misery of their existence, therefore they are united on the base of mutual deceit (Pascal 100). Nevertheless, Miki establishes a link between Pascal and Aristotle when he argues: 'The human being not only exists as an easy source of errors, it is also an existence of self-deception. This might remind us of the Aristotelian concept of 'false man'' (MKZ I: 29). Along this line, truth (*shinri*) represents the mode of existence where everything is unveiled and unmasked. Moreover, it is that situation where 'the self reveals itself as it is', meaning a 'discovery' in the French sense of 'decouvrir' (*miidasu koto*) (MKZ I: 30).[66] The *honnête homme* is thus the man that can openly talk about his true mode of existence. He sees and tells correctly the condition of misery of human life (MKZ I: 30). [67] Although it is Pascal who says that the *honnête home* is the one that is not deceived by the divertissement, in Miki the attention is focused on the possibility of 'communicating' to others this state of human existence.

[64] Despite the fact that Pascal's theology is focused on the relationship between man and God from a very human perspective, it is still elaborated within the grand scheme of Christianity. This is the reason why I describe Pascal's *oevre* as 'theo-centric'.

[65] The divertissement represents the degradation in the world of 'imagination' (*sōzō*). Pascal describes imagination in these terms: 'Cést cette partie dominant de l'homme, cette maîtresse d'erreur et de fausseté, et d'autant plus fourbe qu'elle ne l'est pas toujour; car elle serait règle infaillible de vérité, si elle l'était infaillible du mensogne' (Pascal 82).

[66] The discourse on 'discovery the self' in these terms is very important in Miki's production. As a matter of fact, this theme will return in the mid-1930s, when Miki writes on Nietzsche's Super-human and on Shestov's 'eccentric'. It has to be underlined that Shestov was also a great admirer of Pascal's *Penseés*. On this subject see Chap. 4.

[67] I decided to leave *honnête homme* in French, since there is no real equivalent in English. 'Honest man' would not fully account for the French word. The idea of the *honnête homme* is an old Renaissance concept. It indicates the man who is not focused on a single discipline but that can openly talk on every subject, being morally honest, without imposing his ideas on others. It is widely acknowledged the indebtedness of Pascal to his friend Chevalier de Méré (1607-1684) for the elaboration of the concept he uses, although Pascal left out the 'libertin' side that, instead, had been emphasized in the de Méré's text (Bausola 2003: 34).

In Miki, the possibility of communication is inherently bound to the use of language. By merging the Pascalian 'decouvrir' to the Greek *alethein* that originally means 'unveiling' or 'uncovering', Miki critically establishes a connection between the Aristotelian-Heideggerian 'false man' to Pascal's *honnête home*. In this respect, what in Pascal was the characteristic of a certain condition of existence, in Miki it becomes an ontological prescription. In this sense, the 'facticity' of language is reiterated constantly by the human beings that continues living in falsehood. In Pascal, man's acceptance of his state of misery was already a step ahead towards the possibility of the true envisioning of the self in God. In Miki, as in Heidegger, it is language that deceives the human being since language is deception in se.[68]

Pascal affirmed that in order to overcome the vicious return to deception, the human being had to be able to distinguish the 'nature' of life from its 'naturality' that took place in the third moment of the movement of life: 'consciousness' (*ishiki*, in French *pensée*; MKZ I: 32). In Pascal consciousness referred to the positive movement of life that Miki also defines as 'self-consciousness' (*jikakuteki ishiki*) or the 'rescuer' of the self from the degradation into the world (MKZ I: 34). Consciousness and thinking are the two advantage points that man possesses as tools in contrasting the universe that is constantly trying to crush him. 'Toute notre dignité consiste donc en la pensée' Pascal says (Pascal 347). The discourse on thinking is crucial in Pascal's argument against the 'philosophers'. Philosophizing is, according to Pascal: 'se moquer de la philosophie' (Pascal 4), because 'philosophy' has to be understood as the fundamental activity of human life. In Miki, this is translated into: 'thinking self-consciously […] as the 'mode of existence'' (MKZ I: 35). Questioning as a form of philosophizing comes down to the uncertainty of human life, therefore the activity starts within life itself. The foundation of this research has to be found in the concreteness of human life, not in the transcendental ego (MKZ I: 39-40).[69]

The ideas of the 'thinking self-consciously' and of 'fundamental experience' share some common ground with Nishida's concept of the 'active self-awareness' and 'pure experience'. Nishida started his career with *An Inquiry into the Good* (*Zen no kenkyū*) published in 1911. In this work, he introduced the concept of 'pure experience' (*junsui keiken*) in which experience was considered as the only existing reality that preceded and transcended the 'subject-object' dichotomy as well as human consciousness. It thus became a

[68] On this subject see also Uchida 2004: 203-4.
[69] Jacinto Zavala is right in seeing the stage of self and active-consciousness as a reminder of Nishida's philosophy. The concreteness of human existence could be compared to Nishida's concept of the concrete reality of human experience (Dilworth *et al*. 1998: 294).

sort of all-encompassing reality that realized the unity between the thought and the thinking, the knowing subject and the known object (Cestari 1998: 181). Everything, even consciousness, was subsumed and contained in the framework of experience. Nevertheless, probably not satisfied with this idea and, at the same time, after having been accused of 'emanational Plotinism' by his student Tanabe Hajime, Nishida revisited his theories in the years between 1924 and 1930 (Cestari 1997: 109-10). In his *From the Acting to the Seeing* (*Hataraku mono kara miru mono he*, 1927), Nishida proposed the concept of the 'logic of place' (*basho no ronri*). This locus was the one where the individual was described as the end of the universal and the universal as the self-negation that let the particular emerge. It is also called the place of the Absolute Nothingness (*zettai mu*) where all contradictions ceased to exist. In this locus, the absolute becomes real and all the difference resolve themselves in an identity-differentiation (*itsu soku ta, ta soku itsu*) (Kosaka 1997: 274). Furthermore, in this precise moment consciousness reaches its ultimate stage which is defined as the mirror where consciousness 'reflects itself within itself' (Kosaka 1991: 203). This is the essence of the thinking self-consciously, where nothing else but the Absolute Nothingness can become 'existence' through an active act of self-negation. Nishida's aim was to create a new paradigm where the Aristotelian vision of the *hypokeimenon* would be reversed. The new paradigm would have hence been 'a predicate that cannot become a subject'. To Nishida, therefore, the *basho* is an 'active universal' (*nōdōteki ippansha*) (Cestari in Arisaka *et al*.: 2).

Miki re-elaborates these theories in his idea that 'self-consciousness' is the act that saves the human being from the degradation into the world and, on the other hand, as a self-contained activity that could be perpetrated solely within existence itself. Negating the existence of a transcendental ego is thus specular to Nishida's idea that the unity of the identity-differentiation takes place in the topos of the Absolute Nothingess. Both Miki and Nishida, in this respect, attempted to negate the presence of two elements that stand in opposition to each other in the epistemological process. As said in the introduction, the dissatisfaction with the status of epistemology in European philosophy pushed not only Miki and Watsuji, but also Nishida to try to overcome it through different philosophical means.

This discourse on the activity of thinking is clearly expressed in another part of the book, when Miki expands his analysis on Pascal by including the *Discours sur le Passions de l'Amour*. The *Discours* and the *Pensées* are linked by the elaboration of the theory of the

ésprit de finesse (*sensai no kokoro*) and the *ésprit géométrique* (*kikagakutekinaru kokoro*).[70] In the same fragment of the 'philosophy' Pascal links the fineness to the judgement and the judgement to the 'feeling'. Next, he juxtaposes the morality of the judgement to the morality of the intellect that, for him, is not subjected to any rules. Sciences belong to the intellect as feelings belong to the judgement (Pascal 4). Miki explains that in the *Discours* the *ésprit de finesse* belongs to the feelings and that, for this reason, it has its own logic that is alien to reason (MKZ I: 81). At this point Miki confronts it with the 'faculty of judgement' as expressed in Kant. Since also in Kant the reflective judgment belongs to the transcendental structure of the self, it therefore allows an understanding of individuality as concrete existence (MKZ I: 81). In Pascal, l'*ésprit de finesse* represents the *feelings* understanding individuality according to its own reasons and, as said before, the *finesse* is a characteristic of judgement (MKZ I: 81).

Bausola explains that, although it is true that in modern philosophy there are analogue studies into the faculty judgement, for example in Kant, in Pascal the object of this faculty is not specified (Bausola 2003: 68). What Pascal is talking about are the characteristics of the *ésprit de finesse* as an alternative cognitive capability beyond the rational one. It is flexible and it is concerned with human existence (Bausola 2003: 68). Nevertheless, a specific object is never mentioned. Miki, in an attempt of solving this obscure point, assigns to concrete human existence the role of being the object of the faculty of judgement. Apparently for Miki the answer to the question of judgement is not implicit in the 'object' but rather in the 'faculty'. Since the faculty belongs to the transcendental structure of the human being, it naturally follows that its object should be its own existence.[71]

On the one hand, Miki describes the *ésprit de finesse* as 'intuition' which is necessary to understand existence in relation to its value (MKZ I: 144). On the other, the analysis of the human being should progress 'analytically' (*bunsekiteki*) in the sense of proceeding by 'discerning' (*shikibetsu suru*) or 'distinguishing' (*miwakeru*) not in a logical or scientific way (MKZ I: 145). In this way, the mutual relationships in life that ends in a hermeneutical description of the reason of effects (*genjitsu no riyū*) of existence would be complete (MKZ I: 147-9). Dialectics thus become the methodology employed even in the case of the apparently

[70] For Pascal in the *ésprit géométrique* the principles are clear and visible, although they are far from the common use, while the principles of the *ésprit de finesse* are of common use and 'in front of everybody's eyes'. You are only required to have 'bonne vue' and you will see them (Pascal 1). Pascal further specifies that usually fine spirits are not good with the geometric principles, because they require imagination and a certain degree of speculation. On the other hand, geometric spirits miss the whole picture and loose themselves when it is not possible for them to apply their geometrical method on the fine spirits (Pascal 1).

[71] Miki will continue further his analysis of Kant in his *The Logic of Imagination* (see Chap. 5).

contrasting mutual relationship between the misery and the grandeur of the human being that could be solved by subsuming it in the dialectical method (MKZ I: 150-3). Since truth is not immediately available we have to develop a new method as a self-conscious one in order to attain the real truth that is God. Nevertheless, in Pascal such an objective could be only fulfilled in the order of charity which represents the divine mode of existence and thus precluded to the human beings. [72] In fact, it is the order of the saints, like Saint Augustine and Saint Paul. In a reverse course, Miki affirms that, in order to gain to the order of charity, we have to start from the dialectics of our antinomies which are torn between the thesis of 'logic' and the antithesis of 'reality' (MKZ I: 160). Thus, he does not only hint at the fact that the order is possibly open to non-divine creatures, but he also explains that the divine grace (*onchō*) would not be attainable unless the human will is involved (MKZ I: 112).

> Between logic and reality, idea and existence, we always have to choose for the latter. The reason is because God, the soul, the creation and the genesis have to be acknowledged. Reason is dependent on its submission to reality and there must be given the *possibility* of understanding the antinomies that arise in the self
>
> (MKZ I: 162; emphasis in the original)

The second antinomy is that reality is connected to the order of charity, which is unreachable with our reason. The possibility is not factuality *realizable* (MKZ I: 162; emphasis in the original). Hence, religion is the only way to solve the antinomies. Pascal affirms that the strength of reason resides in knowing when to doubt, when to affirm and when to submit itself (Pascal 268). The certainty of the existence of God is by all means only an instinct (*hontai*). Despite this, the instinct of the *coeur* belongs to the order of charity (MKZ I: 166). How is this problem solved?

Miki addresses this question by means of the 'love of God'. Love is the unity between action and understanding. Since, as already mentioned before, the knowledge of God is a 'practical' matter, it follows that our concrete life must become a conversion in the direction of God. In order to grasp Him, we have to live according to his preaching because: 'the recognition of the religious truth is an intellectual action, it is an active knowledge (*chiteki tabi, kōteki chi dearu*; MKZ I: 167).

> The problem of life has to be solved by *living* this problem in a superior meaning. This is Pascal's faith
>
> (MKZ I: 167; emphasis in the original)

[72] In Pascal the orders are functional to the concept of the position of the human being in the religious hierarchy.

Miki, by recognizing that religious truth is 'active knowledge', turns Pascal upside down and allows for man to reach the stage of the completion of its human existence. By having faith in human reason, Miki is making a powerful statement in overcoming the religious ground Pascal had based his analysis on. Once again, Miki shows the anthropocentrism of his philosophy.

Miki then adds that a more profound explanation of Pascal's faith has to be found in the *Entretien de Pascal avec Saci sur Épictète et Montaigne*.[73] De Sacy says to Pascal that the source of error of both the Stoics and the Sceptics is the fact that they did not recognize that the actual state of the human being is different from what it originally was (Pascal 1914: 52). On the one hand the Stoics ignore the corruption of human nature and, by ignoring its impotence, fall into conceit; on the other hand the Sceptics, by ignoring the original dignity of man and by knowing its impotence by not its duties, fall into laziness (Pascal 1914: 52-3). They both strengthen their falsity without reaching the real truth. The only truth, says de Sacy, is the one of the Christian God who has taught us that what is infirm belongs to the nature, what is valid belongs to the divine grace (Pascal 1914: 54). Therefore, the union of these two natures has to be found in the figure of the 'Homme-Dieu', namely Jesus Christ (Pascal 1914: 54).

The *coeur*, which is the only understanding of God, is represented in the symbol as the particular concept that stands for the material understanding. According to this it follows that man cannot love what is outside himself because that would mean negating God's love (MKZ I: 97-8). The double-folded structure of love goes from man to God and from God to man, being 'figurative' (*shōchō*) of the divine love (MKZ I: 99).[74]

> The substance of human love is not simply inside ourselves as the happiness we aspire to. And it is not even outside ourselves. On the contrary, it is in ourselves *as much* as it is inside us. That is to say: it is the figure of the great *truth* that resides in God
>
> (MKZ I: 99; emphasis in the original)

The original sin (*genzai*) is the origin of the corruption of the nature of the human being and, according to Pascal, Jesus Christ is our sole redemption, because he subsumes the

[73] The *Entretien* is a transcription of a dialogue between Pascal and de Sacy redacted by the secretary of de Sacy, Fontaine, in 1655 (Bausola 2003: 25). The dialogue confronts Stoicism, portrayed in the figure of Epictetus, and Scepticism, personified by Montaigne, and tries to overcome both in a Christian perspective (Bausola 2003: 25).

[74] There are two meanings: the figure in the the *sens literal* (*hyōmenteki imi*) and in the *sense mystique* (*shinpiteki imi*). The access to the *sense mystique* is precluded to the order of charity and, therefore, for the other orders, the figure becomes an obstacle in reaching the truth (MKZ I: 175). Pascal says that it is not possible to understand how God operates unless we understand that he decided to illuminate some and to make some blind (Pascal 566).

misery of the original sin through his incarnation as a human being. On the other hand, he is uncorrupted, because of the fact that he was born without it. Therefore, religion is the only method capable of understanding the totality of life in its reality (MKZ I: 190). Jesus Christ must therefore be the centrality of the Christian faith because of his embodiment of the contradictions present in the concreteness of the life of the human being.

Despite the seemingly religious interpretation that Miki proposes, the fact that he states that the substance of human love is the 'figure' of the great truth that resides in God goes in stark contrast to the dichotomy of the senses that in Pascal set the fundamental distinction between the orders. If the figure is an obstacle for all the orders except for the one of charity, it signifies that man cannot understand it. On the contrary, Miki appears to affirm that, regardless the order, the figure functions as God's truth. In this sense, Miki is very close to one of Pascal's interpreters, Alexandre Vinet, who wrote that 'in order to attain God we have to start from the human being' (even quoted MKZ I: 40). Vinet never saw Pascal as a full Christian, rather he defined him: 'a desperate atheist' (Vinet 1936: 133).[75] He added that, according to the theology of Pascal, Christianity would be a 'practice' in the sense that man could reach God by practicing it (Vinet 1936: 139). This could happen because Pascal was emphasizing the 'heart' (*coeur*) of the knowledge of the Christian faith. As a consequence, the reason was 'humiliated' (*s'humilie*) in front of the things God had prepared for us in order to elevate our spirits (Vinet 1936: 139-40).

Vinet's central concern was to interpret Pascal in terms of 'the man' that came before the 'the believer'. He provided a valid support to Miki's idea that man comes before God, in the sense that the engagement with theological reasoning should begin with man. The centrality of the misery of the condition of the human being in Pascal's thought resembles, although in a complete different context, the *anxiety* related to Heideggerian and existential thought in general in the 1920s-1930s. As a result, Miki might have seen Pascal as a lay man, and not as a religious figure writing an apology of Christianity. The apology is, as a matter of fact, a true one but based on a human perspective. Pascal found the answer to his thoughts in the misery of the human being, and Miki saw in this 'human' answer a valid response to the crisis of his time.

[75] Atheism is understood by Vinet as the impossibility of knowing God without 'possessing', 'living' God. 'Desperate' because man has realized the unattainability of the truth as preached by the religions of life.

Watsuji Tetsurō: the Human Being as a 'Political Being'

In *Climate*, Watsuji treats the Japanese case in the chapter dedicated to the monsoonal regions.[76] Japan is special thanks to the complexity of its climate that Watsuji defines as being 'monsoonal' and 'temperate'. Because of this, Japanese people share two different 'behavioural' characteristics: they are 'receptive' (*juyō*) and, at the same time, 'submissive' (*ninjū*) (WTZ VIII: 134). The mixed characteristics of Japanese climate are compared to a bamboo:

> The shape of the tropical plant of the bamboo covered with snow is often given as a typical Japanese natural feature. Nevertheless, the bamboo, accustomed to the weight of the snow, differentiates itself from the tropical bamboo, being able to draw a flexible curve, becoming a Japanese bamboo
>
> (WTZ VIII: 135)

Watsuji describes the particular Japanese mode of existence as the one being 'silently passionate' (*shimeyakana gekijō*) and 'aggressive disinterest' (*sentōtekina tentan*). This combination is due to the fact that Japanese people have to fight against the destruction brought by the seasonal monsoons but, that, on the other hand, has pushed them to become 'submissive' (WTZ VIII: 134-8). The bamboo represents this particular Japanese trait. It represents the ability of Japanese people of having been able to adapt to every culture that has been introduced in Japan over the centuries and to make it 'Japanese'. Watsuji calls it 'stratification' (*jūsōsei*).[77]

Secondly, Watsuji sees the Japanese family system as the most outstanding characteristic of Japanese culture. Basing his analysis on the concept of *ie*, that in Japanese has the double meaning of both the 'nuclear family' as well as the 'household', Watsuji argues that *ie* takes the significance of 'totality' of the family (in this case he uses *kazoku*) that assumes historical value thanks to the legitimacy guaranteed by the ancestors (WTZ VIII: 141). For this reason: 'the fundamental characteristic of the '*ie*' is the fact that it is the place where totality can be historically grasped' (WTZ VIII: 142). In the Japanese concept of the

[76] Watsuji assumes that different communities reacted in different ways to the climate they live in. It is the case of the monsoonal regions, where people are constantly struggling with the fury of the torrential rains that shapes them as a combatant and passionate. The inhabitants of the desert regions are instead nomadic and characterized by a certain degree of laziness. Last, people living in the temperate climates have learnt how to develop a florid agriculture and to raise cattle, thanks to the favourable climate and are therefore more active (see WTZ VIII: 24 ff).

[77] The concept of 'stratification' had already been expressed by Watsuji in his *Pilgrimage to Ancient Temples* and *Restoring Idols*. In these two books Watsuji writes that Japan, in the Nara period, was the centre of Asia thanks to the immigration of Chinese and Korean labour in order to build the Nara temples. The different cultures were absorbed by Japan and homogenized according to the indigenous substratum.

family parents are ready to sacrifice themselves for the sake of their own children realizing the concept of 'non-divisibility between the self and the other' (*jita fuji no rinen*) (WTZ VIII: 142-3). The passion and the aggressiveness mentioned above are therefore described in these terms:

> The '*ie*' as the mode of existence of the Japanese human being realizes, on a family level, the Japanese 'betweeness' as the passionate, aggressive disinterest
>
> (WTZ VIII: 142)

Watsuji argues that the Japanese are aware of the 'totality' of the 'human beings' through the notion of the '*kami* of the Japanese spirit' (WTZ VIII: 147). The totality of the nation is thus embodied in the 'god of the ancestors' (*sosen kami*) (WTZ VIII: 147).

Watsuji subsequently traces back in history the idea of a god of the Japanese nation. He believes that if the Meiji Restoration happened, it is because the all-embracing principle of the 'family' and of the 'household' had been recognized by the people in Amaterasu Ōmikami, the female founder of the Japanese nation. The Restoration is considered by Watsuji as a moment of 'popular self-awareness' (*kokuminteki jikaku*) that restored the power in the hands of the emperor (WTZ VIII: 147). In Japan, the totality of the nation had been already grasped on a religious level, because of the taxonomic categories of 'microcosmic family' and 'macrocosmic household' that are mirrored in each other. The Japanese emperor is like the Confucian benevolent father and the benevolent ruler (WTZ VIII: 148). In Watsuji's words:

> We acknowledge the full historical significance [of the imperial household] in the doctrine of the loyalty and filial piety that strives to awake the totality of the people on the basis of the analogy with the family. That is just the *peculiar mode* in which the Japanese grasp the totality of the human beings through this *distinctive mode of existence*
>
> (WTZ VIII: 148; emphasis in the original)

Watsuji thinks that in Japan the religious principle and the political principle were able to be combined in an 'inseparable union' (*kyote naki ketsugō*) in the figure of the emperor. This did not happen in Europe where, for example, there was a clear separation between the two with the king on one hand and the Pope on the other (WTZ VIII: 150).[78] The emperor embodied the unity of the Japanese nation, thanks to the fact that the *leitmotiv* that ran throughout Japanese history is the 'feeling of reverence to the emperor' (*sonnō shin*) (WTZ VIII: 150).[79] Related to this discourse is the assertion that before a real ethical system

[78] Watsuji refers to the *matsurigoto* as this union between religious and political spheres (WTZ VIII: 150).
[79] In Chap. 5 and Chapt. 6 the concept of the 'reverence to the emperor' will be further explored.

developed in Japan, the category of 'pure', 'impure' and 'vile' subsumed in themselves both a religious and political meaning. In the double value of these categories Watsuji sees the 'distinctiveness of the [Japanese] people' (WTZ VIII: 151).

In the chapter dedicated to the 'singularity of Japan' (*nihon no mezurashisa*), Watsuji affirms that the Japanese would not be interested in the *res publica*, but that they would rather react if a damage is caused to them. The roots of this attitude towards politics are to be found in the peculiarity of the Japanese people not to be in conflict with others, since they live their lives in a 'communal' way (WTZ VIII: 157). According to Watsuji, a democratic parliamentary system can be implemented only in societies where there is a strong emphasis on individualism (WTZ VIII: 168). Even the Japanese Communist party does not represent the proletariat but solely its leaders' views (WTZ VIII: 168).

Watsuji defines the 'political rarity' of Japan this unsuitable-*ness* of both the Communist and democratic models. Unfortunately, Watsuji does not specify which model would be most opportune for the Japanese case. If compared to his previous articles written in 1919, it is clear that some things have changed in Watsuji's political views. For example, if before democratic ideas were considered 'functional' to strengthen the welfare of the people, here democracy is seen as an inappropriate model for the Japanese nation. The loyalty to the imperial family is underlined even more in the passages mentioned above. This shift might have been triggered by Watsuji experiences in Europe during 1926-27. Watsuji suffered from depression while he was in Germany and, apparently, this 'distance' from Japan lead him to reflect on the political and cultural status of his country that developed in a harsh critique of the European model that finds its climax in the last chapter of *Climate*. This last part is dedicated to the history of the studies on climatology in the works of Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) and Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831).[80]

In a first passage, Watsuji finds common ground with Herder in affirming that language is a characteristic of the human being that differentiates the people of the world. In his *Ideas for the Philosophy of History of Mankind* (*Ideen zur Geschichte der Menschheit*, 1784) Herder said that language was the distinctive character of our reason. Through a process of interpretation (*Auslegung*) language was created as the external 'sign' (*Zeichen*) of the internal sign that is reason itself. Language was therefore aimed at relating us to the outside world, which was the manifestation of God. In this respect, Watsuji says that God in Herder is 'the nature and the profound mystery eternally manifested in mankind's destiny'

[80] This part of *Climate* has not yet been translated. As a matter of fact, the English translation stops at the fourth chapter (see Watsuji 1961).

(WTZ VIII: 210). Nevertheless, Watsuji criticizes Herder for having applied the method of interpretation to nature, as if nature were the object of natural sciences, and for having failed to recognize that natural sciences and the *Geisteswissenschaften* need to be combined (WTZ VIII: 215). Watsuji argues that the 'secret' of nature lies in 'living' in nature without actually knowing why certain phenomena happen in different climates. Hence, nature is not an abstract object different from our consciousness, it is a concrete part of human existence.

> [for example] The fact that air is a living thing is because the human being discovers its own life within air. The secret of air is the secret of human life
>
> (WTZ VIII: 216)

The abstraction of nature and climate as exemplified in Herder is not acceptable from Watsuji's point of view. As long as nature will remain an object of knowledge, it will be impossible to consider it as a concrete part of the structure of human existence.

In Hegel's case, the critique is pointed at his theory of world history. Watsuji therefore focuses only on the second moment of the Idea, or the objective Spirit. [81] Hegel saw nature as the 'outgoing' of the Idea from itself. Nature was the antithesis or the self-negation of the Idea. Nevertheless, nature is still a 'subjective' thing. Watsuji writes that nature is opposed to the human beings and the difference between the particular natural spirit and the human beings has to be found in its 'contingency' (*gūzensei*). History, on the other hand, was the moment of self-consciousness of the objective Spirit. Watsuji says that the self-revelation (*jiko keiji*) of the Spirit is the thesis of the objectivity of the Spirit itself (WTZ VIII: 228). The third moment of the objective Spirit was concretized in the 'volk spirit'. According to Watsuji, it realizes itself in the multitude of the various people.

At this point Watsuji argues that this 'particularity' can be seen as a '*geographical and climatic prescription'* (*chiriteki oyobi fūdoteki kitei*) where the people's spirit manifests itself in different individualities (WTZ VIII: 229). Due to this fact, Watsuji argues that human reality is one moment in the movement in the emancipation of the world Spirit (WTZ VIII: 229). If the Spirit has to set itself free, then the moment of particularity is the *conditio sine qua non* (*hitsusu*) for it to reach the higher stage (WTZ VIII: 230). Watsuji links this particularity, as mentioned above, to the climatic particularity. Hegel had divided history in

[81] The Spirit in Hegel is three-folded. The subjective spirit is still related to the finitude because finitude appears inside the Spirit. The objective Spirit is the spirit realized in the institutions, such as the family, society and the state. The objective spirit is itself divided in three moments (right, morality, ethics). The third Spirit is the Absolute Spirit which is the Idea that self-recognizes in an absolute manner. Related to this last stage are art, religion and philosophy.

three periods. Asia had been relegated to the first form, while the last one was dedicated to the German state, the only one, in Hegel's eyes, that had understood that human freedom relied in its subsumption in the state as the *telos* of history. On a religious level, Asian civilizations stopped on a 'mythical' level and were excluded by the Christian revelation. Watsuji takes up this point, arguing that this is not only a stage to the self-consciousness of the Spirit, but that this is also related to a climatic condition (WTZ VIII: 231). Thus, he criticizes Hegel for not having correctly provided a coherent theory on the significance of nature. Rather: 'on a theoretical level, he strongly grasped the significance of the geographical roots. Nonetheless, he could not sufficiently concretize it' (WTZ VIII: 232). It follows:

> We cannot approve a world history as the one of Hegel that makes Europeans the 'chosen people' (*senmin*). The fact that outside Europe many people are made slaves does not represent the realization of man's freedom. World history has to award to every people a place for itself according to their climatic differences
>
> (WTZ VIII: 232)

Since climate is ontologically related to history, Watsuji could not understand why in Hegel nature had a secondary position in shaping the different people Spirits. The climate thus became a political statement in Watsuji's hands.

In *Study of Ethics* the discourse on politics takes a more radical path. For Watsuji, the concept of *ie* is the emblem of the dynamic movement of negativity. The family is the mirror of society, since the totality of the family is the force that prescribes the role to each member, by negating the possibility of taking up another one (WTZ X: 95). Therefore, the individuals live according to the 'community' and this is the 'familiar community' of the human beings. Watsuji thinks that the 'state' (*kokka*) represents the totality of all totalities, the supreme totality that corresponds to the *sovereignty of all sovereignties* (*tōchiken no shukensei*) (WTZ X: 605). In the totality of human existence, every individuality is seen as a self-determination of the absolute totality (WTZ X: 605). To Watsuji the state represents, most of all, the union of all the communities that are included in it. The state, by being self-conscious and by prescribing all these particularities, is therefore the *conditio sine qua non* of all various relations that run throughout the moral structures. 'The state is the ethical, self-conscious, synthetic structure' (WTZ X: 595).

As it happens in the family system, where to take up the role of parents it is not necessary to renounce to the role of the 'married couple', so in the community the same process has taken place. Every community is subsumed in the bigger one (family-geographic, community-cultural, community-state) without this having to lose its particular characteristics.

The state is therefore the ethical structure of all ethical structures that assigns to every particularity its own place (WTZ X: 596). The movement of negation mentioned above is thereby applied even to the activity of the state, which for Watsuji is an ethical activity aimed at regulating human 'communitarian' existence. The state is capable of doing it by relying on its own 'force' that does not need be to be too coercive since the individual, thanks to the noematic residue of the totality that still lingers in itself, will naturally go back to the state, namely the Absolute Good.[82]

These considerations on the state as the Absolute Good and supreme ethical system will be further developed in other works written between 1942 and 1944. These pieces will be the subject of this enquiry in the next chapters. Needless to say, there is a clear radicalization of Watsuji's thought in these years. As Satō has pointed out, this shift will comprise Watsuji's position in the postwar period (Satō 1996: 8). In fact, after 1945 Watsuji was included in the discourse on *sengo sekinin* or '(post)war responsibility' and he was accused of having been a supporter of the Japanese imperialism. It is left to see how Watsuji re-emerged from the quagmire of the war-time period.

Conclusions

Miki and Watsuji started their careers by elaborating a very similar concept of the human being. They both stressed the 'concreteness' of human life and the 'median' situation in which the human being found itself positioned.

Heidegger influenced their philosophical speculations in different, although similar, ways. In Miki, Heidegger's existential analytic was used as a tool in analyzing Pascal. In Watsuji, on the other hand, Heidegger triggered a deep reflection on the status of the Japanese state and culture after the Restoration and after the encounter with European philosophy.

In Miki the concept of the human being slowly progresses towards a 'religious' man. By saying 'religious' I do not mean that there was a sudden conversion to Christianity on Miki's side. On the contrary, religion has to be interpreted here as the 'religion of the human

[82] In the 1942 edition some considerations are more explicitly nationalistic. For example, the accent is posed in the 'sacredness' of the state thanks to the figure of the emperor who embodies the union between religious and political power. Even the language changes, in fact the word *minzoku* is used more frequently.

being', because it is precisely the human being that becomes the focus and the solution to religious and existential problems. In Watsuji, on the other hand, the path towards the definition of human existence becomes more tortuous and compromised. It could be argued that even Watsuji created a 'religion of the human being', although some might accuse him of having rather shaped a 'Japanese human being'. Watsuji transforms his human being in a political human being that, to some extent, could be effectively recognized in a particular 'Japanese' one. *Climate*, in fact, represents Watsuji's first political attempt. His refusal of Herder, Hegel and Heidegger is justified on the basis of the difference between the European 'human being' and the Japanese one. In *Study of Ethics* the state reaches the level and assumes the role of the absolute totality, in line with what Hegel had prefigured for the Prussian state. The Japanese state becomes 'sacred' and 'particular' and therefore 'supreme'. What it is of most interest will be to confront them with what Watsuji wrote in the following years and see, if possible, whether the Japanese defeat in the Second World War affected his political views or, on the other hand, whether he steadily believed in the 'particularism' of the Japanese nation.

In Miki's *Pascal* there is no indication of a political engagement in this first stage. The concepts he expressed in this book will be subsequently developed in a more 'political' philosophy. In fact, just the year after the publication of *Pascal*, Miki begins his relationship with Marxist philosophy.

What is central in Miki and Watsuji is the concreteness of human life and its relation to the surrounding environment understood as an 'ontological experience'. Their research focuses not on an epistemological subject-object distinction but, rather, on an ontological-existential hermeneutics. The accent is posed on a return to the 'human being' in itself *within* itself. Ergo, everything, including climate, becomes part of the essential structure of the human being.

III. *NINGEN* AND SOCIETY
The Influence of Marxism in the 1930s

> Le scientisme est un cas particulier de l'aliénation ou de l'objectivation qui prive l'homme de sa réalité humaine et fait qu'il se confond avec les choses.[83]

The 1920s were the period when Marxism philosophically and politically flourished in Japan. Philosophically, its influence was felt in the numerous *ronsō*, or 'intellectual debates', that were being published in different journals. Politically, it was concretized in the advent of a new wave of Marxist followers affiliated with the Japanese Communist Party (JCP), first under the leadership of Yamakawa Hitoshi (1880-1958) and then Fukumoto Kazuo (1894-1983).

The role of Marxist philosophy is particularly important in the development of the concept of the human being both for Miki and Watsuji. As a matter of fact, it is with the introduction of Marxism that the shift from the historicizing of the mere human existence towards a historicizing of 'society' as a whole took place. Moreover, the teleological view of history that underpins Marxist philosophy had a great impact on the Japanese intellectuals of the time, since it provided a new theoretical framework for the writing of Japanese history. Thus, the topics of capitalist modernity, modernization and 'Westernization' began to be interpreted in different ways. For the Marxists, Marxism represented a tangible gateway from the conundrum 'feudalism-capitalist development' Japanese society was struggling with. The conservatives, on the other hand, saw Marxism as a real danger to the status quo that needed to be suppressed.

Miki and Watsuji reacted to these new intellectual trends in opposite ways. Miki remained fascinated with the ideas of 'historical materialism', 'class struggle', and 'ideology' and he made an attempt to create a Marxist 'third way', which synthesised existentialism and materialism together. Watsuji engaged in a philosophical discussion with the intellectual Kawakami Hajime (1879-1946) over the significance of historical and dialectical materialism and denied the social and political value of Marxist ideas.[84]

In this chapter I will show how Miki tried to create his 'third way' by conflating the philosophy of Pascal and Heidegger with Marxist materialism and how Miki's theory of the

[83] Merleau-Ponty 1963: 224.
[84] Kawakami was at that time professor of economics at Kyoto Imperial University.

human being as median prevented him from thoroughly understanding the concept of 'class' in Marxist philosophy. As a matter of fact, Miki still defines his *ningen* as 'medianic existence', where the totality and infinity of the Pascalian period will be substituted by logos and ideology. The human being, constrained between these two polarizing elements, will not be able to overcome them even in the context of the Marxist teleology of history. In addition, Miki's effort to reconcile religion and Marxism will naturally continue the discourse on the 'religion of the human being' begun in *Pascal*. Thus, medianity and religion will be considered as the two major factors that, on the one hand, produced a highly original interpretation of Marxism but that, on the other, practically baulked the creation of a Marxist theory *tout court*. As for Watsuji, Marxism could not but represent a threat to his definition of the human being as betweeness in his Japanese, harmonious society. As we shall see, Watsuji widely criticized the Marxist economic outlook on society because it eschewed the problems of societal ethics and morality. Furthermore, since in Watsuji the state represents the highest ethical and social structure, it was impossible for him to accept Marxism as a feasible political and social theory.

Although it might seem that Miki and Watsuji parted completely at this point in time, which partially corresponds to the truth, I attempt to show how this phase prepares the ground for the next stage of their careers. As a matter of fact, the leap from human existence to historical society ties the previous elaborations on the mere *human being* to its 'historical' role in *society*. In the next stage, with the introduction of philosophy of history, this society will become the nation and, in particular, the Japanese nation. Miki and Watsuji's constant concern in their entire philosophical systems remains the human being and its historical structure and formation, albeit in a different and, more ideological, form.

Miki Kiyoshi, Tosaka Jun, Fukumoto Kazuo, Hani Gorō and others all belonged to the second generation of Japanese Marxists. The first generation, embodied in the figures of Yamakawa Hitoshi, Ōsugi Sakae (1885-1923), Arahata Kanson (1887-1981) and, to some extent, Kawakami Hajime, was still bound to the Taishō liberals' idea of *minponshugi*. These latter intellectuals were more oriented towards socialism and liberalism and they were not acquainted with the writings of Lenin, which were translated in Japanese only in 1921 (Duus and Schneider 1998: 182-3). As we shall see later, Kawakami represents an exception since his views on Marxism underwent a deep rethinking after 1924, when Fukumoto harshly criticized his theories on economics.

The JCP was funded in 1922 under the leadership of Yamakawa and his ideas of the 'change in direction' (*hōhō tenkan*) (Miyakawa 1976: 55).[85] The change towards a more radical proletarian revolution by the socialist-oriented intelligentsia signalled Yamakawa's own shift from a Meiji-style liberalism towards a clear Marxist revolutionary attitude (Duus and Schneider 1998: 195-6). The 'draft plan' (*kōryō sōan*) of Yamakawaism aimed at criticizing the anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists for having departed from the masses and to return, by means of the 'change in direction', to a 'massification' of the Japanese revolutionary movement (Miyakawa 1976: 57). Under the leadership of Yamakawa, the JCP found itself under attack from the Soviet Comintern later in 1922, which judged Japan as still backward and in need of a two-stage revolution due to the residuum of feudal elements lingering in its system (Hoston 1986: 65).

In 1926, Fukumoto Kazuo, upon his return from Germany, addressed a number of attacks at Yamakawa's Change in Direction. In Germany, Fukumoto had studied Marx and Lenin and had become acquainted with the recently published works of Georg Lukács (1885-1971), Karl Korsch (1886-1961) and Rosa Luxemburg (1870-1919) (Duus and Schneider 1998: 198-205). He had built his theoretical basis directly on Lenin's writings and he was at that time considered the most prominent intellectual in dialectical materialism, having introduced in Japan the difference between historical and dialectical materialism (Bernstein 1976: 135). His critique of Yamakawa was Lenin-oriented and aimed at stressing the role of the vanguard as an elite capable of guiding the proletarian revolution (Hoston 1986: 49).[86] Through this vanguard, the proletariat would have gained a sufficient class consciousness

[85] The full title of Yamakawa's article is: 'The Change in Direction of the Proletarian Movement' (*Musan kaikyū undō no hōhō tenkan*), written in 1922 (Iwasaki 1971: 30).
[86] Yamakawa had rejected the idea of an intellectual leadership of the proletariat and he had theorized that some members of the working class itself had to represent the 'vanguard' (Duus and Schneider 1998: 196).

capable of fulfilling the tasks of the revolution.[87] Unfortunately, in 1927, the Comintern published the infamous 'Theses on the Japan problem', where it judged Japan as still a semi-feudal state and called for the abolition of the emperor system in order to start the revolution against the bourgeois state (Hoston 1986: 61). Both Fukumotism and Yamakawism were condemned on the basis of a lack of action, abstractness and for being over-theoretical (Miyakawa 1976: 60). Fukumoto was subsequently expelled from the JCP and replaced by Watanabe Masanosuke.

Despite his expulsion from the party, the influence of Fukumoto Kazuo on the next generations of Japanese Marxists should not be underestimated. As Duus and Schneider point out, Fukumoto had the merit of having taken the JCP to a theoretical level that was one of the highest at that time (Duus and Schneider 1998: 201). He thus introduced 'Marxist philosophy' to the Japanese intelligentsia, forcing leading intellectuals such as Kawakami to revise their previous ideas regarding Marxism (Iwasaki 1971: 12-3). The new 'humanistic' side of Marxism introduced by Fukumoto through the readings of Lukács, Korsch and Luxemburg strongly appealed to the sensibility of the young Marxists such as Miki Kiyoshi and Tosaka Jun.

It is in this historical situation of 'love and hate' of Marxism that Miki and Watsuji's works have to be read. From my point of view, the new 'humanistic' trend in Marxist philosophy proved to be a powerful tool in Miki's hands. It allowed him to bridge his previous existentialist and religious writings, such as *Pascal*, with his new fascination with historical materialism and class struggle. This lead to a new interpretation of Marxism which, I believe, it is still not fully appreciated today. On the contrary, the depth of Marxist theorizations and the scarecrow of a Communist revolution prompted Watsuji to take action and confront Marxist intellectuals.

[87] The term 'intellectual' in Lenin's thought does not have a positive connotation. It should be substituted by the expression 'hegemony of the party', since it is the party that represents the class consciousnessof the proletariat even if completely detached from what the actual proletarian class is. The party functions as a sovra-consciousness that knows what the future of the proletarians ought to be and in which direction it should be pointed at. In his view of the party, intellectuals and workers would have formed a single leadership, after the cancellation of their class differences (Kolakowski II, 1978: 390-1).

Watsuji and Marxism

In 1926, in the aftermath of the Kyoto University incident, Watsuji wrote his first public critique of Marxism. This incident involved a group of thirty-eight students belonging to the Social Sciences Study Group, who were arrested and charged with the accusation of being supporters of the JCP (Bernstein 1976: 141). Watsuji's first article appeared in the Kyoto University Newspaper in October 1926 and was entitled *My Impressions on the Incident of the Students' Arrest* (*Gakusei kenkyo jiken shokan*).[88] Kawakami, who was then professor at the university, engaged in a written dialogue with Watsuji right after the publication of this piece.

Kawakami was still struggling with Marxist philosophy at that time. His initial ideas regarding the reform of Japanese society were characterized by a strong moral trait, which included the eradication of poverty through the voluntary renouncement of luxury by the rich (Yagi 2007: 4).[89] He also saw the involvement of the individual in the social revolution as a voluntary gesture driven by moral revolution, a step towards the improving of society. Most importantly, Kawakami affirmed that the 'value' in Marxist theory had to be extended to the whole humankind rather than to a single individual, therefore de-historicizing the process of production and basing it on an eternal concept that overlooked the emergence of surplus value and exploitation. It was his own student Kushida Tamizō (1885-1984) who first criticized him for his moral approach to economy and for been heavily influenced by idealism rather than materialism (Yagi 2007: 9-10). Kushida highlighted how this idealist bias was the fundamental cause of Kawakami's misunderstanding of the theory of labour and surplus value.

On the other hand, Fukumoto attacked Kawakami on the basis of his new theory on consciousness and totality that he had learnt from his studies in Germany. By introducing the concept of class consciousness, Fukumoto was clearly aiming at criticizing Kawakami's moralistic standpoint and accent on humankind. Fukumoto's criticism, together with Kushida's, made Kawakami rethink his own interpretation of Marxism. In fact, in 1926, he started writing on the concepts of class and on the contradictions that arose when dividing society according to class consciousness (Yagi 2007: 22). Despite his deepening knowledge of Marx's *Das Kapital* and other writings, Kawakami's moral trait always occupied an important position in his thought.

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[88] Now in WTZ XVII: 420-3. Quotations are from the *Collected Works*.

[89] Yagi Kiichirō's article *Emergence of Marxian Scholarship in Japan: Kawakami Hajime and his Two Critics* was originally published in the journal *Rekishi to Keizai* in 2007. Quotations here are from the online version that can be retrieved at http://www.econ.kyoto-u.ac.jp/~yagi/yagi2005/index.htm

It is in this context that the dialogue between Kawakami and Watsuji has to be considered.[90] In his first piece, Watsuji starts out by harshly condemning the students for having followed a 'fantasy of youth' (*seinen rashii kūsō*) fomented by a mere strategy of terror comparable to the violence against the Koreans in the aftermath of the Kantō earthquake in 1923 (WTZ XVII: 420). To him, the reason for the call of violence has to be traced back to Marx's books (WTZ XVII: 421). Nevertheless, Watsuji does not question the utility of the teaching of social sciences per se at universities. What he questions is the outcome this kind of education could have, namely to foment 'class struggle' as if the students should become devotees of the Russian Revolution (WTZ XVII: 422-3).

Kawakami immediately replied to Watsuji's article from the pages of the journal he had founded, *Shakai Mondai Kenkyū*. Kawakami's approach to Watsuji's ideas is clearly from the standpoint of a Marxist academic. Kawakami describes Watsuji's language as 'ambiguous' (*aimai*) and his comparison between the Tokyo and the Kyoto riots as 'uncertain' (*bimyō*) (KHZ XVII: 97-99). He is thus reaffirming the right of students to study dialectical materialism at university. Kawakami thinks that Watsuji is only a follower of Yoshino's *minponshugi*, whilst, in his opinion, Japanese society cannot be renovated as it is in that historical time through the legality of laws. Instead, he sees the study of the Russian Revolution like a physician who is studying new treatments for a sick patient, which therefore requires continuous experiments and trials in order to attain the right remedy (KHZ XVII: 107-11). Kawakami affirms:

> Social sciences, as sciences of the truth, wave the sharp scalpel at the real, living society; they flip the skin of the different phenomena where the truth is hidden; they have to reveal the source of the disease underneath the internal connections. There lies the task of physiology and, most importantly, from the basis of the fundamental theories of physiology, general clinical pathology has emerged
>
> (KHZ XVII: 109)

In their continuing exchange, Watsuji defends himself by affirming that he is not against the study of Leninism but, rather, against the 'blind adoration for Leninism and the Russian Revolution' (*Leninshugi naishi Rossia kakumei ni mōmokutekini shinsui suru mono*) (WTZ XVII: 428). His main point is to ask why dialectical materialists interpret dialectics as

[90] The other three articles are: *On the Incident of the Students' Arrest. Addressing Watsuji Tetsurō* (*Gakusei kenkyo jiken ni tsuite. Watsuji Tetsurō ni yosu*), published in *Shakai Mondai Kenkyū* in November 1926; *A Response to Kawakami Hajime* (*Kawakami Hajime hakushi ni kotau*), originally published in *Shakai Mondai Kenkyū* in December 1926 and *My Considerations on Watsuji Tetsurō's Featured Article* (*Watsuji Tetsurō shi yori no kisho narabini kore ni tai suru Watakushi no kansō*) published in *Shakai Mondai Kenkyū* in January 1927. Now they are all included, respectively, in KHZ XVII: 93-114, WTZ XVII: 424-44 and KHZ XVII: 371-97. All quotations are from the *Collected Works.*

a ‘change’, when it is not clear what dialectics is developing towards. He dismisses Marx’s ‘materialism’ as “labelling ‘thing’ what before did not have a meaning [in Hegel]” (WTZ XVII: 429). Therefore the task of explaining the contradictions arising in the material life of the human beings has to be fulfilled by theory and not by materialism. Watsuji continues:

> Employing dialectical materialism as a weapon for the class struggle, meaning that dialectical materialism becomes the *class science* (*kaikyūteki gakumon*) of the proletariat, isn’t it equal to affirming that the proletarian existence is necessarily a product of dialectical materialism?
>
> (WTZ XVII: 430-1; emphasis in the original)

Here Watusji sees dialectical materialism as a powerful weapon that could destroy the established social relations and this worry is strictly linked to his outlook on the formation of society. In fact, he interprets the flourishing of dialectical materialism as the source of the establishment of ‘classes’ as a whole. In his view, this entails that, if it had not been for Marxist philosophy, class struggle would not have emerged in Japan. Watsuji tends to overlook the fact that, historically, there was already a class of exploited workers in Japan. Marxist intellectuals were the ones who tried to give voice to this proletariat and ask for more social justice. Nevertheless, they were certainly a threat to the status quo and to Watsuji’s ideas of harmony and inter-relationality. This is the reason why he affirms that the reform of society can be attained only through a dialectics of the will and an idealist path (WTZ XVII: 433). Thus, the Russian Revolution should be taught and studied as historical facts not as an ‘experiment’. If the ‘fundamental principle’ (*konpontekina genin*) of the socialist doctrine is the sacrifice of the people, Watsuji argues, then it means that there is a fundamental contradiction immanent in ‘humanity’ (*ningensei*), because no structure should require the death of its own foundation (WTZ XVII: 437).

Kawakami did not appreciate Watsuji’s second response and, in January 1927, he published the last article of the debate. He quotes that there is no ‘blind love’ for Leninism and for the Russian Revolution. Rather, what Watsuji calls love is only scientific behaviour (KHZ XVII: 380). Thus, he accuses Watsuji of having confused the student riots with the teaching of Marxist dialectics. In a hasty comment, Kawakami affirms that laws could as well have clauses which are not always beneficial for society. Kawakami still could not explain whether Watsuji, despite being a philosopher and an ethicist, is implying something higher that goes beyond the sovereignty of the laws and whether he is not considering the state, or humanity, in a position of superiority (KHZ XVII: 395-6).

Kawakami and Watsuji are discussing the topic from two different standpoints. First of all, Kawakami is trying to defend his position as a teacher of Marxist philosophy, while, on the other hand, Watsuji looks at the situation as a conservative thinker. Their views partly coincide on the effect the incidents had, namely questioning the infiltration of violent doctrines inside the university campus, which clearly put Kawakami in a controversial position. Kawakami does not have a powerful line of argumentation, besides when he rightly highlights the fact that Watsuji could have favoured the creation of a Hegelian modelled state. Watsuji had not changed his ideas since 1919, the year of the publication of his *Two Ways of Breeding Democracy*, where he argued that the socialist ideas could help reforming the state system. Eight years later, after the grant of the universal suffrage, Watsuji is still talking about the 'respect of the laws' and in this sentence Kawakami immediately glimpses the legacy of Yoshino's *minponshugi*. On a philosophical level, Watsuji is more active than Kawakami, with the references to Hegel and idealist dialectics. Concerning the 'fundamental principle' of society mentioned by Kawakami, Watsuji is quick to dismiss it as a non-sense. In Watsuji's eyes, if the human being as *ningen* is a fundamental component of society and, in return, society is quintessential for the dialectical movement of human existence, it follows that the sacrifice of one or more components for the sake of 'research' is absolutely out of question. Kawakami is not clear regarding where his dialectics are aiming towards. For Kawakami, everything is a question of 'trial and error' and the weak point of his reply is the fact he cannot give shape to what kind of society he is foreseeing for Japan.

There is a commonality between the two thinkers that, I believe, could be explained by looking at their intellectual background. Fundamentally, Kawakami's idea of a moral revolution, although it changed in the course of his career, is not that distant from Watsuji's idea of a harmonious society based on morality and ethics. Kushida's critique of Kawakami also addressed this point, because he saw that, by posing the accent on the 'morality' of a social revolution, Kawakami could have implied a positive relationship between capital and labour (Yagi 2007: 11). Watsuji and Kawakami were both concerned with societal welfare and improvement. The difference between them lies, most of all, in the way they approached society as a whole. Whilst Kawakami embraced the social principles of Marxism to some extent, Watsuji despised them. Secondly, it is arguable that Watsuji's considerations on the role of democracy here, if compared to *Climate* or *Study of Ethics*, were undergoing a period of transition. It is possible that the impact Marxism had on Watsuji made him rethink his previous theories on the implementation of democracy in Japan. Therefore, this dialogue exposes how in *Climate*, Watsuji came to affirm that, for Japan, neither Western-style

democracy nor Communism were suitable forms of government. The dialogue with Kawakami thus occupies a middle position in the development of Watsuji's thought from the 1920s to the 1930s.

Miki as well had criticized Kawakami's theory on dialectics in 1929, with the article *Dialectics and its Vulgarization* (*Benshōhō to sono zokuryūka*).[91] In this piece, Miki draws most of his arguments and conclusions from Lenin's *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916) and argues against those who do not see dialectics as logic of development. Since imperialism reveals the highest stage of capitalism, he continues, the logic of continuation and development that underpins both needs to be dialectical (MKZ X: 61). He furthermore explains that the difference between Marxist dialectics and Hegelian idealism is that, in Marx, there is a 'qualitative' change as the development from feudalism to capitalism evidently shows. The vulgar materialists do not realize that the historical development is concentrated in the society of 'now' (MKZ X: 63). Miki thus engages in an indirect dialogue with Kawakami, using Kawakami's theorizations on dialectics to reveal what dialectics is not. For example, Kawakami used the example of the kimono and the kid: once the kid grows, the old kimono would not fit him anymore and affirmed that this instance particularly reflected the dialectical process. Instead, Miki argues that this is exactly what the vulgar materialists are doing, that there could never be a 'dialectics' between those two because the kimono is in an 'external' relation to the kid. The change is 'quantitative' and not qualitative. The dialectical development of capitalism is completely different, given the fact that capitalism sublates itself into imperialism by means of their internal relation (MKZ X: 64-7). Yet, Miki affirms that Kawakami is creating a 'formal logic' because the universal he is describing is nothing else than an abstraction of reality, the contrary of what Marx was preaching. If the truth is the concrete universal, Miki says, then a relationship between a formal universal and its particular could never take place (MKZ X: 69-74). 'Only the particular which lies in the self-aware universal is a true particular' (MKZ X: 75).

Kawakami appears to be the objective of criticism both for Miki and Watsuji. On the one hand, Watsuji regarded Kawakami's struggle to defend the teaching of social sciences as a possible threat to the structure of society. Despite the fact that Kawakami's system was fundamentally underpinned by a moral and humanistic trait, the method he employed did not resemble the one that Miki or Watsuji used for their elaboration of *ningen*. Even the Marxists could not approve of his apparent misunderstanding of the relationship between capital and

[91] The article appeared in *Keizai Jūrai* in November 1929. Now in MKZ X: 57-76.

surplus value. Nevertheless, Miki and Watsuji, given their intellectual and political differences, put forward two separate kinds of criticism against Kawakami. On the one hand, Watsuji's creation of a society characterized by harmony and by the absence of social conflict aimed at downplaying the role of Marxist philosophy. On the other hand, through his reading of Lenin, Miki judged Kawakami's Marxism as being still a form of Hegelian idealism, therefore entailing that Kawakami had not fully understood the relevance of materialist dialectics. To Miki the exploration of Marxism became a priority.

Miki Kiyoshi's 'Humanistic' Marxism

Between 1928 and 1929 Miki was involved, together with Hani Gorō and Kobayashi Isamu, in the establishment of the Marxism-inspired journal *Under the Banner of New Science* (*Shinkō kagaku no hata no moto ni*) (Doak 1998: 234 ff).[92] Miki and Hani later joined the Proletariat Science Research Group, until Miki was attacked by the Marxist historian Hattori Shisō (1901-1956) and was forced to resign from the association (Doak 1998: 248). In this journal, Miki published several articles on different subjects, such as *Criticism of Natural Sciences*, (*Kagaku hihan no kadai*, 1928), *Dialectics and the Organicistic Theory* (*Yūkitaisei to benshōhō*, 1928), and *Materialism and Its Real Form* (*Yuibutsuron to sono genjitsu keitai*, 1928).

According to many critics, Miki cannot be considered a Marxist *tout court* (Uchida 2004: 211; Hattori 1997: 197; Akamatsu 1994a: 166; Maruyama 1998: 164 and, to some extent, Iwasaki 1971: 142). Rather, most of them agree on defining his methodology as 'hermeneutical', 'anthropological' or even as a kind of 'hermeneutical existentialism'. In fact, none of them ever addresses Miki as a 'dialectical materialist', but they rather highlight the influence that existentialism was still exercising on Miki's ideas. Since Miki's object of inquiry was the 'human being' in existential terms, it was almost natural to him to transpose it in a Marxist context where the proletariat as a 'human class' (Miki's new *ningen*) took up a leading role amidst the deep changes Japanese society was undergoing in that period.

In some way Miki's ideas could remind us of the debate between Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Jean-Paul Sartre on the role of existentialism and Marxism in France in the 1960s,

[92] The journal had been modelled on Fukumoto Kazuo's *Under the Banner of Marxism* (*Marukusushizumu no hata no moto ni*) (Doak 1998: 234).

where there was a need for a refreshing wind in Marxist studies and the necessity to combine it with the existentialist thought on the role of the human being (see Merleau-Ponty 1963; Sartre 1960). My aim here is not to compare what Miki wrote in the late 1920s with the works of the two French philosophers, who had certainly never read him. What I would rather point out is the fact that in Europe these ideas gradually returned to the surface with impetus in the 1960s, especially in 1967 with the republication of Georg Lukács' 1922's masterpiece *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics* which featured a new preface by the author himself (Lukács 1971: ix-xxxix).

The impact of Lukács on Miki's philosophy is undoubtedly important, although there is no clear indication that Miki had read this book prior to his fascination with Marxist philosophy.[93] Nevertheless, Fukumoto had been involved in spreading Lukács' ideas in Japan upon his return from Germany. This hints at the fact that Japanese intellectuals might have been acquainted with his work. The similarities between Lukács and Miki touch upon different aspects of their philosophies, in primis the ideas of totality, reification and class consciousness. Before focussing on their relationship, it is necessary to explain how Miki took his first steps into Marxist philosophy.

In 1928, Miki published the volume *Historical Materialism and the Present-day Consciousness* (*Yuibutsushikan to gendai no ishiki*), which had been previously serialized in the journal *Shisō* in 1927.[94] The piece *The Marxist Form of Anthropology* (*Ningengaku no marukusuteki keitai*) is particularly important and it stands as a corner stone in the formation of the 'third way'. In fact, it is here for the first time that the concept of 'basic experience' as part of the three-fold theory of the 'basic-experience, anthropology, ideology' appears. Miki distinguishes between two kinds of 'experience', the 'ordinary experience' of our daily life and the 'basic experience'. Ordinary experience is lead by the logos which, in turn, is produced and required by the deeper basic experience (MKZ III: 5). As previously expressed in *Pascal*, the quintessential particularity of this experience is the uncertain movement (*fuanteki undō*) at the basis of it (MKZ III: 6).

[93] Uchida argues differently. He affirms that Miki had read Lukács book during his sojourn in Germany and that he made use (*tsuyō*) especially of the fourth chapter "Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat" when he wrote his piece on Marxism and materialism (Uchida 2004: 218-9). I would not go insofar as saying that Miki had actually read Lukács' book, since Miki never explicitly quotes or acknowledges his indebtedness to the Hungarian philosopher (contrary to most Japanese philosophers who tend not to quote their sources, Miki is generally very accurate). Having said that, I do think that Lukács had a great influence on Miki as I will explain in the chapter.

[94] Now in MKZ III: 1-156. The last piece of the collection, entitled *Hegel and Marx* (*Hegeru to Marukusu*), was apparently written anew for the publication of the articles in a volume in 1928 (see Kuno 1967: 524 and Miki's own introduction in MKZ III: 3).

The new definition is here given:

> The human being always finds itself in a negotiating relationship (*kōshō kankei*) with others. Because and in this relationship, existence becomes completely meaningful at its eyes. Thus, the significance of the undertaking of existence is, for first time, concretely determined by the mode of its negotiations
>
> (MKZ III: 7)

The particularity of the negotiating relationship is that it is coerced in its everyday form (MKZ III: 8). In addition, in the immediacy of experience anthropology comes into being, representing the 'self-understanding' (*jiko ryōkai*) of the human being. On the other hand, when the basic experience is mediated by the historical background and the philosophical consciousness it gives rise to ideology or 'self-interpretation' (*jiko kaishaku*). For this reason Miki argues that ideology represents a second kind of logos that belongs to the *Geisteswissenschaften* and he further defines it as the 'common sphere' (*kyōdōken*) (MKZ III: 11-2). As seen here, anthropology is strictly related to the dynamism and the uncertainty of human existence, whilst, on the other hand, ideology takes the role of almost scientifically defining the changing of existence in history.

Yet again, in his piece *Hegel and Marx* (*Hegeru to Marukusu*), Miki restates his theory of the relationship between first and second logos by saying:

> What I wish to call the 'mode of existence' (*sonzai no moderu*) is the establishment of ideology, which happens thanks to the medium of anthropology that allows the basic experience to be clarified in its specific structure
>
> (MKZ III: 121)

The particularity of every experience is determined by the way negotiations take place in human existence and it is, in itself, related to the specific historical period according to the 'scientific knowledge' (*gakumonteki ninshiki*) of the given time (MKZ III: 121-3).

The concept of anthropology is very important in Miki, as seen before in his study of Pascal. Whilst reading Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach*, Miki affirms: 'In Marxism, anthropology leads the basic experience of the proletariat' (MKZ III: 29). Yet again, always in regard to the Marxist understanding of the human being, Miki appreciates Feuerbach recognition of the importance of human experience. Nonetheless, he subsequently criticizes him for having failed to see that his idea of anthropology was still linked to a critique of religion (MKZ III: 26). In line with Marx's critique of Feuerbach (see *Theses on Feuerbach,* thesis 7), Miki furthermore adds:

> The evolutionary process in which the basic experience of the proletariat was living sank into the contradictions of Feuerbach's anthropology. At that point, the necessary change that was taking place in anthropology was only fully grasped by Marx
>
> (MKZ III: 29)

Most importantly: 'Since the proletariat exercises his influence on the world primarily through *practice*, it grasps the self-essence as praxis precisely in the negotiating process' (MKZ III: 30; emphasis added). Practice is related to 'labour' (*rōdō*) and 'sensuousness' (*kansei*) as described by Marx in the fifth thesis.[95] In the practical process of dialectical exchange with nature, the human essence modifies as much as nature does (MKZ III: 32).[96] To Miki, nature therefore does not have to be seen as in opposition to the human being, but rather in the wider context of the dynamics of the world where man historically develops (MKZ III: 33-4). It is precisely at this point, where the historicity of the human being is defined, that Marxist historical materialism takes the shape of the fundamental moment of anthropology and ideology coming together (MKZ III: 38). The present consciousness is the realization of unity between the leading basic experience of the proletariat together with all the present currents of thought (MKZ III: 37). This creates the starting point of reality (*genjitsu no shuppatsu ten*) where the public sphere becomes our present-day consciousness (MKZ III: 220).[97]

Miki seems to employ standard Marxist terminology when he describes labour, sensuousness, proletariat, materialism. Nevertheless, Miki never defines what his idea of 'proletariat' essentially stands for. He only uses the words *puroretaria* or, interchangeably, *musansha*.[98] Rather, his definition of the proletarian class is always referred to as being *in relation to* something else. For example:

> Labour fundamentally defines the basic structure of the proletariat. The proletariat negotiates and exists through this form of negotiation

[95] 'Feuerbach, not satisfied with abstract thinking, wants contemplation; but he does not conceive sensuousness as practical, human-sensuous activity' (Marx 1970: V).
[96] This concept is originally expressed in Marx's *Das Kapital*.
[97] In *The Basic Concept of Hermeneutical Phenomenology* (*Kaishakugakuteki genshōgaku no kiso gainen*), published in *Shisō* in January 1927. Now in MKZ III: 186-220.
[98] As Uchida points out, Miki could refer to the class of toilers that, at that time, started becoming mere paid workers and were therefore separated from the land (Uchida 2004: 216). Uchida situates this phenomenon in the period of the 'rentier-state capitalism' (*jinushikokka shinhonshugi*) that remained a constant feature of the Japanese economy from the Meiji Restoration up until the end of WWII (Uchida 2004: 217). In Japan, this stage of the development of capitalism is as well described as 'imperial rentier-state capitalism', since the imperial family was at the top of the propertied class (Uchida 2004: 217). As pointed out before, the Comintern had labelled Japan as an 'anomaly' in the Far East, as a result of its mixed type of capitalism, which featured ancient feudal remnants together with an emerging industrial working class.

that is characterized by *sensuous praxis*
(MKZ III: 45-6, emphasis in the original)

Therefore, 'labour' becomes the most important feature of the proletariat because it represents an exchange with existence itself in a sensuous and material practice (MKZ III: 48). It is here that Miki gives his foremost definition of 'materialism' as a 'hermeneutical concept' (*kaishakugakuteki gainen*), which will attract the attention and the criticism of most Marxist thinkers of that time, including Tosaka Jun. [99] It is hermeneutical because it is in 'material things' that the human being self-interprets in the first place (MKZ III: 49). Labour represents the roots of the formation of concrete materialism and, since it takes place in the 'production in society' (*shakai ni oite seisan*), it requires for the human being to be in relation to the Thou of its negotiations (MKZ III: 50). 'The possibility of the human being as a unity if I and Thou is for the first time established [in the unity of subject and object]' (MKZ III: 50). The subject and the object are, like in Feuerbach, in a mutual dependence although they do not share the same essence, because, otherwise, they will reproduce the mechanisms of Hegelian idealism. Man is nothing without the object, says Feuerbach, because man would not be able to recognize himself unless he objectifies his own consciousness (Kolakowski I, 1978: 114-5). What happens in religion is the fact the objectification of consciousness becomes religious mystification (Kolakowski I, 1978: 116). As Furihata underlines, the basic problem of Miki's interpretation of 'the basic experience of the proletariat' is exactly this inter-relationality of the I and Thou (Furihata 1969: 55). As a matter of fact, if Miki had to be a traditional dialectical materialist, he would have seen the basic experience as objectified. Instead, Miki re-defines the limits of it by making it inter-subjective in a manner that it is easily spotted as of Heideggerian matrix. Again, Furihata sees in this shift and in the lack of a socio-economical analysis of history a path leading more towards idealism rather than materialism (Furihata 1969: 56).

The accent on the I-Thou relationship, the lack of a clear definition of the proletariat in economic terms and the accent on anthropology lead the reader to believe that Miki's interpretation of materialism is flawed if looked at from an economical perspective. What Miki sees as anthropology is Feuerbach's anthropology as centred on the human being. In the introduction of *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Marx says: 'To begin

[99] Tosaka writes of Miki: '[…] Miki's Marxist philosophy of that time was not a philosophy, it was nothing else than historical materialism (and therefore it continued negating the dialectics of nature). Moreover, that historical materialism, in reality, was not materialism, but only a philosophy of history' (TJZ V: 106), in *Miki Kiyoshi shi to Miki tetsugaku* (Miki Kiyoshi and Miki Philosophy) written in 1936. Now included in *Tosaka Jun Collected Works* (TJZ) V: 103-11.

with, the question under discussion is *material production*. Individuals producing in a society, and hence the socially determined production of individuals, is of course the point of departure' (Marx 1970: 1; emphasis in the original). As we can see, this is almost what Miki wrote in his piece aforementioned. The problem is that Marx traces material production back to the emergence of bourgeois society in economical terms. Miki only seems to be interested in the role of the human being and of society in this process. Miki does talk about the bourgeois state and ideology but in an abstract way.

Miki's innovations in the field of Marxism materialism part from the main 'scientific' trend that was very popular in Japan at that time. As seen before, even Kawakami's example of the physician and the experiment portrays what could be called 'scientific Marxism'. Miki's elaborations of a more 'humanistic' Marxism were not understood at that time and, in the late 1920s, they sparked an outpouring of criticism from the orthodox Marxists. In the same period, the Hungarian philosopher Georg Lukács was being attacked by the Stalinists for his theory of 'totality' that established a direct link between Hegel and Marx (Kolakowski III: 254). Influenced by Hegel and Dilthey (as Miki was), Lukács made 'totality' one of his pivotal concepts:

> Thus the objective forms of all social phenomena change constantly in the course of their ceaseless dialectical interactions with each other. […] this is why only the dialectical conception of totality can enable us to understand *reality as a social process*
>
> (Lukács 1971: 13; emphasis in the original)

Lukács wrote in favour of a unity of theory and practice and affirmed that reality would reach consciousness only in the unity of the two (Lukács 1971: 2). The proletariat as a 'class' was the subject and object of knowledge, in the moment when it realized that it was only due to the bourgeois ideology that the subject and the object were mutually dependable. Lukács moreover argued that reality as a social process could be only understood through a dialectical conception of reality, which was rooted in the 'totality':

> The totality of an object can be posited if the positing subject is itself a totality; and if the subject wishes to understand itself, it must conceive of the object as a totality. In modern society only the *classes* can represent this total point of view
>
> (Lukács 1971: 28; emphasis in the original)

The methodology implied by Lukács is 'orthodoxy', which, to him, meant only the method of materialist dialectics (Lukács 1971: 1). This method was the product of the class struggle and, with the evolution of the proletariat, it would have eventually proved to be the tool for the destruction of bourgeois society. The revolutionary significance of Marxist

dialectics resided in its relation to the whole and historical knowledge would have become possible solely when the ruling class would have ceased to exist (Lukács 1971: 14 ff). As Kolakowski highlights, the Lukácsian idea of totality implies the immediacy of past, present and future in itself, making it therefore a 'foreseeing' whole in the historical development (Kolakowski III, 1978: 266).

In Miki, Lukács' influence becomes clear in the second part of *Marxism and Materialism* (*Marukusu-shugi to yuibutsuron*).[100] Here concepts such as dialectical unity, alienation of the consciousness of the proletariat and commodification of human relationships appear in a new light.

Regarding the problem of consciousness, Miki explains:

> Because the human being is a reciprocal negotiation in the societal production, a new phenomenon here emerges. It is the *burying* of consciousness
>
> (MKZ III: 52, emphasis in the original)

The problem of consciousness is definitely not a recent philosophical question. The difference, Miki highlights, is how consciousness was perceived from Augustine on. The point of view changed with the advent of Marxism that made consciousness aware of its own contradictions and aimed at solving them in this historical period (MKZ III: 54-5). To Miki language is 'the real consciousness of the unity in society' (MKZ III: 56). As Marx said in *The German Ideology*:

> Language, like consciousness, only arises from the need, the necessity, of intercourse with other men. […] man's consciousness of the necessity of associating with the individuals around him is the beginning of the consciousness that he is living in society at all
>
> (Marx 1970: 74)

So, to Miki, Marx's definition of language is directly linked to Aristotle's definition of the 'zoon politikón' and the 'zoon logastikón', and it is reflected in the *awhileness* (*bon'yosei*, *Jeweiligkeit*) and *neutrality* (*chūwasei*) of our existence.[101] Contrary to what Miki had previously expressed in Pascal, meaning that the three-fold logos proved to be, in the Heideggerian interpretation, the fundamental deception of human existence, here he links the neutrality of existence to the introduction of commodities (MKZ III: 60).[102] The logos used to

[100] Originally published in *Shisō* in September 1927. Now included in *Historical Materialism and the Present-day Consciousness*.
[101] *Jeweiligkeit* is a Heideggerian term. It could be defined as the temporal particularity and unique finitude of the *Dasein*. *Jeweilig* is an adverb meaning 'from time to time' or 'accordingly' (Kisiel 1993: 425-6).
[102] Regarding the three-folded logos in Aristotle and Heidegger, see Chap. 2.

provide the 'particularity' to each existence but, in the modern age, commodities and production have taken over, burying the consciousness of the human being (MKZ III: 60). 'The particularity of the capitalist society is the fact that the relativeness of existence has reached completion in this kind of self-alienation (*jiko sogai*)' (MKZ III: 63). The concepts of 'reification' and 'commodification' of the human existence are explained by Miki on the basis that not only labour has been commodified after the advent of the modern age, but even relationships have become a kind of 'intra-goods' relationships (MKZ III: 62). The proletariat becomes thus a product of its own labour by being alienated by commodities themselves. It is the 'self-alienation of the human being' (*ningen no jiko sogai*; *die menschliche Selbstentfremdung*) that leads to the transformation of the logos into ideology, which thus oppresses humanity (MKZ III: 63-6).

It would be interesting here to highlight the description Lukács gave of reification. In his system, reification (*Verdinglichung*) is an evolution of what Marx had called the 'commodity fetishism' (*Fetischcharakter der Ware*). On the object level, reification represents the laws of the market that exercise their power on the commodities, alienating man through the exercise of this external power. On the subjective level, these laws work on man's activities, which become themselves commodities, including man's labour. Reification thus means the 'abstraction of human labour that makes commodities universal' (Lukács 1971: 91). Lukács thought that these reified relations had become the normal relation, and that our consciousness could not distinguish anymore between natural and reified laws. The development of capitalistic societies, therefore, subjected the human being to artificial laws that alienated consciousness thanks to the abstraction and alienation of human relationships (Lukács 1971: 128 ff). The solution Lukács proposed was for the proletariat to overcome the 'immediacy' of the bourgeois thought and, instead, to find the 'mediation' that would have uncovered the reified laws and helped the proletariat re-appropriating its consciousness (Lukács 1971: 164 ff). Reification could be destroyed, Lukács said:

> only by *constant and constantly renewed efforts to disrupt the reified structure of existence by concretely relating to the concretely manifested contradictions of the total development, by becoming conscious of the immanent meanings of these contradictions for the total development*
>
> (Lukács 1971: 197, emphasis in the original)

To Miki, the estrangement of consciousness from the reification process could be solved by the dialectical unity between the philosophical analysis of reality and the praxis provided by Marxism materialism.

> Marxism reaches the peak of the *possibility* (*genjitsusei*) in the dialectical unity between theory and practice […] The human being, in its material and spiritual whole, has just started glowing in its totality (*zentaisei ni oite kagayaki hajimeru*)
>
> (MKZ III: 73-6)

The difference between Miki and Lukács is that, to Lukács, classes are the point of view of totality that enables us to understand reality as a social process (Lukács 1971: 13). Instead, Miki discards the totality that Lukács foresees for the proletariat from its basis: class. Miki sees the proletariat as a community of human beings. Miki's *musansha* is a societal component abstracted from the socio-economical context and normatized as in a theory of values. What before was created by language, meaning the deception of human existence, is now transposed in the Marxist philosophical context. Miki envisioned a new 'class' consciousness in Lukácsian terms but, nevertheless, he complemented it with the Heideggerian idea of the authenticity of the *Dasein*. Therefore, the solution to the reification of consciousness does not presupposes anymore the existence of the proletarian class *per se* but, rather, it has to be found in the context of a totality striving for an authentic existence.

The process of this development is similar to Watsuji, although they reached a different outcome. They both refused an economical analysis of society and they both stressed the importance of the community. Yet, Watsuji's national community had already been established as such by the time he engaged with Marxism, whilst Miki just hinted at the fact that society was slowly becoming the focus of his meditations. In this context, the uprising that Marxism calls for in the form of the Communist revolution is not present in Miki's thought. The uprising, in Miki, cannot achieve the renovation totality needed. It means that the renovation towards the Heideggerian authenticity has to go a step further; it needs to become a spiritual renovation of the totality of a community. Not as class, but rather as a *ningen*-class, which eludes the Marxist connotation of the word and transforms itself into a new meaning leading to the 'community' of human beings.

Hattori criticizes Miki for having failed to recognize Marxism as an ideology. Rather, he says, Miki openly built his Marxist humanism having ideology as a backdrop (Hattori 1997: 198). The problem of ideology in Miki is as problematic as much as his concept of the proletariat is. In Marx, ideology is strictly related to the means of production and to the commodities fetishism, helping to create the false consciousness of the proletariat through the imposing of the supra-structure of the ruling class.[103] In Lukács, as outlined above, ideology

[103] See Chapter 1, Section 4 of Marx's *Capital* ('The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof').

in the capitalist society is best embodied in the reification of the proletarian consciousness. In order to create a new, true ideology it is necessary to destroy the ruling class and to 'mediate' the immediate reified laws if the proletarian consciousness has to emerge. In Miki, ideology is first identified as the natural development of anthropology and as the 'self-understanding' of the human being or as the common sphere of the *Geisteswissenschaften*. On the other hand, in *Pragmatism and Materialism*, Miki speaks about a logos oppressing humanity by transforming itself into ideology. It appears that while Miki continued to read Marxist texts, the more he grasped the real meaning of them. Thus, it is not a coincidence that the understanding of ideology as a pillar in Marxist thought comes to exist in Miki's interpretation later in 1927. Certainly ideology in Marxist terms has not to be understood in derogative terms. Ideology is formed though the unfolding of history and it belongs to the ruling class of the specific time. This is the reason why Marxism, though a teleological view of history, puts the proletariat and its ideology as the winner of the revolution. Miki sees ideology in different terms. He definitely highlights ideology as linked to the historical process, although it is a more 'natural' development rather than false consciousness.

After this first part, the differences between Miki and Watsuji have become clear. Watsuji criticized the emergence of 'classes' as an erroneous standpoint of analysis. He did not believe in the economically based framework adopted by Marxism because it would have destroyed his particular philosophical system based on the unity of a community. Miki, on the other hand, found Marxism inspirational. Marxist theories on the basic experience provided him with a new framework of analysis that could have helped him escape the mere theoretical conundrum of his first Pascalian phase. What they are both lacking is an economical understanding of Marxism. Miki talks about the human being in a highly theoretical and philosophical way, despite the accent posed on the praxis of the proletariat. Watsuji refuses *in toto* to economically acknowledge capitalism as a global phenomenon. They are both concerned with the 'totality' of the human being, with the I-Thou relationship and, in Watsuji's case, with maintaining the established social order. They are both leading towards a 'communitarian' view of the human being that will be further explained in the following sections. Economics is neither the kernel nor the structure of their philosophical systems; the core is the human being and its transformations.

Watsuji and Japanese Society

Some of the themes that Watsuji touched in his dialogue with Kawakami resurface in the article *An Ethical Critique of Marxism* (*Marukusu-shugi no rinriteki hihan*, 1930).[104] This piece on Marxism is particularly important if read as a prelude to Watsuji's *Study of Ethics* (Yonetani 1992b: 486). Secondly, it helps understanding Watsuji's ideas on the role of dialectical materialism. In fact, if Watsuji agreed with Marx's critique of capitalism and individualism, he harshly criticized his economical-socialist framework.

Most of all, Watsuji's considerations gravitate around the concept of the human being and how this has been interpreted in Marxist philosophy. Watsuji thinks that the theoretical background for any research of the human being has to be grounded in dialectics (WTZBII: 95-6). Using the same conceptual framework of his *Climate* and *Study of Ethics*, Watsuji argues that the human being is formed by the two components of the individual and the social. The family therefore, as seen before, becomes the first embodiment of society and it represents a kind of 'social totality'. The difference between dialectics and formal logic, as Miki had already pointed out in his critique of Kawakami, is the fact that in formal logic there is no 'mediation' (*chōtei*) (WTZBII: 97). Dialectics is a concrete and dynamic movement that rose from Hegel and it is not possible to attribute to Marx the invention of it. As already outlined above, Watsuji thinks that Marx only added 'materialism' to the Hegelian dialectics (WTZBII: 99). Watsuji moreover argues that Marx looked at society only from a political point of view, because, in pure thinking, there is no distinction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

Watsuji did not fully understand the importance of the 'commodity fetishism' in Marxist thought. Instead, he continues his criticism of Marxist thought in Japan as linked to the absorption of the Western idea of individualism in the Meiji period. The individualism inherited from Darwin and Spencer has ruined the old Japanese society:

> Japan nowadays has undoubtedly made great economical progress. Nevertheless, alongside the economical development there has been a loss of the original way of thinking and it is undeniable that a great influence has penetrated [into society] […] Needless to say, things such as familism (*kazokushugi*), state-nationalism (*kokkashugi*) and nationalism (*kokuminshugi*) have now been subverted
>
> (WTZBII: 103-4)

[104] The article is today included in a separate volume of Watsuji's *Collected Works* in the section 'Conference notes'. Yonetani Masafumi has reconstructed the history of this text, which belonged to Watsuji's personal collection. The manuscript was written for the 'Shisō Mondai Kōshūkai' ('Course on ideas'), that was held at Kyoto University in July 1930. The original title is *A Second Ethical Critique of Marxism*, because, as Yonetani explains, a first lecture with the same title had already been given by Fujii Kenjirō in 1928, who was professor of ethics at the same university (Yonetani 1992b: 485).

The real danger would be to forget the standpoint of the people's totality caused by the adoption of the capitalist system. To Watsuji Marxism is not an original 'product' of Japanese culture; on the contrary, it represents the fruit of the individualistic way of thinking typical of the West. Watsuji argues from a completely theoretical point of view, without taking into consideration the real economic development of society. In support of this, he even argues that bourgeoisie and proletariat do not exist as separate entities, since they are both composed by concrete human beings.

In the second part of the article, Watsuji admits that Marxism has the merit of having recognized the historicity of the human being and the abstractness of natural sciences (WTZBII: 105-6). Yet, Watsuji thinks that Marx's concept of production still lacks concreteness and he thus suggests including climatology in the analysis (WTZBII: 109). In addition, Watsuji considers 'class' as another type of abstraction that refers to an abstract economical category. In his view, the original form of society is the totality of the people that participate in it and, if this were to be considered as a mere sum of exchange values, its ethical and moral prescriptions would be erased (WTZBII: 118-25). This would lead to a degradation from a *Gemeinschaft* or 'communal society' (*kyōdō shakai*) to a *Gesellschaft* or 'profit society' (*rieki shakai*).[105] On the contrary, the 'use-value' (*shiyō kachi*) typical of primitive societies could help mediating the two (WTZBII: 125-9). This point is hence very important in Watsuji's critique of Marxism, since he is arguing here that, since in primitive and tribal societies there was no exchange value present, it follows that those cannot be included in the process of the historical development of capitalism. To Watsuji, capitalism is only a 'stage' of history (WTZBII: 128-9). Watsuji fundamentally denies the teleology of history of the Marxist doctrine. If capitalism is only a 'stage' abruptly separated from historical development, certainly a critique based on class distinction would not be appropriate. Watsuji's view of history is teleological, notwithstanding in the Marxist acceptation of the term. His highest aim is to bring society towards its sublation into the state.

Watsuji thinks that since history is a fundamental part of the human existence, and the state is the highest sovereignty above all, then the process of development of both history and historicity is resolved in the morality of the state. It might be argued that the accent posed on the 'use-value' symbolizes to Watsuji a return the purity of pre-Meiji Japan, where Western thought had not been introduced yet. Nevertheless, Watsuji never regarded the Meiji period as

[105] The distinction is drawn upon Friederich Tönnies' distinction between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft.* This point is further developed in Watsuji's *Study of Ethics* and it becomes the corner-stone of his critique of American society in his *The American National Character* (*Amerika no kokuminsei*, 1944).

a period of decadence or loss of the collective identity. The valorisation of the use-value does not represent a form of *nostalgia* for an idyllic past. Rather, the assumption that the state embodies the highest ethical structure above all stands as symbol of an ideal society projected into the future. Kawakami had already pointed out that Watsuji recognized the state as being above the legality of laws. As a matter of fact, Watsuji's state is a spiritual vision beyond its mundane government.

In order to support his thesis on the erroneous standpoint of social and economical analysis, Watsuji affirms that in a communitarian society the concept of 'collective responsibility' (*rentai sekinin*) is at the basis of its unity, whilst it is not present in a company or association where only the leadership alone takes responsibility for the actions of the group (WTZBII: 129). Therefore, it is wrong to include the communitarian society inside the modern profit society, since they do not share the same intrinsic values. Watsuji argues that the theory of the *jita-furi* expressed in *Climate* is exemplificative of the unity between self and other and of the awareness of the individual of belonging to totality. This concept is related to the basic concept of ethics, that Watsuji affirms being at the basis of Kant's morality as well. What Marx has failed to recognize is the importance of moral principles that do not fall under the umbrella of economics. By super-imposing class consciousness related to economical development to the original morality, for example, of primitive societies, Marx has confused the two categories (WTZBII: 130-4). Marx's contradictions are all rooted in the error of looking at ethics from the standpoint of economics and by creating a super-structure (*jōsō kenchiku*) upon it (WTZBII: 135):

> In Marx's interpretation, in the study of dialectical materialism, human morality emerges from the economical structure of society. In other words, is nothing else than a super-structure […] [In the study of dialectical materialism] the legislative and political super-structures that Marx recognizes as structures above the economical one, and in particular the legislative one, are considered to be the religious, artistic and philosophical basis of ideology. Nonetheless, the word morality is never mentioned
>
> (WTZBII: 135-6)

For this reason, Marx is able to argue that there are different kinds of consciousness and morality, one for the proletariat and one for the bourgeoisie, which therefore correspond to the concept of ideology. Watsuji, following the interpretation of Bucharin according to whom to the bourgeoisie belongs a theoretical morality based on egotism while practical materialism belongs to the proletariat, sees it as a contradiction in terms. Marxism is theoretical from the point of view of the economical structure of society, and practical from

the standpoint of the morality of society. Instead, Watsuji proposes a global analysis that will take into consideration the 'totality' of the community, where in the various stages of aggregation, from the family to the people, the responsibilities will be shared. Looking at a concrete totality, Watsuji affirms, means looking at the 'people' (*kokumin*) (WTZBII: 138).

> If we look at the profit society, we will see the proletariat; if we look at the communitarian society, we have to look at the people. In this way, when we concretely grasp human society, we grasp things like familism and nationalism (*kokuminshugi*). This represents, to me, the real and concrete socialism […] The proletariat is often described on the basis of its being an 'international association'. Nevertheless, the union of profit societies and the union of communitarian societies completely differ
>
> (WTZBII: 138-9)

This happens because the communitarian totality represents the self-awareness of the whole community, while the union of proletariat does not, since it is only based on internationalism as unity of different national constituents. Therefore, in order to reform society, it is necessary to start from the moral basis, because the individual is capable of being aware of the totality that resides in him and to return to it as the source of 'humanity' (*ningensei*) (WTZBII: 141). In Japan, nowadays, the dangerous ideas come from the fact that political power has lost its ethical foundations, becoming an immoral government (WTZBII: 142).

In light of these passages, I would argue that this 'totality' of the community that Watsuji is talking about stands as the foundation of his later involvement, in one way or the other, with the Japanese political elites during the years of the war. His system provides justification for the establishment of a Japanese-community based existence. Watsuji created a fragile system of society which is only imagined as idyllic. To Watsuji now the existence of a communitarian society has become a political question aimed at counteracting the practical allure of Marxism on a generation of young intellectuals. I nevertheless believe that Marxism still appealed to Watsuji since they both condemned the isolation of the individual that came along with the industrialization of society. Yet, Watsuji refuses to accept an economical analysis of society on the basis that economy cannot explain morality. This perhaps represents the weakest point of Watsuji's critique, the failure to recognize that the alienation and reification of his *betweeness* is not only a question of 'import' of Western thought, but rather a problem of global development. Watsuji mainly fails to understand the practical aspect of human existence, leaving the human being to this destiny in a particular system of thought.

At this point, Tosaka Jun's words could be quite illuminating. Despite the fact that Tosaka is here specifically criticizing Watsuji's *Study of Ethics*, I believe his critique perfectly nails Watsuji's major flaw regarding his understanding of Marxism. According to Tosaka, Watsuji abstracted universal concepts such ethics and the human being only to transform them into something particular and Japanese. The effect is the creation of an 'Asian' or 'Japanese' ethics. By means of this invention, Watsuji set Japanese people and Japanese 'things' as a model that every other nation would have to look up to (Tosaka 1973: 215). This method epitomizes the culturalist trend that Tosaka vehemently warned against. From Tosaka's Marxist point of view, in Watsuji's works the human existence was completely detached from reality. Therefore, Watsuji merely saw human existence as an 'expression' in words totally abstracted from its significance:

> The result of the creation of the materialist, productive relations by human existence by means of the cause-effect process is not ethics. Instead of opting for structural relationships grounded in materialism, an idealist creative relationship has been chosen so that the basic materialist historical society, as *a social symbol*, is merely a given fact
> (Tosaka 1973: 220, emphasis in the original)

Tosaka said that 'anthropologism' (*ningengakushugi*) was the most significant characteristic of Watsuji's thought and, he pointed out, it was profoundly grounded in the essence of Japaneseness that was unfortunately comparable to Hitlerism in Germany (Tosaka 1973: 222).

In another piece, Tosaka described Watsuji as an 'aristocratic, resistant reactionary' (*kizokuteki hankōsei hansayōsei*) (TJZ V: 96). Regarding Watsuji's idea of nature, Tosaka judged it as being derived from Heidegger and transformed into a kind of philology, which was, most of all, a 'Japanese philology'. Watsuji, in Tosaka's eyes, embodied the leading trend of Japanese academia that epitomized the modern bourgeois philosophy. This bourgeois philosophy was then used by Watsuji as a weapon against Marxist thought.

The anthropologism at the centre of Watsuji's thought is Watsuji's response to the Marxian concept of class. By dismissing 'class' as a useless and super-imposed economical structure, Watsuji wants to re-affirm the centrality of his now 'communal' human being. What before was the small family nucleus has been transformed into a national community which belongs to a specificity that goes beyond mere national characteristics. Instead, it takes the shape of the specificity and the locality of a given race. This step, which started as a reaction to Marxism, brings a whole community towards a fascistization of itself. The centrality of the imperial family represents the centrality of a national community that

reinvented itself in a mythical past in order to come to terms with the shock of modernity. The mythization of the past is rooted in the very same abstractness of the human being that has been transformed into a community. The result is the failure to recognize the importance of materialism, global development and realism of human existence.

Watsuji does speak about the 'concreteness' of the human being he has created by linking it to the historical past through the medium of the relationship with the ancestors. Nevertheless, on a theoretical level, there is a gap. The use of the hermeneutical methodology does not provide Watsuji with a tool to define what ethics substantially is. It only justifies how ethics work in the social realm. This significant gap represents the link between the universal concept of human existence and its particular counterpart. Without grounding the human being in a socio-historical context that goes beyond its mere relation with climatology, Watsuji is able to abstract it and make it become an ideal model that eventually transforms itself into the cultural particularism of Japan. In the critique of Marxism this step emerges quite clearly. Accordingly, the fact that capitalism is not seen in the process of an active, teleological history but a mere 'stage' seems to imply a return to an ideal society where individualism and alienation never existed. Yet again, it is not the *nostalgia* for the past that pushes Watsuji in that direction. Rather, it is a vision of an absolute historical future belonging to a particular society. In this stage, Watsuji's faith in the moral destiny of Japan shows its fist signs of germination. The return to this envisioned community that could overcome 'Western' modernity is precisely that detachment from the reality of history that will bring Watsuji to affirm that Japan was morally entitled to a destiny of victory. The ideal model of cultural particularism of Japan will find further life in the belief in the *escaton* of the war.

The Return to the Pascalian Moment

In his analysis of the importance of history in the formation of knowledge Miki returns to Pascal and Lukács by means of George Sorel (1847-1922).[106] Miki affirms that Sorel's revolutionary-syndicalism was highly influenced by Bergson's intuitionism, because both stressed the intuition of action (MKZ III: 109-10). Nevertheless, Bergson's theories did not allow for a foreseeing of the future, because his focus was limited to the limitation of present and past and their mutual relationship (MKZ III: 111). Sorel, on the other hand, recognized the immediacy of the class struggle by embodying it in the 'general strike' (*sōdōmeihiku*) that would have materialized in a catastrophic event. Miki thinks that Sorel's thought is an eschatological one, because it has complete faith in the idea that the proletariat and its revolution would rise after the destruction of the bourgeoisie (MKZ III: 112). Sorel's theories, Miki thinks, are a kind of 'Pascalinité', because they consider the change possible on the basis of faith (MKZ III: 113). Miki equals Sorel's violent, revolutionary practice to Pascal's *travail pour l'incertain* and the wager due to the fact that they aim at rescuing society from decadence (MKZ III: 112). Despite the fact that Miki seems to sympathize with the anarco-syndacalists, he nevertheless criticizes them for not having recognized the role of dialectics in Marxist philosophy. As seen before, to Miki it was important, as it was for Lukács, to stress the centrality of the dialectical movement inside the totality. Totality is bound to history because it is in history that the human being self-understands itself.

In another example, Miki binds the concept of history in Marxism to its development in the Historicist trend. Miki says that the concept of 'humanity' in Dilthey became crucial because of its relation to the immediacy of totality as the experience at the basis of the study of history (MKZ III: 321).[107] The mistake, or the 'suicide' (*jisatsu*) as Miki calls it, of the Historicists was their failure to recognize the value of the historicity of existence as a two-moment stage in the historical development (MKZ III: 323). Miki explains:

> Regarding what I have analyzed as the two moments of the historicity of human existence, Hegel and the Historicist only completely understood the first one, namely the historicity of life (*sei no rekishisei*). Nonetheless, they almost did not grasp at all [the second moment]: the lifefulness of history (*rekishi no seimeisei*). As a consequence, they did not acknowledge what has to be most importantly grasped: the unfolding of the present-day as history. To

[106] In *Pragmatism and Marxist Philosophy* (*Puragumachizumu to marukishizumu no tetsugaku*). Originally published in *Shisō* in December 1927. Now included in *Historical Materialism and the Present-day Consciousness*.
[107] In *The Organicist Theory and Dialectics* (*Yūkitaisetsu to benshōhō*). Originally published in *Shinkō kagaku no hata no moto ni* in December 1928. Now in MKZ III: 305-33.

> them, the present-day is rather a finite, united body that has reached completion (*kanryō shita tōitsutai*). It is for this reason that whatever is eternal is judged according to this[108]
>
> (MKZ III: 323)

The relationship between history and dialectics becomes therefore even more significant if seen in the light of progression and teleology. The meaning of existence as historicity is important, but the lifefulness of history is even more. Historicity precedes history as the social structure of human existence because, in Miki, it represents the premises for the unfolding itself. As Sugimoto has pointed out, history takes significance from its being lived in the praxis of the present. Therefore, even practical consciousness is the true historical consciousness and history is the history of the present (Sugimoto 2004: 206). The criticism addressed to Sorel is here thus restated in the analysis of Hegel and the Historicist philosophy. The dialectical unity of past, present and future is embodied in the present-day consciousness of totality, which could be as well defined as the Lukácsian 'foreseeing' totality. This is the reason why, I believe, Miki defines the Marxist dialectical system as an open one, contrary to Hegel's closed system of the Absolute Idea (MKZ III: 333). Since dialectical materialism is concerned with the present, it is the present-day consciousness and historicity that take up the roles of corner stones in Miki's philosophy. As a matter of fact, the accent posed on the society of 'now' and on the supremacy of the present time are themes that will be further explored in Miki's subsequent production. In the early 1930s Miki will publish his *Philosophy of History* alongside other works that specifically deal with the philosophical understanding of history and human existence. It will be there that the present time will become the nation-time and the focus will shift from a historical society to a historical nation.

Despite the fact that the present-day is the highest point of consideration, it remains bound to the openness of the dialectical system. It is in this context that we have to read Miki's religious related Marxist pieces that, incidentally, caused the outcry of the 'orthodox' Marxists. They were published in different journals between 1929 and 1930 and they mainly deal with the relationship between the proletarian movement and religion.[109] Uchida considers these articles as the strongest proof of the link between the early *Pascal* and the Marxist

[108] Compare this to Walter Benjamin's XVI thesis in the *Theses on the Philosophy of History*: 'Historicism gives the "eternal" image of the past; historical materialism supplies a unique experience with the past" (Benjamin 1968: 262).

[109] The articles are: *Literature, Religion and the Proletarian Movement* (*Bungei to shūkyō to puroretaria undō*), *What kind of Criticism do we Address to Religion?* (*Donnani shūkyō wo hihan suru ka*), *Religious Struggle and Class Struggle* (*Shūkyō tōsō to kaikyū tōsō*) and *Freedom and Necessity in Dialectics* (*Benshōhō ni okeru jiyū to hitsuzen*). The first three articles were published originally in the newspaper *Chūgai Nippō* in the course of 1930, while the last one was published in October 1929 in *Shisō*. Nowadays they are respectively in MKZ XX: 83-91; MKZ XIII: 3-11; MKZ XIII: 12-19; MKZ IV: 95-139.

period (Uchida 2004: 237). I think that, in addition to this consideration, they are furthermore the evidence that Miki's religiosity of the human being has, at this point, evolved towards a religiosity of the societal human being. The accent Miki puts on the practical side of the human existence seems to me to be the pivotal shift within his elaborations because it allows not only 'concreteness', but, most of all, 'action' on a community level.

In order to fully understand the depth of Miki's religious humanism it is necessary to provide a brief account of the intellectual debates that were taking place between 1928 and 1930 and the reason why Hattori Shisō and his peers found Miki's philosophy completely separated from Marxist orthodoxy. The first critique addressed to Miki appeared in *Marukusushugi Kōza* in 1928 and was written by Saeki Shunpei, the penname used by Hattori Shisō (Iwasaki 1971: 124). The article had the title *Dialectical Materialism and Historical Materialism* (*Yuibutsu benshōhō to yuibutsu shikan*). His critique mainly gravitated around the concepts of 'basic experience' and 'negotiating existence', which, in Hattori's eyes, had nothing to do with Marxism. He accused Miki and the other editors of *Under the Banner of New Science* of having operated a shift (*tenkō*) in Marxist philosophy and that this shift was leading towards a return to the organistic theory and social-democratic ideas (Iwasaki 1971: 125-6). Miki's responded as follows[110]:

> Even theory is a product of history. *From below* (*shita ni oite*), the established theory is regulated by the existence of that historical period. *From above* (*ue ni oite*), it is constrained by the theoretical consciousness of that historical time. The latter represents what I have so far named 'the common sphere'
>
> (MKZ III: 334; emphasis in the original)

Miki thinks that Hattori is theorizing on materialism, while, on the other hand, there should be a clear distinction between concrete, historical materialism and its basic definition (MKZ III: 345). In a reverse course, in the second part of the article, Miki starts justifying himself and his views. He specifies that his 'model of existence' is drawn upon Lenin's concept of property of existence (*sonzai no zokusei*), although he explicitly avoids using this term because he thinks he could be mistaken for a category of natural sciences (MKZ III: 358).[111] He, instead, defines his concept as '*Jedem Dasein mögliche Weisen zu sein*' (*sonzai*

[110] In *Materialism and its Real Form. A Critique of the Critique* (*Yuibutsuron to sono genjitsu keitai. Hihan no hihan*), published in *Shinkō kagaku no hata no moto ni* in January 1929. Now in MKZ III: 334-366.

[111] This part and the following regarding Heidegger are actually inserted in a footnote and not in the main body of the text. Given the sensitivity of the subject, which is concerned with Miki's intellectual integrity, I believe Miki did not want to clearly expose himself and be subjected to further criticisms.

no shikata) (MKZ III: 358)[112]. Most importantly, Miki openly acknowledges his indebtedness to 'Professor Heidegger', however refusing to accept the allegations that his ideas are a copy of Heidegger's formulations (MKZ III: 358). His theories are a form of Marxism, because they comprise the mutual, dynamic relationship between existence of nature and human existence and, moreover, his concept of human existence is socially determined as in Marx's writings (MKZ III: 360).

By looking at the accusations and at Miki's reply, it appears that Hattori's criticism was not without a reason. The theoretical speculations Miki had published at that point could not be considered entirely Marxist, given both the Heideggerian language and the conceptual framework used. Secondly, it appears that Miki was struggling to defend his positions since he was forced to come to terms with the influence Heidegger's thought had upon him. In later articles that were subsequently published later in 1929 and in early 1930, Miki will express his distress even more in counteracting the increasing condemnations coming from different orthodox Marxists. The definition of ideology and his speculations on the 'mode of existence' clearly show an un-Marxist matrix. As seen in the very first part of this chapter, Miki still thinks that the movement at the basis of human existence is anxiety, which, in return, it is the basic assumption for a religious understanding of life. The human being remains so far a 'medianic existence' caught between the everyday logos, guided by the everyday, false language, aka false consciousness, and ideology, which is imposed by above. Between these two constraining forces the role of the human being remains unclear. A new consciousness should arise, as Miki suggested, although it is not evident from which side of the two components. If the human being represents its own possibility, it therefore needs to re-appropriate its authenticity, in Heideggerian terms. This is the key question in Miki's Marxist writings. Has the authenticity to be found in the negotiating process with other human beings at the moment where the reification of their relations has been unmasked? Or, on the other hand, is it impossible to retrace it anywhere in the concrete experience of life?

Miki does not seem to be able to reply to these questions. Therefore, he shifts his focus to the relationship between religion and the proletariat and argues that this relationship is

[112] The original passage from Heidegger reads: 'Die an diesem Seienden herausstellbaren Charaktere sind daher nicht vorhandene »Eigenschaften« eines so und so »aussehenden« vorhandenen Seienden, sondern je ihm mögliche Weisen zu sein und nur das. Alles Sosein dieses Seienden ist primär Sein.' (Heidegger 1927: 42). Miki's German is evidently corrupted. Macquarrie and Robinson translates Heiddeger's passage as: 'They are in each case possible ways for it to be, and no more than that' (Heidegger 1962: 67).

indeed possible, albeit from the *standpoint* of the proletarian movement and class struggle (MKZ XIII: 17-8).[113]

> In a society without exploitation, even religion could completely renovate itself. Nonetheless, it would still be religion. As once Nietzsche said, the future philosophical thought will be born from a type (*taipu*) of human being called the weak and apathetic philosopher (MKZ XIII: 18-9)[114]

He sees an interesting parallel between Marxism and religion in light of the fact that they both point at humanity as a whole. Yet, religion has helped reifing (*butsuka*) human relationship, whilst Marxism aims at destroying the reified laws (MKZ XX: 86 ff).[115] One possible solution Miki foresees would be to view religion from the standpoint of class society, because that is the framework every kind of critique has to start from (MKZ XIII: 6-7).[116] One of the major flaws in Miki's system is that the class struggle he talks about cannot be tied to any 'class'. Yet again, the relationship he sees between religion and the proletariat is 'humanity', which is a clear sign that it was still comprised in his framework of the religion of the human being. Interestingly enough, the reference to the Nietzschean 'type' is a theme that Miki will explore and exploit in the subsequent period of intellectual career and that will become the thrust of his meditations on the renovation of the human being.[117] Understandably, after the publication of these articles, Miki's theories were smashed in nearly every journal that dealt with Marxism, even after his arrest in May 1930.[118]

In August 1930 Hattori Shisō and his peers published the *Theses against Miki Philosophy* (*Tetsugaku ni tai suru wareware no taido. Miki tetsugaku ni tai suru tēzē*) in *Puroretaria Kagaku*. There Miki was extensively accused of belonging to the bourgeois intelligentsia and to be a promoter of bourgeois ideology. His concept of the 'basic experience of the proletariat' was defined as nothing else than bourgeois idealism aimed at preventing the development of Marxism (Iwasaki 1971: 137). In September, Akizawa, under the pressure of the 'theses', publicly renounced his belonging to the 'Miki tetsugaku' faction (Iwasaki 1971:

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[113] *Religious Struggle and Proletarian Struggle.*
[114] Miki's critique of the religious figures rather than to the religious doctrines is very close to Nietzsche's own critique of Christianity as expressed in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (1883-85), *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), and *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887).
[115] In *Literature, Religion and the Proletarian Movement.*
[116] In *What kind of Criticism do We Address to Religion?*
[117] See Chapt. 4.
[118] Miki was arrested under the restrictions of the Peace Preservation Law for having allegedly financed the campaign of the Communist Party. He was released shortly afterwards but subsequently rearrested in July and locked up at Totoyama prison until November (Uchida 2004: 255). As a consequence, he had to leave his position at Hōsei University and start his career outside academia, providing for him and his family with the work of journalist and writer.

131). According to Iwasaki, the betrayal of one of Miki's peers signed the end of Miki's Marxist philosophy (Iwasaki 1971: 132).

As briefly sketched here, the interpretation of Miki as a 'humanistic Marxist' not only is a common agreement amongst the present-day scholars, but it had already initiated in the 1930s. Perhaps, the accent posed on the human being was the fatal move at the eyes of the hard-core Marxists. Furthermore, the references to Dilthey and the semi-positive assessment of Historicism, could as well have contributed, on the one hand, to the creation of Miki's original ideas and, on the other hand, to the problems highlighted by his critics. As Iwasaki says, the position of Miki's philosophy should not be judged too hastily (Iwasaki 1971: 141).

Tosaka Jun had already noticed the incongruence in Miki's interpretation of Marxism. In 1936, Tosaka wrote that Miki was never a Marxist, because Miki's philosophy was a philosophy of history based on historical materialism, not on dialectical materialism. Tosaka traced the causes of this gap in Miki's studies of Dilthey and his previous analysis of Pascal (TJZ V: 106-7). Miki's *tenkō*, Tosaka argued, did not happen after 1930, but already at the time of his involvement with the Proletarian Research Group, where he started being interested in Nishida's philosophy that led him to shape a 'metaphysical, teleological view of history' (*keijijōgakutekina, shingakutekina rekishikan*) (TJZ V: 107).

Miki's philosophy of history is nothing else than humanism, Tosaka said, because:

> Humanism (*hyūmanizumu*) is what stands in contrast to Eastern 'naturalism' (*tōyōtekina shizenshugi*) (which in reality is nothing else than a category applied to metaphysical history). Humanism can be explained in terms of the human being that arises from history, changes in history and dissolves in it
>
> (TJZ V: 108)

The rift between the Marxists actively involved with the JCP and the theoretical Marxists, such as Kawakami, Miki and, to some extent, Watsuji, lies on a different interpretation of ideology (Iwasaki 1971: 142). The academics sought to define and interpret Marx's idea in the light of the history of philosophy and the development of thought. On the contrary, Hattori, Fukumoto and the others saw in Marxism a weapon against the growing totalitarianism perpetrated by the Japanese political elite. Hence, their achievements should not be regarded as a failure, but rather as an attainment of a different vision of Marxism.

Uchida thinks that the importance of religion in Miki's thought has to be seen in the context of the Marx-Feuerbach relation (Uchida 2004: 246). He therefore affirms that the problem of the consciousness of the individual did not start with the publication of *Pascal*, but even before, with Miki's graduation thesis. It is there, Uchida argues, that his 'anthropological

existentialism' took shape for the first time (Uchida 2004: 246). Thus, the question of the individual consciousness in existential terms remains crucial even in Miki's treatment of Marx. The link between the religious reform and the proletarian movement has to be interpreted in the light of the individual renovation and then, in a second stage, in the renovation of the proletariat (Uchida 2004: 248-9). Despite the fact that I agree with Uchida insofar his idea of the individual consciousness and the leap to the proletariat as a class is concerned, I think that it is not merely a question of individual freedom as in Kant. I believe that Miki's contamination between materialism and spiritual matter is a question of *Angst*. His anthropological existentialist Marxist-driven theories are a continuation of the path he had already undertaken with *Pascal*. The problem of the renovation of the human being happens because there is oppression from above. This oppression from above is very similar to the feeling of anxiety connected to the infinite as described in *Pascal*. With the introduction of the Marxist view of historical development Miki was able to link history to nature and to human existence. History and historicity become deeply entangled as fundamental parts of human life. Dialectics helped this process of renovation by providing the methodology and means for a renovation in the religious sense. Furthermore, dialectical materialism, with his focus on *praxis*, helped reshaping the fundamental error the Historicists had done by posing the accent on the theoretical aspect of history. Praxis was also the condition by means of which the new '*ningen*-class' of the proletariat could have freed himself from the oppression of ideology.

Heideggerian authenticity is therefore realized in the religious renovation of the human being that happens through the dialectical movement aiming at the Lukácsian 'foreseeing' totality through the means of praxis. Anthropology becomes the medium between the logos and ideology and, since ideology is the super-structure, it could be compared with the Lukácsian or Marxian false consciousness. That is the reason why individual existences are abstracted in history, because they are guided by the ordinary logos and not by the basic experience. This is purely Heidegger's *das Man*. The difference and overcoming of Heidegger happens in the shift from individuality to society. As Miki said, the human being reaches its material and spiritual whole in Marxist historical materialism, in the unity of theory and practice. Nevertheless, materialism is also hermeneutics, the self-understanding of man. Although Miki affirms that the proletariat self-understands in the praxis of labour, I would go a step further and argue that not only is the proletariat, but it is society as a whole. At this point the medium of hermeneutics clearly appears and it is related to the concept of renovation. Following Lukács, if reality is a social process, then the social part of the structure

of human existence in Miki is transformed in authenticity as a re-appropriation of the openness of the possibilities given to the *Dasein* in the praxis of the everyday life. The religious renovation comes to terms with the expression of the sociality of the human existence in the I-Thou relationship.

Conclusions

As we have seen, Miki and Watsuji seemed to reach similar conclusions but through different paths.[119] They were both concerned with the establishment of a totality: in Watsuji it took the shape of the Japanese nation, in Miki it became his counterpart to the Marxist concept of class. Secondly, philosophy of history makes its first appearance. I believe that Miki, with the construction of his humanism-oriented Marxist system, already prepared his subsequent involvement with this kind of philosophy. Watsuji followed the same path, since philosophy of history had always been present in his works. This major shift does not only regard Miki; it is a common feature of the development of Japanese philosophy in the 1930s and early 1940s. Nishida, Tanabe, as well as the participants of the later *Chūōkōron* roundtables, all saw in the philosophy of history a tool to analyze and justify the Japanese standpoint in the global scenario of the Second World War. Philosophy of history as it will be interpreted by Miki in the 1930s gathers most of the issues already underlined here. Although Miki's career will continue on a different path than Marxist philosophy, the praxis this type of philosophical argumentation provided will linger in Miki's thought for the years to come.

Thirdly, religion also plays an important role in both systems of thought. The abstractness of Watsuji's human existence tends to take the nuances of a nationalistic ideology firmly rooted in the ideology of the *kokutai*. To further clarify the relationship between state and religion in Japan, it is noteworthy to refer to what Karl Löwith wrote in 1942:

> Japan is the only modern nation with a genuine natural religion, where religion neither transcends nor interferes with but supports the socio-political system
>
> (Löwith 1983: 549)

[119] On this relationship, see also Yonetani 1993: 185-6.

The question of religion is therefore important in Watsuji's case, although it does not have to be mistaken for a belief akin to Christianity. The religion of the *kokutai* is a product of society (very much like Marx) and Watsuji recognizes to this principle the function of uniting a whole nation. The religious-political principle explained in the previous chapter has now to be understood as a prototype of national unity. Therefore, the negation of the religious symbolism of the emperor as proposed by the Marxists would have disrupted the whole structure of Japanese society. Thus, I believe that the abstractness of the human being Watsuji created is the result of a culturally based analysis of human existence aimed at safeguarding a semi-religious figure bound to Hegelian idealism. Watsuji's human being, already grounded in history, became thus a political question for a whole community aimed at counteracting the practical appealing of Marxism on a generation of young intellectuals.

In Miki, the role of the human being and its *Angst* finally found a solid ground in the practical basic experience grounded in history thanks to the medium of Marxism. The religious vision present in Miki's works is still a reminder of his previous Pascalian phase. The influence of Heidegger and Lukács, comprehensive of both aspects of theory and praxis, is brought together and underpinned in a unified vision of a communal human being that substitutes class. Miki invented a new *ningen*-class, Watsuji dismissed 'class' *in toto*. Both aimed at preserving or foreseeing a new totality which became more of a 'particular' community rather than a universal concept. In the early 1940s, in the midst of the Second World War and with the expansion of the Japanese empire, this societal totality will finally bring Miki and Watsuji together.

IV. *NINGEN* AND THE NATIONAL CHARACTER
History and the Nation: the 1930s and the 1950s

> This is *my* morning, *my* day beginneth: *arise now, arise, thou great noontide*- Thus spake Zarathustra and left his cave, glowing and strong, like a morning sun coming out of gloomy mountains.[120]
>
> *The historizing of history is the historizing of Being-in-the-World.*[121]

This chapter is an attempt to bring Miki Kiyoshi and Watsuji Tetsurō together by means of synchronicity. I will analyze Miki Kiyoshi's *Philosophy of History* (*Rekishi tetsugaku*, 1932) and his pieces on 'humanism' (1932-36) and, regarding Watsuji, I will shift to his postwar production.[122] Specifically, I will consider the second volume of *Study of Ethics* that appeared in 1949 and *Two Pioneers in the Philosophy of History: Vico and Herder* (*Kindai rekishitetsugaku no senkusha: Bico to Heruda,* 1950).[123] I will also take into account *Sakoku. Japan's Tragedy* (*Sakoku. Nihon no higeki*, 1950) and parts of his collection of articles *The Buried Japan* (*Uzumoreta nihon*, 1951).[124]

In the previous chapters we have traced the genesis of the idea of *ningen*, its early developments and we have reached some preliminary outcomes, namely in Miki the creation of a 'societal *ningen*' and in Watsuji the Japanese national *ningen*. In this part, I will show how Miki's human being transforms itself into a national character, reaching a form that is very close to Watsuji's vision. After 1932, Miki shifts his attention from Marxism and society to history and society. This movement coincides with the emerging of totalitarian forces in Japan that brought Miki to describe the period of the mid-1930s as a period of *Angst.*

Therefore, Miki appears to be increasingly involved with the politics of his time, when the Japanese state was putting forward a more aggressive foreign policy and, domestically, it was implementing more repressive measures in order to safeguard the status quo. In 1931 officers of the Kwantung Army blew up parts of the Southern Manchurian Railway Line, only to then accuse General Chang Hsueh-liang's army of having perpetrated the offence (Bix

[120] Nietzsche 1999: 236, emphasis in the original.
[121] Heidegger 1963: 440, emphasis in the original.
[122] Now in MKZ VI: 1-288.
[123] Now in WTZ XI: 1-434 and WTZ VI: 357-421.
[124] Now in WTZ XV: 1-548 and WTZ III: 309-507.

2000: 235). This gave the pretext to the Japanese to attack the Chinese nationalist Manchurian forces and to occupy parts of Southern Manchuria. The Chinese immediately appealed to the League of Nations and petitioned it to stop the advance of the Japanese. The international image of Japanese was at stake, as well as its domestic order. Nevertheless, the army was not ordered to withdraw by the then emperor Hirohito who let his soldiers advance and establish a puppet regime in the South in 1932, in defiance of the ruling of the League of Nations. This event is usually considered to be the first step in the creation of the later-to-be Japanese empire. Furthermore, in 1933 Martin Heidegger delivered his in-famous lecture *The Self-Assertion of the German University* when he was nominated rector of the university of Freiburg. This speech is widely considered the endorsement of Hitler's Nazism by Heidegger, something that will remain a stain in the German philosopher's career.

These two incidents sparked a wide sense of uncertainty and *Angst* amongst Japanese intellectuals. Miyakawa describes this period as the one of 'the culture of crisis' and of the 'philosophy of crisis' (Miyakawa 1970: 91). This climate coincides with what was happening in Europe with the rise of Hitler in Germany and Mussolini in Italy and with the increase of xenophobic and nationalist sentiments. In Japan, the rise of totalitarian forces was reflected in several countermeasures that the government took in the early 1930s. In January 1933 Ōtsuka Kin'nosuke, Kawakami Hajime and several members of the then underground Japanese Communist Party were arrested under the Peace Preservation Law. In February of the same year, Kobayashi Takiji, the preeminent author of proletarian literature, was arrested and died under torture (Miyakawa 1970: 91-2). In July, the so-called 'Takigawa Incident' sparked a row of widespread indignation at the Faculty of Law of Kyoto Imperial University. Takigawa Yukitoki (1891-1962), professor of law, was put under pressure by the director of the faculty for his ideas regarding adultery and the right of legal defense in the case of a crime. Takigawa's considerations were taken up by Minoda Muneki, an extreme right-wing member of the Genri Nihonsha, as symbols of Communist propaganda and signaled to the Ministry of Education. As soon as Takigawa was dismissed, the other professors went on strike and showed solidarity with their peer (see Yusa 1998: 26-7 and Barshay 1988: 38-44). Miki as well contributed to this protest with an article entitled *A Re-Examination of the Kyoto University Problem* (*Kyōdai mondai no saiginmi*).[125]

In this period of high international and national tensions, Miki publishes *A Philosophical Explanation of the Consciousness of Crisis* (*Kiki ishiki no tetsugakuteki kaimei*)

[125] The Takigawa Incident is also known as 'The Kyoto University Problem' (*Kyōdai no mondai*). The piece was published in *Kyōshinbun*. Now in MKZ XIX: 604-11.

in 1932 followed by *The Idea of Angst and its Overcoming* (*Fuan no shisō to sono chōkoku*) in 1933, and *Heidegger and the Faith of Philosophy* (*Haideggā to tetsugaku no unmei*), which represents a direct response to Heidegger's Freiburg lecture.[126] These three pieces are deeply connected and, alongside *Philosophy of History,* show the complexity of Miki's thought and the various issues he was struggling with in the years between 1932 and 1935. First of all, the topics of time and consciousness, secondly the question of the role of the human being and third, the interpretation of the historical period Miki was living in: the time of 'crisis'.

As we shall see, already from *Philosophy of History*, Miki is concerned with the central question of the historical existence of the human being, which he finds in the 'historicity of history' or 'fundamental history' that underpins it. Moreover, Miki attempts to re-conceptualize the problem of time in relation to history and nature, and he establishes the supremacy of the present over the past and the future. This is not a new element in his production. Already in *The Organicistic Theory and Dialectics*, in 1928, Miki had reprimanded the Historicists for not having recognized 'the unfolding of the present day as history'.[127] The difference is that, if before the concept of a 'societal human being' was put in a Marxist-inspired context, here the supremacy is awarded to philosophy of history and humanism. By underpinning society to a fundamental historicity grounded in the present temporality, Miki raises this society to a national level. This move presents itself as a step further into the political ideology of the time that could already be symptomatic of Miki's subsequent involvement with the Shōwa Research Association in the late 1930s. He portrays a national, absolute present time that, as Harootunian poignantly says, is based on the assumption of the existence of an already formed nation-state (Harootunian 2008: 109). At this point Miki's human being becomes a national human being, which could resemble, in some aspects, the conclusions reached by Watsuji in his first volume of *Study of Ethics*.

Most importantly, the atmosphere of *Angst* that had been so pervasive in the first part of Miki's intellectual career vigorously returns into Miki's writings. *Angst*, in connection with the newly redefined medianity as the unity of logos and pathos in human consciousness, will play a key role in his construction of the national society. Thus, Miki continues his explorations of the human being qua medianity by trapping it in the condition of uncertainty of his historical time.

[126] They were published, respectively, in *Risō* in November 1932, in *Kaizō* in June 1933 in and *Serupan* in November 1933. Now respectively in MKZ V: 3-30; MKZ X: 285-309 and MKZ X: 310-20.
[127] On this topic, see Chap. 3.

In the comparison between Watsuji's prewar and postwar production, I will attempt to show the continuity of his thought. I believe that Watsuji did not essentially modify his prewar views on the emperor and on the Japanese nation. Even after 1945, Watsuji still remains a conservative attached to his prewar intellectual breeding based on the Imperial Rescript on Education (1890). Therefore, to him, the nation is still represented in the community of the Japanese people and in the figure of the emperor as a father. This move allows him to accuse the rulers of the Tokugawa period (1603-1868) of having caused the catastrophic defeat of 1945.

What changed is not the content or the substance of Watsuji's ideas, but, rather, the historical context. In 1945 Japan lost the war and was occupied *de facto* by the United States with a mandate of the Supreme Command of the Allied Powers (SCAP). Japan regained territorial independence in 1952, albeit several American military bases remain stationed in Japan even today. Led by General MacArthur, the Americans drafted the new Japanese Constitution in 1947 that redefined the role of the Japanese emperor as the 'symbol' (*shōchō*) of the nation and stripped him of his military and political powers. Nevertheless, Emperor Hirohito was not removed from his position nor did he abdicate, a political issue that is still a matter of controversy amongst historians nowadays. Moreover, the Allied powers established a tribunal, the Tokyo Trial, that should have served the same function of the Nuremberg Trial in Germany. Notwithstanding, only a few military commanders were put on trial and hanged, whilst the emperor was not even prosecuted.[128] Yet again, in the period immediately after the end of the war the Americans started a policy of purges in Japanese universities. Some have argued that Watsuji's alleged 'change of views' was dictated by the unwillingness to leave his post at Tokyo University (see LaFleur 2001 and Yuasa 1988). It is arguable that Watsuji did not want to be purged and that therefore changed his language without substantially modify his fundamental concepts. I agree with this view, although I do not agree with the underlying cause that pushed Watsuji to act accordingly. As we shall later in the chapter, the reason why Watsuji did not change his ideas is because he was still focusing on the particularity of Japan. The rhetoric changed, although the content of his work did not.

As a matter of fact in 1950, alongside *Vico and Herder*, Watsuji publishes the second volume of *Study of Ethics* and *The Buried Japan*. The latter is an edited volume where Watsuji collected some of the pieces he wrote in the late 1940s. If *Study of Ethics*, *The Buried Japan* and *Our Standpoint* (*Ware ware no tachiba*, included in *The Buried Japan*) have to be

[128] On the issues of Tokyo Trial and on the role of emperor Hirohito before and after the war see Dower 1999, Bix 2000, Large 1992, Kersten 1996.

compared, we could see that the themes are recurrent and the topics here addressed are very similar. First of all there is the problem of modernity, which Watsuji seems to be considering an important issue even for postwar Japan. As we shall see in the analysis of *Sakoku*, Watsuji blamed the Japanese defeat in WWII on the technological and intellectual delay that Japan accumulated during the *sakoku* period (1633-1857).[129] Watsuji establishes a line of continuity between the rulers of that time and the political figures who led Japan in the interwar years, blaming both for the destruction they brought. Secondly, Watsuji here begins his meditations on the role of the emperor in the framework of the postwar Japan state in order to come to terms with his new role of 'symbol' of the nation. As he had theorized in the previous years, Watsuji still believed in the particularity of Japan as a particular and exceptional nation where the structure of the state was embodied in the ethical principle of betweeness. The *ningen* as a national character, therefore, does not undergo a major change in its fundamental structure.

For Miki, the renovation of the human being foreseen so far on an individual but also collective basis takes here the shape of the renovation of a national community through a new form of temporality called 'historicity of history'. As it had already happened with *Pascal*, the renovation Miki is talking about brings on itself the nuances of a religious renovation very close to Heidegger or Shestov's ideas of 'authentic temporality' and of the 'eccentric man'. To Watsuji, the path of the national character, already marked in his prewar production, becomes even more highlighted after 1945. Diachronically, they seem to have little to share. Synchronically, this chapter shows how they fundamentally came together in depicting an achieved national time beholder of a national, Japanese character. This will bring about different political consequences for both thinkers, reinforcing Watsuji's ideological stands and exposing Miki's controversial alignment with the ideology of his time.

In order to have a complete picture, I will analyze not only how Miki reaches these conclusions but also the influence other thinkers had on his thoughts. It will be thus crucial to compare this new temporality to Tosaka's concepts of 'everydayness' and 'character'.

[129] The *sakoku* period is also called 'the period of national seclusion'. It lasted over two hundred years during which any kind of foreign relation was banned, living Japan in a situation of almost complete isolation from the rest of the world. One exeption were the Dutch, who were allowed to have economical exchange through their station in Deshima, along the coast of Nagasaki.

Time and Consciousness

In *Philosophy of History* Miki distinguishes between two types of history: the *historia rerum gestarum*, or subjective history and *res gestae* or objective history (*dekigoto*). According to his new definition, they correspond to *historia qua logos* and *history qua existence* (MKZ VI: 6). The trick to make them come together as 'history' is to relate them to the present, or the historical time where the writing of history as an actual human action takes shape as a repeating of the past (*kurikaesu*). Most importantly, the writing of history needs to be underpinned by a certain totality which is the *kairos* or 'the right moment'. Miki calls it 'the temporal aspect of the present', borrowing the expression from Spranger's *Zeitperspektive der Gegenwart*. Already from this passage we can see how the 'present' and its perspective come to occupy a pivotal role in his system.

Nevertheless, those two types of history are not sufficient if the goal is to sketch its genealogy. For this reason, Miki introduces a third element: *history qua facts* (*jijitsu toshite no rekishi*) (MKZ VI: 262-3). History qua facts obeys to the order of contemporaneity or *gendaisei*, which represents a small part of every totality. It can moreover overtake history qua existence and elevate it to a higher order, where the present becomes historical and non-historical, *à la Nietzsche*. Its foundational moment is embodied in the *Ur-Geschichte* or foundational history that creates a complete and superior order which is the one of the *historicity of facts* (MKZ VI: 26). What are the facts that Miki describes? First of all, they do not regard strictly 'history', but they are intrinsically linked to the concept of 'action' (*koi*) as well. History qua facts is the one that acts in the process of the creation of history, when human action becomes historical and historical action becomes human. As Akamatsu points out, in this case 'facts' is very close to the Ficthtian *Tat-Sache,* implying that facts themselves become a self-evident activity (Akamatsu 1994a: 187). It is for this reason that the action of producing history (history qua facts) is in a dialectical relationship with the produced history (history qua existence). Most of all, Miki underlines that, in order for historical knowledge to emerge, an action of free will is necessary (MKZ VI: 27). Free will acts as a 'rupture' (*setsudan*) by means of which every totality moves and detaches from the past. In an interplay between Hegel and Marx, Miki reaches the conclusion that history is not what Kant described as 'practice' or Fichte *Tathandlung*, it rather embodies a practical and sensuous principle of acting.

The most important part here is the stress that Miki puts on the 'societal' aspect of history. Since history is not divided from nature, as Fichte suggested, is not even divided from society. History is interlinked to society because the history of mankind is a particular history

where people relate to a certain group (Miki calls it *shuzoku*). For this reason produced history and producing history are in a dialectical relationship, out of the necessity for individuals and mankind to relate to a particular past and tradition (MKZ VI: 36-7). This seems to imply that Miki is here talking about a well defined community that can take the form of a nation. This stands as an attempt to go beyond Marx by subsuming Marxist philosophy into philosophy of history. This is the move that, I believe, will bring Miki on the path leading to the Shōwa Kenkyūkai and to his involvement with Japanese ultranationalism. By quoting Heidegger and his 'authentic historicity as authentic temporality', Miki decrees a nation time based on an active, present temporality.[130]

Miki is keen to underline that his system is different from both the idealist and the materialist. In fact, he affirms that both conceptions of history are underpinned by the same ontological determination, which prescribes the characteristics of the conception itself (MKZ VI: 56). Simply, one calls it 'ontological determination' and the other one 'anthropology'. In order to clarify his view, Miki draws a parallel between his concept of history and Dilthey's division of 'experience', 'expression' and 'comprehension' (*Verstehen*). Miki considers Dilthey's separation between the natural sciences and the human and historical science, based on the categorization of the experience of 'life' (*Erleben*) and of the 'comprehension' and 'communication' of this experience between men, as a 'psychological' distinction. In Dilthey's view, the unfolding of history does not rely on the presence of an absolute entity, but rather it is underpinned by human creation and its ability to 'create' history. Therefore, Dilthey's principle is that history encompasses life. Although Miki draws some his ideas from Dilthey, he still cannot accept that the *Geisteswittenschaften* did not include the idea of the dialectical relationship between history qua facts and history qua existence (MKZ VI: 89). The hermeneutical method, Miki says, is adequate for an organicistic theory, because they abide to the same logic (MKZ VI: 57). Instead, Miki defines his historical method and historical knowledge in terms of dialectics, attempting to overcome Dilthey's and the Historicists view of an encompassing history divided from nature. The key to understand history, Miki affirms, is to understand the three-fold system of the history qua logos, history qua existence and history qua facts in their dialectical relationship (MKZ VI: 57-8). The dialectical movement allows the history qua existence and the history qua facts to be bridged together in the experience (*taiken*) of nothingness (MKZ VI: 91). The facts themselves are, to Miki, the negative moment of the movement, since they are linked to the historical past if

[130] See also Harootunian 2008 on this aspect of the 'nation time' in Miki.

represented in reality. This reasoning, as Miki himself acknowledges, is very close to the Heideggerian notion of the finitude of the *Dasein* (MKZ VI: 91-4). If the feeling of history and historical knowledge arise from nothingness, they are the result of a societal pathos. Hattori describes it in these terms: 'When historical consciousness feels the destiny of its era, it perceives its pathos' (Hattori 1997: 199). Historical events of the past remain in the historical description of the present, therefore allowing for the historical present to become the central fact of historical knowledge (Hattori 1997: 199).

In order to support this point, Miki says that history qua existence appears in a multitude of categories, or what Marx had described as the 'economical categories' or multiple relations (MKZ VI: 133). This implies that things show themselves in a multitude of forms, therefore entailing a certain 'already' or 'in reality'. The fundamental characteristic of the history qua existence is thus the 'appearing' as historical time which already bears in its structure the 'now' or the 'already' (MKZ VI: 182). What provides structure to this kind of temporality is factual time and what provides its substance is the history qua facts (MKZ VI: 134). The transformation from one to the other happens thanks to the mediating dialectics that does not have to be mistaken with the Hegelian self-unfolding of the Spirit. The root of the change is the *original existence* that is located beyond existence. In accordance with Kierkegaard, according to whom eternal time is a subjective, active time understood as an instant, Miki concludes that factual time could actually be considered as an instant separated from the 'eternal now' as well as being separated from the present in objective time (MKZ VI: 167). Specifically, factual time represents the 'instant' understood as *instant historicity*. Instead, historical time embodies the continuity as *systematic historicity*. Their dialectical relationship gives birth to history (MKZ VI: 183). Most importantly, the fundamental characteristic of factual time is 'futurity of the origin' (*honrai no miraisei*), because time flows from the past to the future.

In a reminiscence of Heidegger, Miki describes what 'expecting' means to him:

> Expecting is the characteristic of historical time. Yet, it is the particular 'futurity' as the one that does not have an origin that is the character of factual time. Furthermore, it is also 'anticipatory'
>
> (MKZ VI: 198)

Again:

> Our life is not simply one sound, it is rather the unity of myriad of sounds. These are natural, historical and factual times that arise in a concrete structure of relations. Yet again, it is not a 'pleasant symphony'. It is a dialectical relationship which encompasses existence and facts. The movement of things develops in time and

> cannot be separated from it. This represents the circle of the formation of real time
>
> (MKZ VI: 199-200)

The first passage is clearly a reprise of the Heideggerian theme of the 'authentic temporality' as the anticipatory feature of the *Dasein* to grasp its own existence. It is worth noticing here that it is directly linked to factual time and that it does not entail having an origin. Having an origin, in this case, would imply a teleological view of time which requires a starting point. Instead, the circularity of the dialectical movement avoids this question and poses the basis for the grounding in the originality of history that equally generates in a reminiscence of Nishida's Absolute Nothingness. On the other hand, the second passage describes how natural, factual and existential times prescribe real time. In a previous part, Miki had already specified how natural and historical time are internally different if looked at from the perspective of the human being, since history implies human activity (MKZ VI: 186-9). From both we can assume that the 'time' Miki talks about is a very human one, aimed at satisfying the condition for the attainment of an authentic way of living. As explained in previous chapters, nothing has fundamentally changed in his thought, since it is from *Pascal* that Miki strives to locate authentic existence.

The themes developed in *Philosophy of History* return strongly in one article that I consider to be one of the most lucid philosophical analysis that Miki ever wrote: *Anthropology and Philosophy of History* (*Ningengaku to rekishi tetsugaku*), published in May 1935 in the journal *Risō*.[131] In this piece Miki goes back and gives new shape to his concept of anthropology. He explains 'reality' (*genjitsu*) in terms of 'historicity' (*rekishisei*), therefore colluding real and practical anthropology with history. The result is 'historical anthropology'. Its three basic categories are everydayness (*nichijōsei*), world historicity (*sekai rekishisei*) and historicity. Philosophy of history, Miki says, should be concerned with the study of everydayness which represents its method (MKZ V: 84-7). What Miki then calls the historicity of historical anthropology is anthropology from the standpoint of historicity; on the other hand, what is expressed in the actions and productions is concreteness or the human being itself. It follows that everydayness and world historicity are united and form history as a whole, very much alike the history qua facts and the history qua existence. The key question that remains unsolved is how this fundamental historicity can underpin both. On this point Miki can only paraphrase what perhaps would need a deeper explanation:

[131] Now in MKZ V: 78-104.

> In order to fully understand the fundamental historicity of the human being, the understanding of the historical and the understanding of the everyday have to be mutually clarified and judged according to each other. First of all, world historicity will be considered according to everydayness
>
> (MKZ V: 87)

The relationship between nature and historicity occupies another special position in Miki's wondering. As a matter of fact, he considers nature as the internal moment of history that is rooted in 'action' as 'event'. In a parallel between necessity and contingency, Miki confronts nature and history, concluding that the former is spatial and the latter temporal. Yet, history is spatial as well, if we follow the reasoning that space is only an aspect of temporality.

And here Miki reaches the core of his analysis of time and existence, which appears to be a profound meditation on Heidegger's concept of time and an original reinterpretation of it. Miki argues that historical-temporal things are circular and continuous at the same time. In their division, the circular aspects are the 'periode' and the continuous ones the 'epoché' (MKZ V: 101). In their unity, they symbolize the *Zeitraum*, where they 'enrich' (*jūjitsu*) each other. In the analysis of the three categories, everydayness represents the circular aspect and world historicity the continuous one. The kind of 'time' that prescribes their separation is the *kairos* qua event (MKZ V: 101). The *kairos*, in this instance, is comparable to the Heideggerian *Zeitigung*, which in his philosophy embodies the real essence and maturity of time. As a matter of fact, Miki calls the *kairos* the 'ripened time' (*juku suru, jijuku*) from which history is produced because it is where the two aspects come together in the 'enriched time' (MKZ V: 103). Despite the fact that everydayness and world historicity should be separated, they are still in a dialectical relationship because they act in a human world that, as seen before, is based on a dialectical movement.

This brief account shows how many issues are at stake in Miki's thought. First of all, despite the fact that Miki tried to synthesize time into the present by mean of the *kairos* qua event, his attempt utterly fails. If the event is the 'ripened time' and therefore also time in its maturity, it means that it temporalizes the principle of world historicity as well. It creates a kind of 'protohistory' that sounds more Hegelian than practical. Miki's present becomes the kernel of his system, it is absolutized and traps facts in their own reality. The accent posed on human action and on the anthropology of the historical world can only partially provide a solution to avoid making the present totality.

This core problem has already been noted by Harootunian. He argues that Miki's effort to link the everydayness to world historicity is based on the assumption that a nation-

state had already taken shape (Harootunian 2008: 109). The implication is that world historicity finds its natural parallel in the historical world of the 1930s and everydayness in the national world of Japan. The take over of the present, the accent on everydayness and the appearance of the historicity of the human being (as a nation, it could be argued) are all elements that tend to put Miki in relation to some aspects of fascist ideologies.

Despite this, there are still some similarities between Miki's concepts of everydayness and type and Tosaka Jun's elaborations of the 'everyday' and the 'character'. Tosaka's views, it has to be specified, are elaborated from a Marxist perspective and therefore achieve quite dissimilar results compared to Miki's. Nevertheless, this does not deny the fact there are actual influences between the two. As a matter of fact, when Miki wrote his article regarding the Takigawa incident, he had joined, alongside Tosaka and other intellectuals, the 'Association for Liberal Studies' (*Gakugei jiyū domei*) to protest against the interference of the state into university matters (Uchida 2004: 128). Moreover, Miki and Tosaka had been peers and colleagues at Kyoto Imperial University.

Tosaka elaborated a different concept of everydayness, which does not have the same connotations of Miki's but it is still somehow related. Everydayness is the principle guiding the practical and philosophical truth of the so-called 'characterial concepts' or the concepts that characterized our common sense and daily life by means of the character.[132] The character is 'qualitative division' of history and it is introduced by Tosaka as a mean to overcome both the divisions of time qua eternity and time qua instant. His character is, first of all, a human concept and its origin is the *incision* (*kokuin*) that leaves the impression on the everyday things (TJZ II: 7). Moreover, it characterizes every era as a societal phenomenon that has to be grasped practically, on the basis of the sensuousness of history. Time in general is, instead, divided in two categories: the actual, eternalized time, as in Augustine, Plato and Plotinus and, on the other hand, the instant, spatialized time, as the one of Aristotle (TJZ III: 96-7). Time has different characters, as seen above, and they embrace the content of history, providing the definition of the different eras through the material relations and the means of production (TJZ III: 99). Yet, the character abides to the principle of the everyday, where the present (*genzai*) where people live in becomes 'presentness' and 'reality'. What Tosaka seeks to reach is to find in the principle of the everydayness that would inlay the practical life as a necessity in the history of the present (see also Harootunian 2008).

[132] All the sources are from two articles: *The Logical Mission of the Concept of 'Character'* (*'Seikaku' gainen no rironteki shimei*) published in the volume *The Logic of Ideology* (*Ideorogii no ronrigaku*) in 1930 (now in TJZ II: 5-19) and *The Principle of Everydayness and Historical Time* (*Nichijōsei no genri to rekishiteki jikan*) published in 1934 in *Lectures on Modern Philosophy* (*Gendai tetsugaku kōwa*) (now in TJZ III: 95-104).

The difference between Miki and Tosaka has to be found first of all in the different definition of the everyday, which is Miki is linked to the principle of world history, whilst in Tosaka it is embedded in the present. On the other hand, if in Tosaka the necessity is expressed in practical life, in Miki necessity appears to be contingent in the sense that 'rebels' against the necessity of nature. Free action is the rupture of the totality of history, it is its multiplicity (in this case it is similar to Tosaka's character) but with the difference that everydayness remains a part of the total historicity. Historical time as character is reality in Tosaka as well in Miki, but the *kairos* qua event prevents Miki from discarding his system from the idealist Hegelianism. Tosaka's everydayness is materialist and abides to the laws of dialectical materialism; Miki's everydayness is bound to a transcendental existence that opposes materialism in every sense.

The transition between *Philosophy of History* and *Anthropology and Philosophy of History* shows how Miki's ideas underwent a strong development in only three years. In the first book the concepts of action, history qua facts and history qua existence, historical time were analyzed in the context of what philosophy of history can mean for human existence. In the second piece, the thrust is more on the significance of time both from an internal and external points of view. Action remains the constant thread. Nevertheless, action was before the act of free will thanks to which every totality moved away from the past and was projected into the future. Here, in *Anthropology and Philosophy of History*, action is not anymore an act of free will. It rather embodies the event that crystallizes time in the present. It is nonetheless true that the present had always been a constant worry for Miki. Inasmuch as he tries to sweep away from a Hegelian kind of eternal present he still leans towards it by making it the principle of both everydayness and world historicity. Worse, he makes world historicity depend on the everyday. This move underpins the presence of the everyday as national time, since time and history are human, as Miki clearly expresses. By presupposing an eternal present upon which world history is decided, he unwillingly grants Japan a superior role into the world scenario. Thirdly, the concept of destiny appears reinforced. As we shall see later, Miki criticizes Heidegger because of the accent he put on 'blood, soil and land' and for his 'love of destiny', albeit Miki himself seems not to be completely lucid on his side either. Specifically, it proposes a temporal condition by means of which the national time is tight to national destiny. This point is crucial, since it lays the foundations of the failure of Miki's philosophical system at the end of WWII. As I will subsequently argue, the faith that Miki had in the moral destiny of Japan was the element that bankrupted his idea of the human

being.[133] It is sufficient to say here that, by bounding temporality to destiny, Miki predestined the outcome of his whole system.

One of the major issues here at stake is the fact that, in 1935, Miki publishes a striking article against totalitarianism: *A Critique of Totalitarianism* (*Zentaishugi hihan*) in *Rokkōdai*.[134] The outstanding feature of this piece is that Miki describes how totalitarian ideologies are rooted into the organicistic views of history, where the state is considered the reality of totality and the reality of the union of people (MKZ XIX: 668). He argues that with the spiritualization of nature and by posing the accent on blood and soil, these ideologues (Miki mentions Gentile, Schmitt and Spann) merely amplified the natural role of the state and the 'natural' relations in society, negating the intermediate moment of dialectics (MKZ XIX: 669-72). Miki argues that by depicting the state as the totality, they were fundamentally denying the intermediate, negative moment of the individual, because the independence of its own members is what makes the relationship dialectical in the first place and anti-totalitarian in the second.

Miki's view of history should thus oppose the organicistic theories being underpinned by the dialectical movement. However, as mentioned before, this does not happen. Probably his aim would have been to escape the establishment of a similar system, although his absolute present reaches the same conclusions. In fact, his total present simply synthesizes another way to state the presence of an achieved nation-state. Even Watsuji was capable of synthesizing the negative moment of the individual with the positive moment of the state and he did indeed create a kind of Hegelian system where everything was subsumed in the absolute state. Miki does not approach the problem from the same standpoint, but the implications of his reasoning reach the same goal: the creation of a nation-state with a clear mission in the world.

[133] On this subject, see Chap. 6.
[134] Published in October 1935. Now in MKZ XIX: 664-72.

Anthropology and Ideology: the Role of Consciousness

In the last part of *Philosophy of History* Miki returns to the concepts of anthropology and ideology and to their relation. History and historical description, Miki affirms, are determined by politics and culture, since they belong to the realm of ideology. As he had described previously, ideology represents the 'common sphere' where the philosophical and intellectual atmosphere of the given time gives birth to the second kind of logos.[135]

Yet, philosophy of history is rather concerned with philosophical problems than with historical ones (MKZ VI: 220-1). Philosophy of history is dedicated to the role of the human being in shaping its own history through poiesis, therefore it is deeply interlinked to anthropology. The problem of the 'burying of consciousness' that Miki had so vehemently warned against finds here its solution in the recognition of this very same problem and in the attempt to solve it. In Miki's words: 'The problem of anthropology is *disclosed and then smashed* under the reality of ideology' (MKZ VI: 224, emphasis in the original). In addition, Miki wants to prove that the question of anthropology is not only relative to objective existence, but that is intimately bound to the way we write history and, most of all, to the different historical periods it was developed in.

It is here that Miki clearly explains how historical research should be conducted. Since the views on history are usually socially prescribed and society is practical, active and concrete, it follows that the conception of history is a matter for the history qua existence rather than the history qua logos. Different anthropologies were developed in different conceptions of history as much as they abide to their ontological limitations (MKZ VI: 248). Like Nietzsche, Miki affirms that historical knowledge arises from history itself, letting room for genealogy to prescribe how facts are established. This kind of genealogy is although intermingled with the view that the historical world is produced by men and that, without the knowledge of the past, the enterprise of establishing historical consciousness would be vain. The present and future importance of historical facts is made possible through the historical traces that historical research has looked for, supported and controlled in objective existence. To conclude, in a parallel between the development of art history and history itself, Miki says that as the interpretation of art changes with the discovery of new things dug from the past and might be therefore labeled differently throughout the years, so the same has to apply to historical description, which lives through life, precisely human life (MKZ VI: 270).

[135] On this subject see Chap. 3.

Since life changes and adapts, historical knowledge has to undergo the same process. Funayama notices that, despite Miki's efforts to isolate praxis even in this book, his standpoint remains quite transcendental (Funayama 1995: 173). In fact, although Miki tries to overcome Simmel's concept of 'life' and Dilthey's 'experience', he cannot but admire the ideas of these philosophers (Funayama 1995: 174). This is the reason why Miki takes refuge into the concept of nothingness that brings him, once again, on the path of existentialism (see also Funayama 1995: 178). Nonetheless, Miki underlines that facts are a kind of 'production' directly linked to the practical subject. The crucial difference from Marxism is that, although existence is rooted in history, at the same time it denies a teleological view of history because of the presence of the historicity that denies the attainment of a new society through revolution. In fact, if factual time does not have an origin and develops in an eternal and present circularity, it does not leave room for a finalistic historical theory. Moreover, Miki's new interpretation of historical knowledge is based on a community-national platform and not, as in Marxism, on a social class. In *The Philosophical Foundation of Humanism* (*Hyūmanizumu no tetsugakuteki kiso*), written in 1936, Miki even criticizes class struggle as envisioned by Marxist intellectuals as a negative moment that needs to be overcome in favour of a more harmonious relationship between the individual and the collectivity (MKZ V: 185).[136]

As a matter of fact, the role of consciousness changes dramatically from his Marxist period, since consciousness becomes the unifying principle of dialectics, instead of representing what has been oppressed with the introduction of commodities[137]:

> The human being possesses the dialectical structure of facts and existence and this structure is mediated by consciousness. Consciousness epitomizes the mediating, dialectical origin
> (MKZ X: 247)[138]

Consciousness is the medium between objective existence and subjective facts that concretizes dialectics. It follows that praxis cannot be immediate, but needs to be mediated, which could only take place with the juxtaposition of existence and facts, as well as in their unity. The key is the human being, thanks to whose life history unfolds. To Miki, the human being as a medium represents a philosophical necessity, and not a contingency, that has to be

[136] Published in *Shisō* in two parts, the first one in October and the second one in November 1936. Both parts are now in MKZ V: 159-186.
[137] See Chap. 3.
[138] In *A Reply to my Critics* (*Seccho hihan ni kotau*), originally published in *Shisō* in September 1932. Now in MKZ X: 229-54. This idea of the 'mediation' of consciousness seems to point in the direction of Miki's concept of 'imagination' that was elaborated later on.

reckoned with (MKZ V: 45).[139] The human being is both the subject and object, the wonderer and the wondered. It is at this point that human consciousness takes the shape of the 'fundamental essence of the human being as median' (MKZ V: 49). Consciousness represents the transcendence of human existence, what makes the dialectical relationship between subject and object possible.

The medianity that Miki points at is the same medianity of *Pascal* and of his Marxist period. In his first book Miki had described this condition as the uncertainty that arises when the human being comes to grip with its position of medium between totality and infinity. Later in his career, as seen above, medianity had surfaced as human existence trapped between the everyday logos and ideology. Therefore, his considerations on the role of consciousness dramatically changed in time. As a matter of fact, in *Marxism and Materialism* Miki had defined consciousness as related to language, therefore slightly differentiating himself from the Lukácsian definition of consciousness.[140] Nevertheless, there the I-Thou relationship had been reified by the introduction of commodities. With these considerations on the role of consciousness, Miki had seemed to aim at the destruction of the immediacy and naturalization of reified laws, but he had not been able to describe the new type of mediated consciousness, as foreseen by Lukács. In *Philosophy of History* consciousness becomes the 'medium' or the dialectical origin, which is not that far from what Lukács had theorized. Lukács' solution to reification is to become conscious of the 'immanent meanings of these contradictions [of the reified structure]' and Miki as well says that human consciousness is the fundamental principle to realize the condition of medianity of the human being. Thus, this later work seems to embody a Marxist principle of totality and dialectical mediation. Yet, in reality, it does not. The accent on transcendence thwarts and distances Miki from the materialist principle of Marxist philosophy. The point is that there are no reified laws nor a reified structure in Miki's thought at this point in time. Medianity is here linked to the previous considerations in *Pascal*, where the condition of *Angst* pervaded the human being. It follows that Miki seems to draw a parallel between the social and historical context of anxiety witnessed in Germany in the early 1920s to the one he was experiencing in Japan in the late 1930s. *Angst* and existentialism-inspired theorizations surpass Marxist materialism and its accent on class struggle and class division. It is at this point of his career that Miki returns to the problem of 'humanism'.

[139] In *The Problem of the Future of Metaphysics* (*Keijijōgaku no jūraisei no mondai*), originally published in December 1932 in *Shūkyō Kenkyū*. Now in MKZ V: 31-52.
[140] See Chap. 3.

Angst and Humanism: the Renovation of the Human Being as 'Type'

In *A Philosophical Explanation of the Consciousness of Crisis* Miki is concerned with the value ideas can have. He divides the value from the nature of ideas, which is also defined as the 'character'. The character is the subjective, practical side of ideas and it is usually molded by the cultural environment (MKZ V: 6-7). During the time of crisis, the value takes over the character and unnatural thoughts become the norm, giving usually birth to utopia. 'Crisis' is a historical feeling directed towards experience and facts. It embodies human feelings and it arises in different historical times because rooted in the temporal, epochal and social condition of the given time. The best way to describe it would be to call it the 'moment critique', or the condition by means of which the present time becomes absolute and forgetful of the anticipatory moment. Crisis explodes when the transcendence of facts is put *vis-à-vis* existence (MKZ V: 24). On the other hand, crisis also reflects the 'myth consciousness', when utopia becomes ideal eternity crystallizing the anticipatory moment. This definition of crisis is obviously a negative one. The difficulty is that without the mythos consciousness neither science nor philosophy, beholders of the ontic and ontological truths respectively, could have been born. So, where do we find the solution to the conundrum of reconciling myth, utopia and crisis? In the subsuming of the ontic and ontological truths thanks to dialectics. Only in this way could myth develop into its practical character and avoid the stasis of utopian thought.

The time of crisis is often permeated by the feeling of angst. Miki interprets the Manchurian Incident as the one event which paved the way for this particular feeling to penetrate into Japanese society. It is very similar to what happened in France after WWI as it was portrayed in the works of André Gide and Michel Proust (MKZ X: 292).[141] The main feature of this time is *pathology* or that mechanism by means of which the rationality of society is taken over by irrational feelings. Pathology is therefore the decisive factor in the creation of a society of escapism. As for the German case, Miki argues, the movement of the feeling of angst has been best narrated in the philosophies of Heidegger and Jaspers. Their ideas are representative of the intellectual climate where the individual, limited sphere has overcome the objective society. Nowadays, Miki says, fascism is the quintessential feature of these irrational tendencies (MKZ X: 301). The only solution Miki foresees as a gateway is the reformation of society from within the human being itself. It is the new 'type', that is the thrust of Miki's later works on humanism. The type, Miki is keen to point out, is not the

[141] In *The Idea of Angst and its Overcoming*.

proletariat. It is rather a renovated, born out of the subjective consciousness, and objectively given human being (MKZ X: 305-8). Most importantly:

> […] It is created above the logos and the pathos consciousnesses. There, where the unity of objective reality and subjective truthfulness strengthen and reinforce each other mutually. More than anything else, the new type appears in front of us as a living thing that will console, encourage, deepen and provide a new and stronger force to our life
> (MKZ X: 309)

The new type is therefore not the embodiment of a new social class based on praxis and materialism. Neither it resembles the *Dasein* and its authenticity. Rather, the new type can be mostly characterized as a force coming from within society and its members, or a 'creation from nothingness' as well. At this stage it is not possible to understand what Miki is effectively describing, besides the references he makes to the heroes of literature Don Quixote and Hamlet. His point is that, if in literature a new human being has been created, in philosophy this still needs to happen. Miki focuses on a renovation from *within* the human being, but how this would arise and under which social and historical conditions is not clear. Following Miki, if there needs to be a new society, the current one needs to be overcome. How can this take place? Perhaps by means of a revolution? Miki is specific on this point, he is not foreseeing a Communist revolution at all. It is more likely then the type would have the same characteristic of the Nietzschean Super-human (on this point see also Karaki 2002: 95).

Miki's new type is better explained in *The Problem of Neo-Humanism and Literature* (*Neo-Humanizumu no mondai to bungaku*, 1933), where he describes how a 'revival', in the sense of Renaissance, can achieve the restoration of humanity.[142] The unity of objectivity and subjectivity, human being and society, can lead towards 'neo-humanism' (here in katakana), where a new kind of anthropology can overcome the binary 'philosophy of life'-'philosophy of reality' where it has been trapped (MKZ XI: 220-5). It is here, in this article, that Miki finally delineates his guidelines of his 'creation from nothingness', which is directly linked to the concept of action. In fact, he uses the comparison of the 'work of art' to explain how the creation from nothingness works. Through the process of artistic creation, Miki says, art can change both the reality it is portraying and the human being as portrayer as well. The real meaning of the human being is thus represented in the 'discovery' (*hakken*) and in the

[142] Originally published in *Bungei* in October 1933. Now in MKZ XI: 215-44.

creation as action through the process of dialectics (MKZ XI: 232).[143] The new type is logos and pathos united in the forms of logos and myth. Miki asserts:

> Today's worldview needs to be constructed on the unity of logos and pathos, epistemology and creation, being and nothingness, subject and object
>
> (MKZ XI: 234-5)

The real meaning of 'renovation' has to be born from action, from the 'being produced' as an event grounded in fundamental history (MKZ XIII: 199). Acting and being acted bear the significance of being produced and producing history. The philosophy of *Angst* can only be overcome by the unity of space and time that starts the process of creation (but here Miki is keen to point out that it is not the Bergsonian creation). It is rather a Nietzschean, Heideggerian creation from nothingness.

> The human being expresses itself in being the 'producer' of goods, as it is possible for an artist as human being to be produced in the poiesis. This is the new philosophy of the human being
>
> (MKZ XIII: 198)

What will grant the unity of all these elements is the historicity of the human being that can overcome the Romantic view and go back to the classical idea of man. Society therefore constitutes one of the components that form this new human being, because it is in society that the human being is born, lives and dies (MKZ XI: 242-3).[144]

In *The Philosophical Foundation of Humanism* Miki explains that the philosophical foundation of humanism has to be seen in 'the position of the human being in its essence or the world' (MKZ V: 162). World here does not refer to nature, but to society. In order for the subject and the object to reach unity, the body needs to be 'related' or 'have an attitude' towards the world. Yet again, thanks to the human action or techné, life as a Bildung is at the basis of the idea of humanism, where the creation of ourselves corresponds to the creation of the world (MKZ V: 175). 'Humanism has to renovate the human being from its self-alienation produced by the objectification of life by culture' (MKZ V: 176-7). In order for this to happen, there is the need for a new to society to be formed, which however will never completely set us free, since we are society ourselves. In this instance destiny becomes not only a necessity and a contingency for the individual, but the 'destiny of the community' which is historical

[143] 'Discovery' will become a pivotal concept in Miki's *Philosophy of Technology* (see Chap. 5).
[144] In *The Renovation of the Human Being and the Question of Culture* (*Ningen saisei to bunka no kadai*), published in *Chūōkōron* in October 1935. Now in MKZ XIII: 189-203. Compare also to Tosaka's critique of Miki outlined in Chap. 3, where Tosaka said that Miki's human being 'is born, lives and dies in history'.

and placed in the world (MKZ V: 182).[145] Society and the individual are in a dialectical, confrontational relation that could only be resolved through the evolution of society that frees the individual by transcending itself in its self-formation in the world (MKZ V: 186).

The definition Miki provides of the 'world' and of 'having an attitude' could be well compared to Heidegger's considerations on the same topics. 'Being-affected' by the world and 'Being-thrown-in-the-world' are the most fundamental questions Heidegger addresses in his *Being and Time* and they describe the situationality of the *Dasein* in relation to the rest of world as well as to the others. What Miki is trying to avoid here is to make his own human being as an individual detached from society. His human being is thrown into society but it also forms it, it is part of it. We have already seen before that the renovation of society has to come from the human being itself, here society goes one step further and becomes the world as its own self-formation and transcendence. Miki's whole system of renovation is therefore based on a transcendence that encompasses every aspect of human existence, including existence itself.

It is in the article *On Shestov's Angst* (*Shesutofuteki fuan ni tsuite*, 1934) that Miki appears to have a change in direction in regard to his concept of nothingness and 'medianity'.[146] As a matter of fact, they are described in more positive terms, as if Miki were still pondering how to solve the problem of human existence. Here everydayness embodies the 'buried *Angst*' of men, that can only be overcome by means of the 'eccentricity' (*rishinsei*) of the human being (MKZ XI: 401). The everyday is although fundamental because it provides the first encounter of the human being with its 'curiosity' as the most basic source of *Angst*. In Shestov, as in Heidegger, Miki argues, the difference is demarcated between the everyday and the non-everyday (Heidegger's World). Shestov, therefore, offers the most quintessential example of the philosophy of tragedy. His eccentric man, that Miki adopts as his own as well, is the response to the utopian 'type', it is the man who can stand above the *Angst* in its Pascalian medianity. The distress is caused by the smashing of human hopes under the realization of the impossibility of fulfilling them or what Nietzsche called 'the pathos of distance' (MKZ XI: 402-3). By re-appropriating its own destiny, by becoming aware of the dialectics between life and death, the human being can rise above *Angst* and complete its life. Eccentricity, on the other hand, also embeds the 'reality' of the unity between necessity and possibility that can then succeed in overstepping the condition of

[145] The relationship between necessity and destiny is also highlighted by Uchida, who says that: 'the focus is the transition between the objective world of contingency and the subjective world of necessity', referring to the Hegel-Marx contamination (Uchida 2004: 68).
[146] Originally published in September 1934 in *Kaizō*. Now in MKZ XI: 392-408.

'flatness' of the everyday (MKZ XI: 408). Akamatsu points out how Miki, although grasping Shestov's fundamental ideas, does not share his pessimism, because he still leaves the door opened for human action to resuscitate the human being (Akamatsu 1994a: 210). The creation from nothingness here becomes the human hope, its own poverty in the moment the human being faces the outside world (Akamatsu 1994a: 210). Most importantly, the re-appropriation of its own destiny from the human being will become the appropriation of the destiny of a whole nation in the enterprise of its military expansion.

Heidegger thought of the *Dasein* that its existence was unauthentic and that its only way to re-grasp its own potentiality was to become self-aware of its own death. Shestov took refuge into the eccentricity of the human being in order to rescue it from the flatness of the everyday life. Nietzsche created a super-human from nothingness. They exemplify the tragedy of human existence, the tragedy of their own destiny, of their own historical period. They are certainly inspirational figures for Miki, although he tries to find a way out of the negativity that they convey. Miki's human being is a societal element, it is a human being that, even willingly, cannot be detached from the world he is clustered into. Marxism is not enough anymore and alienation is not embodied anymore in the objectivising of consciousness, although the burying of it is still present in his thoughts. Rather, a more substantial way to surpass this kind of alienation is to renovate the society *in toto*.

The problem of this approach is multilayered. First of all, it runs the risk of totalizing society by subsuming the individual in it, as seen above. Secondly, by describing and depicting the destiny of the community as a 'collective pathos' Miki returns to his ideas of time and history, where destiny is tantamount to the negation of individual freedom. His human being is born out of pathos, although he claims that solely in the unity of pathos and logos that renovation can take place. I believe it is not at all a rational man Miki is trying to depict. On the contrary, it leads to a kind of a contradiction, because it implies that the total rationalization of society in a totalizing totality is based on fundamental irrationality of the individual. Pathos is not rational, it is a human feeling and it is 'demonic' (MKZ V: 171). How can then a society become rational if the community that constitutes it is led by a communal pathos? The answer is probably transcendence. Society transcends itself in the formation of the world which, in turn, affects the human being in its medianity. Here the eccentric can emerge as the creative artist that has the ability to mold reality from an idea, which is nothingness in this case. Whilst the artist creates, reality shapes it, becoming the producer and the produced at the same time. It is the same process that affects history. Human action epitomizes the only way out from a condition of affliction and flatness or inauthenticity

in Heideggerian terms. The question is here whether a producing, pathological society can take responsibility for its own actions, like in the invasion of China for example. Or whether the presenteness this society is formed and develops is another kind of escapism that Miki had so vehemently criticized.[147] In the following chapters I will answer these questions through the analysis of Miki's works on technology. There, Miki will establish a direct link between the pathos as a 'demonic' feeling and the attempt to rationalize it in the technological action. Unsatisfied with this concept of type, Miki will create the *homo faber* or the human being that is capable of merging the technological action with artistic creation.

Following Benjamin's critique of historicism and the creation of a universal, homogenous and empty temporality, I argue that Miki was doing exactly what Benjamin was so wary of. In fact, Miki's conception of history is the 'time of the now', because it is the *kairos* that gains supremacy over the teleology of history (Benjamin 1968: 263). Miki's philosophy of history is fundamentally historicism, where the present as *present-ness* becomes the absolutization of universal history. Tosaka had already criticized Miki in this respect, when talking about Miki's Marxism:

> Miki's Marxist philosophy of that time was not a philosophy, it was nothing else than historical materialism (and therefore it continued negating the dialectics of nature). Moreover, that historical materialism, in reality, was not materialism, but only a philosophy of history
>
> (TJZ V: 106)

This passage stands as a confirmation that the pervasion of ontological *Angst* and the underpinning of fundamental historicity are elements that fundamentally deny the possibility of teleology of history and the dialectical movement there entailed. Hence, Miki's temporality could well stand as a kind of Blochian nonsynchronicity that embodies the relationship between an absolute, present and, as in an oxymoron, universal temporality together with the creation of a national temporality.

[147] Miki's pathological society will later become the nation of the *escaton*. For a more detailed analysis see Chap. 6.

Miki's Politics

Heidegger and the Faith of Philosophy perhaps represents Miki's first political 'attempt'. In this piece, Miki ties Heidegger, Gide and Barth to their common denominator: Nietzsche. The underlying discontinuity between the French and the Swiss thinkers and the German, Miki says, is the fact that the former took up the Apollonian side of Nietzsche's philosophy, while the latter the Dionysian one. What Heidegger, and German contemporary philosophy, are lacking is the practical side of the super-human (MKZ X: 318). The accent that Heidegger poses on the love of destiny is a direct Nietzschean influence that arises after the death of God and the creation of different spiritual worlds for different people. The origin of the German *Völk*, Heidegger says, resides in the commonality of blood, land and pathos that together bridge the destiny of the community.[148] Nevertheless, Miki highlights, this is not what Nietzsche foresaw for his super-human (MKZ X: 319-20). In fact, the super-human is born out of the unity between the knower and non-knower, of subject and object and not, as Heidegger stresses, out of an irrational force *qua* destiny. The irrationality of Heidegger's ideas is the mirror of the Nazi ideology. Moreover, Miki argues, the idea of being 'German' is nothing else than a type born out of a utopian self-perception.[149]

In 1935 Miki restates his opinions in an article that is more concerned with the situation in Japan as opposed to the German atmosphere. In *The Turn towards Irrationalism* (*Higorishugiteki tenkō ni tsuite*), Miki criticizes both the emergence of fascist irrational forces in Japan as well as the failure of Marxism to bring rationality into Japanese society.[150] He describes fascism as 'an irrational and non-cultural movement' that abides to 'a logic of totality' (MKZ X: 400-2). The problem, Miki underlines, is not that irrational bourgeois forces have taken over, it is rather that even the Marxists are not capable of putting forward a model that could overcome rationality and irrationality all together in a dialectical movement (MKZ X: 392-3). The mistake resides in having confused the *Geist* with the *Seele* and to have divided logos and pathos. In order to reestablish the equilibrium, it would be necessary to get rid of all the Western influences in Japan, although Miki is keen to point out that this would be accompanied by further problems, such as a return to an unscientific and irrational society

[148] Heidegger says: 'And the *spiritual world* of a Volk is not its cultural superstructure, just as little as it is its arsenal of useful knowledge [*Kenntnisse*] and values; rather, it is the power that comes from preserving at the most profound level the forces that are rooted in the soil and the blood of a Volk, the power to arouse most inwardly and to shake the most extensively the Volk's existence. A spiritual world alone will guarantee our Volk greatness' (Heidegger 1993: 33-4; emphasis in the original).
[149] In *The Repressive Culture of Nazism* (*Nachizu no bunka danatsu*), originally published in the *Hōchi Shinbun* in May 1933. Now in MKZ XIX: 594-602.
[150] Originally published in *Kaizō* in September 1935. Now in MKZ X: 392-409.

(MKZ X: 404-6). Miki considers therefore the 'West' as the engine behind Japan's modernization and rationalization which is necessary for Japan's development. Yet, it does not mean that Japan was completely irrational. On the contrary, Miki argues that it was already a 'practical' society but that, since nowadays it is completely Westernized, it is almost impossible to avoid those influences without endangering society as a whole. The solution lies in taking these forces and make them 'contingent' instead of necessary, therefore defeating the totalitarian and absolutist logic of fascist irrationality (MKZ X: 408). Here Miki resumes to the concept of *techné* in order to explain how the 'intellect' as a *métier* (notion taken from Alain) represents the only tool to understand the diversity of human phenomena. The concept of technology appears later in Miki's *Philosophy of Technology* (1942), whereas now it is only mentioned as a possible solution to the return to rationality.

As we have seen before, Miki claims that the renovation of the human being as a winner of irrational forces comes from within the human being itself. The 'type' he creates is exactly that utopian self-perception the Germans were criticized for. The temporalization of the present in the *kairos qua event* does nothing more that creating the exact same feeling of the particularity of a nation driven by destiny that, in those years, had started conquering parts of Asia. Miki's renovation leaves a lot of room for criticism and perplexity on how it cannot be representative of a national time and national community. Miki seems to be unaware of the consequences of his own actions and 'productions', or, if he was aware of it, he highly disguised it under the curtain of the criticism of fascism. Certainly, this part of his career prepares the path for the dooming 1940s, where Miki will be personally involved in supporting the ideology of the Japanese empire.

Watsuji's Philosophy of History

Watsuji's postwar production presents some similarities with what he had written before 1945. There is a period of about four years after the end of the war when he did not publish anything. The second volume of his *Study of Ethics* appeared in 1949 and one of his masterpieces, *Sakoku*, only in 1950, although the genesis of this work has to be traced back to 1945, before the end of the war (see Furukawa 1966: 564). In 1950 a short but poignant study of Vico and Herder was published for the first time. Watsuji had always been an admirer of Herder, from the time of *Climate*. In fact, as seen before, Herder was to Watsuji the only German philosopher who had recognized the importance of climate in the formation of a nation.[151] Vico, instead, appealed to him for the accent he posed on the role men play in the writing of history.

In *Two Pioneers of Philosophy of History: Vico and Herder*, Watsuji analyses the work of these two thinkers. This piece was actually started before the end of the war, in 1944, but abandoned for the writing of the second volume of *Study of Ethics*. In *Vico and Herder*, Watsuji is concerned with the rise of philosophy of history as a separate branch of philosophy in the 17th century, when Francis Bacon divided the *historia naturalis* from the *historia moralis*, basically separating the divine history from the human one (WTZ VI: 381-2). Nevertheless, Gianbattista Vico (1668-1744) was the first one to dedicate his attention to 'human things'. What Watsuji admires in Vico is the fact that the Italian philosopher recognized philology and philosophy as the quintessential expressions of humanity (WTZ VI: 386). Nevertheless, Watsuji is not completely satisfied with Vico's analysis, since his study is centred on the history of European peoples. Regarding this lacuna, Watsuji tries to justify it by saying that Vico might have used a code language to talk about the new philosophy of history on purpose, in order to avoid the censorship of the Catholic church (WTZ VI: 389). Yet, Watsuji is still concerned with the fact that Vico left the non-European to the level of the 'age of gods' when he divided history into three, circular eras that end with the age of men.[152] Accordingly, he uses the same framework of Vico and tries to transpose the triads into Japanese history. He arrives at the conclusion that the age of heroes can be traced back to the Japan of the 18th century, which should be followed by the age of men.

Vico's ideas are though underpinned by the idea of ' Providence' or an ideal of history that the history of mankind abides to. This represents also the relationship between men and God, where men's history slowly develops toward the ideal God has set for us. Naturally, the

[151] See Chap. 2.
[152] Vico divides history into three stages: the age of gods, the age of heroes and the age of men.

age of men can only correspond to the age of Christianity. Therefore there is no room left for peoples or societies which are not under this umbrella. This view of the supremacy of the Christian faith is something that Watsuji had struggled with since the time of *Climate*. If we have to draw a parallel between *Vico and Herder* and Watsuji's first book we could see that the same kind of criticism had already been addressed to Hegel's *Weltanschauung*. Although Watsuji's assessment of the Italian philosopher is far more positive than the one dedicated to Hegel, the underlying motive appears to be the connubium Christian faith-modernity that relegates non-Christian or non-European peoples to an inferior status. Nevertheless, Vico's ideas on philology and on the power of men to shape their history is a quality that Watsuji admires.

In the second part of *Vico and Herder*, Watsuji takes into consideration the works of Herder. In fact, he affirms that there is a close influence between Vico and Herder, more than critics have ever recognized. Herded underlined how language was important in the shaping of social consciousness and in the formation of national identity, calling it the secret to understand the mystery of human life. In conveying the expressions of a whole community through the commonality of the language, Herder had recognized the deep link between the individual and the community and this factor is what made him capable of overcoming Kant (WTZ VI: 401-3). What Watsuji defines *ningesei* or 'humanity' in Japanese is in fact the Herderian *Menschheit*. Restating what he had already extensively argued in the prewar period, Watsuji concludes that Herder's state is, in some ways, an anti-state because it is grounded in the unity of the community rather than on a bureaucratic state apparatus beholder of the legal system. Herder acknowledged that 'every people [has] a particular form as an expression of the historical reality of humanity' (WTZ VI: 408). Secondly, another pillar of philosophy of history is 'tradition', because the definite character of each people is transmitted through language and communication. The only question Watsuji asks is how Herder could have not recognized the link between the religiosity of ancient tribes and the modern state, something that he had already pointed out in the first volume of *Study of Ethics*, when he described how the Japanese emperor could have been compared to the religious tribe leaders whose powers were beyond the simple magical transmission (WTZ VI: 418).

The particularity of every people or nation is still the point of departure for Watsuji's analysis of history. As seen before, these remarks could have been well written in the first volume of *Study of Ethics*. The difference is the accent on the particular form of 'historical reality of humanity', which corresponds to Watsuji's admiration for Herder's Romantic idea of the *Volksgeist*. It is highly interesting to compare what Miki said in the early 1920s, when

he said that his idea of 'Romantic' had changed since it 'has dismissed all heroic tendencies', and Watsuji's idea of Romantic that, instead, did not change from the 1920s onwards.[153] Could the reason be because Watsuji's considerations on the problem of modernity completely overlooked the materialistic side of it? If the problem of capitalism is a global one, then certain specificities cannot be allowed. Instead, what brings Herder and, to some extent Vico, together with Watsuji is the particularity of nations that differentiates people from people. It follows that the modernity Japan acquired is also a specific one, probably different from the European model. Therefore, in this book it appears as if Watsuji was trying to include Japan and Japanese history into world history, something that European thinkers had failed to do in the past. If this small piece had been published before the end of the war, then it would have comprised all the nationalist, ideological theories of interwar Japan. Yet, since it was published in 1950, it conveys a new message. Probably Watsuji was attempting to put Japan back into the world scenario of post-WWII global history and to, perhaps, assign a new role to the defeated Japan. Iijima argues that, even in the postwar period, Watsuji's ideas did not undergo a major shift (Iijima 2003b: 159). The influence of Herder becomes stronger, because it becomes the 'unity of humanity' rather than the unity of the state in the Hegelian sense that had pervaded Watsuji's writings until 1945. Iijima defines it as 'an interpretation that goes from a Hegelian linear theory of development to a Herderian multi-branched theory of development' (Iijima 2003b: 160). He also argues that, in the postwar period, the particularity of Japan does not disappear from Watsuji's thoughts, it is simply subsumed in a historical movement from the self-awareness of the community to the self-awareness of the exchange with other communities, meaning other states, which becomes clear in the following passages.

In 1951 Watsuji publishes a volume with a collection of various pieces: *The Buried Japan*. One of them is entitled *Our Standpoint* and it shells some of the ideas that are also expressed in *Sakoku* and in the second volume of *Study of Ethics*. Here Watsuji explains that, five years after the end of the war, the global situation is not what Japan had hoped for.

> The Japanese people who drafted the pacifist constitution are witnessing the Korean war that reminds them of the Second World War. Furthermore, the Japanese are still under the 'duty' (*gimu*) of the Potsdam declaration
>
> (WTZ III: 480)

[153] See Chap. 2, when Miki says: 'My idea of 'Romanticism' has dismissed all heroic tendencies and has penetrated into ordinary things […]. Insofar as I value historicity, I am a Romantic too' (MKZ XIX: 276).

Two issues are at stake here: first of all, the Japanese had accepted the pacifist constitution drafted by the Americans in 1947, which banned Japan from carrying an offensive military apparatus and to only have self-defense forces, in line with the Potsdam declaration of July 1945 that asked for the unconditional surrender of Japan. The Korean war certainly posited a dangerous threat to the stability of East Asia and it was the first war combated in the Cold War period. Having Japan fallen under the American influence and by still being occupied by the Americans, the war that was fought in Korea definitely did not embodied the principle of peace everybody had hoped for after WWII. Watsuji reprimands the international community for not having respected the peace agreements, according to which, Watsuji says 'colonialism and oppression should have been erased' (WTZ III: 481). To him it is almost outrageous that Japan had been asked to renounce to have an army, something that Japan did 'according to its principles', but that the other powers did not. The specter of Communism is still present, especially when 'the Communist countries dictators are in power' (WTZ III: 486-7). Therefore, the standpoint of Japan remains to deny the use of weapons in any situation, because only in this way Japan would remain the only country that abides to the principles and regulations of the postwar imagined pacifist world order.

The question here is where Watsuji's standpoint is. In the first part, he seems to be criticizing the Allied forces for having ordered Japan to renounce to the use of weapons. Nonetheless, in the second part the responsibility appears to be on the shoulders of the Communist countries and their 'dictators'. Thus, it is not clear what Watsuji is arguing against or in favour of. In addition, Watsuji seems to be convinced that Japan had apologized enough for the atrocities committed in the conflict, especially when he argues:

> In the UN, the former imperial powers are still not raising their voices against oppression, exploitation and intolerance
>
> (WTZ III: 484)

Certainly this criticism does not include Japan, which is also the 'forgotten' former imperial power. I do not believe that Watsuji was taken into this kind of 'collective amnesia' in the postwar period. Nonetheless, he does not seem to think that Japan has to bear any responsibility for the atrocities committed in the Second World War. His idea is that Japan was a victim of the 'victors' justice' and therefore its role had to be reestablished in a different context. Hence, the double tragedy of the Japanese situation in the postwar period seems to be supported both by the undergone defeat and from the presence of dictatorships. These two positions came to highlight the inferiority of Japan in both instances, losing the war and not

having their conditions accepted and respected. In order to find the reason for both, Watsuji turns to the Tokugawa period.

In *Study of Ethics* there is an interesting part that deals with the problem of the 'popular ought to be' (*kokuminteki tōi*, Germ. *Sollen*):

> First, we have to consider the problem of *internal* popular ought to be and, secondly, to examine the problem of 'one world' as a matter of the oughtness of the people *in the relationship between different national people*
>
> (WTZ XI: 347, emphasis in the original)

Watsuji defines the established, prescribed morality in the *Sollen* and he sees it as the universal, general morality of each people. The morality of Japan is based on the Edo period 'popular morality' (*kokumin dōtoku*) which influenced the successive eras as well as changed completely the interpretation of the relationship between father and son (WTZ XI: 350). As explained already in the previous volume, the 'ethics' that pervades the family is mirrored in the different communities until the nation, with the emperor at its forefront. On the birth of the 'collective morality', Watsuji says:

> Besides permeating the behavior of people, *the manners of social relations* come into being in the common sense of the citizens, or what we call *manners of social relations of the members of society*. In other words, it is the birth of collective morality
>
> (WTZ XI: 359, emphasis in the original)

In a way, when the culture changes, the change affects the structure of the *jinrin* as well, as it is shown in the example of the geographical community, where the stability and the introduction of agriculture modified the social structures. It is the rise of capitalism, though, that Watsuji accuses for having jeopardizes the global order (WTZ XI: 370). In fact, the economic structure came to mediate with the structure of the mutual service through capital, leaving the oughtness aside. The criticism is here addressed to both the conservative and the progressive, who have failed to see the revolution that was going on in the decadence of society. The formers did not recognize the problem and the progressives assumed a confrontational and revolutionary attitude (WTZ XI: 371). The criticism is once again directed towards the social modifications capitalist modernity brought along. In his view, the period that best exemplifies the import of European culture and modernity is the Edo one, because it transposed the feudal remnants into society and basically destroyed the popular

morality of Japan with the emergence of the *chōnin* culture.[154] The solution Watsuji proposes is to therefore reform the society and to overcome and restore the popular unity through a concrete return to the service to the wellness of the totality (WTZ XI: 393-4). In order for this to happen, the emperor has to be seen now as the 'expression' of the national unity, because it would be uncritical and forgetful to deny the historical tradition of Japan which has always recognized in the emperor the symbol of the nation. The oughtness resides thus in this movement of the restoration of a limited imperial power, in line with the new constitution of Japan that described the emperor as the 'symbol', stripping him of all the military and government powers.[155] In the same way as he had done in *Climate*, Watsuji declares:

> As we have learnt, *we have to revive the national character.* The only way to attain this is to fully understand the different particularities. If particularities are thought to be the limit, then the path to overcome them will never be opened
>
> (WTZ XI: 400, emphasis in the original)

The message Watsuji is trying to convey is the fact that each particularity as national character has to be respected and defined according to the single cultural and climatic differences. Solely when this will happen there could be a kind of internationalism capable of overcoming the imperialism of the Second World War. This is what Watsuji means when he talks about 'one world' (*hitotsu no sekai*) as 'one world-state' (WTZ XI: 401). If there will be a failure to acknowledge this, then there will be the loss of the 'character' and of each national identity.

As we can see from here, Watsuji's argument is not that different from what he had already pronounced in *Our Standpoint* or *Vico and Herder*. His argument is quite clearly drawn back to his prewar writings, such as *Climate* or *Study of Ethics*, where the climate and the culture were linked to the historicity of each people. Watsuji found Vico and Herder useful in his analysis, because one provided the 'particularity' of human history according to men as the main agent in the history writing. On the other hand, Herder, with his accent on language and climate could provide a backup for Watsuji's idea of the correspondence between climatic characteristics and national character. As Iijima already pointed out, Watsuji's formulation of the particularity subsumed in the totality is still present in his postwar writings. The difference is that this time he is in favour of internationalism, although based on the assumption that differences need to be preserved. It is also interesting to notice

[154] The *chōnin* were the social class of merchants and retailers that became increasingly economically powerful towards the end of the Tokugawa period.
[155] For a more detailed analysis of Watsuji's view on the emperor in the prewar and postwar periods see Chap. 5.

how Watsuji judges history from this standpoint. As a matter of fact, the introduction of capitalism represents the factor that contributed to the ruining of Japanese society and its traditional morality. By shifting the focus from service and ethics to the economical exchange, it jeopardized the classical standard of living. Remembering what he had argued in his debate with Kawakami Hajime, it is clear here that his hatred towards Marxism is not directed to the theories per se, but rather to the explanation of capitalism and capitalist society that Marxism provides. Secondly, as seen in the previous chapter, Watsuji had theorized a return to the *Gemeinschaft* in order to restore the ethical and moral principles of Japan.[156] He had argued that each individual spontaneously 'feels' that it has to return to the totality because this is the totality of 'humanity' (WTZBII: 141). Here the same argument is restated and reshaped with the help of philosophy of history. The key concept, I believe, is the one of tradition. Before Watsuji had criticized Marxism from what he considered the erroneous standpoint of 'class'. Now, by subsuming these previous considerations with the element of philosophy of history and its accent on historicity and particularity of the *Volksgeist*, he finds another reason to justify the specificity of Japan. 'Humanity', which in theory is a global concept, finds its crystallization in the climate and the social systems typical of certain people. Capitalism, on the other hand, remains global and therefore derogative of any specific way of development. The Edo period, or Watsuji's vision of the Edo period, embodies the social changes that brought to the disruption of Japanese traditional society. The past he wants to identify with, once again, is the ideal past of pre-modern Japan. It is here that our discourse can be linked to *Sakoku* and to *The Buried Japan*, the article that gives the title to the collected volume.

National Seclusion and National Particularity

The Buried Japan and *Sakoku* both deal with the context of 17th century Japan, the Tokugawa period. *The Buried Japan* starts with the analysis of the Kirishitan period, when Christianity was first introduced in Japan in the 15th century to then continue until the *sakoku* period (WTZ III: 382-96). In this piece Watsuji argues that the problems of Japan start already in the Sengoku era under the ruling of Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582) a ruler Watsuji

[156] See Chap. 3.

harshly criticizes. He describes him as 'surrounded by sycophants', a coward and a person of low moral standards who let 'brainless people' colonize his court (WTZ III: 399-401). He did not embody the idea of the 'strong *daimyō*'; on the contrary he was weak and powerless. His successor, Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542-1616) was instead eager to crack down on Christianity and to substitute the Buddhist religion with Confucian morality. Watsuji sees him as the one who attempted to establish a personal cult parallel to the one of the emperor. The major figure that brought Japan to the ruin although is not Ieyasu, but rather his decision to be surrounded by Hayashi Razan and his peers, who firmly attacked Buddhism and any kind of 'untraditional' way of thinking. Ieyasu, by allowing Hayashi Razan to push Japan back to traditionalism, is guilty of having prevented its intellectual and military development. Watsuji says:

> Whilst in that period, in Europe, Shakespeare and Bacon were completing their 'modern' works, [in Japan] the attempt to slowly return to the ancient Chinese way of thinking cannot but be criticized for being an anachronism (*jidai sakugo*)[157]
>
> (WTZ III: 407)

The most important point for Watsuji is the fact that the thinkers of the Tokugawa period were in fact valuable and original thinkers. What prevented them from developing a 'modern' intellect was the ban on the exchange with foreign cultures imposed by Ieyasu. Again:

> I think that the fact that Hayashi Razan and others dictated over education is such a terrible thing that can be barely described. The greatest misfortune for Japan in the *sakoku* period is that free thinking was oppressed, and that a reactionary, *conservative spirit* presided [over Japan]
>
> (WTZ III: 407, emphasis in the original)

In *Sakoku* this argument reappears, only to begin with the European empires, the discovery of Asia by Marco Polo, the travels of Vasco de Gama and the conquest of Latin America by the Spanish and the Portuguese. Only the second part of the book is dedicated to the history of Japan. Watsuji's argument is that, if the West was modernizing and expanding by the means of its colonies, Japan was not. Rather, Japan was going backward, returning to a traditional way of thinking that could not have competed with Europe's strength. The structure of the book is clearly an attempt to, once again, repositioning Japan in the global context. One of the other issues with *Sakoku* is the fact that rest of Asia is completely missing.

[157] A slightly different translation is provided by LaFleur (see LaFleur 2001: 3).

The focus is the dichotomy Europe-Japan, forward-backward, scientific-irrational. Probably it was done on purpose, since the book is supposed to reflect on the postwar Japanese situation and to find the causes of the defeat.

What is of most interest for us is although the continuity that Watsuji sees between the *sakoku* mentality and the mentality of the Japanese leaders that took Japan into the war in the 20th century (see Yuasa 1981: 241). In the introduction of the book Watsuji says:

> After the defeat in the Pacific war, the Japanese people have revealed their miserable condition. I do not intend to emphasize the feeling of inferiority the Japanese people are now under. In the finitude of human existence there are both exceptional events as well as flaws and weaknesses. Pointing at those flaws has been necessary after people had portrayed with empty discourses the superiority of the Japanese people. […] In one word, that weakness has been the *lack of the scientific spirit*
>
> (WTZ XV: 15, emphasis in the original)

The scientific spirit is that thing that drove Europe and America towards the conquest of the rest of the world and to their scientific and technological development that resulted in their military superiority in WWII.

Many commentators, amongst which Furukawa, have underlined the common denominator between *The Buried Japan*, *Sakoku* and an article Watsuji wrote in 1937, titled *The Standpoint of the Bearer of the Creation of Culture* (*Bunkateki sōzō ni tazusawaru mono no tachiba*) (see Furukawa 1966: 497 ff).[158] This piece was written after the Marco Polo Bridge incident of 1937 and it is a strong call for the particularity of Japan in the 'world civilization' (*sekai bunmei*) (WTZ XVII: 441). Watsuji here is even more explicit in his criticism of Europe and the United States, drawing the line between 'white' and 'Asian' people. Stunningly, Watsuji argues:

> The role prescribed to the Japanese is, essentially, to preserve the freedom of ten million Asians. Without this freedom, in its deepest meaning, it will not be possible to describe the culture of humanity
>
> (WTZ XVII: 442)

To him, the oppression Japan is under is due to the fact that the country is technologically progressing. The more it will progress, the more it will be oppressed. This represents the 'pathetic but heroic destiny of Japan' (*hisō unmei*) that his citizens have to abide to. At the same time, this is a great moment in Japanese history, Watsuji underlines,

[158] Originally published in *Shisō* in September 1937. Now in WTZ XVII: 441-4.

when Japanese people have the chance to safeguard world history, although 'the burden will be heavy' (WTZ XVII: 444).

The particularity of Japan is here reproposed, albeit in a different context. It seems that there is continuity in Watsuji's thought from the prewar to the postwar period. The accent is always on the particularity of the Japanese character or nation in opposition to the other people. If internationalism in the prewar period was seen as a negative aspect of history, remembering how Watsuji harshly dismissed the League of Nations in the first volume of *Study of Ethics*, now it is reevaluated in positive terms. The question, as also specified above, is whether to posit the *sakoku* period and the Meiji one. Since the Edo era had been positively assessed, the Meiji and the Shōwa are although considered as dooming periods. The time Watsuji would like to return to is probably unattainable and born out of a utopian concept of the nation. The *sakoku* period prevented Japan to develop and display its force in the 17th century. Now, in the Shōwa period, the same kind of secluded mentality has prevented Japan from winning the war or, better, it has allowed for an unconditional surrender and defeat. LaFleur argues that Watsuji considered the *sakoku* mentality as an anomaly in Japanese history, since Japan had always been opened to other cultures (the *jusōsei* of *Climate*) (LaFleur 2001: 14). Nevertheless, I do not entirely agree with his argument that 'wars and historical tragedies such as the ones known to the Japanese in the Twentieth century are *not* brought about by a constitutively flawed rationality' (LaFleur 2001: 17). LaFleur is arguing from the standpoint of Weberian rationality and linking it to Watsuji's personal interest in Bacon from the early 1940s onwards. The problem is that, by arguing solely on the ground of rationality, there is the possibility of losing contact with the most important issue: Watsuji's particularism. His ideas about Japan and Asia do not lose power in the postwar period, they might have changed setting and makeup but they constitute a clear ideological argument on the basis of the superiority of one nation.

The core question is how Watsuji defines modernity and what modernity means to him. On a first glance, Watsuji appears to blame the import of European culture and capitalism for the underdevelopment of Japan. Nevertheless, if his books are read carefully, they show that modernity was a 'necessary evil' to compete with the other superpowers. This argument might be similar to Miki's, when he argues that, in the 1930s, it was impossible to get rid of all the Western influences in Japanese society without destroying that society as a whole. Yet, Watsuji writes from the standpoint of the late 1940s and early 1950s, where the problem of modernity is not linked anymore to a question of national identity, but rather it is constructed around the concept of restoring that very same national identity. Does it thus represent an

attempt to create another utopian type of Japanese people? Watsuji seems to be thinking so. His utopian type, if we had to describe it in Miki's terms, is born out of an erroneous self-perception developed in the 1930s and 1940s and stretched until the 1950s, where the reshaping of the Japanese role in the global scenario becomes a matter of alliance, rather than opposition, to the United States. By blaming capitalism for the defeat in the Second World War, Watsuji is attempting to establish a secure cause for the failure of the Japanese commanders to bring Japan to a victory. The problem is that, without that capitalism, the Japanese nation would have remained in a 'backward' state, as he described in *Sakoku*. Yuasa affirms that probably Watsuji was not aware of the fact that, by arguing that the position of Japan had been destroyed in the postwar period, his personal position had been destroyed as well (Yuasa 1981: 243). In fact, this is what happened indeed. Watsuji's argument that Japan has been a victim of Western powers from the *sakoku* period on does not leave room for a positive assessment of his standpoint either. On the contrary, it seems to suggest that Watsuji was not capable of finding a safe ground where to put himself and, for this reason, he still could not find a reasonable cause and solution for the loss of his identity and the identity of the people he represented.

According to him, Japan still needed to be seen as a particular nation to survive the defeat. Despite this, it does not allow for Watsuji to judge the standpoint of Japan being forgetful of what happened in the conflict.

Conclusions

In this chapter we have seen how Miki and Watsuji approached the problem of philosophy of history from two different standpoints. Miki tried to solve the question of history and history writing by grounding a whole 'society' into a kind of nation-time. Watsuji attempted to solve the problem of the Japanese defeat by returning to an ideal past and time where the influence of Europe had not been experienced yet. He continued along the same lines of the prewar period, by judging the particularity of Japan as a source in the new postwar internationalism. He still poses the accent on the Japanese national character as a particular form of history and historical consciousness that could overcome the disputes that followed

the end of the war. His ideal 'type' is as much utopian as Miki's criticism of the idea of being 'German'. On the other hand Miki developed his idea of the human being in the direction of a national community. If before the accent was on the societal component of human existence, here, by focusing on 'time' and 'renovation', he transformed this community into a nation. The eternal, over-encompassing present time is tightened to the formation of a new human being that will arise from *within* society. Miki criticized the direction German philosophy went after WWI and for having created a utopian self-perception. Yet, the crystallization of the national time is a potential preparatory stage for a similar ideological development. Furthermore, the basis for the unfolding of such a national, temporal definition is the creation from nothingness or of a new 'type' that could overcome the feeling of *Angst*. Miki's Neo-Humanism hence represents both the acknowledgement and the recognition of the climate of historical uncertainty on the one hand, and, on the other, it stands as a possible response to a society that needed to find its new position in the world. Miki's idea of the human being is rooted in an absolute present that contributes to the creation of a utopian self-perception of an 'eccentric' human being. The 'eccentric' is thus capable of standing above its own structural society and reform it from within. This, I believe, is tantamount to the idea of a nation that was trying to cope with the mutation of the international geo-political landscape and therefore to rise above it. From here to the Shōwa Research Association the path is short. Miki and Watsuji become now associated with the ideology of imperialism of wartime Japan. Despite the fact that Watsuji was writing in a different historical context, I still believe that his writings could be judge retroactively, because of the continuity between his ideas in 1930s and in the 1950s. The outcome is, for Watsuji, his re-positioning in a different global scenario by means of the reestablishment of the prewar ideology. Miki moved towards a more global worldview in the period of his involvement with the Shōwa Research Association.

V. *NINGEN* AND MODERNITY
Before and After the War: the 1940s and the 1950s

> The will to mastery becomes all the more urgent the more technology threatens to slip from human control.[159]

In July 1937 the hostilities between the Chinese army and the Japanese one exploded in the Marco Polo Bridge Incident (Bix 2000: 317-23). Following the incident, the Japanese army marched to occupy Beijing and subsequently moved towards Southern China, occupying Shanghai and Nanjing and the cities in between. It was the start of the 'holy war' that aimed at subjugating the whole world under the imperial ruling (Bix 2000: 326-7). In September 1940 Japan signed the Tripartite Pact with Germany and Italy and in December 1941 Japanese planes bombarded the American base of Pearl Harbor, signing the official entry of Japan in the worldwide hostilities of WWII.

The four years that elapsed between the start of the second phase of the war in China and the outburst of the total war were the period that saw Miki plunging into the militarist ideology of the Japanese regime that culminated with his official entry in the Shōwa Research Association in 1938. Despite the fact that Miki had previously condemned the emergence of 'irrational forces' in Japan and that he had written against the seize of power of Nazism and fascism, in those four years he certainly became a state intellectual that actively supported the expansionist campaigns of his country.[160] The works that he published, both under his name and under the seal of the Shōwa group, show a critical turn in his thinking that, nevertheless, still contains some of the main themes that had occupied his production from *Pascal* onwards. As a matter of fact, the idea of *ningen* as median and the problem of *Angst* still remain his foremost preoccupations and sources of continuous interrogations into the question of human existence. The main difference between this period and the previous ones is that his human being becomes *de facto* the Japanese nation in the quest for its own empire.

The causes for his direct participation into the Japanese imperial project could be traced in his writings on the relationship between everydayness and world-history and in the theory of the *kairos* that had trapped Japan in a kind of fascist temporality. Secondly, in his Neo-Humanism that had already shown that the human being was part of the grand scheme of

[159] Heidegger 1977: 5.
[160] See Chap. 4.

the Japanese nation. Between 1937 and 1941 Miki's *ningen* underwent a subsequent transformation that had its outcome in the creation of the *homo faber* underpinned by a new, technological society. In this later phase of his intellectual activity, technology stands as the core concept aimed at historically solve the overarching spirit of crisis and, philosophically, at molding a new human being capable of facing the challenges brought on by the war. Thus, in this context where Japan was moving towards a state of extended belligerence, Miki felt that a new period of *Angst* was approaching and therefore sought to overcome it by means of a newly renovated human being. Miki therefore used technology as a mean to reflect on the development of technological warfare and on the crisis of modernity. Medianity began to take a new shape. It retained its character of fundamental prescription of human existence, but it took the form of a 'poietic subject', a legacy from *Philosophy of History*, that 'technologically' acts in Japanese society. Miki's new theory was included in *Philosophical Anthropology* (*Tetsugakuteki Ningengaku*, 1933-37) and in *Philosophy of Technology* (*Gijutsu no tetsugaku*, 1942). [161]

In line with his new role of state intellectual, Miki devoted some of his attention to questions of intellectual agency in *Addressing the Intellectuals* (*Chishiki kaikyū ni atau*, 1938) and in *Addressing Young Intellectuals, or on the National Sentiment and National Destiny*, (*Seinen chishikisō ni atau –Aikokushin to minzokuteki shimei ni tsuite*, 1939), to the omnipresent spirit of crisis in *The Understanding of Crisis* (*Kiki no haaku*, 1941) and to mass culture in *The Formation of Popular Culture* (*Kokumin bunka no keisei*, 1940). [162] In addition, Miki started writing what should have been his masterpiece, a study of the concept of imagination in Kant, that nevertheless was never finished: *Logic of Imagination* (*Kōsōryoku no ronri,* 1937-1946). [163] Since the following and last chapter of this thesis predominantly deals with Miki's participation in the Shōwa Research Association, I will here address the issues that arose in last stages of Miki's genealogy of *ningen* and highlight the path he followed before his official involvement with the government think tank.

The 1940s were a period of personal travail for Watsuji as well. The outburst of the total war pushed Watsuji to reflect on the strength of Japanese tradition and on its 'historical

[161] *Philosophical Anthropology* was apparently never published during Miki's lifetime but only posthumously (now in MKZ XVIII: 127-419). *Philosophy of Technology* was originally published for the Iwanami Shoten Series *Rinrigaku* in September 1942 (now MKZ VII: 197-330).

[162] They were originally published, respectively, in *Chūōkōron* in July 1938 (now MZK XV: 237-43), in *Chūōkōron* in May 1939 (now MKZ XV: 341-60), in *Kaizō* in December 1941 (now MKZ XIV: 558-66) and in *Chūgai Shōgyō Shinpō* in January 1940 (now MKZ XIV: 336-43).

[163] *Logic of Imagination* was written and published between 1937 and 1946 (now in MKZ VIII. For a detailed account of all the editions and publications see Kuno Osamu's interpretative essay in MKZ VIII: 511-9).

mission' in the world. In these years, Watsuji became a fervent supporter of the Japanese wartime regime and of its military enterprise in Asia. Nevertheless, the constant motive of his writings remains the human being in the form of the *aidagara*, albeit expressed in a different fashion. As a matter of fact, between 1944 and 1952 Watsuji's core question was the 'reverence to the emperor' (*sonnō shin*) and not, specifically, betweeness. Watsuji started investigating the reason behind the unconditional devotion that the Japanese subjects had always had towards the emperor and he found the answer in the idea of the reverence to the emperor that, he claimed, ran throughout the whole of Japanese history. To him, the reverence had been the foundational element that helped Japan overcoming the difficult historical periods that it had to face in the course of the centuries and, most importantly, it was the quintessential element that could have been used to contrast 'Western' modernity and its individualism.

What is thus the relationship between the reverence and medianity? It should not be forgotten that to Watsuji betweeness was the prescriptive and normative structure of the human being and that was also at the basis of the ethical structure of society. In *Study of Ethics* Watsuji wrote that the emperor was the benevolent father and the benevolent ruler of the Japanese nation.[164] Therefore, Japanese society was structured like a pyramid, with the emperor at the top and his subjects at the bottom. The Japanese subjects in their structural relationship with the emperor were naturally pushed towards him in the dialectical movement of negation. In 1944, the feeling of belonging to the Japanese state, thus, appeared to be dictated both by the ontological structure of the human being as *aidagara* and by the force that the emperor exercised in his embodiment of the supreme element of national awareness and national unity. In 1944 Watsuji seemed to have found the final push that Japan needed to win the war in the unconditional devotion that the Japanese people felt towards their ruler that, at the same time, brought them to endure unbearable sacrifices.[165]

After 1945 Watsuji continued reflecting on this topic in an attempt to find a reason for the defeat in WWII. He re-embarked in a journey of exploration of Japanese history and he gave the same answer. Most importantly, he restated the importance of the reverence in an written debate with the constitutionalist Sasaki Sōichi (1878-1965) that verged on the idea of the *kokutai* as expressed in the new Japanese Constitution of 1947. In the face of another crisis, the one of the tragic loss of WWII accompanied by the American occupation of Japan,

[164] See Chap. 2.
[165] Compare Chap. 4 where Watsuji says: 'the burden will be heavy' (WTZ XVII: 444).

Watsuji did not change his ideas nor his framework. He saved the Japanese emperor and his role and he continued believing in the particularity and exceptionalism of Japan.

In order to prove that Watsuji's ideas did not undergo a major shift between the prewar and the postwar period, I will employ a transwar perspective. I will thus compare two pieces that deal with the subject of the reverence to the emperor. One, *The Reverence to the Emperor and Its Tradition* (*Sonnō shisō to sono dentō*) was published at the height of the war in 1944 and the other one, *The Symbol of National Unity* (*Kokumin tōgō no shōchō*) in 1948, at the end of WWII and after the promulgation of the new Japanese constitution.[166] Nevertheless, there is another book that Watsuji wrote in two volumes in 1952, *Japanese Ethical Thought* (*Nihon rinri shisōshi*), where he dealt with the same subject.[167] Scholars of Watsuji have pointed out how *Ethical Thought* stunningly resembles *The Reverence*, both in the chapter division as well as in the contents (see Yonetani 1990; Yonetani 1994a; Yonetani 1994b; Akasaka 1989 and Furukawa 1966). Needless to say, *Ethical Thought* is an expanded, revised and edited version of his previous work. In order not to repeat the comparison that others have already undertaken, I will approach the topic from a different angle and I will specifically compare *The Reverence* to *The Symbol*.

Thus Miki and Watsuji differently but similarly reacted to the historical crisis that was then unfolding. They both addressed the problem of 'modernity' by creating a new, bodily and national subject that could have faced the challenges and the internal contradictions that the war was starting to expose Japan to. Miki created a technological subject whilst Watsuji stuck his Japanese subject in the immobile body of the emperor. In the postwar period Watsuji remained faithful to this principle, as if he was facing the crisis of modernity once again.

In the next chapter we will discuss Watsuji's involvement with the committee who wrote the draft of the *Kokutai no hongi* together with his most political pieces and we will try to answer the question of how Watsuji, alongside Miki, remained caught up in the ideology of the wartime regime.[168]

[166] Now in WTZ XIV: 3-294 and WTZ XIV: 315-96.
[167] Now in WTZ XII and XIII.
[168] The *Kokutai no hongi* (*The Essence of the Nation*, 1937) and the *Shinmin no michi* (*The Way of the Subjects*, 1941) were two official documents drafted with the purpose of sanctioning the ideology of the Japanese ultra-nationalist regime. Watsuji's appears amongst those who drew up the first draft of the former document, although his name does not appear in the final and published edition.

The Road to Technology

Miki intermittently wrote *Philosophical Anthropology* between 1933 and 1937, when he started writing *The Logic of Imagination*. These three hundred pages are the summa of Miki's production. They contain all the main themes from Pascalian medianity, to Marxian praxis, to the Heideggerian idea of the World until technology as narrated in his subsequent *Philosophy of Technology* as well as the emergence of the concept of imagination. This all-encompassing work represents a useful tool in understanding why he chose the human being and how he attempted to renovate it on a philosophical, political and historical level.

The first two chapters reiterate the themes present in *Philosophy of History*, as well as in the other philosophy of history-oriented work *Anthropology and Philosophy of History*. Nevertheless, *Philosophical Anthropology* seems to conflate the different ideas expressed in his two previous books. In particular, Miki redefines 'anthropology' in terms of 'philosophical anthropology'. To Miki, philosophical anthropology now represents the only science that considers the human being in its subjective role (MKZ XVIII: 128). The 'human self-awareness' (*ningen jikaku*), that was before only reached through a comparison with other species and animals, overlooking the 'subjective' role the human being has in the environment, becomes the Pascalian awareness of the pathos (MKZ XVIII: 140). Anthropology is thus the science that is able to unify the 'human intellect' (*ningen chi*) with the 'philosophy of life' (*jinseikan*). Miki had previously described human existence as 'the unity of a myriad of sounds' which was not 'a pleasant symphony'. [169] Now human existence is narrated in terms of contradictions that are nevertheless always rooted in the condition of medianity.

Miki writes:

> 'The human being is not divine nor evil', so Pascal said. The definition of the human being that I have so far provided, and there are many albeit not all concordant, is the one that prescribes the human being qua '*chūkansha*' or ***medium.*** Even when Descartes conformed to the definition of the human being as a thinking animal, he still recognized it as 'the medium between God and nothingness'. In truth, the human being as medium belongs to the basic experience (*kiso keiken*) of our real and everyday life, as discovered by many other philosophies. The difference is that these very same philosophies could not provide anything other than a theoretical interpretation of the different ways this basic experience is at work. Rather, if the concept of medium could be fundamentally defined as *the human being*, we would not be needing anymore all those numerous concepts to define what it is constituted of. Medium is not simply an amalgam

[169] See Chapt. 4.

> nor a mere quantitative middle (*chūkan*), and since it stands as the characterial and total definition of the human being, it follows that it must encompass all its internal contradictions and grasps them dialectically. The human being is an existence full of contradictions
> (MKZ XVIII: 132; Latin in the original, emphasis added)

In the brief passage above, Miki shows us the essence of his philosophical enterprise, which consisted in taking the condition of medianity as the fundamental prescription of human existence, linking it to basic experience as 'negotiating experience' of his Marxist period and having it underpinned by the condition of uncertainty described through the Pascalian comparison between man the reed. From here Miki moves towards the 'situatedness' (*jōjōsei*) of human existence, where the eternal question of *Angst* permeates both the human being, the environment and the world.

Here the environment is considered not as mere nature, but rather as the *Welt*, in the sense of Heidegger's World that opens a certain amount of possibilities to the *Dasein*. The *ningen* needs to be 'open' (*ningen wa sekai ni hirakaretewiru*) to the world and being its ontological rather than ontic centre (MKZ XVIII: 266). This central position is not described in terms of *Zentrum*, but rather *Mitte* or *milieu*, a condition by means of which the human being becomes the *median* between subject and object as a form of action. As Miki underlines, on a theoretical level action signifies 'taking a stand' or 'relate to' the world (MKZ XVIII: 268). The problem is that these forms of action are completely unconscious and dictated by our inner and subjective part of existence dominated by the Nietzschean pathos of distance or the Greek *ubris*. Medianity pushes the human being towards 'eccentricity', something that had already been pointed out in the Shestov piece, which eventually represents the only way out from apathy and insecurity.

In *Anthropology and Philosophy of History* Miki discussed the idea of the creation from nothingness and the 'rise above nothingness' that the human being faces in its existence. This problem is approached a second time in *Philosophical Anthropology* but in a different fashion. On the one hand, the creation from nothingness remains a stable concept. On the other, it is here linked to the question of 'solitude', where our inner feeling becomes clear and apparent in boredom and *ennuit*. The resolving to the *divertissement*, the condemnation of human existence in Pascal, is compared to the 'limit situation' in Jaspers (*Grenzsituationen*; *kyokugen jōjō*) (MKZ XVIII: 280).[170] In this respect, Miki seems to express his appreciation

[170] Jaspers's 'limit situation' is for the first time elaborated in *Psychologie der Weltanshauungen* in 1919 and then further expanded in the two volumes of *Philosophie* (1932). The limit situations are those situations where the phenomenon of existence is exposed and "they all pose ultimate incompatibilities or antinomies which

for Heidegger's finitude of the *Dasein* and its highest realization or wholeness in its Being-towards-Death, although at the same time considering Jaspers' *Grenzsituationen* as the necessity of our life in the world. The innovation he introduces is 'nothingness', which comparatively functions as Heidegger's project of the *Dasein* and, at the same time, as the push for the human being to become self-aware of the limit situation as an a-priori and thus definitive prescription of human existence. Contrary to the negativity expressed in the two philosophers, Miki's view seems to convey a positive message which reflects his 'creation of nothingness' qua work of art. Similarly to what Akamatsu noted in regards to the relationship between Miki and Shestov, the same could be said here.[171] The nothingness the human being feels is certainly a void and the finitude of existence. The key is that Miki does foresee a new type of man that could overcome the solitude and the anxiety through eccentricity and through the awareness of the very same limitation. The downside, as explained elsewhere, is the envisioning of a pathological society derived from a 'pathological and manic existence [caused by medianity]' (MKZ XVIII: 270).

Therefore, my interpretation of Miki's concept of medianity differs from Miyakawa's who, in his *Miki Kiyoshi*, links the 'median' to 'self-interpretation' (*jiko kaishaku*) (Miyakawa 1976: 138). Miyakawa, referring to a piece from Tanikawa Tetsuzō, concludes that Miki's overarching theme since his Marburg time had been the 'self-interpretation' of the human being qua anthropology.[172] Employing psychology on the one hand and history on the other, Miyakawa determines that Miki's self-interpretation became his central concern and that, therefore, he built a 'combative humanism' (*sentōteki hyūmanizumu*) born out of Taishō humanism and reinforced by Marxism (Miyakawa 1976: 155). Tsuda, on the other hand, argues that the process that led Miki to elaborate his concept of 'true persona' (*shin no jinkaku*) conflated the Taishō personalism with the Shōwa socialism inspired by Marxism (Tsuda in Kiyoshi *et al.* 2008: 169). Despite the fact that I sympathize with these readings of Miki's thought, I believe that Miki's central concern was neither 'self-interpretation' nor 'personalism', but rather medianity qua fundamental condition of human existence that needed to be overcome. His obsession with the *taipu* clearly reflects his intellectual struggle

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frustrate our desire to see our finite situation as a whole, to ascertain the totality of the world and of life. Thus the limit situation of death contradicts life, chance contradicts necessity and meaning, war contradicts reciprocity, guilt contradicts innocence […] For the antinomic means destruction, which is always experienced in a co-experience of the whole, of the unity which is somehow being broken 'Contradictions remain as antinomies at the limit of our knowledge *in the face of* infinities'". (Kiesel 1993: 140-1 and Jaspers quoted in Kiesel 1993: 141).

[171] See Chapt. 4.

[172] The piece Miyakawa refers to is: Tanikawa Tetsuzō, 'Tetsugakusha Miki Kiyoshi', in *Kaisō no Miki Kiyoshi*, Tokyo, Bunka Shoin, 1948.

towards a renovation of society as a whole capable of going beyond the period of crisis the world was then facing. It is the midst of the apparent irrationality that permeates Miki's thought that his idea of technology has to be considered. First of all we have to start from a new definition of the 'subject' as human being that Miki explores in *Philosophical Anthropology*.

The Acting Subject

In 1933, Miki published a small piece called *On Pathos* (*Patosu ni tsuite*) in which he introduced the concept of *shutai*, or the 'embodied subject', in relation to feelings.[173] His discussion was mainly concerned with Aristotle's *Ars Poietica*, although it does lay the foundation for the development of his own idea of subject. Miki says that *shutai* is the only 'entity' that is capable of describing the 'external' and the 'internal' human being in a movement of double transcendence (MKZ XIX: 582). Miki adds that the human being cannot be constituted merely of spirit, but that it is 'bodily' (*shintaiteki*) too (MKZ XIX: 582). Therefore:

> The consciousness of pathos is the one that is delimited by the *shutai* when it transcends consciousness in an inward direction. These are violence, emotions and passions. Pathos does not reproduce the *shutai*, it expresses it. This is the reason why I determined that the problem of pathos is a problem of creation
>
> (MKZ XIX: 583)

Creation is thus here related to poiesis, as in *Philosophy of History*, but at the same time it involves a new kind of poeitic subject whose consciousness is transcended from within and from outside. Conflating language, rhetoric, poiesis and theory of the subject Miki aims at overcoming the Diltheian *Verstehen* that, to him, disregards the importance of societal expression, because it considers society an external system (MKZ XVIII: 342). The *shutai* does not allow for an external object to interfere neither with the epistemological process nor with praxis. The artist is 'expressed' in the work of art as much as he 'expresses' it. Since pathos 'expresses' the subject:

[173] Originally published in *Sakuhin* in January 1933. Now in MKZ XIX 580-4. For an interesting discussion of the concept of *shutai* and its differences with the epistemological and grammatical subjects see Sakai 1997.

> Pathos is not simply the subject (*shukan*). On the contrary true pathos is what sets us free from its constrictions
>
> (MKZ XVIII: 349)

Expression, in the unity with technology, gives birth to rhetoric that, in return, reveals the true character of the human being (MKZ XVIII: 325).[174] Rhetoric is societal because in the process of language there needs to be a speaker and an interlocutor that is at the basis of the social relationship between man and man. As in the work of art, in literature the writer expresses himself in his piece of literature and his own self qua writer spontaneously expresses itself in the vacuity. In this way, through communication and expression in the creation from nothingness, truth is revealed. In a highly complicated and circular reasoning that includes coining three different terms for 'truth', Miki concludes that the unity between truth and truthfulness is reached only in technology (MKZ XVIII: 345). Technology is consequently an active and poietic activity, where the first moment of the logos or the 'idea' is united with the second moment of the pathos, or the production from nothingness. Again, the subject-object unification does not leave room for something 'external', therefore the absolute 'object' or *moteur* behind it needs to be nothingness. Miki affirms that even world history is 'expressional' history, because it represents the two aspects of interiority and exteriority (MKZ XIX: 773).[175]

Language, rhetoric and technology therefore establish the new role the subject covers in Miki's philosophy. The *shutai*, to some extent, is the evolution of the *ningen*. If we had to use the language of *Philosophy of History*, the *shutai* could be defined as the unity of logos of pathos; in the Marxist period it would have instead represented the unity of theory and practice or anthropology and ideology in the *praxis* of the *ningen*-class. In the expression of the *pathos* the human being is set free from its constrictions precisely because it becomes the *shutai* that overcomes the epistemological difference between subject and object. In this instance, Miki's theory of 'expression' is heavily influenced by Nishida's. In 1936 Nishida had had argued that the historical world had become the dialectical world where the acting self self-expressed (Kosaka 1995: 80-1). Moreover, this world was one of poiesis. As it had happened with the universal and the particular in the locus of Nothingness, so the world expressed and limited itself in the self and the self in the world. To Nishida that human life

[174] See chapt. 2 for the discussion around language in Miki and Heidegger. Uchida notes that for Miki language is a unifying activity, as much as it was for Heidegger in his analysis of Aristotle's poietic empisteme (Uchida 2004: 313).

[175] In *Trends in Contemporary Philosophy* (*Gendai tetsugaku no dōkō*), in 'Lectures for the public inauguration of the association of national studies' (*Kokumin gakushutsu kyōkai kōkai kōza*), June 1941. Now in MKZ XIX: 759-91.

was historical, and not abstract as in Kant, and therefore action was 'expression' from its original Greek root which was poiesis (Nishida and Miki 2007: 58). Action is expression and in Miki this discourse is re-interpreted in the discourse on technology, where technology becomes the 'active and poietic activity'.

This bodily subject had been pointed out and used by Watsuji as well. In his 1938 *Personality and Humanity* (*Jinkaku to jinruisei*) Watsuji embarks in a critique of Kant's concept of humanity as expressed in the *Critic of Practical Reason* and *The Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. Especially in the chapter titled 'The problem of the body', Watsuji contests to Kant that his division between internal sense and external sense, or time and space, is at the basis for the division of soul and body. In a reasoning that reminds us of Miki's double transcendence and the internal-external human being, Watsuji declares that since the 'I think' is fundamentally a synthetic faculty, it must belong to a synthetic subject (WTZ IX: 341 ff). The synthetic subject is nothing other than *shutai*, which can overcome the subject-object division established by Descartes and then revised by Kant in his philosophical 'Copernican revolution'. According to Watsuji, the most important sense is space and not time. Space is where the human being qua *shutai* or embodied subject objectifies itself, notwithstanding that the transcendental apperception remains within itself. Possibly, the transcendental apperception becomes a subject constituted of body and soul. Again, to Watsuji what is most important is to grant the highest status to the *aidagara*, rather than to set consciousness as the 'individual' Subject. Watsuji's bodily transcendental apperception objectifies itself in a material body that is a specific and fundamental part of the I-Thou relationship. As seen before, this relationship constitutes medianity and it is foundational as well as normative. Later, in the second volume of *A Study of the Japanese Spirit* (*Zoku nihon seishinshi kenkyū*) Watsuji defines the *shutai* as the 'Japanese people' (WTZ IV: 298).[176] He restates that it is not possible to separate the spirit from the materia and that, therefore, the living totality of the Japanese people needs to be considered as a national and 'bodily' subject.

Shutai qua embodied subject does not have to be seen as the 'body' in the sense of body-mind theories. Rather, both in Miki and in Watsuji the subject functions as an overcoming of the traditional epistemological subject on the one hand and, on the other, as the basis of the relationship between human beings that is the cornerstone of their thoughts.

In *Logic of Imagination* Miki reshapes his concept of society in terms of the I-Thou relationship. Here Miki argues that society is the transcendental, creative subject thanks to the

[176] The two volumes were published in 1926 and 1939. Now they are both included in WTZ IV.

fact that its root, the human being, is fore and foremost a discoverer and a creator (MKZ VIII: 183-5). Once again, society comes to bear a position of supremacy but, differently from Watsuji, it does not come as a heavy burden for the individual. Miki tries to explain the value he gives to society in a historical sense. In his theorization, Miki indirectly criticizes Watsuji and his concept of betweeness. On the one hand, as Watsuji, Miki says that society represents the relationship between man and man and that, therefore, it takes the meaning of 'World' (MKZ XVIII: 374). Watsuji as well, in his *Study of Ethics*, described *ningen* as the 'World' (WTZ X: 16 ff). Secondly, Miki criticizes Heidegger's idea of the *Dasein*, albeit in a different fashion if compared to Watsuji's. If Watsuji had contested the idea of *Dasein* qua individual in *Climate*, Miki criticizes Heidegger's division between the ordinary man (*das Man*) and the *Dasein*. Hence, for Miki, Heidegger's abstraction of the human being is not strictly related to individualism but rather on having created two separate human beings, one authentic and the other one not. The critique of the German philosopher is here expanded as an indirect critique of Watsuji as well.

Miki affirms that the 'I and the Thou' (*watashi to kimi*) is *not* society, but rather society is where this relationship is established (MKZ XVIII: 372-3). If we had to consider it as totality, then the differences between I, Thou, He and We would cease to exists and one of the elements would become preponderant. Watsuji, on the other hand, clustered society into the relationship itself. In other words, he absolutized the 'I-Thou' and equated it to society. Miki says that Heidegger's 'man' is the ordinary one whilst, in the everydayness, the *ningen* is not simply a *personage* (*kakujin*) but a *personality* (*jinkaku*) (MKZ XVIII: 374). It does not 'play a role' in the relationship between different personas, but it is rather the World.

> The value of our personality (*jikaku*) is not related to the value of the role we play. By considering the human being as merely comprised in *aidagara*, the significance of personality would be disregarded. Despite the fact that the concept of the I-Thou is more a concept of the human being qua *aidagara* or human being in his role, it shows even more distinctively the importance of the concept of personality
>
> (MKZ XVIII: 376)

Miki acknowledges, in his sources, that his reading of Heidegger was in fact inspired by Löwith's critique of the German master, as it was for Watsuji. The main difference is that Watsuji did not considered his *aidagara* as an abstraction of the human being. On the contrary, he considered it a critique of Heidegger's abstract individualism. Kosaka points out that Watsuji's idea of totality qua inter-relationality is the condition sine qua non for the individual

to exist (Kosaka 1997: 258-9).[177] The *aidagara* also embodies society, the relationship self-grounds itself, although Watsuji insists that it is grounded in nothingness. Hattori even says that Watsuji's *aidagara* absolutizes the feudal, social status based on relationality that hampers historical change (Hattori 2006: 86). The absolutizing of the *aidagara* does indeed result in the absolutization of the state and the emperor. Miki seems to be thinking along the lines of Kosaka and Hattori, despising the idea of an absolute society and trying to 'construct' it from a different perspective. The question remains around how this concept of personality can overcome the theoretical issues present in the I-Thou relationship and why Miki resumed to such a concept. Unfortunately, this chapter of *Philosophical Anthropology* is left unfinished. Therefore, we cannot know what kind of role personality would take up. The only important remark is that society needs to be seen as a technological, expressional subject that will subsequently be called the *homo faber*.

Technology and Society

Miki's view of technology, as he himself admits, sparked out of the reading of, amongst others, Friedrich Dessauer's *Philosophy of Technology* (1927), Oswald Spengler's *Men and Technics* (1931) and Werner Sombart's *The Taming of Technics* (1935). Together with Heidegger, these thinkers contributed, to various extents, to the germination and spread of the Nazi ideology.[178] Leaving aside value judgments regarding their involvement, the fact that Miki reflected on their ideas of technology and technological development in that very same historical context cannot be overlooked. Miki heavily contributed to the creation of a 'technology of culture' in Japan as his German counterparts did in Germany. [179] I will attempt here to explain how Miki arrived to such a conclusion.

Miki describes technology as 'the medium between the environment and the subject (*shutai*)' that manifests its essence in the use of tools (MKZ VII: 202-3). The origin of

[177] See Chap. 2.
[178] Dessauer, fearing prosecution by the Nazi, left Germany in 1933, but his influence on the Nazi anticapitalist discourse has been widely recognized (Herf 1984: 171).
[179] For an analysis of the intellectual discussion around the theory of technology in 1930s and 1940s Japan and its German influences see Iwasaki 2000.

technology resides in its inherent possibility of 'making' things, in its active and producing characteristic that is guided, on the one hand, by the human intellect and, on the other, by the human body. Due to this, technology is 'active, productive, but most of all, historical action' (MKZ VII: 211). As other philosophers pointed out before him, in technology there needs to be a differentiation between 'tools' (*dōgu*) and 'means' (*shudan*).[180] Tools are, to Miki, practical means, or the way the systems of means make themselves apparent in the material production. The risk that the human being encounters in the process of production is for tools to become detached from it when they become machineries. In this respect, modern technology has completely parted from the 'living organisms' (MKZ VII: 321).[181] In this respect, Miki is not that far apart from Sombart's idea of the 'mechanicization of the human being'. Nevertheless, Sombart described his contempt of the state of German society in the 1930s and its capitalist tendencies as rooted in a 'pervasive Jewish *Geist*', that was embodied in the Marxist idea of 'exchange value', and that, in turn, was trying to destroy the Christian, German, positive 'use value' (Herf 1984: 130 ff).[182] Sombart did not describe technology as inherently good or evil, but he did indeed called for a 'technopolitics' in which the state should have controlled the mechanization of technology in order for it to serve the common good (Herf 1984: 150).

Miki agrees with the fact that technology has taken over humanity. Nevertheless, he strives to define it as a 'medium' between subject and object, between sciences and experience. Most interestingly, he proposes it as an antidote to 'the poisoning of Japan by the theories of Japanese essentialism' (MKZ VII: 302). He affirms:

> Nowadays, many people have expressed the necessity for a technological progress. In reality, that necessity has not been sufficiently emphasized. The development of technology is matter of great national urgency. Especially today, the question of technology is intimately linked to the question of *Weltanshauung*. Grasping this world-view problem means rooting it in a new technological *Geist*
>
> (MKZ VII: 300; German added)

Miki speaks of the new *Geist* as the newly renovated Japanese spirit by means of which Japan would have been able to rise on the world stage vis-à-vis the imperial powers.

[180] I believe that Miki's ideas of tools and means were drawn on Heidegger, Dessauer, Sombart and other philosophers of technology. Therefore, I strongly contest Nagatomo's reading of Miki's concept of 'tools' as 'embodiment of Dao' (Nagatomo 1995: 74).

[181] In *Technology and the New Culture* (*Gijutsu to shin bunka*), originally published in *Kagakushugi Kōgyō* in January 1942. Now in MKZ VII: 317-330 and included in *Philosophy of Technology*.

[182] Herf notices how the Marxist terminology is here used by Sombart in terms of nationality and race (Herf 1984: 139). Compare to what Watsuji said about Marxism and the 'good' use value of pre-modern Japanese society being contaminated by modern capitalism (see Chap. 3).

The development of technology is therefore inextricably linked to the crisis of modernity that is embodied in the technological development that Europe and America had successfully managed to achieve in comparison to Japan. By calling technology a 'national urgency', Miki underlines how important it was for his country to rapidly reach that stage, especially in the height of the war with China. Therefore, on the one hand technology has taken over 'humanity' whilst, on the other, its driving force is still a necessary 'evil' in the time of war. Later, Miki will solve this apparent contradiction by affirming that, in order to create a new technological spirit, the 'Western' mechanical technology should have been merged with the 'Eastern' moral spirit. Miki's stress on the urgency of technological development, therefore, does not put him in an antagonistic position if compared to the one of the 'theories of Japanese essentialism'. As a matter of fact, it compromises his political stance, since it is clear that the call for a new technological spirit is a call for national unity and national strength. Technology was speaking to a country that was already in the midst of its military expansion.

Thus, Miki continues by saying that technology consists of a new form of action based on 'invention' (*hatsumei*), which stands as the basis of production (MKZ VII: 306-8; MKZ VIII: 239; MKZ XVIII: 302).[183] Invention refers to the invention of a new purpose for technology which is embodied in the unity of the objective moment of the machine together with the subjective moment of human skills. For this reason, technology cannot be an immediate process, but a mediated and mediating one. In addition, in all three books, Miki compares the subjective desire that guides the human intellect towards discovery and invention to the desire that drove Prometheus to steal the fire from Zeus. Technology is therefore demonic, but not in the neutral sense Jaspers saw it, but as a principally irrational 'pathos' or 'spirit of a warrior' (*senshi no kokoro*) (MKZ VIII: 249). Yet again, Miki refers to it as the Nietzschean pathos of distance, the same one that helps the human being becoming aware of its finitude and to rise above nothingness.

The positive attitude he has towards technology does reflect the work Dessauer had conducted in Germany slightly before him.[184] To Dessauer technology was not a 'neutral' element, rather it was deeply connected to the three Kantian realms of the natural, the categorical and the aesthetic (Dessauer 1972: 327). As a matter of fact, it had its own particular realm, called 'the fourth realm' that expresses the 'possibility' of creation. It is the 'profusion of power' of the *Ding an sich* (Dessauer 1972: 330). In Dessauer's words:

[183] This discourse is stated in *Philosophy of Technology*, *Logic of Imagination* and *Philosophical Anthropology*.
[184] Miki considers Jaspers and Spengler 'anti-technology' philosophers, but not Dessauer (MKZ VII: 301).

> The technical or invented object which is perceived in the external world like a tree consequently implies an encounter of a different kind than the encounter with a natural thing. It is a *re-seeing*; and still more than that, a *re-finding*- of a *third thing*
>
> (Dessauer 1972: 327; emphasis in the original)

The re-seeing is what causes the 'wonder' regarding how the outside world works and how it is possible that the 'machine' that is now working in front of me 'does not come from me nor it was in me' (Dessauer 1972: 327). It is the power of the outside world, or the spirit of the inventor that still lingers in the mechanical process and that makes us wonder in our minds, producing new ideas. So technological improvements are passed down from generation to generation thanks to the power inherent in this third thing that fundamentally belongs to the fourth realm. As Tuchel notes, Dessauer's aim was to establish a new philosophical foundation at the level of epistemology and for it to contribute to a modern worldview (Tuchel 1982: 270-2). The fundamental difference between Dessauer's philosophy of technology contribution to a modern worldview and Miki's is that Dessauer still saw his project of the fourth realm as belonging to God's plan (Tuchel 1982: 271; Iwasaki 2000: 167). Since technology belongs to this a-priori realm, its manifestation into the empirical world happens in discovery (Mitcham and Mackey 1972: 23). Miki's invention is not that far from Dessauer's discovery. The striking difference is that Dessauer's concept of technology, belonging to a fourth, a-priori and transcendental realm, thwarts the possibility of moral and ethical considerations regarding the most controversial aspects of modern technological development. On the other hand, Miki was aiming at demonstrating is that technology is inherently human freedom due to its historical and active character. Miki therefore attempted to transcend metaphysics, although he did not completely succeed in his enterprise.

Miki's attempt was to establish technology as the human faculty *par excellence* that could prove to be the solution to the problem of *Angst*. Born out of a demonic pathos, technology rationalizes the conflicting relationship between man and the environment. It domesticates nature, it shows the possibility of human intelligence and it synthesizes the dichotomy subject-object by transcending it in a 'subject' (*shutai*). Yet, Miki seems to be torn between the rationality and the subsequent alienation modern technology brings with machines. On the other hand, he attempts to provide a new definition of technology that, in his mind, should go beyond the philosophical borders set by previous philosophers who defined technology in neutral terms, or, instead, as a realm, a human faculty or an entity per se. What Miki was striving to achieve was a mediation between technology and modernity. In

other words, he wanted to purge technology from the alienation it brought along and, at the same time, he desired for it to set the human being free from the constraints of pre-modern irrationality. The only way to solve this conundrum was for Miki to underpin technology into society and history. Thus, he established 'natural technology' as the scientific kind whilst he defined 'social technology' as the one belonging to society and more strictly related to the human being. The two are, in some way, interconnected and cannot be fully divided from each other, given the structural historical character of technology. Hence, technology is historical as well as history is technological: it provides its form (MKZ VII: 314). 'Technology is societal. And philosophy of technology is the foundation of philosophy of history and vice-versa' (MKZ VII: 315).

On a political level, societal technology becomes the key to overcome both Communism and liberalism. In a brief passage in *Freedom and Liberalism* (*Jiyū to jiyūshugi*), Miki affirms:

> The concept of personality grants the destruction of very same idea of feudalism. The equality of all human beings as personality needs to be honored, when we think that freedom is the essence of personality
>
> (MKZ VII: 469)[185]

Again:

> Liberalism professes to honor personality, but instead it commodifies the human being and the very same things it produces end up becoming its constrictions
>
> (MKZ VII: 478)

If we had to compare it with what Miki argued above in his criticism of Watsuji, it is clear that *personality* is strictly related to the everydayness of the *ningen*. Personality is the World that opens us the possibility of authenticity that, in this instance, has become the liberation from the constrictions of any sort of political subjugation. In fact, Miki argues that both Communism and nationalism reflect this discourse on a political level. The former represses freedom in the name of the liberation from capital and the latter negates the very idea of freedom by becoming authoritarianism (MKZ VII: 479). In place of a solution, Miki specifies that the old form of humanism, which is the modern (technological) one needs to be combined with 'todays' humanism' (*kyō no hyūmanizumu*) in order to create a new form

[185] Originally published in Volume 5 of the Iwanami Shoten Series *Study of Ethics* (*Rinrigaku*) in December 1941. Now in MKZ V: 245-262.

(MKZ V: 261).[186] This new, third humanistic way would be able to effectively counteract the 'tendency towards the revival of the feudalistic, totalitarian culture' (MKZ V: 262). By overcoming whilst maintaining the inheritance of modern humanism, it will be possible to create this new one. Thus, personality could be well described in terms of a third kind of humanism, which reminds us of his 'Marxist third way'. Personality is freedom, neo or third humanism, and liberation. Arguably, Miki's concern with 'freedom' might have constituted a reflection on the domestic and international situation of Japan of 1941. The main issue here is that, despite these concerns, the problem of the temporality of this new personality is still clustered in the eternal present of *Philosophy of History*. The key to understand this process is technology.

Technology is production and it is related to the 'means of production', albeit it is not historical anymore. The societal technology that Miki defines as the third form of humanism is profoundly influenced by the *kairos* of *Philosophy of History*. Once again, Miki clusters his society into an immanent present that, in this case, was aimed at renovating a nation at war. The freedom Miki is talking about is the freedom from the 'bad' import of technology for which 'Western' modernity has to be blamed. For this reason, freedom will be attained only in the renovation of the old *Gemeinshaft* and the new *Gesellschaft* in the creation of a new national society capable of overcoming both. At this point, Miki's *ningen* becomes the subject of this renovated, Japan society.

In *The Reason of History*, Miki affirms that what 'sets' form free is nothingness:

> It is the form without a form (*katachi naki katachi*). In the East, 'nothingness' has this meaning. Nothingness embraces all forms, it unifies them, it overcomes form by being without a form, it is a form without a form, it is the origin of form
>
> (MKZ XIV: 262)

Eastern nothingness, yet, is the one that will help creating a new society, the new *Gemeinschaft*. Watsuji and Miki come together here, to some extent. Miki describes the new *Gemeinschaft* as being born of the dialectical unity between the modern *Gesellschaft* and the old *Gemeinschaft*, in what he calls the unity between the Western technological spirit and Eastern morality. Watsuji, on the other hand, sees the *Gesellschaft* as the ultimate evil for the Japanese *Gemeinschaft*. In his *Sakoku*, Watsuji blamed this lack of scientific spirit in Japan as the reason for the defeat in the Second World War. Something that to him was inherently

[186] In *The Ethical Thought of Humanism* (*Hyūmanizumu no rinri shisō*). Originally published in *New Dictionary of Social Sciences* (*Shakai kagaku shinjiten*) edited by Miki Kiyoshi, Nakayama Ichirō and Nagata Kiyoshi in April 1941. Now in MKZ VII: 462-480.

dangerous, inherently Marxist and a threat to the status quo becomes the calling of his postwar period. In the interwar years Miki, fighting to establish a new society, saw the possibility of a dialectical unity grounded in nothingness that, as in Watsuji, unfortunately functioned as a totalizing element. What brings them together is the historical actuality of the presenteness, and what sets them apart is historical action. Watsuji never informed his system in terms of historical poieisis, albeit 'producing' real history with his totalizing state system. Miki strove for historical action and production, but in a sort of self-reproducing movement history kept repeating itself, preventing a real historical development. It is what Bloch called 'non-synchronicity', or the time of fascism. And what Benjamin tried to counteract with his Messianic time. Miki and Watsuji's poietic subjects, because *shutai*, in reality frustrate the possibility of progress because clustered in a logic of the present that is nothing else than the logic of imagination.[187] This is the same problem Nishida encountered in his pure experience and the world of worlds, and the same one Heidegger created in the present of his *Dasein* that lives for the moment of death.

The social technology Miki describes is very much informed by the discourse on *Angst* and renovation of the human being qua medium. Miki sees the new technological order brought about by the beginning of the war with the USA in 1941 as the fundamental reason for the establishment of New Order in Asia (MKZ VII: 317). The historical crisis that opens with the new phase of the total war is reflected in Miki's take on technology and his need for a redefinition of historical substance per se as well as its narrative. In *The Understanding of Crisis*, written in December 1941, Miki says that, in the time of crisis, pessimism is what is perceived as endless, whilst 'the instantness (*shunkansei*) of crisis requires resolution'(MKZ XIV: 561). Resolution is hence action in active reality. The solution does not come from simple activism but rather from the awareness of being producers of world history in its actuality. Only in this way, Miki says, the human being could be theoretical and practical at the same time, which, in turn, means combining technology and scientific spirit with a spiritual renovation (MKZ XIV: 564).

Nevertheless Miki, probably reflecting on technological warfare, affirms that this kind of technology has become too mechanical and is now threatening spiritual culture. What he proposes is for Japan to undertake a 'spiritual renovation' at the level of social technology, where the Western mechanical inventions could be united with the Eastern spirit in a dialectical process (MKZ VII: 321-6). Since the spirit is what drives creation and, it could be

[187] A similar criticism is presented in Harootunian 2000a, Harootunian 2000b and Harootunian 2008.

added, invention, society will be able to return to its living organism by being historicized in the process of unification of subjective means and objective tools. Miki adds that the historical world is the only objective-subjective thing. It is here that the creation of the work of art vehemently returns into Miki's discussion. In fact, the artistic spin is what Miki believes would in fact make technology organic again, because technological production with the artistic spin is the only one capable of being 'a form without a form', to create from nothingness and to belong to the 'anthropology of the *homo faber*' (MKZ XIV: 258-62).[188]

The new *homo faber* is simply another definition of the human being that clearly descends from the type of the Shestov's period. The *homo faber*, according to Miki, embodies the renovation of society based on technology driving the scientific development and, on the other hand, the irrational spirit of the Eastern myth or morality. The sublation of the two, understood in terms of the reason of history qua subject-object, into a new, renovated society is what will give birth to a new 'order in Asia' (MKZ XIV: 268). The concept of the 'New Order in Asia' represents the last bit of Miki's work and it is the one most ideologically charged. In fact, it is part of the production that appeared with the Shōwa Research Association and it defines the new Japanese imperialist order in East Asia. Since this topic will be further explored in the following chapter, it is here sufficient to say that, with *Philosophy of Technology* and *Philosophical Anthropology* Miki creates a new human being that definitely reflects the tendencies of the Japanese empire.

The Return of the Present

In his discussion of the concept of imagination in Kant, Miki returns to the issue of the 'present time'. To Miki imagination is the production of the self and of history. In the chapter on 'experience' in *Logic of Imagination*, Miki argues that Kant's anthropology has its roots in experience, because it unifies all the different elements of the faculties and bring them together in an act of creation. Experience thus become the form of reality together with the form of knowledge thanks to the principle of imagination (MKZ VIII: 276).

[188] In *The Reason of History (Rekishi no risei*). Originally published in *Nihon Hyōron* in June 1939. Now in MKZ XIV: 249-269. Interesting to note here, Watsuji includes the *homo faber* in his discussion of the flawed definitions of the human being and anthropology (WTZ X: 15).

Heidegger had argued similarly in his *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* (1929). He said that Kant's metaphysics was essentially the problem of the centrality of the Being (Heidegger 1962b: 16). Disclosing transcendence to him meant disclosing the subjectivity of the subject. Most importantly, and also central in *Being and Time*, was the question of the finitude of the *Dasein* with the impossibilities there present due to the essence of finitude of human knowledge. Therefore, Heidegger reduced intuition, deduction, reflection and recognition to the I-Think or transcendental apperception which, in se, was not such a distortion of Kant (Heidegger 1962b: 83-93). The distortion happened when Heidegger granted time as pure self-affection as the possibility of selfhood. Time became the 'present', because it was where the transcendental schematism belonged in light of the homogeneity of time. Heidegger says that:

> Time exists as a *now*-sequence precisely because, flowing across each *now*, it remains a *now* even while becoming another *now*. As the aspect of the permanent, it offers at the same time the image of pure change in permanence
>
> (Heidegger 1962b: 112)

Again:

> […] The transcendental imagination as that which lets time as the -*now*-sequence spring forth is- as the origin of the latter- primordial time
>
> (Heidegger 1962b: 181)

Kant had not prescribed the 'present' such a role. To him time was one of the two categories belonging to the subject and allowing knowledge of phenomena. In another distortion of Kant, Heidegger affirmed that ontological knowledge was the one that attained truth (cfr. Miki on truth) due to the fact that it was original truth already (Heidegger 1962b: 128). To him, this was the reason why Kant labeled it 'transcendental truth', which in reality did not reflect Kant's original idea. Basically Heidegger was interested in making transcendence into ontology and from there move to the existential analytic of the *Dasein* qua metaphysical discourse. Therefore, Miki's centrality of imagination as philosophy of action and producer of history is highly similar to the one portrayed in the *Dasein* of Heidegger. Imagination is not related to the transcendental schema anymore, in both philosophers becomes an ontological element, which implies a different or human temporality not as an internal sense but as THE sense. Imagination becomes the 'basic experience' for Heidegger as well as for Miki.

Imagination, in Kant, is not so much an act of *Ursprung*, as much as it becomes in Heidegger. Maruyama says that Miki's imagination is like Heidegger's, a 'practical' one (*jissenteki kōsōryoku*) (Maruyama 1998: 186). Similarly, Uchida defines Miki's standpoint as the one 'the radicalism of imagination' (*kōsōryoku radikarizumu*), where imagination becomes the structural and unifying faculty (Uchida 2004: 319). Iwasaki, on the other hand, underpins Miki's imagination on the ground of technology and affirms that Miki technologized imagination (Iwasaki 2000: 174). Miki sees in the form that imagination provides the continuous movement in history of formation and destruction. Thanks to this faculty, history becomes the union between past and future, once again in an eternal present (MKZ VIII: 262 ff). Miki's technological and historical poiesis hinders the Kantian categories as mere categories and, instead, ontologizes them in his *shutai*. The supremacy of the present tense embodied in the sense of temporality reflects Miki's whole enterprise of historicizing the human being. Imagination, in his historical form, becomes the equivalent of the *kairos*. If technology stood as the 'form without a form' grounded in nothingness that could set the human being free, imagination becomes the materialization of history as 'present'. Thus, the practical, poietic subject transforms itself into the producer of a national, crystallized time that will be one of the causes of the failure of Miki's whole philosophical enterprise.

Miki as the State Intellectual

Uchida sees the issue of freedom and the relationship between necessity and contingency as the main themes in Miki's production and that are possibly retraceable to his Marxist period. He argues that Miki's labour theory runs from his philosophy of history to the one of technology and that the theory of technology underpins history (Uchida 2004: 101). He attempts to ground all of Miki production in his first major work, his graduation thesis on the autonomy of the individual. Uchida's framework is the one of the development of the rentier-state capitalism and the modernization of Japan and he attempts to trace the extent to which the historical development of capital influenced Miki's work. Hence, he argues that in the period of *Philosophy of Technology* Miki somehow moved from Japanese ideology understood as the 'high' ideology of the rentier-state capitalism to a 'low' ideology produced

by capitalism that affected daily lives (Uchida 2004: 105-6). This shift is the one that pushed Miki towards culture and its renovation that, I believe, also brought Miki to affirm the need for a synthesis between Western technology and Eastern morality. Another kind of criticism comes from Arakawa Ikuo, who contends that Miki and other intellectuals of the interwar period became 'technocrats' when they equated the 'industrial technique with the administrative technique of the specialist' (*sangyō gijustu= kanri gijutsu no senmonka*) (Arakawa 1976: 744). Uchida contests this view, underlying that Miki envisioned his role as the one of the reformer of society that acts thanks to his 'imagination' that produces a 'mass based' (*taishūteki kiban*) theory of technology (Uchida 2004: 106-7). This attention to the masses on Miki's side is reflected, to Uchida, in the expression: 'responsibility towards society is, at the same time, responsibility towards the self' (MKZ VII: 297-8; in Uchida 2004: 167).

This mass-based technology comes from the discourse around what I call 'the massification of intellectuals'. Miki criticizes his contemporary intellectuals for 'having detached from reality', which to him signifies that intellectuals have detached from society and its national past (MKZ XV: 237-9). He proposes a sort of humanistic renovation of the intellectual class attained through the unity with the masses. Miki calls it 'the reformation of intelligence' (*chisei no kaizō*) (MKZ XV: 240). Masses represent to him the guardians of culture although, at the same time, they are the driving force behind innovation (MKZ XIV: 338-9).[189] The "'massification' (*taishūka*) of culture is crucial in the development of popular culture", Miki says, nevertheless adding that this would not mean vulgarizing culture, but rather giving it new strength (MKZ XIV: 342). Through this process, intellectuals will be able to judge the past history and find the 'reason of history' or the 'world meaning of the actions of Japan' in its actuality in order to move on, towards the future, 'where one nation will excel in its historical mission' (MKZ XV: 243).[190]

The sense of responsibility towards the self and society did not thwart Miki from joining the Shōwa Research Association. On the contrary, it is the reason why Miki joined it. Although it is correct to affirm that Miki's societal technology became a 'mass technology' and that not every intellectual, in particular Miki, became a technocrat, the society he 'imagined' was a society preponderantly within the national boundaries of Japan. Despite his criticism of Japanese essentialism, German Nazism and fascism in general, Miki could not

[189] In *The Formation of Popular Culture*.
[190] Cfr. Heidegger's Rectoral discourse: 'A spiritual world alone will guarantee our Volk greatness. For it will make the constant decision between the will to greatness and the toleration of decline the law that establishes the pace for the march upon which our Volk has embarked on the way to its future history' (Heidegger 1993: 34).

prevent himself from becoming a state intellectual. The national society that he had created, crystallized in the omni-present Japanese national time, was indeed a matter of imagination.

His considerations above confirm the view that Miki was moving towards his idea of cooperation that he explains in these words in 1939:

> Since patriotism is a feeling belonging to the original *Gemeinschaft*, it defends it against the oppressiveness of feudalism. Ergo, it is necessary for patriotism to awake the spirit of cooperationatism (*kyōdōshugi*) that dwells in itself and that reflects itself in being the virtue of the modern *Gesellschaft*. Presently, all the movements need to become patriotic movements, and each and every cooperativism is the true patriotic movement
>
> (MKZ XV: 344)[191]

Although I agree with Goto-Jones when he says that Miki's philosophy of the 1930s contained the seeds of his subsequent involvement with fascism, I cannot fully agree when he uses Tosaka's critique of Miki's liberalism to affirm that Miki's liberal thought 'could not defend itself against the manipulations of the Japanists' (Goto-Jones 2006: 15).[192] Miki's thought was not manipulated; it was the trajectory of his philosophy that led him there. As Löwith said of the political implications of Heidegger's philosophy:

> What is true or false on theory is also so in practice, above all when the theory itself originates in conscious fashion from a supreme fact – historical existence- and when its path leads it towards the latter
>
> (Löwith 1993: 169)

Miki's historical existence already showed the germination of his political philosophy. The very same fact that his *ningen* became first a negotiating relationship, therefore laying the foundation for a societal-class human being, and subsequently a historical *ningen* trapped in the morass of the crystallized everydayness of the Japanese nation did nothing more but to prepare the ground for the technological subject of the *homo faber*, mass intellectual and eventually ideologue. Theory and practice cannot be separated, even when attempting to rescue an intellectual from its own deeds, which represents another paradox in itself. Even Miki, in his Marxist period, declared that the human being as material and spiritual whole reached unity in theory and practice, albeit at that time the unity was acquired thanks to Marxist materialism.[193] *Philosophy of History*, *Philosophy of Technology* and *Logic of Imagination* are intimately bound through the concept of the poietic subject that, as Iwasaki

[191] In *Addressing Young Intellectuals, or on the National Sentiment and National Destiny.* Again, compare to Heidegger's Rectoral address.
[192] A quite contrasting and highly critical assessment of Miki is provided in Goto-Jones 2005a: 104-109.
[193] See Chap. 3.

said, was a response to Japanese essentialism but, that, at the end, failed to provide a valuable alternative to it. On the contrary, Miki's subject became the Japanese folk in a global, Asian context (Iwasaki 2000: 176). In Marcuse terms:

> […] In existential anthropology the corresponding relation [between the existence of the forces of history and the theoretical and practical critique of these forces] is limited to one of accepting a 'mandate' issued to existence by the 'folk'. […] Every folk receives its historical mandate as a 'mission' that is the first and last, the unrestricted obligation of existence
>
> (Marcuse 1968: 35)

It is precisely the 'mission' of the Japanese folk that Miki believed in that predestined his *ningen* to failure. In the next chapter we will see how history converged with philosophy through Miki's faith in the *escaton* of the war that should have materialized in the victory of Japan.

Before the 'Reverence'

Watsuji's subject had always been the Japanese folk. His *aidagara* symbolized the particularity of Japan in the connubium history-climate and the state Watsuji envisioned for his country embodied the ethical structure of all ethical structures. In 1944, when Japan was at the peak of its war against the USA and had occupied most of South and East Asia, Watsuji began his search for the 'real' tradition that made its country unique. He found it in the concept of the 'reverence to the emperor'. The awareness of the Japanese subjects of representing a nation was therefore underpinned by the sentiment of obligation and adoration that they felt towards their supreme ruler. The Japanese people thus were the 'bodily' subject characterized by a particular kind of history and climate and a tradition of reverence that was unfound in the rest of the world. The betweeness in which every social relation was grounded was the societal relations governed by ethics.

In 1944 Watsuji published *The Reverence of the Emperor and Its Tradition*. In its introduction, Watsuji explains that he will attempt to sketch the development of 'idea of the

reverence to the emperor' (*sonnō shisō*) that embodies the Japanese ethical thought (WTZ XIV: 3). Nevertheless, his enterprise will be undertaken 'historically'. He adds:

> The reverence has been the fundamental basis of our people's life and its resonance never faded during the years. Even if the people who hold the power seem to have forgotten about this, the people have not. It is my hope that I will be able to urge the importance of this tradition
> (WTZ XIV: 3)

Watsuji had previously explored the ideas of 'Japanese spirit' and 'popular morality' in *Climate* and, especially, from the time of *Ancient Japanese Culture.* Between 1929 and 1931, before writing *The Reverence*, Watsuji had prepared some memos on the concept of 'popular morality' (*Kokumin dōtokuron mēmo*), part of which was subsequently included in the second volume of *A Study of the Japanese Spirit*. To Watsuji, the Japanese spirit had been the driving force behind the victory over Russia in the Russian-Japanese conflict of 1904-5, an event that had embodied the significance of Japan in world history. In these memos, Watsuji both attempted to provide a description of 'popular morality' and harshly criticized the *chōnin* culture for being the evident proof of the penetration of capitalism in Japan (WTZ IV: 463 ff). In a reasoning that could well remind us of his dialogue with Kawakami, Watsuji accused capitalism of having contaminated Japanese society and slowly transformed it into a *Gesellschaft*. He argued that the return to the original *Gemeinschaft* embodied in the Japanese spirit could only be acquired through a renovation of society that could go back, but at the same time overcome, the traditional way of thinking. As highlighted somewhere else in this work, this was the main point of Watsuji's critique of 'Western' modernity. The return to this idyllic kind of society, purged of the contamination of capitalism, was realized in the state as the 'way of ethics' that respected the laws of humanity and fully realized the sacredness of the absolute totality (WTZ XI: 619).[194] Needless to say, the only nation state that had been able to accomplish such a condition was the Japanese one.

In his reasoning around the fulfillment of the ethical way, Watsuji conflated the concept of ethical thinking or *ought to be* with the political sentiment of loyalty to the emperor, something that derived from the neo-Confucian prescription that the ruler is the father of the nation in a game of mirrors between the family and the nation. Watsuji was able

[194] This part belongs to the chapter 'The State' (*Kokka*) that was written twice, in 1937 and 1942. The revised edition belongs to the second volume of *Study of Ethics* but it is not strictly considered an extra volume. The text presents some seminal differences if compared to the first draft. The tone changes, becoming more and more nationalistic and the critique to the League of Nations and the Euro-American powers undergoes an almost complete revision (Cfr. WTZ X: 607-20 and WTZ XI: 412-33). Quotations are from the second draft, if otherwise stated.

to theorize in such fashion because his *Sollen* was inherent in the community, especially in the national one (like Japan). Thus, his idea of the human being as betweeness not only strangled the human being in the structure of the Absolute totality of the state, but it also made it the recipient of the idea of *ought to be*. In this way, Watsuji's *ningen* is not only absorbed in an absolute state, but the inherent concept of freedom of rebellion against this state is denied on the basis of an ethical principle of harmony and collectivism. The idea of the reverence to the emperor makes this system even more immobile, since it traps it in the history of the Japanese nation that never teleological developed. In other words, the reverence to the emperor represents the last element that completes the transformation of the human being from *ningen* as it was to *kokumin* (people) and that aims for Japan to return to his pre-modern stage before 'Western' modernity infected it.

Amidst the fighting, Watsuji thought that the 'Japanese' idea of the emperor could have driven Japan to a victory. In this way, the everyday life of the Japanese subjects became symbolized in the emperor (Yonetani 2002: 39).

Watsuji's Mythicized Emperor

In *The Reverence* Watsuji embarks in a journey that brings him back to the time of the Age of the Gods. It is not the first time that Watsuji traces the ethical way of thinking and the tradition of the imperial family to the birth of humanity. Nevertheless, the way he approaches these questions in 1944 presents some innovations. He bases his analysis on the two mythical texts of the *Kokiji* and the *Nihon Shoki*, highlighting the way the different Japanese deities were there portrayed. He argues that the concept of the *matsurigoto*, the term that identifies the divine affairs, finds its roots in the 'nothingness' typical of Japanese culture (WTZ XIV: 38). Thanks to 'nothingness' and not to 'essence' that underpins monotheistic religions, the myriad gods present in the Japanese pantheon were able to be qualified as 'revering' (*matsuru kami*) and 'revered' (*matsurareru kami*) at the same time (WTZ XIV: 28).[195] Thus, none of these gods could have possibly elevated him or herself to a position of supremacy over the

[195] The division also includes 'only revered gods' (*matsurareru nomi no kami*) and 'gods that are honoured during rites' (*matsuri wo yōkyū suru agameri no kami*).

others, because none of them could have qualified as ontological demiurges. In the movement of double negation rooted in vacuity Watsuji explains that deities are, in some way, empty and therefore able to be revered and revere at the same time. The emperor belongs to the former classification, the goddess Amaterasu to the latter. In their unity they form the *matsurigoto* (*matsurigoto no tōitsu*) or the human order by means of which the national awareness is prescribed (WTZ XIV: 39).

If in *Study of Ethics* the origin of the modern political power was traced to the religious community that had a 'sacred king' as leader who held the two power spheres by means of his magical powers, in *The Reverence* these kind of communities reappear. Watsuji affirms that the awareness of belonging to different, sacred, blood communities is nothing else than the awareness of belonging to a 'totality'. The accent posed on the importance of blood could be well interpreted in racial terms, and Watsuji does nothing to disguise his admiration for the exceptionalism of Japan when he affirms:

> The absolute (*zentaisha*) as the objectification of one god is nothing else than a limitation of the absolute itself. On the contrary, when the objectification of the absolute happens in a context of non-limitation, the docile, unconditional divine truth of the old faith appears in its greatness. Eventually, this is the way the exceptionality of our religion came to being as forbearing acceptance compared to the other world religions
>
> (WTZ XIV: 38)

The principle of the *matsurigoto*, therefore, is an 'empty' principle capable of unconditional tolerance, as it was the 'stratification' of Japanese culture in *Climate* and *Restoring Idols*. Nevertheless, Japan is the only country which was able to perpetuate the 'specialty' of the imperial family throughout history, not like modern states who abandoned the divine power of their rulers (or established other forms of government). As explained in the mythical texts of the Age of Gods, the reverence to the emperor represents the unifying principle of this total and religious community. As in *Study of Ethics*, the ethical residue present in the intentionality of consciousness qua noesis is the ethical principle of the totality that pushes the people to be nationally aware of their dependence from the emperor (WTZ XIV: 44). 'The emperor is the unifier of the *matsurigoto*' (WTZ XIV: 44). The emperor is basically a form (*katachi*) that can be 'filled' with the sentiment of national awareness in light of its fundamental emptiness.

The fundamental problem with Watsuji's text are the sources that he uses to justify the establishment of Japan as a nation and its apparent continuous history. The *Kojiki* and the

Nihon Shoki, as mentioned above, are two mythical texts of dubious authorship. They describe the creation of Japan in a myth of 'production' and physical generation of a land, rather than divine creation as understood in Christian terms. The *Nihon Shoki*, moreover, is a chronological account of all the emperors of Japan and the divine descent of the Shōwa emperor from them. The temporal errors of this work were known even at the time of Watsuji, but the ideology of the time forbade to question their authenticity, granting them the status of historical truths. If Watsuji had really wanted to provide the genealogy of the idea of the reverence of the emperor, he should have certainly not based his studies on two mythical books. The question is whether Watsuji did it in the name of a certain political agenda and to which extent this agenda was modified in time. Watsuji's emperor is a mythicized emperor, one that transcends any possible concrete realm of accountability and that can easily change from ruler to governor and vice-versa. The implication of this kind of assumption will be considered later in the chapter, nonetheless it is important to underline here how a vacuous religious principle can, in substance, change and be molded according the historical and ideological context.

Yonetani notices how the concept of the imperial reverence slightly changes in Watsuji's thought from *Ancient Japanese Culture* to *The Reverence*. Yonetani argues that in the 1920s Watsuji criticized Inoue Tetsujirō's idea of popular morality as filial piety, because to him that signified the 'naturalization' (*shizensei*) of the myth (Yonetani 1994b: 109). To him, the popular morality descended from the Age of Gods in its 'form' rather than in its content. Stressing the naturality of the principle would have only granted the latter a position of superiority and, arguably, an immobilization in history. The reverence was thus based on the 'form' (*keishiki*) (Yonetani 1994b: 110). Instead, as seen above, in *Study of Ethics*, *Japanese Ethical Thought* and *The Reverence* Watsuji gives a contrasting definition of the reverence. It is still born in a mythical age, but in this case the emperor becomes a cultural ruler, where the totality and the popular morality indeed become something natural and identified in the filial piety. Yonetani argues that the loss of the origin of the imperial family as limited to the Age of Gods is a sign that the emperor comes into being as the 'expression' of the Japanese people (Yonetani 1994b: 112). The emperor qua 'expression' will later transform himself into the symbol emperor of the postwar period.

This shift evidently appears in *The Reverence* in regards to the Taika Reform.[196] Watsuji argues that the Taika Reform had legally normativized the imperial sanctity, whereas the two mythical books had provided a political overview of the state qua unity of the people in the emperor (WTZ XIV: 67-79). The Taika Reform, it should be noted here, is of dubious authorship and validity and the fact that Watsuji regarded it as the legal document of the sacredness of the emperor should cast some doubts on the real intent of Watsuji's work. In addition, Watsuji affirms:

> Our ancient people did not narrate the different gods to show the greatness that they believed in, they narrated the gods as foundations *of the sanctity of the emperor* (*tennō no shinseisei*), thus they narrated the 'history of the age of Gods' […] The examples of Alexander the Great and of the Roman emperors that scholars have provided are merely examples of *individual* myths, whereas a popular myth as the basis of the original faith of one people is a complete different matter
>
> (WTZ XIV: 48; emphasis in the original)

Whether it is an empty form or a natural principle the figure and the sanctity of the emperor are always granted. Watsuji underpins his 'historical account' of the reverence in a series of mythical books that, in the hands of the policy makers of the regime, became the official narrative of Japanese history. Thus, Watsuji not only does not question the master narrative, he reinforces it. Here Watsuji's ideas and Japanese history merge together. This convergence reaches completion in the moment when Watsuji decides to marry the official historical line that the emperor was the supreme ruler and 'empty form' of the Japanese nation. This conclusion entails several and different problems related to sovereignty and political power that will remain unrsolved even in the postwar period. Watsuji's faith in the emperor theory is the one that will result in his personal and intellectual defeat in 1945. This issue will be approached in the next chapter, it is here sufficient to say that the analysis of the tradition of the reverence to the emperor is the last and final stage of Watsuji's enterprise, since after the publication of the works on the Japanese ethical thought and *Sakoku* Watsuji will dedicate his attention to Japanese performative arts.[197]

Despite the alignment between Watsuji's philosophy and the political power, in 1942 the right-wing intellectual Yoshimura Teiji published an article titled *Attacking Watsuji's*

[196] The Taika Reform is an edict from 646. It set a centralized government and it strengthen the political role of the imperial family.

[197] See *Study of Japanese Art History. Volume 1: Kabuki and Jōruri* (*Nihon geijutsu kenkyū. Dai ichi kan [Kabuki to jōruri]*; 1955). Watsuji wanted to write a monumental work on the history of Japanese performative arts. Nevertheless, it remains unfinished due to Watsuji's death in 1960. In the meantime, in 1956, he had also began to write his autobiography: *An Autobiographical Experiment* (*Jijoden no kokoromi*), which was never completed.

Disrespectful Thought, in which he attacked Watsuji for having 'un-deified' the emperor.[198] In particular, he picked two sentence from *Ancient Japanese Culture*, where Watsuji affirmed that the Japanese country had chosen its leader in light of the divine descent of its founder and that the emperor of Japan was of unbroken descent. Yoshimura accused Watsuji of having deified the people rather than the ruler, since it appeared that he had been appointed by means of a popular vote or agreement, as in totemic society the shaman or magical king were chosen. Most importantly, Yoshimura accused Watsuji of belonging to the 'organ theory' faction, because he had identified the *kokoro* of the emperor with the *kokoro* of the people, hence making the emperor a 'symbol' (Yoshimura 1943: 6).[199] Regarding the second sentence in question, Yoshimura found the idea that the cult of the emperor only started in the 6th century, when people stopped worshipping natural phenomena and started worshipping the emperor, preposterous. To him that was a clear sign of the penetration of foreign, dangerous ideas into Watsuji's books and his sympathy for Tsuda's work on the studies of Japanese thought. In particular, he highlighted three major elements, that he labeled 'the lies of Watsuji's theories' (*Watsuji gakusetsu no gyōmosei*): the use of archeological techniques, the misinterpretation of Asian texts and American rationalism (Yoshimura 1943: 18-23).

Yoshimura here refers to the excavations that were then taking place in Japan and that were revealing that the chronology of the *Nihon Shoki* was completely inaccurate, thus undermining the imperial cult and its 'unbroken descent'. This kind of studies were initiated by the historian Tsuda Sōkichi (1873-1961), who was attacked in 1939 by the right-wing party of the *Genri Nihonsha* and put on trial, together with his publisher Iwanami Shigeo of Iwanami Shoten, and sentenced to prison for *lèse-majesté* (Barshay 1988: 50).[200] Watsuji was even called to take the stand during Tsuda's trial, since he had publicly admitted his admiration for Tsuda's work, and he defended Tsuda's ideas (Minamoto 1995: 201). On the other hand, Yoshimura mentions the 'organ theory' which was elaborated by the constitutionalist Minobe Tatsukichi (1873-1948). He had stressed the importance of individual liberties in modern governance through the expansion of the political powers of the Diet (Barshay 1988: 40). As a consequence, he had denied that the *kokutai* was an immutable historical principle and, instead, he had affirmed that the emperor was an 'organ' at the top position of a constitutional monarchy. In 1935, the 'Minobe incident' brought Minobe to the stand and his books banned behind the machination of the extreme right-wing politicians such

[198] *Watsuji no fukei shisō wo utsu*. Originally published in *Kokumin Hyōron* in October 1943.
[199] *Kokoro* is a Japanese word of difficult translation. It could mean 'heart', 'spirit', 'soul' and 'mind'. I believe Yoshimura is here referring to the 'spirit' of the emperor as the symbol of the 'spirit' of the people.
[200] They were subsequently acquitted in 1944.

as the Baron Kikuchi Takeo (Bix 2000: 287-8). This is just a proof of the fact that, in the 1930s and 1940s, right-wing political parties were gaining more and more power, influencing public policies at the top and constantly reporting 'dissenting' scholars. Although Watsuji could not be associated with such extreme positions, his message of uniqueness and particularity of the Japanese state and people did bear some nationalistic traits. The very fact that he believed that the emperor was of unbroken descent and that he believed that the Japanese state and nation were an exception in history allowed him to talk about 'continuity' of Japanese history, as if the Second World War had been just another 'down' in the circular temporality of a nation. The continuity is best exemplified in *The Reverence* where, from the Age of Gods onwards, the form of the imperial cult remained stable and always present in the national consciousness of the people. Whether in the Heian period with the supremacy of the Fujiwara family, or the Kamakura period when society started being shaped by the structure of the bushi or the period of the Nanboku-chō (Warrior states), throughout all these times the reverence for the emperor remained latent but present.

Watsuji restates that Japanese history was a linear and unchanging type of history, where one continuous idea could move undisturbed without the possibility of developing. In the larger scheme of his vision of the Japanese nation, the myth of the divine descent of the emperor was mirrored in the myth of its history. The Japanese national consciousness and the national strength had to be found in this all-encompassing and immobile principle, where there was no room for any possible movement of change. Thus, the human being as betweeness finally became the human being as a primordial and divine people.

Watsuji's selection of sources serves the purpose of maintaining the status quo as it was and affirm the particularity of the Japanese people as embodied in the figure of the emperor. Even in the case of the Yoshino court, when the two courts were separated between North and South (Kyoto and Yoshino) governed by two separate emperors, one appointed by the Ashikaga shogunate and the other one by the deposed emperor Go-Daigo, Watsuji seems to support the theory that the ancestors of emperor Hirohito came from the South, which, instead, was the illegitimate court (WTZ XIV: 116).[201] There is a complete mirroring between

[201] Go-Daigo's history was still debated at that time. Pre-Meiji and post-Meiji scholars gave different dates for his reign. Go-Daigo was considered a traitor of the Kyoto court until the Edo period, when his figure was rehabilitated in light of the movement behind the Meiji Restoration that sought to bring the emperor back to the throne. Since Go-Daigo had attempted twice to overthrown the Kamakura shogunate, succeeding the first time with the help of Ashikaga Takauji who betrayed his master, but failing the second time when Ashikaga became shogun, he was considered the first one who attempted to get the imperial power back. The war between the court of the North and the one in the South is called the Nanboku-chō period and the tales are narrated in the *Taiheiki*.

the popular morality and the popular thinking and the will of the emperor. As in *Study of Ethics*, in the moment of double negation between the general and particular the two should subsist together, although the general becomes the foundation of the particular. In history and politics, thanks to the apparent vacuity of the form of the reverence, the emperor negates itself to let the country emerge and vice-versa. Yet, there would not be any people without the divine emperor. In *The Reverence* the structure remains unchanged; simply the movement of double negation of this human being-nation remains silent or latent during certain periods of history to then reemerge at the end of the Edo period (*bakumatsu*), that Watsuji describes in these terms:

> [The pressure from foreign powers and the bakufu power] even these causes did not crash *the national awareness* of the Japanese people. The request for the national unity in the unity of the emperor followed naturally. That kind of request started becoming reality. We can recognize it in the different forms that the loyalty to the emperor theory (*kinnōron*) took
>
> (WTZ XIV: 241; emphasis in the original)[202]

As in the case of the Mito School, the reverence was strengthen and concretize vis-à-vis the threat posed by foreign powers.[203] Watsuji seems to think that the Mito School was right in finding a link between the abstraction of the latent idea of the reverence and its concretization when feudalism was overcome (WTZ XIV: 251). First, they coined the term *jōi* or 'expel the barbarians' and, secondly, they laid the foundations of the idea of *kokutai* with the studies of Aizawa Seishisai (WTZ XIV: 252-3). Despite the fact that Watsuji was highly critical of the writings of one of its members, Motoori Norinaga, he nevertheless admired their efforts in re-establishing the power of the emperor against the Tokugawa rulers.

As Goto-Jones highlights, the Meiji Constitution (1890) and the Imperial Rescript on Education politically granted the divine descent of the emperor and even the descent of the people from previous imperial subject (Goto-Jones 2008b: 30). The work done by the Mito School in the *bakumatsu* period helped shaping the key concepts of the Meiji, Taishō and early Shōwa Japan. Furukawa thinks that the modern idea of *kokutai* came from the Neo-Confucian idea of the five relations and filial piety that was then transformed into the reverence of the emperor qua relation between state and subjects (Furukawa 1966: 505).

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[202] The terms *sonnō* and *kinnō* are almost equivalent. The motto *sonnō jōi* (revere the emperor, expel the barbarians) was one of the slogans of the pre-Meiji Restoration period.

[203] The Mito School was a school of thought also called 'nativism'. The writings of its members, such as Kamo no Mabuchi, Motoori Norinaga and Hirata Atsutane established the ideological and intellectual basis that brought to the Meiji Restoration.

Watsuji's hatred for 'Western' modernity brought him to look into Japanese history in search for the intellectual figures or the texts that magnified the emperor as the sole and traditional beholder of power. In his view, the overcoming of feudalism is not seen as in Miki with the creation of a technological subject, but rather in the concretization of the idea of the reverence to the emperor. In this respect, the critique of modernity as unfolded in Miki and Watsuji subtlety differs. To Miki the critique of modernity was linked to the renovation of the technological spirit, to Watsuji it meant going backwards in Japanese history to establish the continuity between 'pre-modern' and 'modern'. What Watsuji accomplished was to ditch the 'modern' *in toto* in favor of the sacred and mythical 'pre-modern'. Watsuji's detachment from historical reality reaches the point where real history does not count anymore and where the crisis of the war makes him take refuge into an invented past. It is precisely this detachment from real history that will push him to strive for continuity even in the postwar period.

The Reverence ends with the Meiji Restoration. The narration of the tradition of the imperial cult allowed Watsuji to write a history of an idea that nonetheless does not represent the history itself. By founding a concept in the nothingness and multiplicity of deities that culminated in the empty form of the emperor Watsuji affirmed and legitimized the existence of a totalizing figure. As in *Study of Ethics*, the peculiarity of Japan remains untouched and, even more, it is strengthen and glorified since the birth of humanity. The concept of form is the key concept by means of which the emperor becomes a 'symbol' in the postwar period.

The Symbol Emperor

The Symbol of National Unity appeared in 1948 as a collection of five articles that Watsuji wrote between 1945 and 1948. All the pieces deal with the emperor qua 'expression' or 'symbol' of national unity. In particular, the two central pieces that are responses to the constitutionalist Sasaki are of the most interest to us. As in *The Reverence* and the other prewar pieces, in the postwar Watsuji does not change his mind regarding the role of the emperor. His technique is quite subtle nevertheless. As a matter of fact, Watsuji uses the same language as the one of new Japanese constitution of 1947 that defined the emperor as a 'symbol' of the nation and stripped him of all his divine and political powers. Watsuji

therefore calls the postwar emperor 'symbol' and tries to circumvent the constitutional problems related to popular sovereignty and imperial sovereignty by using the expression 'sovereign will of the people' (*nihon kokumin shikō no sōi*) (WTZ XIV: 336). In the second part of *The Symbol*, titled *The Expresser of National Totality* (*Kokumin zentaisei no hyōgensha*) and written in 1945, Watsuji restates some of the key concepts present in *The Reverence*. For example, the fact that the emperor is a 'form' that runs throughout Japanese history, that he is the 'expression' of the popular unity and that precisely this term 'expression' is nothing else than 'symbol' (WTZ XIV: 330-6). Changing the terminology but not changing the substance, Watsuji resumes to the *escamotage* of differentiating between state and community, therefore allowing for the previous 'subjects' of the emperor to become 'citizens' in the postwar period. The will of the people, as much as the reverence, is a feeling or a totality that underscores the whole Japanese history, from the old blood communities until the *Gemeinschaft*, transforming itself and finally finding its particular locus in the unity of community and history. Needless to say, the emperor is still the living, concrete and cultural symbol of this unification. How can Watsuji find a continuity of the imperial court even when the emperor had been stripped of all his powers? He resumes to the Muromachi period. He says that even then, when the emperor was subjugated by the shogunate, the will of people was expressed in his figure and role, despite that there was no law that sanctioned it (WTZ XIV: 344). He was already a symbol emperor without political powers. Thus, the postwar Japanese constitution does not undermine the principal role of the emperor which is to represent the will of the people and national unity.

The main problem with *The Symbol* is certainly the way Watsuji approaches the problem of *kokutai*. In 1946, both Watsuji and Tsuda had argued that the emperor was the symbol of national and popular unity, accusing the army of having distorted this view in the prewar period (Akasaka 1989: 274). In 1947, responding to an article by Sasaki on this subject, Watsuji writes *Seeking Elucidations from Sasaki on the Theory of the Changed Kokutai* (*Kokutai henkōron ni tsuite Sasaki hakushi no oshie wo kō*) and *On Sasaki's Teachings* (*Sasaki hakushi no kyōji ni tsuite*). In both pieces Watsuji states that he had so far avoided the subject of *kokutai* on purpose, but that he could not behold his thoughts anymore (WTZ XIV: 355). Previously, Sasaki had theorized that the *kokutai*, together with the *bansei ikkei* (the theory that affirmed the unbroken descent of the imperial family) had been the root of the authoritative and totalitarian sovereignty in Japan (Sasaki in Watsuji XIV: 356). To Sasaki, the emperor should have not represented the sovereignty of the people in the postwar period and therefore the constitution should have not granted him this role. He argued that the

Potsdam Declaration had not even questioned the problem of whether the *kokutai* should have been modified (Yuasa 1981: 210). In his role of constitutionalist, Sasaki wanted a change in the political and legal aspects of the concept (Yuasa 1981: 209).

To Sasaki, the state in its political form had seen the *kunigara* become the *kokutai*.[204] Even on a daily life base, where the state emerged as the beholder of the ethical and spiritual form, the same had happen. Thus, Sasaki had exposed the complete overlapping between the political power of the emperor in his state function with his role of the ethical and spiritual leader of his subjects. It was, in Watsuji's words, the idea of the *matsurigoto*, or the convergence between temporal and spiritual power that eventually found its blossoming in the absolute state he had theorized. In this way, the emperor had been able to control every aspect of the daily lives of his people and Sasaki warned against the fact that this could have been legally sanctioned even in the postwar period.

Watsuji dismisses Sasaki's differentiation as a 'misunderstanding'. Instead, he argues that the *kunigara* as understood by Sasaki corresponds to the word *seitai* (*body politic*) and that Sasaki made the mistake of confusing 'government' with *kokutai* (WTZ XIV: 358-9). Watsuji attempts thus to separate the actual political power of the emperor, as expressed in the Hobbsian idea of body politic and that should be reflected in the executive power of the government, with the *kokutai* that to him, in this period, simply indicates a cultural and symbolic form of power. Watsuji finds the justification of his distinction in the idea that the emperor was never an absolute ruler, unless for a very short period of time that, by chance, corresponds to the interwar years. What people have failed to recognize or have mistakenly recognized is the fact that the emperor was solely the expression of the national unity embodied in the concept of *kokutai* (WTZ XIV: 362-4). 'That unity *is not a political one, it is a cultural one*' (WTZ XIV: 367).

> I acknowledge the fact that the traditional sovereignty of the emperor played an important role in Japanese history. That sovereignty existed as *the emperor being the expression of the totality of the people, but it was not legally prescribed until the national constitution*
>
> (WTZ XIV: 382, emphasis in the original)

As a consequence, Watsuji seems to blame the Meiji period for having normativized the emperor as a political ruler in the Constitution of 1890 and having thus modified the essence of the concept of *kokutai*. Nevertheless, as Akasaka underlines, Watsuji was never able to completely formulate a brand new concept of the *kokutai* purged from its

[204] *Kunigara* indicates the traditional characteristics of a country, such as climate, food and culture.

ultranationalistic traits (Akasaka 1989: 280). Watsuji himself admits that, perhaps, the best way to do that would be to 'get rid of the concept all together' (*mushiro sutesaru beki dewanai darō ka*) (WTZ XIV: 368). Yuasa points at the fact that Watsuji probably conflated the legal definition that separates the 'seat of sovereignty' (*tōchiken no jozai*) with the 'seat of power' (*kōshi*) in the concept of *seitai* (Yuasa 1981: 218).[205] Contrary to what Sasaki had done, meaning to legally separate the two in 'in principle' and 'in action', Watsuji unified the two in the name of the cultural concept embodied in the emperor. It is for this reason that Yonetani affirms that the everyday life of the Japanese subjects became symbolized in the emperor (Yonetani 2002: 39). Even if Watsuji had shifted the sovereignty from real power to symbolic power, he nevertheless continued on his line that the emperor embodied the national unity of the Japanese people. The problem of where sovereignty actually resides is not solved even in Watsuji's expression of the 'sovereign will of the people', since in the prewar period and in the postwar period he locates it in the emperor. Such continuity is made possible by the fact that the emperor had always been an 'empty' form that could be 'filled in' with any sort of legislative definition.

Probably Watsuji had never completely understood the concept of sovereignty itself and, secondly, since his *ought to be* was the result of the conflation of popular morality with the totalitarian political power of the emperor. Thus, it did not allow for the spring of an independent popular morality from the ideology of the state. In this sense, the dictatorship of the emperor was seen as reflected in the willingness of the people to be subjugated. The same *modus operandi* is applied to sovereignty. There is no internal or external division, sovereignty lies in the hands of the emperor even in the 'symbol' phase. Therefore, even after 1945, the structure of Japanese society does not change in Watsuji's eyes. He ties the national subject to the reverence to the emperor and subsequently intertwines it to the idea of the modern state. The most outstanding difficulty of his reasoning is that the attempts to historically and legally prescribe the tradition of the imperial role. In this regard, Watsuji prevents the development of a possible national consciousness by underpinning it in the supreme ruler of the nation and not in the elected representatives. The structure of the human being as betweeness is therefore preserved in the symbol emperor, since the general will of the citizen still appears to belong to the imperial edicts or to the 'word' of the emperor. By affirming that the people, whether subjects or citizens, had always honored their sacred king,

[205] The 'seat of sovereignty' and the 'seat of power' are two concepts developed by Hobbes in his *Leviathan* (1651).

Watsuji fundamentally sanctioned the continuity between the prewar idea of the 'way of ethics' and the postwar idea of 'the expression of the totality of the people'.

By conflating ethics with politics, Watsuji could not escape the conundrum that he had somehow helped to elaborate. Ethics is embodied in the structure of the nation, thanks to the double movement of negation rooted in nothingness, and cannot possibly stand as an independent social ethics. It is a political ethics. The theory and the practice, as in Miki, belong together in 'cooperation'. As Tsuda points out, Watsuji's attempts to overcome the Rescript on Education miserably failed, since the Rescript ratified feudalism and filial piety (Tsuda in Kiyoshi *et al.* 2008: 76). His attempt to create a new national subject as *kokumin* which, in the postwar period, becomes the beholder of the general will, was a response to the crisis WWII and the post-WWII occupation had plunged Japan into. It follows that Watsuji reacted to two periods of crisis with the same argumentation. It could be argued that he saw in the postwar period the reiteration of the prewar one, as if the influence of 'Western' modernity had never been purged and it had become so pervasive that there was no way out than to see it in a whole, continuous dialectical movement.

Nevertheless, grounding the fundamental existence of the human being into a historical but de-historicized nation prevented Watsuji from accomplishing the popular renovation he was aiming at. Furthermore, it plunged his system into the faith in this all-comprehensive theory or, as we shall see later, ideology of the Japanese state.

Conclusions

In this chapter we have seen how both Miki and Watsuji differently answered to the questions of the subject formation on a theoretical and political level. Miki introduced the concepts of technology and imagination to overcome the problem of historical creation that he had first developed in his *Philosophy of History*. By linking technology to history and creating an all-encompassing subject he laid the foundations for his subsequent idea of cooperation. Watsuji, on the other hand, first found the national subject in the reverence to the emperor and subsequently tied it to the modern, sovereign state. Tsuda argues that they both failed in their enterprises of modeling a new, modern subject because their critique of 'reality'

was not a critique in itself (Tsuda in Kiyoshi *et al.* 2008: 78). Their fundamental standpoint completely lacked 'reality'. Instead they managed to conflate religion and culture that Tsuda defines being the essence of 'cultivation' (*kyōiku*) (Tsuda in Kiyoshi *et al.* 2008: 78).

I agree with Tsuda interpretation of both thinkers, since I think that their failed subject was, on the one hand, a response to the crisis of the traditional subject and, on the other, it stood as a possible critique to it. Yet again, the missing point here is not simply 'reality', but 'historical reality'. You cannot transform a subject unless you transform it according to and within history. Their attempted historical or technological narratives of history completely overlooked the reality of the situation. The continuity in their thought, in particular the attachment to an idea of *ningen* that was elaborated years before, prevented them from develop it. It remained clustered into what it had always been, a de-historicized human being that now has technology and imagination qua tools. Watsuji's ethics as well embodies this principle of immobility throughout history. From the Age of Gods to the postwar period the Japanese people have constantly recognized themselves in the figure and the role of the emperor, as if their impossibility to develop a national consciousness could not be achieved lest losing that very same identity. Both periods, the interwar and the postwar, created a vacuum both on a intellectual and political point of view. Probably, it is another sign the *Angst* was never overcome.

VI. *NINGEN* AND IDEOLOGY
The *Escaton* of the War and the Failure of a Destiny

> Ideology has no history.[206]
>
> The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear.[207]

State of the Field

This final chapter explores the relationship between the ideology of the Japanese wartime regime and the 'ideas' and 'ideals' of Miki and Watsuji. I will demonstrate that the failure of the Japanese empire and the loss of the Second World War coincided with the failure of Miki and Watsuji's vision of Japan.

As said, in this particular instance ideology will be employed within the boundaries of Gramsci's hegemony and Althusser's ideology. In these terms, the relationship between ideology and the philosophy of the *ningen* will be defined as the philosophy of the *ningen* belonging to the state apparatus that produces and reproduces knowledge. On the other hand, I consider the hegemony of the Japanese wartime regime as that form of power that won over its subjects by means of consent in its all different forms. Ideology therefore does not only represent false consciousness as it was in Marx and Engels but it includes a 'human' factor as well that, if somehow missing in Althusser, is certainly preponderant in Gramsci. As we shall see later, the ideology of Watsuji's philosophy of *ningen* could be judged according to the Gramscian definition of hegemony. Watsuji supported the power of the Japanese wartime regime through his idea that the state should not be coercive but that its subjects should naturally converge towards it because of the control hegemony exercise on their consciousness.

When dealing with ideology and intellectuals, it is often easy to vulgarize or to be apologetic of the production of certain authors, depending on the political orientation of the given scholar or the historical context. In particular, Miki and Watsuji have been respectively regarded as a Leftist pundit and a nationalist ideologue. As said in the introduction, in the case of Japanese commentators and critics, any discussion regarding Miki's involvement with the

[206] Althusser 1977: 150.
[207] Gramsci 1971: 276.

Shōwa Research Association was usually omitted or his role downplayed (Shimizu 1951; Kuno 1966; Arakawa 1968; Miyakawa 1970; Shimizu 1976; Uchida 2004). Only recently, Tsuda and Machiguchi have dealt with the problem of Miki's intellectual contribution to the theory of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere in the broader context of his philosophical production (Tsuda 2007; Machiguchi 2004). Shimizu notices that the first edition of Miki's *Collected Works* (*chosakushū*), compiled between 1946 and 1952, excluded the documents that Miki drafted for the Shōwa Research Association (Shimizu 1976: 60). Only in 1968, when the *Complete Works* (*zenshū*) was first published, the editors eventually decided to include these controversial works (Shimizu 1976: 60). The reason behind this sudden turn has to be attributed to the change in the political context. As Shimizu argues, right after the end of WWII and during the American occupation the editors of the *Collected Works* possibly wanted to stress the role Miki had in the Left rather than his involvement with a nationalistic think-tank (Shimizu 1976: 60). On the other hand, at the end of the 1960s, Japan had become a global economic power and the works that were there emerging in regard to the history of the Second World War had started dealing with the painful issue of the Shōwa association (Shimizu 1976: 61). Therefore the pamphlets suddenly reappeared alongside Miki's writings on Marxism and existentialism.

In Europe and America, if compared to the scholarship on Nishida, Watsuji, Nishitani and other Kyōto School members, not many studies have been dedicated to Miki. Amongst the few published, Crowley and Fletcher have predominantly focused their attention to the role Miki played in the Shōwa Research Association (Crowley 1971; Fletcher 1979; Fletcher 1982). Recently, Harootunian has attempted to contextualize Miki's theory of the East Asian Cooperation in the bigger framework of his intellectual career (Harootunian 2000a: 293-357). These three scholars, to a greater or lesser extent, agree on the point that Miki was a nationalist ideologue. Goto-Jones, on the other hand, provides two contrasting assessments of Miki, first leaning more towards the collaborationist side and, later, affirming that Miki's ideas had been manipulated by the Right (Goto-Jones 2005a: 104-9; Goto-Jones 2006). As it is clear from this brief account, the discrepancy in the treatment Miki received from Japanese, European and American scholars is a sign of the complexity of both Miki's production and of his compromised political position.

The state of the field of 'Watsuji's studies' is somehow different. His book *Climate* was translated in English already in 1962 and the fact that Watsuji was not really purged in the aftermath of the Second World War gives some indication of the climate in which his work was received. Nevertheless, the scholarship on Watsuji resembles very much the one on

Miki. In other words, critics are divided on the extent to which he actually contributed to the ideology of the wartime regime. Nobody denies that Watsuji was a conservative, but Japanese critics, such as Yuasa, Yoshizawa, Kōsaka, Nagami and Ichikura tend to be apologetic of the most ideological parts of Watsuji's philosophy (Yuasa 1981; Yuasa 1987; Yoshizawa 1994; Kōsaka 1962; Nagami 1981; Ichikura 2005). In addition, they stress the 'Buddhist' elements present in Watsuji's works, arguing that the principle of 'emptiness' (*kū*) eschews the possibility of the creation or envisioning of a totalitarian state. Other Japanese scholars, such as Furukawa, Kosaka and Mine, have tried to provide a more comprehensive assessment, highlighting the factors that might have pushed Watsuji to collaborate to the ideology of his time (Furukawa 1973; Kosaka 1997; Mine 1998; Mine 2002). The situation in Europe and America somehow mirrors the Japanese one. Some critics consider Watsuji a 'full' ideologue (Bellah 1965; Najita and Harootunian 1988: 711-74; Sakai 1997; Harootunian 2000a: 250-92), whilst others have strenuously tried to justify his political positions (Dilworth 1974; LaFleur 1978; LaFleur 2001 and, to some extent, Arisaka 1996b).

I have never denied the fact that Watsuji was a nationalist ideologue and I have not negated the impact of Miki's Marxism on the Japanese Left of his time. Nevertheless, in this chapter I will show how Miki came to join the Shōwa Research Association in 1938 and the extent to which his previous production on *ningen* and technology contributed to the elaboration of the concept of the 'East Asian Cooperative Body' (*tōa kyōdōtai*). On the other hand, I will consider Watsuji's most political works, *The Way of the Japanese Subject* (*Nihon no shindō*) and *The American National Character* (*America no kokuminsei*) and his participation in the committee that prepared the first draft of the *Kokutai no hongi* (*Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan*). [208] These pieces function as a cluster for the ideas he had expressed in his prewar and interwar books.

[208] Now, respectively, in WTZ XIV: 297-312 and WTZ XVII: 451-81.

Escaton and Destiny

In the 1940s, the similarities between Miki and Watsuji become striking: their language coincides with the terminology of the political leaders, their rhetoric merge, the Japan they each envisioned becomes one Japan or, in Miki's words 'a Third Japan' (Miki 1938: 609). Both supported the establishment of a Greater East Asia that should have comprised most East and South-East Asia under the leadership of Japan and they both criticized American imperialism, Western capitalism and colonialism. De facto, it appears that they did not consider the Japanese invasion of China and of most of South-East Asia as another form of colonialism but, rather, as a 'liberation' from Western oppression and exploitation. Miki and Watsuji were not alone in supporting the political claims of the Japanese government; almost all the members of the Kyōto School shared their vision for a new Japan in one way or the other. What is of most interest to us here is the accent they pose on 'destiny'.

Destiny represents the key to understand this sudden intellectual convergence. The historical climate Miki, Watsuji and the other members of the Kyōto School lived in and in which they developed their ideas was one of *Angst* and uneasiness towards modernity. It appears that, from the Taishō period onwards, Japan had struggled to find a place in the world. As explained elsewhere, Watsuji protracted this way of thinking even in the postwar period.[209] If the discourse on medianity as the quintessential human condition is mainly concerned with society in the first period of Miki and Watsuji's intellectual lives, in this stage medianity appears to have become the uncertain position that Japan had in the world. It is therefore of no surprise that in the late 1930s and early 1940s Miki and Watsuji, as well the other Kyōto School members, talked about the 'world-historical mission' or 'world-historical place' of Japan.[210] Miki and Watsuji started their philosophical elaborations by posing the accent on the societal aspect of the human being rather than on its individuality. Their constant struggle to overcome the Cartesian duality of subject and object resulted in the creation of an absolute totality, or an Absolute Nothingness in Nishida's terms, which, instead of freeing the individual it subjugated it to an immanent, higher authority. This negation of

[209] See chap. 4.

[210] See the (in)famous *The World-Historical Standpoint of Japan* (*Sekaishiteki tachiba to nihon*) published by the journal *Chūōkōron* in 1943 that collects a series of three round-table discussions held at Kyoto University between 1941 and 1942. The authors, Nishitani Keiji, Kōsaka Masaaki, Suzuki Shigetaka and Kōyama Iwao, were all members of the Kyōto School. In the postwar period, these roundtables together with the 1942-symposium *Overcoming Modernity* (*Kindai no chōkoku*), sponsorized by the journal *Bungakukai*, were interpreted as a sign of the involvement of the Kyōto School with the ultranationalist regime (see Minamoto 1995; Horio 1995; Goto-Jones 2005a: 109-116; Uhl 2008).

freedom, which Uchida underlines as being the eternal struggle in Miki philosophy, predestined the human being towards a clear and defined path (Uchida 2004). The destiny of the human being hence becomes the destiny and the mission of a whole nation.

Uhl has explored this quasi-religious dimension in Nishitani and Nishida, linking it to the concept of 'self-realization' or the '*concern about the self*' that underpins the discourse on the moral and ethical renovation of Japan (Uhl 2008: 129; emphasis in the original). Despite the fact that I share some sympathy with this interpretation of some of the members of the Kyōto School's ideas, I would like to push this discourse even further. I would argue that not only this renovation of the *ningen* takes place on a semi-religious platform, but that it is embodied in the *escaton* of the war.

In this instance, the *escaton* needs to be considered in Paul's and John's terms, where the eschatology of history is inevitably related to the Apocalypse (Bultmann 1957: 38-55).[211] Dodd and Löwith stress the importance of the separation between God's teleology of history and the teleology of human history (Dodd 1944: 89; Löwith 1949: 182-90). The coming of Christ is an unrepeatable, fulfilling, apocalyptic, now-time event. It allows for metaphysical history to enter into the realm of human history, it overthrows the power of evil, it fulfills historical destiny and it allows for man to experience eternal life (Dodd 1944: 86).

Obviously, this kind of discourse cannot be fully applied to Miki and Watsuji that were not Jewish or Christian thinkers. In addition to this characteristic, Löwith denies that it is possible to transfer the Christian eschatology into a philosophical discourse, since in the Christian faith the goal is the redemption from sin and death (Löwith 1949: 189). Nevertheless, there is some room left for expanding this discourse on eschatology in the realm of ideas. If we link the *kairos*, the eternal and clustered present, to the *escaton*, then the idea of the fulfillment of the teleology of history could be realized in the historical mission of Japan. Hence, it should be possible to link the failed destiny of Japan to the failed destiny of intellectuals and ideas. Miki and Watsuji effectively created a 'religion of the human being' that, on the one hand, eschewed theology as we know it but, on the other, still maintained the religious trait of faith. Faith here is the faith in the end of the war, of the *escaton* of the war qua *re-ordering of the world geo-political and cultural scenario*. The Messiah Miki and Watsuji were waiting for was the end of and victory in the war that would have allowed Japan to elevate itself to a new position and that would have fulfilled its historical destiny. Along

[211] Paul contributed to theology by interpreting the apocalyptic view of history in the light of anthropology, and John stripped the eschatology of its expectations of the future by stressing the present happening of the *escaton* in the coming of Christ himself (Bultmann 1957: 41-7).

these lines, the singularity of the Apocaliptic event is preserved, since the end of the war appeared in a catastrophic form. The *escaton* becomes a *human escaton* and not a metaphysical one.[212] Ideas transform themselves into a vision for history, in a future that will finally bring peace to the anxiety of the past forty years.[213]

The *kairos* that we have previously analyzed that does not allow for a teleology of history is the perfect example of the significance of the *escaton*.[214] Discussing the failure of Miki's thought in creating a link and equilibrium between everydayness and world historicity, we have demonstrated that Miki was not able to overcome the problem of the supremacy of world history. His ideas found their historical counterpart in the geo-political situation of the 1930s, with Japan taking its first steps into imperialism and with basic freedoms being denied on a domestic level. In the 1940s, the world history linked to the *kairos* qua event becomes inevitably intertwined with the destiny and historical mission of Japan in Asia. Therefore, his vision finds life in historical reality. In this respect, the *escaton* works as this vision. With the defeat, despite the fact that Miki could not witness it since he died in prison in September 1945, his vision of Japan and the longing for the Third Japan were crushed. For Watsuji, whose elaboration of time does not involve the *kairos*, the *escaton* is even more reflected in a pure and visionary state of victory. He, who survived 1945 and went on writing until 1960, felt that the loss of WWII was not only a national defeat but a personal one as well.[215] The situation of *Angst* that Watsuji equated to the pervasive presence of capitalism, egotism and utilitarianism in Japan, did not disappear in the 1950s. His vision failed together with Japan's mission and the historical destiny of the Japanese nation was not fulfilled. Watsuji thus becomes like a Christian, waiting for the second coming of Christ and longing for a renewed, worldly role for Japan. It is in this instance that the discourse on the *sakoku* period has to be considered, as the explanation of the reason why the *escaton* did not materialized in the way he had foreseen it.

I believe that the atmosphere of *Angst* that pervaded Japan after 1945 and that I consider being expressed in the *shutaisei* debate and around the question of war-responsibility is nothing else than consequence of the failure of *ideas* and *intellectuals* in the previous years. For the Kyōto School, their historicized human being but de-historicized nation linked to the historicity of the human being qua nation did not fulfill its historical mission. The key is faith

[212] Some have argued that Heidegger did the same by bringing back eschatology from metaphysics to human history with the elaboration of his concept of the Being-towards-death.
[213] Interesting is Cullmann's comparison between the *escaton* and the V-Day (quoted in Löwith 1949: 188-9 and 251-2).
[214] See Chap. 4.
[215] See Chap. 4.

and, as Löwith says: 'the confidence in a theological *escaton* stands or fails with faith alone' (Löwith 1949: 252). Not solely a failed theological *escaton*, I would argue, but a failed intellectual *escaton* as well.

In political terms, the *escaton* that Miki envisioned and the one of Watsuji's slightly differ in their origin but not in their outcome. Miki failed to recognize that the way he had characterized his human being was doomed from its start. His philosophy completely merged with ideology in the moment when Miki defined the human being as the Japanese nation attaining its moral destiny. Differently, Watsuji retained part of his faith in Japan after 1945. In this case, his attempt to reshape the destiny of the Japanese nation in the post-1945 world shows signs of continuity. Nevertheless, it is not a problem of ideas crushed by political power, otherwise the 'ideologue' theory could not be sustained. In his case, as well as in Tanabe and Nishitani's, it is a problem of convergence between history and ideas.[216] What is lost is the political faith in the *escaton* but not in the vision. Therefore, the failure is the sudden convergence between history and ideas on a political level but the continuation of the vision of a second *escaton* for Japan is matter of intellectual *escaton*. Power did not overthrow their philosophies, history did.

Miki and Watsuji created a human being that was, in its existential and philosophical foundation, social, historical and national. The elaboration and subsequent renovation that followed did nothing more than strengthening the national traits of the *ningen*. Bound to a Japanese history, trapped into a historical present unable to fulfill its development towards historical completion and born out of faith, it could not exempt itself from being crushed together with historical reality. The condition of medianity doomed the human being from its early philosophical appearance. In this context, it is without doubt that questions related to Miki's role as an ideologue of the interwar status quo or the extent to which Watsuji could be regarded a nationalist do not fully address the problem explained above. Miki and Watsuji contributed to the ideology of the Japanese empire, but how they did it and which destiny they envisioned is the most pressing issue that we now have to take into consideration.

[216] Tanabe and Nishitani, after August 1945, mostly published on religion and withdrawed from the political landscape. This discourse will not be explored further, but I nonetheless believe that both thinkers shared the same vision of the *escaton* as Miki and Watsuji. The withdrawal from politics, in my view, is dictated precisely by the failure of the political *escaton*.

The Shōwa Research Association

The Shōwa Research Association was informally set up in 1933 by Gotō Ryūnosuke together with the soon-to-be prime minister Prince Konoe Fumimaro (Shimizu 1976: 59; Sakai 1992: 16). This association was officially recognized in 1936 and it functioned as Konoe's brain-trust. Several intellectuals, philosophers and economists were called to join the discussion groups with the main objective of advising Konoe on matters of foreign policy and economic planning (Shillony 1981: 111). In his book dedicated to the association, Sakai Saburō, a former member himself, lists thirteen different sub-groups the association was divided into, according to the political issues that needed to be addressed (Sakai 1992: 59-60). Miki joined the Shōwa Research Association in 1938 and, according to Shimizu Ikutarō's personal account of the meetings, he worked closely with Shimizu, with the Marxist philosopher Funayama Shin'ichi, the historians of science Sugai Jun'ichi and Saigusa Hiroto and the two journalists from the Asahi Shinbun Ryū Shintarō and Sasa Hirō (Shimizu 1976: 59). Other important members of the association were the professor of economics and chief strategist of the East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere Rōyama Masamichi, the expert on China and Manchuria Taira Teizō, the sinologist Ozaki Hotsumi, the professor of economics Yabe Teiji, and Kazami Akira, who will subsequently occupy strategic positions in the first and second Konoe cabinets (1937-1939 and 1940-41) (Crowley 1971: 324). As it is clear from this list of names, the group was not composed solely by right-wing figures. On the contrary, it brought together people from different backgrounds and activities, who were supposed to provide a strong economical and theoretical underpinning to Konoe's policies.[217]

In November 1938, after the China incident, Konoe declared that China had been 'the victim of the imperialistic ambitions and rivalries of the Occidental powers' and that Japan had the mission to reestablish justice in East Asia (Konoe quoted in Crowley 1974: 279). It was the start of the New Order Movement that sought to subtract Western powers of their colonial territories and to subject them to Japanese ruling. The New Order was also deeply intertwined with the idea of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere (*dai tōa kyōeiken*) or simply 'Greater East Asia' (*dai tōa*). These slogans describe the different principles that Konoe wanted Japan to satisfy, which spanned from the construction of an East and South-East Asian regional block in the name of the unity of the Asian race, the defeat of communism and capitalism and to put an end to the presence of Western powers in the block

[217] Miyamoto affirms that the ultra-nationalist Minoda Muneki even wrote an article titled 'The magical language of the Shōwa Research Association ' (*Shōwa Kenkyūkai no gengo majitsu*) criticizing it for being 'anti-*kokutai*' (Miyamoto 1978: 119).

(Crowley 1974: 287).[218] Despite the fact that the association ceased to exist in 1940 the ideology behind it did not die with it.[219] In December 1941 Japanese planes bombarded the American Naval base of Pearl Harbor and from then on the total war started.

During the four years of its activity, the association produced a striking amount of documents and pamphlets on the problems of the invasion of China and Asia, domestic issues and economic reforms, and the creation of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. In this regard, it appears that Miki's contribution was crucial in drafting two documents that set out the ideological and theoretical principles of Greater East Asia. The first one, *The Intellectual Principles of the New Japan* (*Shin nihon shisō genri*), appeared in January 1939 and the second one, *The Intellectual Principles of the New Japan, Continuum. The Philosophical Bases of Cooperativism* (*Shin nihon shisō genri zokuhen. Kyōdōshugi no tetsugakuteki kiso*) was published in September of the same year.[220] Despite the fact that Shimizu admits that the second pamphlet might have been written by a different person (they are quite dissimilar in style and language), the themes present in both documents are very similar to the articles and pieces that Miki wrote in the mid-1930s, before formally joining the association (Shimizu 1976: 62-3). From about 1935 onwards, Miki started being interested in the problem of the relationship between China and Japan and he wrote extensively on the cultural relations between the two countries and the position of Japan in world history.[221] In the following section we will see which of his writings are more relevant to the construction of the 'new principles'.

[218] The idea of 'Greater East Asia' was not a novelty or an invention of the 1930s-1940s Japan. The difference is that, during those years, it stood as the intellectual and ideological backdrop of Japan imperialistic aims.

[219] In 1941, Ozaki, one of the members of the association, was found guilty of treason in connection to the Sorge Ring (Shillony 1981: 112). Richard Sorge was a Russian spy in Japan. In 1941, he and Ozaki were arrested and put in jail for treason under the Peace Preservation Law. They were both hanged in 1944. It appears that, despite his involvement in the Shōwa Kenkyukai and his proximity to Konoe, Ozaki secretly provided sensitive documents to Sorge and the Soviets. For a detailed account of the Sorge Ring, although to be carefully read, see Johnson 1990.

[220] Nowadays, they can be found in MKZ XVII: 507-533 and MKZ XVII: 534-588.

[221] From 1935 is *The Problem of Sino-Japanese Thought* (*Nisshi shisō mondai*) published in December in the *Yomiuri Shinbun* (now in MKZ XV: 28-35), from 1937 *The Imperial Way of World History* (*Sekaishi no kōdō*) and *The Reality of Japan* (*Nihon no genjitsu*) published, respectively, in July in *Shinchō* and in November in *Chūōkōron* (now in MKZ XIII: 402-407 and 438-463) and from 1938 *The Significance of World History in Modern Japan* (*Gendai nihon ni okeru sekaishi no igi*), *20th Century Thought* (*Nijū seki no shisō*), *The Foundation of the Greater East Asia Thought* (*Tōa shisō no konkyo*) published respectively in June in *Kaizō*, in July in *Nihon Hyōron* and in December in *Kaizō* (now in MKZ XIV: 143-150 and 151-158; MKZ XV: 308-325).

Towards the 'Intellectual Principles of the New Japan'

The goal of this section and of the following one will be to demonstrate that Miki's system of the human being reached completion in the creation of the Japanese nation with a new mission in the world. As we shall see, the development of the *ningen* from a *ningen*-class of the Marxist period until the *homo faber* of *Philosophy of Technology* will finally materialize in the Japan of 1940s and its struggle to create a Japanese empire. I will thus argue that Miki's statement that 'attaining self-awareness of one's own moral destiny is crucial' is a proof that his human being had eventually merged with the Japanese nation and died with it.

In the aftermath of the 1936 February incident, Miki wrote *The Japanese Character and Fascism* (*Nihonteki seikaku to fashizumu*), where he lamented the fact that Japan had been taken over by the fascist tendencies of 'Japanism' (MKZ XIII: 252).[222] Miki interpreted the rebels' attempt as a sign of the radicalization of the term 'Japanese spirit' (*nihon no seishin*) and he condemned the rebellion, although in implicit terms, for not having recognized that no pure Japan ever existed. Along the lines of Watsuji, Miki defined Japanese culture as 'stratified' (MKZ XIII: 258). As in his theory of the renovation of the human being, he states that fascism is nothing else than a mis-conception of the 'Japanese character', because, he argues, even this character that is a form without a form is subjected to change and continuous renovation (MKZ XIII: 260-3). He attributed the rise of fascism in Japan to the seclusion of the Tokugawa period that allowed for elements of feudalism to linger in Japanese society and that were never overcome (MKZ XIII: 250-1).[223]

Miki never denied the great cultural debt that Japan owed to China in the creation of the 'stratified' culture of Japan, but he thought that it was time for Japan to lead China towards a path of modernization and political stability. In 1935, Miki wrote that China was in need of help in forming an alliance against Western modernity (MKZ XV: 32-4). He reaches the conclusion that, in this world of decline of Western thought, Japan has the chance of emerging and contributing to world history (MKZ XV: 34).

This discourse on 'help' that China apparently needed is restated in a very short but significant piece from 1940. The article is the printed version of a dialogue between Miki and Zhou Fohai, who at the time was the second commander in chief of Wang Jingwei's puppet

[222] Originally published in *Chūōkōron* in August 1936. Now in MKZ XIII 241-267. During the February incident a group of army officers led an attempted *coup d'etat* in the name of the restoration of the political power of the emperor. The rebels were calling for a 'Shōwa Restoration' and the reinforcement of the imperial ruling and the doctrine of the *kokutai* (Bix 2000: 298).

[223] This discourse is very similar to the critique that the Second Soviet Comintern addressed to Japan in 1922. They, too, found that the feudal elements present in Japanese society were hampering the path to revolution. On the other hand, it is not that dissimilar from Watsuji's discourse on the *sakoku* period.

government in Nanjing.[224] Their main concern is 'nationalism' (*minzokushugi*) and the link between what they call 'natural' or 'people's nationalism' (*minzokushugi*) and 'state-nationalism' (*kokkashugi*), characterized by military strength (Miki *et al.* 1940: 83). Miki suggests to Wang that many countries have undergone the path of unifying these two sides of the same coin, including Japan, but that China might need some more time. As a solution, Miki proposes the Greater East Asia as symbol of the peaceful co-existence of different countries in one sphere, where each and every country is independent and 'nationally' free (Miki *et al.* 1940: 84-5).

In 1937, in *The Reality of Japan*, Miki lays out some major themes that will then make up the kernel of the two Shōwa Kenkyūkai's documents on the 'new Japan'. This article, which nevertheless shows heavy signs of censorship, faces the philosophical background behind the phrases 'Japanese spirit' and 'Chinese spirit' (MKZ XIII: 445). Miki, noticing how the most recent intellectual and political discussions had shifted from 'Japan' to 'Asia', proposes to look at the situation by the standpoint of world-history. Comparing what was then only an idea of a Greater East Asia to the unifying role that the Roman empire or the Catholic Church had in European history, he argues that Buddhism could function as a principle of unity in East Asia (MKZ XIII: 450-4). Buddhism, as much as Christianity, retains its religious, transcendental character. Human existence, as seen in the previous chapters, is transcendental as well since its life in the world is characterized by the movement of transcendence from object to subject (MKZ XIII: 77-8). [225] Together, religion and existence share this common transcendental ground that allows for both to preserve their 'world character'. On the stage of world-history, Buddhism has now to allow for the Japanese character of 'worldly-ness' to emerge without losing its own in the process. Therefore, Buddhism as a religion needs to drive the political process behind the Japanese expansion in Asia, but not transform itself into politics otherwise it will lose its authority (MKZ XIII: 81). Nonetheless, Miki cannot solve the problem of the particularity of Buddhism, in the sense that Buddhism remained confined to the Asian continent, whilst he seems to imply that Christianity spread well beyond its birth boundaries. One of the most important issues here is that Miki does not seem to distinguish between the political role the Catholic Church qua establishment had and Christianity as a religion in general. There is a disparity between his treatment of Buddhism, that to him covers a cultural rather than a political role, and his treatment of the Catholic Church. The two things

[224] *The Problem of Nationalism* (*Minzoku no mondai*). Published in *Chūōkōron* in May 1940.
[225] In *Religion as the Inspiring Force of the New Japan (Shin nihon no shidōryoku toshite no shūkyō)*. Originally published in *Kōru* in January 1938. Now in MKZ XIII: 71-81.

somehow conflate when Miki affirms that some Christian countries are now witnessing a flourishing of totalitarianism and nationalism, as if Japan, by virtue of the Buddhist principle of 'nothingness', was immune from this threat.[226] The most fundamental Buddhist principle, nothingness, thus transforms itself from a religious principle into a cultural and political factor. This consideration is very important, since it represents the basis of the Asian Cooperativism theory where the discourse around culture was used to disguise Japan's real political ambitions.

Facing the impossibility of resolving the question of the relationship between religion and politics, Miki introduces 'science'. Miki argues that 'tradition' (*dentō*) could help in unifying Asia but that, at the same time, 'science' (or Watsuji's 'scientific spirit') should go hand-in-hand with it (MKZ XIII: 462):

> There is no doubt that Eastern thought has been greatly limited by the underdevelopment of science that makes world universality possible
>
> (MKZ XIII: 462)

The world-character of a regional Buddhism and the scientific spirit of modernity should thus provide the fundamental bases for Japan to finally enter world-history. The sustainability of such a way of reasoning was nevertheless doubted by Miki himself only a couple of months before, in *The 20th Century Thought*, when he returned to the problem of *Angst*:

> What humanity experienced in the Great War was not the question of 'choice' (*sentaku*) but rather of 'a destiny difficult to escape from' (*nigere muzukashii unmei*) and as Scheler said, instead of complete unity, the world was thrown into the midst of contrasting ideologies of an unprecedented scale […] The Second World War is now difficult to avoid, and through the general pessimism that has spread far more than imagined, rebuilding a unifying principle for the history of humanity has become perhaps an impossible task
>
> (MKZ XIV: 155-6)

The abstraction of nationalism and, most of all, internationalism, are the causes behind the impossibility of tracing a new 'worldy-human' historical principle. Similarly to Nishida, Watsuji and other Kyōto School members, Miki launches an implicit attack on the League of Nations, considering it only an association based on the 'individuality' of single countries (MKZ XIII: 405-6).[227] Miki calls it 'the abstraction' of the 'way' (*michi*) that has pushed history and reality to part and that has given birth to this form of internationalism that is based

[226] Miki seems to imply, throughout the whole article, that there was never a 'Renaissance period' in the East. As seen before, this is what made the renovation of the human being possible in Europe.
[227] In *The Imperial Way of World History*.

solely on capitalist development (MKZ XIII: 406-7). Miki therefore considers capitalism as the root of this kind of wrong world-cooperation. In this instance, Miki brings about a similar critique of capitalism to the one Watsuji had put forward in his dialogues with Kawakami Hajime and later in his *Study of Ethics*.[228]

Capitalism is the cause of the transformation of the traditional *Gemeinschaft* into the modern *Gesellschaft*, where the old principles that belonged to the community have been replaced by the capitalist spirit. To Miki, capitalist and liberalism have the same root, which is the abstraction of history from reality and he warns against constructing a new Asia on the basis of economic exchange and trade (MKZ XIV: 149).[229] To him, establishing a cooperation of this sort will simply perpetuate the imperialism of Western powers. Instead, he affirms, 'the unity of Asia is a matter of true world history' (MKZ XIV: 149).

The *motifs* that underpin Miki's vision for Japan are several and they all intertwined. On the one hand, the scientific spirit that the 'East' failed to appropriate in the past centuries could be seen as the continuation of his discourse on technology. Technology here is 'social' technology or the technology that in the East never developed into in the technology of things (MKZ XVII: 140-2).[230] Buddhism, as explained above, functions as cultural glue, the element that, together with race, melds commonalities in the whole Asia.[231]

In this convergence, Miki sees the chance for the 'East' to substitute Europe in leading world history and to create a new Greater East Asia not simply confined to geographical boundaries but pregnant with 'world significance' (*sekaiteki igi*) (MKZ XV: 309).[232] He explains that 'Europeanism' (*Yōroppashugi*), an expression borrowed from Ranke, has finally declined under the heavy hit of Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West* (1918), Ernst Troeltsch's *Historism and Its Problems* (1922) and Leopold von Ranke's *World History* (1888) (MKZ XIV: 147-8).

> If the East Asia Cooperative Body (*tōa kyōdōtai*) has today to have world significance, it surely needs to be concretized in the particularity of East Asia. Nevertheless, particularity cannot be a mere particular, but a particular and a universal at the same time. In other words, it cannot be confined to geographical boundaries, it has to become the mark of the new world order

[228] See Chap. 2 and Chap. 3.
[229] In *The Significance of World History in Modern Japan*.
[230] In *The History of the Sino-Japanese Cultural Relationship* (*Nisshi bunka kankeishi*), originally published in *Taiheihō Mondai Shiryō* in March 1940. Now in MKZ XVII: 126-85.
[231] In *The Reality of Japan,* Miki criticizes the discourse on the 'common race' (*dōshū*) that the most right-wing ideologues were putting forward (MKZ XIII: 447). For the history of the narrative of race in China and Japan see Karl 1998 and Duara 2001.
[232] In *The Foundations of the Greater East Asia Thought*. For a similar discourse on the position of Japan in world-history through an overcoming of European philosophy from Kant to Ranke see Uhl 2008.

(MKZ XV: 315)

Again, the new *Gemeinschaft* that will be born from the new order in Asia will make each and every country there included self-aware of its particularity. At the same time, nations will accept the sense of belonging to this higher entity. Again:

> If the unity of the East is a matter of world history, so it has to be considered. In other words, it represents the solution of the problem of capitalism. In what ways we can overcome the contradictions immanent in capitalism is a matter of the great concern for world history today. Not confronting these issues would mean not facing the reality of the true, world-historical significance of the unity of the East
> (MKZ XV: 324)

Conflating Tönnies' ideas of *Gemeischaft* and *Gesellschaft* with Bergon's 'open' and 'closed' societies, Miki tries to convince us that the closed societies inside an open structure would only correspond to a new capitalist alliance and not a cultural and historical one. Asian nations have to open to this new Japanese project, otherwise the 'modern *Gesellschaft*' would take over and this would be 'unforgivable' (*yurusarenai*).

Uchida affirms that Miki's idea of cooperativism is an act of resistance to Western imperialism (Uchida in Miki 2007: 243). Taking as a proof Miki's statements that Japan was in need of a process of cultural self-criticism before going and occupy half of Asia and that feudalism was still present in the Asian spirit, he concludes that Miki brought forward this idea on the basis of the 'pathos' Japan shared with the other Asian peoples (Uchida in Miki 2007: 249). Leaning towards a contemporary theory of post-colonialism that involves a critique of colonial modernity and capitalist development, Uchida transforms Miki into a contemporary intellectual of resistance. Very much alike Goto-Jones' theory that Nishida was not effective in his 'speaking the truth to power', Uchida posits Miki's problematic involvement with the regime in the context of Miki's theory of the renovation of the human being and eventually attempts to find a positive assessment of this troubled period of his life.

My disagreement with Uchida does not regard the context of his statements. It rather points at the fact that it is not possible to define Miki as a 'post-colonial intellectual' *ante litteram*. Miki's vision of a new Asia, at this stage, has already taken the form of propaganda. His proximity to Konoe transformed his language into a political pamphlet. Far from arguing that it is solely a problem of language, I see this ultimate step in Miki's philosophy as the completion of his system of creation of the national human being. From his early writings on capitalism during his Marxist period Miki eschewed the crucial problem of 'class', posing the

basis for a direct link between the late 1920s and the late 1930s. If imperialism forms the alliance between mob and capital, overstepping the problem of class, then Miki had already created it in his creation of the *ningen*-class.[233]

Miki's mistake was precisely the overlooking of the internal mechanisms that regulate capitalism. If imperialism is the necessity of the capital of the nation state to channel the exchange-value and overpopulation, then the expansion of the nation state is inherently linked to the overflowing of capital. Miki never recognized this aspect of Marxist theory, and therefore created the form of imperialism typical of fascist ideologies. His critique of capitalism is the fascist one, not the one of a post-colonialist. His cultural and, I would argue, 'human' imperialism rooted in his faith in a national and international awakening does not constitute an act of resistance. Rather, in its own right, it represents a philosophical discourse that blurred the boundaries between politics and culture, between intellectual and political activity. His vision of a common destiny for the whole Asia misses, or probably it is too close, the reality of the unfolding of history. The lucidity and objectivity that had characterized his previous writings, contrastingly charged with pathos and anxiety, loses its efficacy in the rhetoric of Japanese imperialism. That rhetoric was the one that Miki had defined as the true character of the human being.

The question here is not whether Miki can be rescued from history or historical memory, but rather why he supported Konoe's principles of the 'New Order in Asia'.

The 'Principles'

The Intellectual Principles of the New Japan appeared in January 1939 as a product of the Shōwa Research Association. In reality, most of the pamphlet was compiled by Miki. In November 1938, when Miki joined the association, he delivered a speech called *The World-Historical Significance of the China Incident* (*Shina jihen no sekaishiteki igi*). This speech, together with *The Reality of Japan*, forms the backbone of the *Principles*. Repeating his

[233] See Arendt 2004: 196-209. Following Arendt, if the imperialist expansion was a way to overcome the class divison and struggle in the formation of the paradoxical alliance beween mob capital then: 'the aim of these movements was, so to speak, to imperialize the whole nation (and not only the 'superfluous' part of it), to combine domestic and foreign policy in such a way as to organize the nation for the looting of foreign territories and the permanent degradation of alien people' (Arendt 2004: 206).

previous arguments on the necessity of helping China in expelling foreign powers and combating Western imperialism, he gives a new interpretation of the China Incident according to the categories of space and time:

> Spatially, the world-historical meaning of the China Incident will make the unity of the world possible through the realization of an East Asian unity […] Temporally, the significance of the China Incident must bring an end the problems of capitalism […] There is a mutual relationship between these spatial and temporal problems and it will not be possible to create a real unity in East Asia unless the issues of capitalism have being solved
>
> (MKZ XVII: 508-11)

The pamphlet reaches its intellectual peak when Miki argues that the unity in Asia will represent a 'new Renaissance' such as the one that happened in Italy and sparked the emergence of national consciousness in Europe (MKZ XVII: 512). The *leitmotif* of the Renaissance, which always constituted Miki's point of reference in the outline of the theory of human renovation, becomes a model also for his theory of the East Asian cooperation. This new kind of Asian Renaissance will be based on 'Eastern humanism' (*tōyōteki hyūmanizumu*):

> Against Western humanism (*seyōteki hyūmanizumu*) that is based on humanism (*ningenshugi*) and culturalism (*bunkashugi*), Eastern humanism represents the connubium between man and nature, between life-style and culture. Against the idea of 'human species' (*jinrui*) that is at the root of Western humanism, Eastern humanism is underpinned by concepts such as 'nothingness' (*mu*), 'nature' (*shizen*) and 'heaven' (*ten*). Again, Eastern humanism will accomplish the rational order of society by following the ethical way on which the cultivation of the self lies upon
>
> (MKZ XVII: 514)

The process of renovation does not only involve the solution of the contradictions immanent in capitalism and the creation of a new 'Asian human being', it involves a process of renovation of culture through sublation. Eastern culture, purged of its feudalistic elements, would elevate itself into a new *Gemeinschaft*. The human being, Miki adds in a Watsuji reminiscence, is born and lives within society, the society that will defeat the individualistic tendencies of utilitarian ones. Rationalism and irrationalism, nationalism and internationalism, familism and modernism, communism and liberalism, all these contradictory factors will be sublated into the new cooperative body that will bring stability and freedom to the people of Asia.

> The creation of the East Asian Cooperative Body under the leadership of Japan will not only depend on the initiative of the Japanese people, it will based on the moral destiny of Japan in the face of the present incident. *Attaining self-awareness of one's own moral destiny is crucial*
>
> (MKZ XVII: 533; emphasis added)

What are the philosophical principles that underpin this idea of the awareness of Japan's destiny? They are the 'practical' principles of cooperativism.[234] They are realized by a concrete and technological subject, the *shutai*, that abides to the social and practical standpoint of the present (MKZ XVII: 539-44).

> The development of history looks to the future and looking at things historically means looking at them in their unfolding. Praxis is not simply the past, it is also prescribed by the future. *The historical present, past and future in which we act are, at the same time, present, temporal and eternal and the instant stands as the unity between time and eternity*
>
> (MKZ XVII: 545-6; emphasis added)

Cooperativism therefore is based on the theory of the form without a form, that Miki had already outlined in his theory of technology, that will reach historical and practical form in the East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere.

Assessing Miki's involvement with the Japanese wartime establishment is an issue that has sparked quite some controversy in Japan. Yonetani, following some earlier assessments of Miki philosophy, agrees that Miki's language sounds like the one of a *tenkōsha* or the intellectual who has abjured his faith to embrace the ideology of the Japanese nationalist regime (Yonetani 1998: 48). Sakai, on the other hand, treats Miki as a full member and enthusiastic participants of different governmental think-tanks, even before the Shōwa association (Sakai 1992: 157-63). Shiozaki, in direct antagonism to Sakai, explains that Miki's situation has to be understood and interpreted according to the 'logic of state of affairs' (*jimu no ronri*), an expression that Miki himself used in one of his articles (Shiozaki 1993: 18).[235] Following Miki's original, in which he equated the logic of the state of affairs with the logic of politics in Machiavellian terms, Shiozaki argues that Miki's involvement

[234] In *The Intellectual Principles of New Japan. Continuum. The Philosophical Bases of Cooperationism.*

[235] *The Logic of the State of Affairs* (*Jimu no ronri*). Originally published in *Chisei* in October 1939. Now in MKZ XIV: 299-306. Shiozaki's aim is to rewrite the narrative behind the idea of cooperativism and how this has been interpreted in the postwar period. To Shiozaki, Miki's elaboration was highly influenced by Krauss, who was then professor at Jōchi University (nowadays Sophia University) and who was at that time translating the 'Dictionary of Catholicism'. Krauss' main theory was 'solidarism' (*rentaishugi*) to be attained through the 'principle of help', a catholic principle behind solidarity (Shiozaki 1993: 28). In my personal view, this kind of narrative sounds like historical negationism.

was dictated by the *raison d'état*. Nevertheless, if we carefully look at Miki's piece, the situation appears to be quite different. Miki refers to Machiavelli's idea of logic of the affairs as a political and technological act (MKZ XIV: 299). Since Machiavelli, Miki continues, considered the logic of the affairs as based on an objective knowledge of history and reality, the *raison d'état* has to be the natural self-preservation of the state and the development of its vital force (MKZ XIV: 301-4). Thus, it is quite difficult to judge from this piece whether Miki thought that there was no other choice for him but to join the Shōwa association. Certainly, the *raison d'état* could be interpreted as Miki's endorsement of the China Incident and the advance in North China. Therefore, both the idea of *tenkō* and of the submission to political and historical necessity do not appear to be very helpful in attempting to interpret the reason behind Miki support for the ideology of the Japanese status quo.

Shimizu, despite his effort to rescue Miki from the judgment of history, argues that Miki never lost faith in the human being and that, in his deep love for Japan, he was trying to warn it against the fascist tendencies of the Right (Shimizu 1951: 10-4). Shimizu himself seems to be regretting having joined the Shōwa Research Association, especially when he read Miki's pieces and he contextualized them in Miki's theory of the human being. How to hence explain Miki's continuous support for the Shōwa group and his proximity to Konoe? Shimizu is right when he affirms that Miki's idea of *ningen* underpins even this part of his political and intellectual life. It is the *ningen*, but it is not the one of his Pascal period, it is the *homo faber* of technology. A *homo faber* that recognizes itself in the Japanese nation and in the creation of a sphere of influence aimed at overcoming liberalism and communism. It is the genealogy of the idea that, from its origins, dooms its outcome. In the realm of ideas, Miki himself affirms that 'since military activities cannot be carried on permanently, Japan has to resort to the measure of influencing China by means of ideas' (Miki 1938: 607). The Third Japan represents the force that should implement the change in its synthesis of Eastern and Western cultures and that is now:

> In the midst of the travails for its birth. We are certainly experiencing the period of "*Sturm und Drang*". There might be certain overstepping and shortcomings, but the Third Japan is sure to be born
>
> (Miki 1938: 609)

The *Sturm und Drang* deeply reflects the period of uncertainty that pervaded the late 1930s and the early 1940s. The idea of a Third Japan that should have been born right after the conquest of North China historically materialized in the Japanese empire. Nevertheless, if we return to the passage quoted above on time and eternity, we once again face the national

temporality of the *kairos*, which is the crystallized present. How could a temporal present that belongs to past, present and future be reconciled with the future birth of a renovated Japan is a problem of ideas. In this instance the *kairos* is deeply intertwined with the idea of the *escaton*. Miki's vision of the Third Japan is born out of the technological subject and the political nation in an attempt of creating an entity capable of overcoming the problems of modernity, war, power and geo-political equilibrium. The intellectual *escaton* is therefore immersed in the faith in the attainment of *one's own moral destiny*. The moral destiny of Japan is the creation of the Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere and this specific, national destiny will be fulfilled only when the faith in a de-historicized historical present will meet the real, historical reality. In historical and historiographical terms, these two elements partially meet in the territorial expansion of the Japanese empire. In ideological terms, and not in the sense of 'ideology' but in the sense of 'ideas', these two elements create a fatal connubium that nevertheless is never fulfilled. It does not materialize because the *escaton* of the end of the war qua victory never arrives.

Miki had complete faith in the human being, as Shimizu points out, but it is precisely this flaw in his thinking that helped him recreating the *kairos* of the supremacy of world history over everydayness. From Pascal onwards, the *medianity* that underpins his elaboration of *ningen* never reaches completion. The most basic problem here is that no matter whether Miki is considering Pascal, Marx, Lukács, Hegel, Kant, Dessauer, Heidegger, he needs to construct a system that is anthropological and, therefore, inherently *median*. On a world-scale, *medianity* is the situation Japan found itself into. The *Angst* remains pervasive, medianity remains the fundamental condition of a nation kept between totality and infinity (Miki's eternity in the instant) that is: 'un milieu entre rien et tout [..] également incapable de voir le neant d'où il est tiré, et l'infini où il est englouti' (Pascal 72). This is the historical reality that Miki is missing out and that helps him building a system that is and will still remain detached from the reality of the human condition because based on faith in a particular idea of Japan. Analyzing Miki's idea of cooperationism in the name of Derrida's *differance*, as Machiguchi does, would naturally eschews any moral responsibility of Miki's involvement with the imperialistic ideology (Machiguchi 2004: 234-7). Moreover, it would disregard 'the structural differences between its own historical location and other histories, past and present' (Dirlik 1997: 10). Since Miki himself talked about moral destiny, that same moral destiny becomes his moral responsibility. The I-Thou relationship between the Japanese and the rest of Asia is not a question of identification after the old world order has been disrupted and therefore a 'decentering' of global politics. It stands as a national I-Thou that brings a whole nation to re-

iterate the same kind of colonial occupation that the European powers and America had previously perpetrated.

Most probably, Miki's overlooking of the economical side of Marxism, his fascination with Heidegger and the existentialists and his immersion in the technology discourse, all contributed to the *caesura* between Miki's highly complex theoretical system and his political activity. Nonetheless, I cannot believe that ideas are not political. Thus, arguing that Miki had two sides, one good and one bad, or censoring his contribution to the Shōwa association or praising him only for his innovations in Marxist dialectics overlook the fact that Miki's politics was born out of Miki philosophy. From a human being to a society and then a nation, this *ningen* never ceased to be medianity, uncertainty, collectivity and practice and its de-historicization brings the nation towards an intellectual *escaton* that was predestined to fail from its seeds.

Miki's adventure with the Shōwa Research Association ends here. In January 1942, he was drafted by the ministry of propaganda and sent to Manila, in the Philippines, with other novelists and intellectuals. They were all called *bunkajin* or 'men of culture' and their mission was one of providing intellectual support to the government's policy of completing 'the emancipation of Asia' (Taraiko in Kiyoshi *et al.* 2008: 311). Miki returned to Japan in December of the same year and in March 1945 he was arrested and incarcerated on suspicion of having given shelter to a member of the underground Japanese Communist Party. He died in prison in September, after the war had ended and after American troops had been deployed to Japan.

Watsuji and the *Kokutai no Hongi*

The *Kokutai no hongi* was issued by the Ministry of Education in May 1937, as a response to the 1936 February incident. The document was primarily directed to education and it was supposed to be used in schools. Nationally, it sold more than two million copies (Bix 2000: 313). The *Kokutai no hongi*, as the title suggests, had the objective of reinforcing the role of the emperor both on a moral and political level and to affirm the particularity and

purity of Japan. It condemned European and American cultures and their rationalism and positivist ideologies that led to the rise of Nazism and fascism in Germany and Italy (Hall 1949: 52-4). Moreover, it decreed that all Japanese subjects had to obey to emperor Hirohito, since:

> The Way of the subjects exists where the entire nation serves the Emperor united in mind in the very spirit in which many deities served at the time when the Imperial Grandchild, Ninidi no Mikoto, descended on earth. That is, we by nature serve the Emperor and walk the Way of the Empire, and it is perfectly natural that we subjects should possess this essential quality
>
> (Hall 1949: 79)

The *Kokutai no hongi* was clearly intended as a propaganda document and it was issued with the vision of strengthening the national support for the war in China. Watsuji appears in the list of names of intellectuals who wrote the first draft of the pamphlet, while it seems that he did not take part in the committee who prepared the final and published document. Indeed, some of the ideas that are present in the *Kokutai no hongi* can be retraced in Watsuji's own books. For example, the condemnation of Western rationalism and utilitarianism that had contaminated Japanese culture and that, to him, is best represented in the '*chōnin spirit*' (*chōnin seishin*) (WTZ IV: 463).[236] Or the fact that the reverence to the emperor is a theme that runs throughout Japanese history and that guides the ethical and moral behavior of the Japanese people.[237]

The expressions used in the *Kokutai no hongi* strongly match a discourse that Watsuji addressed to the Navy academy in 1943. This discourse, *The Way of the Japanese Subject,* was printed together with another lecture that he delivered, *The American National Character*, in 1944 for the 'Wartime National Library'. The Ministry of Education distributed two million copies of this pamphlet (Bellah 1965: 579). Some scholars have tried to argue that Watsuji's involvement with the *Kokutai no Hongi* committee has no political value and that it needs to be contextualized in the framework of his philosophical work. Even Bellah, who is quite critical of Watsuji, affirms that 'Watsuji is a long way from the fanatic traditionalists' (Bellah 1965: 589). Notwithstanding his distance from right-wing figures such as Minoda Muneki and the Genri Nihonsha, Watsuji's opinion regarding the Japanese cultural and ethical uniqueness does compromise his position. Watsuji's considerations on the Japanese

[236] In *A Study of the Japanese Spirit*.
[237] These themes were not unique to Watsuji. Most Japanese conservative thinkers of these years argued along the same lines.

spirit and the greatness of Japanese ethics could be only limitedly justified. His participation in the committee should be considered in relation to the pamphlet and in relation to his work on the reverence to the emperor and the *kokutai* that thus reveal his political position. His vision of Japan, which is also re-stated in some of his wartime memos, was one of a country that morally stood on top of Asia and was destined to guide it towards a path of liberation from Western occupation. Different from Miki, Watsuji did see Buddhism as a cultural factor but he ditched it in favor of the Shinto deity Amaterasu, a symbol of his political support for State Shinto. Since to Watsuji there is no higher ethical entity than the state itself, as explained in *Study of Ethics*, religion cannot but be subordinated to the state's sovereign power. Compared to Miki's understanding of the role of Buddhism in politics, Watsuji considers politics above any category of human life. The moral destiny of Japan thus becomes, first of all, a political one and, secondly, a duty that needs to be carried out with the selflessness that he claimed characterized the *bushi* ethics from the Kamakura period onwards. Secondly, the moral destiny of Japan is embedded in the defeat of the American *Gesellschaft* and in the guiding of Asia back to its communal *Gemeinschaft*.

The Way of the Japanese Subject

In *The Way of the Japanese Subject*, Watsuji lectures the navy cadets on the 'way of the Japanese subject' as the 'way of our ancestors' (WTZ XIV: 297). The first part focuses on the question of whether the expressions 'to happily die for the Emperor' and, more significantly, 'not to die until the enemy is defeated' still retain the significance of being attached to one's own life. Watsuji explains that, if this is the case, then the sacrifice would have no ethical value, since it would mean that there is still an attachment to the ego. Instead:

> This 'ego' (*watakushi*) needs to be destroyed as well, since sacrifice (*sekinin*) solely must remain […] This is the state that, I believe, the ancient referred to as 'the standpoint that transcends life and death' (*shisei wo koeta tachiba*)[238]
>
> (WTZ XIV: 297)

[238] *Sekinin* literally means 'responsibility'. I decided to translate it as 'sacrifice' since it seems to convey more the ultimate 'responsibility' these men were asked when sent to die in the war.

This standpoint is the one that apparently characterized the *bushi* ethics, when samurai dutifully died for their lord. Nevertheless, Watsuji argues that it later became a moral code indicating the Emperor, rather than the shogun or the feudal lord and that it deepened its significance through the contamination with Buddhism or Christianity or, later, Confucianism (WTZ XIV: 298-9). In order to better clarify the moral superiority of the Japanese people, Watsuji brings as an example Francisco Xavier, the Jesuit missionary who came from Macau to Japan before the persecutions against Christians started, who wrote that the Japanese had higher moral standards than European people (WTZ XIV: 303-4). The standpoint that transcends life and death is therefore that moral and ethical principle that pushed samurai and warriors to carry on with the ultimate sacrifice for the reverence to the lord and, then, to the emperor. It needs to be kept in mind that when Watsuji was pronouncing this discourse he was lecturing young Navy cadets that were about to be shipped off into combat zones. Therefore, this kind of affirmation has a great impact even on a ethical level, because, especially in 1944, in the name of the emperor many Japanese soldiers died as *kamikaze*.

The absolute particularity of Japan is subsequently linked to the figure of Amaterasu and her being a 'non-absolute' deity. As we have seen in the two books dedicated to the reverence of the emperor, Amaterasu is considered to be only the most 'revered' in the Ise sanctuary and the one, who, at the same time, 'was revering' (WTZ XIV 27-37; WTZ XIV: 307-8).[239] This is her most quintessential characteristic:

> Because Amaterasu Ōmikami is not an absolute deity but *an intermediate one*, she expresses what means to be complete and *non-exclusive*. She is the truthful expression of the absolute
> (WTZ XIV: 308; emphasis in the original)

The veneration of the emperor as a living god thus descends from this idea that the 'Way' is more important than the deity itself. Whilst Judaism, Islam and Christianity venerate a God that is absolute and exclusive, the Japanese have always focused their attention on the Way of revering rather than what had to be exclusively revered. This absolute Way resembles the Absolute Totality that Watsuji described in his *Study of Ethics*. If there the famous 'noematic residue' of the totality immanent in the individual pushed the human being to rejoin its structural, total basis, here the noematic residue is embodied in the 'Way' of the Japanese subjects:

[239] In *The Reverence to the Emperor and Its Tradition* and *The Way of the Japanese Subject*.

> The Way to which every absolute relates and that is the deepest foundation of man, every ethical structure, is truly concretized in the state (*kokka*)[240]
>
> (WTZ XIV: 309)

In this instance the totality pushes the human being to go beyond its attachment to the ego and ultimately sacrifice itself in the name of the divine emperor. In Watsuji's view, the state, the highest of every ethical structure, should not even ask for that, since the human being is naturally pushed to obedience and negation of its freedom. Again, in his memo on what kind of popular leadership should have guided the Greater East Asia, Watsuji writes that the problem of the state is the most important issue to be addressed if Japan wants to lead the continent (WTZ BII: 454).[241] Moreover, the moral aim of Japan would be to establish the Greater East Asia in order for Japanese history to enter world history (WTZ BII: 457).[242] In this sense, even if contradictory, Watsuji's human being comes very close to Heidegger's Being-towards-Death. In *Study of Ethics* and *Climate* Watsuji had harshly criticized Heidegger's idea that the true and authentic *Dasein* was represented in its awareness of the finitude of its existence. Here Watsuji pre-destines a whole nation of subjects to the authenticity of the Way which involves death.

There is not much difference between Heidegger calling on his students to sacrifice themselves in the name of the greatness of the German *Volk* in his Rectoral Address and Watsuji calling on the cadets to die for the emperor. Sakai notices this shift in Watsuji's thought and he also points out the fact that Watsuji and Heidegger reached the same kind of conclusion (Sakai 1997: 100). Sakai argues that it is due to the 'appropriation of an individual's death by the state' that they come together (Sakai 1997: 100). Despite the similarities, I believe that Heidegger and Watsuji converged on this matter of the authenticity of life by means of death because of the principle of the *escaton* behind it. It is not because the state appropriates an individual's death that the German *Volk* and the Japanese *minzoku* are asked to sacrifice themselves. It is because, for Heidegger, the principle of the Being-towards-Death is inherently linked to the problem of the present time and the attainment of the *authentic temporality* in the ripened time. The state comes in second place. The *escaton*

[240] Dilworth and Viglielmo translate *kokka* with 'nation' (Dilworth *et al*. 1998: 285). I believe that in this instance translating *kokka* with 'state' better fits into Watsuji's own philosophical system, where the state is recognized as the highest structures of all.
[241] In *(Autographed memo) What Kind of Education is needed for the Popular Leadership in Greater East Asia?* (*Jihitsu. Dai tōa no shidōteki kokumin taru ga tameni ware kokumin wo donna ni kyōiku subekika*) 1942. Now in WTZ BII: 453-6.
[242] In *My Impression on the Establishment of Greater East Asia* (*Dai tōa kensetsu ni kan suru iken*), 1942. Now in WTZ BII: 457-8.

thus becomes a human vision that only later becomes the German state. In Watsuji the state is the highest ethical structure of all ethical structures and therefore can dictate the faith of its subjects. In this instance the *escaton* remains a human one but it is not linked to temporality or the ripened time, it is intertwined to the idea that daily life is permeated by the standpoint of transcendence of life and death. The cultural specificity of this affirmation is sanctioned by the fact that this standpoint could only be a characteristic of the Japanese people:

> The experience of transcending life and death in the sole moment of the fighting with the enemy is undoubtedly an honorable one. Nonetheless, when it saturates (*shintō*) every aspect of one's own life and when it becomes the real 'pure and clear heart' (*seimeishin*) with one's all might (*kōshin*), then it indeed is this absolute state of mind
>
> (WTZ XIV: 312)

Every aspect of the everyday life, therefore, has to be permeated by this spirit of transcendence of life and death. This passage is quite exemplary of the way the Japanese government was asking the whole country to sacrifice itself in order to win the war.

If the ideological expressions of the *Kokutai no hongi* are compared to the language of the *Way of the Japanese Subject* the similarities are quite evident. The propaganda document distributed in the schools throughout the country had the objective of educating the population to the reverence of the emperor and to put their faith in his hands. The discourse Watsuji pronounces does the same, it calls for an ultimate sacrifice. In this instance, negating the fact that Watsuji supported the government ideology is quite unfruitful and eschews the possibility of comprehending the reason behind which Watsuji delivered such a perfect propaganda piece. In a much broader context, it appears that the critique of individualism that Watsuji directed towards Heidegger and that was subsequently replaced by the ethics of the national human being negates the possibility of freedom. Watsuji's *escaton* is, more than Miki, based on the faith in the reverence of the emperor qua unique possibility for Japan to win the war. In this instance the establishment of the Greater East Asia appears more of a contingent consequence of the moral destiny of Japan. In fact, Watsuji says:

> […] the establishment of Greater East Asia portrays the significance of the exceptional shift world history is undergoing. Regarding the accomplishment of this great enterprise unprecedented in world history, the Japanese people (*nihon minzoku*) have to take a firm and independent stance […] that should not simply be acquired through the defeat of the American way of thinking, but rather by sufficiently knowing it and therefore being able to transcend it
>
> (WTZ BII: 457)

Watsuji's consideration on Greater East Asia is more linked to the inherent moral direction Japan is following. In this sense, as the authors of the *Kokutai no hongi*, he does not deny that American culture has penetrated into Japan. What he is calling for is the overcoming of this individualistic tendencies in order to complete the mission Japan was 'chosen' for. Recalling another piece that has been previously analyzed, *The Standpoint of the Bearer of the Creation of Culture*, it is clear that the discourse is almost the same.[243] In 1937 Watsuji wrote that 'the role prescribed to the Japanese is essentially to preserve the freedom of ten million Asians'. Here Watsuji writes that the establishment of the Greater East Asia is an exceptional event that never before had materialized in world-history. Yet again, the 'pathetic but heroic destiny of Japan' will be to create this geographical, cultural and political space where Japan could fulfill its historical destiny. Evidently, the mission of Japan is Watsuji's *escaton* that is based solely on faith. Watsuji regards the creation of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere more as the 'natural' outcome of the particularity of Japan, rather than seeing it as the *Sturm und Drang* in Miki's terms. In Watsuji, the *escaton* has a different origin. Nevertheless, the result is equal. The element that they have in common is the national human being, that whether is theorized on the level of culture and 'ethics' as in Watsuji, or theorized on a more philosophical level as in Miki, it always reaches its completion on a global scale. In other words, the human being qua *medianity* cannot be confined anymore to the national boundaries, it becomes the renovation of the whole Asia as significance of the attainment of the moral destiny of Japan which could not but end in this way.

The American National Character

In *The American National Character* Watsuji launches a harsh attack on American and British culture. Delivered in 1943, this lecture was published together with *The Way of the Japanese Subject* and it functions as its mirror. As a matter of fact, if the first piece was an apology of the Japanese spirit, the second one reinforces the arguments there expressed through negation. What the American character represents is not what the Japanese spirit

[243] See Chap. 4.

stands for. Analyzing how Hobbes and Bacon influences those two cultures, he affirms that American civilization has now reached the stage of being a 'machine civilization' (*kikai bunmei*) because its morality was never a true morality, but one of self-interest (WTZ XVII: 455-74). The 'machine civilization' is the one that slaughtered the Native Americans in the name of Jesus Christ, but that, in reality, did it for the control and expansion of their territory. The same happened with the enslavement of African-Americans who, on paper, had the same rights of the Anglo-Saxons but that had no basic rights in their daily lives (WTZ XVII: 469-70). Watsuji attributes the 'national character' of the American people to two factors: the Hobbsian 'law of nature' (*shizenhō*) and the Baconian 'logic of invention' (*hatusmei no ronri*). To Watsuji, Hobbes' theory of the state of nature is what drove the Anglo-Saxons to 'massacre the natives' without any moral or ethical standard (WTZ XVII: 465). On the other hand, Bacon's idea of the relationship between philosophy and science is what represents, to Watsuji, the foundation of the American *Gesellschaft* (WTZ XVII: 473-5). Despite the fact that Watsuji considers the mechanical technology (*kikai gijustu*) that the Anglo-Saxons reached in the 18th century *subarashii* (*super*), he also counterargues that this very same spirit is what started permeating society as well (WTZ XVII: 474 ff). In this respect, Watsuji seems to agree with Miki that 'Western technology' was the one of 'things' and that Eastern technology, or in this case the Japanese morality, remained on a 'spiritual level'. Watsuji considers Americans as being a mere 'material civilization' by means of which no culture and, therefore, no ethical improvement was ever possible.

To Watsuji, the event that best embodies the 'uncivilization' and the egotistic character of American culture was the arrival of Commodore Perry in the Uraga port in 1854. This historical fact, which triggered the Meiji restoration under the *sonnō jōi* slogan, explains more than anything else the American will of subjugating Japan to its own economical power. Watsuji says that this kind of society that masks itself under the declaration of the 'pursuit of happiness' is a society that does not have in its structure a 'moral significance' (*jinriteki igi*) (WTZ XVII: 480).

> In this sense, their defeat of the enemy is solely considered in utilitarian ends. Even more, their daily lives have lost moral significance. They need great excitement to be made to work and when they build machines they use that force to subjugate nature and human beings […] To them the most immediate meaning of enterprises is nothing different than the *charm of gambling* […] Under the influence of a civilized superstition they fight *with all their force*. But they are only awaiting for a nervous breakdown (*nervous breakdown*). The true potentiality of one people does not rely on the

> power of quantity but on its moral strength. Like a gambler who impatiently bets all he has, they will be suddenly crushed
> (WTZ XVII: 480-1; emphasis and English in the original)

Comparing this passage with what Watsuji had described as being the quintessential features of Japanese morality it is possible to see how the two parts of the pamphlet fit together. On the one hand, Americans' daily lives are not permeated by the spirit of transcendence of life and death that is at the basis of Japanese people. This state of mind that Watsuji linked to the two expressions of 'happily dying for the emperor' and 'not die until the enemy is defeated' is in stark contrast to the way the Anglo-Saxon non-civilized civilization massacres other peoples only for utilitarian purposes. The moral stance of Japanese *bushi* and, in 1943, of Japanese soldiers, elevates itself upon the gambling spirit of the Americans that are waiting for a nervous breakdown to happen to them. Once again, the dichotomy *Gemeinschaft-Gesellschaft* is used by Watsuji to re-state that the ethical exceptionalism of Japan should be the driving force behind the victory in the Second World War. Remembering Watsuji's lament of the lack of scientific spirit that predestined Japan to lose WWII, there is a huge difference between what technology represented to him.

Watsuji's faith in the *escaton* of the war finds its most rampant expressions in the 1944 pamphlet. His complete faith in Japanese morality pushed him to affirm that a new era in world-history had started. The defeat in 1945 triggered a mechanism of withdrawal into Japanese history to locate the causes of the failure of this *escaton*. His view that the *kokutai* should not be abolished, that the emperor still remained the symbol of national unity and that the *sakoku* period was uniquely to blame for the defeat seems to indicate that Watsuji was still hoping for a new role for Japan in world-history. The particularity of Japan that in 1951 brought Watsuji to write that Japan was still a great nation with its pacifist constitution never disappeared from his philosophy. His conservatism, sometimes overlapping with the wartime ideology, brought him to the personal loss of his own ideas. LaFleur argues that Watsuji embraced the solution of religion in the name of Buddhist vacuity and he, together with other scholars, such as Berque, Arisaka, and most recently McCarthy, have argued that his *aidagara* or medianity represents a kind of benevolent principle that could be used in inter-religious dialogue, or in a kind of post-colonial critique of Eurocentrism, or even in feminist theory (LaFleur 1978; Berque 1994; Arisaka 1996b; McCarthy 2008).

I believe that the statement that Watsuji embraced the solution of religion is a correct one. Nevertheless, the religion that lies behind Watsuji's theorization of the *aidagara* is not Buddhism, it is the religion of the Japanese national human being. The medianity that

characterizes Watsuji's system, that to him takes life in the *aidagara*, is still a product of *Angst* towards the future of Japan and Western modernity. The post-colonial critique of Eurocentrism that some have theorized for both Miki and Watsuji does not properly function here. As long as the critique of Eurocentrism will result in the perpetuation of imperialism in the name of racial superiority it will not be possible to consider it under a positive light. And if a transnational ethics of care implies the occupation of China and South-East Asia, as well as Korea and Taiwan, in the name of the I-Thou ethical relationship, then it will pose the basis for further imperialistic and colonial theories.

Watsuji's philosophy is tainted with the ideology of the Japanese wartime regime and it is very difficult to deny his political responsibility. His *escaton* did not materialize and his personal faith in the human being that constitutes the focus of his mediations and philosophical speculations crushed in August 1945. He is like a prophet who, in Dodd's words:

> […] a particular historical crisis, constituted by the ministry, the death, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, is interpreted in terms of a mythological concept, which had been made by the prophets into a sublime symbol for the divine meaning and purpose of history in its fullness. The characteristics of the Day of the Lord as described in prophecy and apocalypse are boldly transferred to the historical crisis
>
> (Dodd 1949: 85)

Watsuji interpreted the historical crisis of his time in the name of the mythological concept of the reverence of the emperor that was symbolized in the sublime meaning of the death in the name of the emperor. The Day of the Lord, which must be imagined as victory in the Second World War, came in the apocalyptic event of two atomic bombs. The historical crisis did not find its expected and final resolution, it just spiraled down even further.

Conclusions

The medianity that has been the kernel of this thesis for so many pages finds its end in the loss of the *escaton*. Miki and Watsuji, who firmly believed in a Japanese success in world-history, saw their expectations bankrupted by the war. The ideological stains embedded in their philosophies remain testament of their collaboration with the wartime regime. Attempting to rescue the philosophy of the human being from the judgment of history and historiography seems to me a vane effort to deny what the essence of a philosophical discourse should be.

The most fundamental question a philosophical discourse should thus attempt to answer is how to interpret the present in light of the past. Only by understanding the mechanisms that lay behind a given philosophical or historical discourse we could reconstruct the path certain ideas followed and, most importantly, how they unfolded. In the case of Miki and Watsuji, their communal, societal, national and imperialist *ningen* has proven to be a powerful concept that had inevitable consequences. The inherent flaw in its conceptualization, grounding medianity in the historical *Angst*, was exposed by their faith in the *escaton*. It is here that the historical context and the one of ideas come together.

On the one hand, the prolonged crisis that started in the 1920s and continued until the 1950s pushed Miki and Watsuji to reflect on the status of their 'human being'. On the other, the direction they chose for it, the one of the national *ningen*, was a response to this crisis. The fact that they chose the 'human being' as the kernel of their philosophical speculations is symptomatic of how deep this historical and existential uncertainty was. They not only strove to reconceptualize epistemology, they wanted to redefine existentialism in the sense of 'human existence'. They sought a new element of specificity that could change the course of historical and philosophical events.

It is in this context that the *escaton* functions at his best. By strongly believing in the Japanese nation and its moral destiny Miki and Watsuji showed complete faith in the Japan that they had themselves molded. It is for this reason that their *ningen* was predestined to fail from its genesis. By underpinning it in the specific character of medianity they trapped it in a condition that could not evolve if not in the limited space and time they had assigned to it. These space and time became the Japanese ones. The *escaton* charged their systems with great expectations for the future and, at the same time, it doomed them to bankruptcy. Miki and Watsuji chose not to stop and to continue on the path of medianity. This will probably go down in history as their biggest mistake, the one that failed their entire philosophical enterprises.

Conclusion

Three Reasons for Bankruptcy

The years between the 1920s and 1950s were a period of political and intellectual turmoil. As we have seen, the crisis and the *Angst* that pervaded the historical condition of Japan led to a chain of events that brought unbearable destruction and suffering both domestically and abroad. Miki and Watsuji, although in their small realm of ideas, contributed to the ideological establishment of the Japanese empire by constructing a human being that was clustered in the immobility of the Japanese nation. Their philosophy became what Marcuse calls 'the political form of existentialism' where 'a secularized theological image of history emerges' (Marcuse 1968: 33-5). Whilst Marcuse's poignant critique is mainly directed towards Heidegger, the same could be argued here. The envisioning of the *escaton* and the belief in the complete success of the moral destiny of Japan is what drove Miki and Watsuji's human being to its doomed failure. Throughout this thesis, I have argued that the historicization of the *ningen* resulted in the de-historicization of the Japanese nation, where a teleological view of history was remanded to an idealized and visionary future. It was precisely the detachment from 'real history' that triggered this ill-faith mechanism into the production of national and imperial human being. In Miki and Watsuji's systems of thought, 'a cognitive relation of existence to the forces of history' that should be at the basis of historicity, never took place in a critical way.[244] Miki and Watsuji uncritically subordinated their philosophy to the ideology of the government. The reason for this can be located in three fundamental and interlinked elements: first of all in the concept of medianity, secondly, in the interplay between historical context and ideas and, thirdly, in the creation of the religion of the human being.

[244] See Marcuse 1968: 34-5.

Medianity

The medianity that ontologically structured the *ningen* is the element that predestined it to bankruptcy. In Miki's case, the human being as a median between totality and infinity could not have moved in another direction than the one already set by its societal element. Even when dealing with Marxist materialism, Miki was not able to overcome the problem of the medianity of existence because his '*ningen*-class' frustrated the concept of 'class' in its original definition. In Watsuji's case, 'the ethical structure of all ethical structures', alias the state, crushed the freedom of the individual as well as the possibility of a 'rebellion' against its totalitarian power. Nevertheless, subordination neither implies subjugation from higher powers nor coercion. Despite the fact that Miki was imprisoned in 1930, his ideas did not fundamentally change. In other words, the shift from Marxism to philosophy of history took place before his arrest, because it was already an inherent trait of his philosophy. Thus, the passage from 'community' to 'nation' was not the outcome of coercion, but rather a necessary step in the development of an idea. Watsuji, on the other hand, did not encounter such an episode in his lifetime. The criticism that he received came from the far right-wing fringes of the political establishment, such as the Genri Nihonsha, on the basis that his elaboration of the 'reverence to the emperor' did not respect the principles of the *kokutai*. His *ningen* had always been the Japanese nation, since he had always considered it a particular and exceptional country. Thus, even in the postwar period Watsuji was not able to overcome the structure of his thought because he could not ditch betweeness. Since in Watsuji medianity functioned as an existential and normative element, it impeded the possibility of the renovation of his idea.

To a larger extent medianity crystallized the human being and then a nation in a position of uncertainty. Temporally, medianity appeared to be stuck in an immobile present that denied the possibility of evolution. In this respect, Miki's *kairos* subordinated everydayness to world-history as if the historical mission of Japan had already been present in his thought. Watsuji's betweeness clustered his human being in a position of subordination to the power of the emperor and the state. Both Miki and Watsuji, by denying the progress of a teleological history, trapped their *ningen.*

Angst

The interplay between historical context and ideas is another factor that, to some extent, helped the concept of medianity being shaped in this fashion. Miki keenly described the period he was living in as one of *Angst*. His readings reflected his feelings. As a matter of fact, Pascal, Gide, Heidegger, Shestov, Jaspers, Sorel, Nietzsche, who were the main European sources of influence for Miki, are all philosophers who lived in historical periods of spiritual and political travail. It probably should not be underestimated that they were all 'existentialist' thinkers whose efforts were directed to the analysis and interpretation of human existence in the world. As Miki himself acknowledged, during his sojourn in Germany he realized that students were not interested anymore in the rational logic of Neo-Kantianism, but they were turning to Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and Dostoyevsky (MKZ I: 437). He blamed it on the period of uncertainty that Germany was undergoing after the loss of WWI and that mirrored, with similar characteristics, the one that Japan faced in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Miki thought that this milieu was the one that permitted the rise of 'irrational forces' that took Japan over and that he attempted to confront with his concept of the renovation of the human being as 'type' from a human, cultural and intellectual standpoint. Nevertheless, his technological *homo faber* could not be effective in the critique of totalitarianism, since its characteristic were the ones of the Japanese folk. Yet again, the historical context and the idea of the *ningen* that then emerged appear to be deeply related. The combination of the uncertainty of the present with the longing for an immediate, future solution are two historical elements that contributed to Miki's underpinning of his entire system in the existential *Angst* of the human being. Since the historical context, in this case, reflected the one of ideas, it is easy to conclude that they both failed in finding a solution for the renovation of Japan. Instead, they opted for a resolution of war and for the imperialist enterprise in East Asia.

Watsuji did not consider the period he was living in as explicitly one of angst. Nonetheless, he effortlessly proposed his betweneess and human being as the Japanese alternative to Western modernity, Western capitalism, Western 'profit society' and Western colonialism. It is difficult to see how such a theorization could have been generated had it not been for the historical crisis in which Japan found itself. From the very beginning of his career he constructed a model of existence that was particular, harmonious, overshadowed by the presence of an absolute state and absolute ruler, and whose ethics was distinctively Japanese. As an interpreter of his time, Watsuji thought that the only formula that would have saved Japan from the 'imperialist powers' was to look back into

the Japanese past and find the elements that set it apart from the rest of the world. Unfortunately, the crisis ended with another crisis in August 1945. In the second part of his life Watsuji strenuously searched for the reason why his model failed together with his country. He was only able to blame it on the period of national seclusion of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, where, yet again, Japanese technological process had been prevented by the short-sightedness of its rulers. Thus, Watsuji did not re-discuss his own system of thought based on betweeness, he re-discussed Japanese history.

The second period of *Angst* that came alongside the American occupation of Japan pushed Watsuji to revisit his idea regarding the role of the emperor, albeit not to change it. He could not accept the fact that the emperor had been stripped of his powers and he affirmed that throughout Japanese history, whether the emperor had retained the political power or not, his subjects had always felt the 'reverence' for him. The betweeness that had seen the emperor being the good, totalitarian ruler in a dialectical relationship with his subjects had become the good, symbolic ruler of his citizens. The Japanese ethical thought was preserved in its crystallized and immobile structure, the revisiting of the past did not resulted in a critical understanding of it and Watsuji's human being remained clustered in the Japanese particularity. The only solution Watsuji could come up with was to 'get rid of the concept [of *kokutai*] all together' as if only a word could help re-winning a war (WTZ XIV: 368).

The Religion of the Human Being

Miki and Watsuji certainly bore on their shoulders the burden of having been the prophets of their own national history. Their systems, based on the idea that the *ningen* was the origin and the future of Japan, were based on the faith that the *escaton* of the war would have materialized in a Japanese victory. The *escaton* always presupposes an expectation towards the historical fulfillment that will come with the Day of the Lord. At the same time, the element of predestination plays a key role in this sense. Miki and Watsuji called it 'the moral destiny of Japan'. As in religion, they firmly and uncritically

suggested that the renovation of the human being should have come after the end of the 'world', in a re-shuffling and re-balancing of the global powers. Their religious thought was underpinned by the idea that the *escaton* could have not but appeared in this way. Miki and Watsuji's *ningen* was predestined to become a society, a nation and then an empire because of its immanent ontological structure on the one hand, and because Miki and Watsuji trusted the *escaton* on the other. The historical fulfillment of the destiny of Japan not only should have brushed away any doubts regarding the technological superiority and 'modernity' of Japan, but it would have finally seen the new 'type' appear in the form of the 'Eastern' human being or the Japanese *Gemeinschaft*. Eventually, the cardcastle collapsed both politically as well as idea-logically. Japan lost the war and had to endure the tragedy of two atomic bombs, the Eastern human being died with Miki in a prison cell forgotten by the Americans and Watsuji's *Gemeinschaft* took the oxymoronic form of a brand new postwar society grounded in the old and defeated prewar one.

The idea of *ningen* as Miki and Watsuji built it was a 'vision' completely detached from historical reality. In the face of a crisis they were not capable of coming to terms with reality in a critical way. The national, uncertain, median human being that they constructed could not but fail in its internal renovation since spatially and temporally it was crystallized a specific location and history. The *escaton* simply contributed to expose the flaws their philosophy had kept hidden for so long. The war bankrupted their ideas and they chose to take that risk.

Further Thoughts

In this thesis I have attempted to answer the questions of how Miki and Watsuji created a concept of the human being that could not but eventually collapse into the Japanese empire, and also to what extent the historical period and the intellectual milieu of their time contributed to this vision. Yet, I have tried to demonstrate that a clear line between philosophy and politics cannot be drawn. As long as ideas are not considered as being the combined expression of a philosophical exercise, its historical context and its political environment, it will be almost impossible to understand why they unfolded in a

given fashion. Judging Miki and Watsuji solely for their political choices would not do justice to the essence of their work. Refraining from exploring these very same choices, on the other hand, would have identical results. Contextualizing their political expressions in the framework of their overall production could help in casting more lights on the reasons that pushed them to support a totalitarian regime.

In my work I have reached the conclusion that Miki and Watsuji's *ningen* did not have a choice but to follow this path. What was negated to their human being was the possibility of evolving following the progress of history. Medianity prevented development, the *Angst* located it in a position of uncertainty and the religious thought based on the belief in the moral destiny of Japan made into a predestined ideal. Such a theorization indeed endangers the possibility of change and to swiftly turn into another direction. This problem does not entail that Miki and Watsuji did not bear any responsibility for their political involvement with the regime. On the contrary, they chose to subordinate their ideas to the one of the government by opting not to modify the vision they had themselves helped to carve.

Further thoughts come to mind. For example, is the fact that Miki created a 'ningen-*class*', without following the concept of class as explained in Marxist philosophy, the result of the idea of 'harmony' (*wa*) that many have recognized to be an 'invented tradition'? If this was the case, then it would mean that Miki's society was indeed a society where class struggle would have only disrupted the order imposed from above and it would put Miki in the same position as the one of Watsuji. Secondly, is the fact that Watsuji refused to change his idea of betweeness not a symptom of a greater malaise that pervaded the Japanese intellectual milieu in the 1950s and 1960s? In other words, is the refusal of dealing with the war and its subsequent loss a proof that a whole intellectual community took refuge into what Hannah Arendt called 'the nostalgia for a still intact past'? Thirdly, could the failure of the *escaton* be the reason behind Tanabe Hajime and Nishitani Keiji's turn towards philosophy of religion in the postwar period? Lastly, could the framework of the *escaton* be employed in other historical or ideological locations to possibly attempt to explain the involvement of a great number of intellectuals with the totalitarian regimes of the past century?

Perhaps this is a small piece of the puzzle of why intellectuals got involved and enthusiastically supported the 'banality' of evil of WWII.

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Samenvatting

Aan het begin van dit proefschrift stond een onderzoek naar de manier waarop en de mate waarin twee twintigste-eeuwse Japanse filosofen, Miki Kiyoshi (1897-1945) and Watsuji Tetsurō (1889-1960), hebben bijgedragen aan de ideologie van het Japanse oorlogsregime. Hun achtergrond was zeer verschillend; Miki was een intellectueel die een deel van zijn leven wijdde aan de studie van het Marxisme en die de concepten 'dialectiek' en 'klasse' vanuit een zeer vernieuwend perspectief benaderde. Watsuji was een conservatieve intellectueel die de vorming van een nieuw nationaal karakter nastreefde ten aanzien van de crisis, die in zijn optiek door de 'Westerse moderniteit' naar Japan was gebracht. Een plotselinge omslag in hun ideeën in de jaren veertig van de twintigste eeuw bracht de filosofische systemen van Miki en Watsuji uiteindelijk samen, toen zij er beiden toe overgingen de expansiepolitiek van Japan te ondersteunen. De hoofdvragen waren daarom hoe twee zozeer verschillende standpunten zowel filosofisch als politiek konden versmelten, en in hoeverre zij hun waarde verloren toen Japan werd verslagen in 1945. Op methodologisch niveau werd dit vraagstuk gereflecteerd in de kwestie of de relatie tussen filosofie en intellectuele geschiedenis zo zwak was dat het onmogelijk was om deze twee te scheiden, of dat, anderzijds, een nieuw methodologisch instrument nodig was om een brug tussen de twee te slaan.

Mijn stelling is daarom dat het antwoord op deze vragen moet worden gezocht in de manier waarop Miki en Watsuji het concept 'mens' (*ningen*) gedurende hun carrière theoretisch hebben vorm gegeven en verder hebben ontwikkeld. Ook ben ik van mening dat hun idee van 'medianity', dat hun uitwerking van *ningen* onderbouwt, de meest diepgaande en fundamentele fout was waardoor hun systemen in 1945, samen met het regime, ten onder gingen. Ik toon aan dat de overwinning er niet alleen in militair en historisch opzicht niet in slaagde tastbaar te worden, maar ook op filosofisch vlak. Het 'geloof' in de morele bestemming van Japan waar Miki en Watsuji blijk van gaven en dat werd belichaamd door het idee van het *escaton* wat betreft de overwinning in de Tweede Wereldoorlog, werd niet verwezenlijkt op de manier die zij zich hadden voorgesteld. Zo waren hun filosofische systemen gedoemd te mislukken om twee redenen: de mens die zij vormgaven was een weergave van de betekenis die de Japanse staat voor hen had, en hij was bovendien in ruimte en tijd gebaseerd op een Japanse locus die was gericht op een denkbeeldige toekomstige overwinning. De Tweede Wereldoorlog, met de crisissfeer die deze met zich mee bracht, leidde tot het failliet van de verwachtingen en ideeën van Miki en Watsuji.

Op politiek vlak werd deze Japanse mens weerspiegeld in de expansiepolitiek van Japan, en, in het geval van Watsuji, zelfs in het politieke klimaat van de naoorlogse periode. Ondanks de persoonlijke en intellectuele verschillen tussen Miki en Watsuji vonden zij elkaar in politiek opzicht in hun theorievorming van *ningen*, hun vertrouwen in het *escaton* en hun idee van 'medianity'. Ik zal laten zien dat wat zij verzuimden te doen was ervoor te waken dat hun systemen afgleden tot ultranationalisme en imperialisme. In plaats daarvan gingen zij er gewoon in mee.

Om mijn hypothese methodologisch te ondersteunen maak ik gebruik van zowel intellectuele geschiedenis als filosofie, en breng deze onder bij filosofiegeschiedenis. In feite bleek noch intellectuele geschiedenis noch filosofie alomvattend genoeg om te bepleiten dat ideeën en geschiedenis gezamenlijk kunnen instorten. Enerzijds kan intellectuele geschiedenis, met haar gerichtheid op de contextualisering van de productie van een bepaalde auteur, niet volledig antwoord geven op de vraag of de auteur en zijn productie een heimelijke verstandhouding kunnen hebben met de historische realiteit. Anderzijds omvat het bereik van de filosofie niet noodzakelijkerwijs het historisch milieu of de historische impact die bepaalde ideeën hadden. Door de historische en intellectuele ontwikkeling van het idee van *ningen* bij Miki en Watsuji te schetsen, probeer ik daarom de kwestie te behandelen van een mogelijke oplossing voor het probleem van de verhouding tussen filosofie en geschiedenis. Met het oog op de specifieke historische omstandigheden van de Tweede Wereldoorlog is deze kwestie nog prangender wanneer we de manier willen begrijpen waarop intellectuelen actief deelnamen aan het ontstaan van de 'banaliteit van het kwaad' van deze oorlog.

In de tweede plaats ben ik van mening dat er een belangrijk probleem is in de wijze waarop men de filosofie van de 'Kyōto School' tot nu toe heeft benaderd. Alle studies die tot op heden zijn verschenen richten zich hoofdzakelijk op de vraag naar collaboratie. De verhouding tussen intellectuele geschiedenis, filosofie en de productie van ideeën moet echter nog degelijk worden geproblematiseerd. Daarom moet, in het bijzonder in het geval van deze twee denkers, de kwestie niet blijven steken bij hun vermeende collaboratie, hun vermeende *tenkō* (afzwering) of hun vermeende politieke onschuld (en, zo zou ik willen bepleiten, naïviteit). Eerder zou de kwestie moeten zijn op welke manier zij allebei opschoven in de richting waar de Japanse regering op aanstuurde. De 'kloof tussen intellectuele historici en godsdienstfilosofen' zal nooit worden overbrugd als het onderzoek niet ophoudt hardnekkig vast te houden aan deze twee polariserende posities. Wanneer bovendien de fundamentele vraag achterwege wordt gelaten hoe een bepaald idee in een bepaald filosofisch systeem kan veranderen in een politiek wapen, wordt voorbij gegaan aan de belangrijke rol die

intellectuelen hadden in de totstandkoming van de ultranationalistische ideologieën van de afgelopen eeuw, met hun naargeestige politieke en historische gevolgen. Om deze kwestie op te lossen heb ik ervoor gekozen om het onderzoek naar het concept van de mens bij Miki en Watsuji zowel vanuit het perspectief van de intellectuele geschiedenis als dat van de filosofie te benaderen. Door de interne ontwikkeling na te gaan van drie fundamentele elementen die de theoretische basis vormen van het concept *ningen*, te weten 'medianity', *Angst* en religie, laat ik zien dat mijn benadering nauwer verwant is met filosofiegeschiedenis dan met intellectuele geschiedenis of filosofie.

Voor Miki en Watsuji geeft 'medianity' zowel de ontologische als de historische positie van de mens weer, waar de *ningen* zichzelf geplaatst ziet tussen totaliteit en oneindigheid bij Miki, en totaliteit en bijzonderheid bij Watsuji. De theorievorming van een alomvattend menselijk wezen als 'median' die de eenheid van subject en object weergeeft, van logos en pathos, van lichaam en geest was erop gericht het epistemologisch onderscheid tussen 'subject' en 'object' op te heffen. Deze mens had als bijzondere eigenschap dat hij bij Miki zijn onderbouwing vond in geschiedenis en praxis (vervolgens poiesis), en bij Watsuji in geschiedenis en klimaat. Precies echter het feit dat deze mens de specifieke geschiedenis van Japan grondvestte, en dat in een specifiek Japans klimaat, maakte dat hij geen complete vernieuwing kon ondergaan die in staat was zich te ontwikkelen tot een ander soort potentiële 'geschiedenis' dan die welke de Japanse natie heeft ondergaan.

Ten tweede ontwikkelden Miki en Watsuji 'medianity' als een antwoord op de intellectuele en spirituele crisis die zij als alomtegenwoordig ervoeren in de Japanse maatschappij tussen de jaren twintig en de jaren vijftig van de twintigste eeuw. De historische crisis was aangewakkerd door de onzekere politieke stemming die volgde op de Eerste Wereldoorlog, en die de weg vrij maakte voor de opkomst van het ultranationalisme in Japan. Miki zag dit weerspiegeld in de 'irrationele krachten' die de overhand kregen in de vorm van fascisme (MKZ X: 400-2). Watsuji beschouwde dit in termen van de gevaren die de 'Westerse moderniteit' en het 'Westerse' kapitalisme vormden voor de pure en 'traditionele' Japanse cultuur. Verder werd hij dit opnieuw gewaar in de Japanse nederlaag in 1945 en in de Amerikaanse bezetting die hierop volgde en die aanhield tot 1952. Het was hierom dat beide denkers de crisis (of crises) van hun tijd interpreteerden als een teken van de diepgaande historische verandering die zich in die periode meester maakte van Japan. 'Medianity' kwam dus niet alleen op als een middel voor vernieuwing op filosofisch niveau, maar ook als een product van en een poging tot een oplossing voor de historische context waarin het was ontstaan. Als we Gramsci echter moeten geloven, die zei dat, in de tijd van crisis, 'het oude

sterft en het nieuwe nog niet kan worden geboren', en dat 'in dit interregnum een enorme verscheidenheid aan morbide symptomen opkomt', dan wordt duidelijk dat het wel eens zo zou kunnen zijn dat 'medianity' zich geen machtig instrument betoont om ultranationalistische tendensen te contrasteren (Gramsci 1971: 276). In feite is het mogelijk om 'medianity' te beschouwen als een 'morbide symptoom' van het ophanden zijnde rijk.

In de derde en belangrijkste plaats is er het element religie dat behoorlijk sterk naar voren komt in de systemen van Miki en Watsuji. Beiden geloofden dat de Japanse overwinning in de Tweede Wereldoorlog zich zou hebben gerealiseerd in de vorm van een intellectueel *escaton.* Aan het einde van de oorlog zou een nieuwe, vernieuwde Japanse *ningen* leiding hebben gegeven aan heel Azië, tegenover de Europese en Amerikaanse mens. Het geloof in hun land dat zij aan de dag legden, en hun overtuiging dat dit de bestemming was waar Japan moreel recht op had, zijn er nu juist de oorzaak van geweest dat hun opvatting van de mens een noodlottige slag kreeg toegebracht door de loop van de geschiedenis. In de kern is het een probleem van godsdienstig geloof, zij het dan niet in de zin van theologie, maar meer in de zin dat Miki en Watsuji geloofden in een religie van de mens, met alle implicaties van dien, predestinatie incluis. Toch verschillen het *escaton* van Miki en dat van Watsuji enigszins van elkaar in hun historische realisatie. Miki overleed in september 1945 en zou de Amerikaanse bezetting van Japan en de intellectuele en fysieke reconstructie van zijn land niet meer meemaken. Zo stierf zijn idee van de vernieuwde mens met hem, en bleef deze idee kenmerkend een religieus *escaton.* Watsuji daarentegen overleefde de oorlog en bleef schrijven tot aan zijn dood in 1960. Omdat zijn idealen samen met Japan waren verslagen in augustus 1945, moest hij een ander model van *ningen* voorstellen, dat de nieuwe uitdagingen van de naoorlogse periode tegemoet kon treden. Daarom besloot hij om de idee van 'betweeness' te omarmen. De mislukking van zijn *escaton* in 1945 deed vervolgens een nieuwe vorm van *escaton* ontstaan die erop gericht was dat Japan zich zou verheffen in het nieuwe geopolitieke klimaat van de Koude Oorlog. Het *escaton* van Watsuji nam zowel een politieke als een religieuze vorm aan en belemmerde de mogelijkheid om fouten uit het verleden toe te geven nog meer.

Deze drie elementen vormen de essentie van de filosofische innovaties van Miki en Watsuji, en gezamenlijk hebben zij hun systemen naar de ondergang geleid. Van daar toon ik aan hoe de filosofische ondernemingen van Miki en Watsuji als geheel gedoemd waren te mislukken door een combinatie van de interne wisselwerking van genoemde elementen en de externe kracht van de historische context. Op deze manier probeer ik te laten zien dat filosofische systemen kunnen botsen met de geschiedenis naarmate die zich ontvouwt.

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Curriculum Vitae

Chiara Brivio was born in Morbegno, a small village in the Italian Alps, on April 10th 1980. In 1999, she graduated from the Lyceum Gymnasium 'G. Piazzi' in Sondrio where she studied Greek, Latin, history, philosophy and English. In the same year, she enrolled at the faculty of East Asian Studies at Ca' Foscari University in Venezia, Italy, with a major in Japanese studies. In 2001 she left Venice for an internship at Rheon Automatic Machineries in Utsunomiya, Japan, and in 2002 she won the Socrates-Erasmus European grant for a one-year exchange program at Leiden University, The Netherlands. In 2004, she completed her MA degree at Ca' Foscari University with a thesis on the relationship between ethics and politics in the philosophy of Watsuji Tetsurō. She subsequently left for Keiō University, Tokyo, Japan, where she spent one year as a student and researcher.

In August 2005 she returned to Leiden University, where she had been accepted as a Phd candidate in the context of the VICI project: 'Historical Consciousness and the Future of Modern China and Japan: Conservatism, Revisionism and National Identity', led by Prof. Dr. Rikki Kersten (Department of Japanese and Korean Studies, now at Australian National University) and Prof. Dr. Axel Schneider (Department of Chinese Studies). Her thesis, 'The Human Being: When Philosophy Meets History. Miki Kiyoshi, Watsuji Tetsurō and their quest for new *ningen*', was completed under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Rikki Kersten and Prof. Dr. Christopher Goto-Jones, professor of Japanese Studies at Leiden University. She is currently a 'docent' in the Department of Japanese and Korean Studies at Leiden University.

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