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

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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.