

DEUS ABSCONDITUS:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF JAPANESE AND AMERICAN POLITICAL THEOLOGIES
IN THE TIME OF EMPIRE, 1931-45

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This dissertation challenges established assumptions concerning the religious and civilizational influences upon certain prominent Japanese and American intellectuals during the interwar period, 1931-1945. My argument has two stages. First, I take the case of Tanabe Hajime, a major theorist of Japanese imperial sovereignty, and demonstrate that he has been mistakenly represented as (something like) a “Buddhist” thinker who advocates Japanese racial superiority as a justification for empire. In fact, on closer examination of his writings it is apparent that he is to all intents and purposes a political theologian adapting the discourse of the Barthian post-WWI Euro-American theological world. It is also apparent that he has much more complex views on race and its malleability than his commentators have typically afforded to him.

The second stage of my argument is to show how the forms of “postnational” sovereignty Tanabe is arguing for are also given serious consideration (and often support) by major American intellectuals of the time. I undertake this comparison by examining the work of Reinhold Niebuhr and John Foster Dulles in the 1930s. In particular, through highlighting the deployment of “repentance” by all three thinkers, as well as through historicizing the various representations of transpacific interwar intellectual history post-WWII, I show the conspicuous

transpacific commonalities among all three figures. This, in turn, evidences the distorted nature of the prevailing accounts of the 1930s, accounts that have deployed civilizational religious-cultural differences to misrepresent and/or disavow or the *global* transformations of thinking on sovereignty during this time.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

After obtaining a BA in Philosophy and Politics at the University of York, England, Christopher Jones went on to complete an MA in Japanese religions at SOAS in London in 2001. He then undertook research in central Japan for one year followed by two years research in religion and gender at the University of Tokyo. In 2004 he began his PhD program at Cornell University and will take up a lecturing and administrative position there in 2015.

This dissertation is dedicated to all those who will never even have the opportunity to try and understand.

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Introduction

“As a scholar from Asia working closely with European theory in America, I find myself habitually returning to the implications of this disjuncture: between the self-reflexive and (fashionably) mournful/melancholy postures of contemporary theory on the one hand, and the strange complacency of its provincial contents (its habit to tell the story of only about certain languages, cultures and histories), on the other, is there not . . . a persistent epistemic scandal?”

Rey Chow, *The Age of the World Target*

“There is no more urgent project therefore than to ask in what sense the legacies of ‘religion’ disarticulate and reconstellate themselves as the elementary forms of life in the twenty-first century”

Hent de Vries, *Political Theologies: Public Religions in a Post-secular World*

In recent decades a conflux of forces have combined to make “religion” a very uncertain scholarly category indeed. Among these, whether it be considered as arche or symptom, the commonest thread in this overdetermined state of affairs has been the erosion of a certain early twentieth century complacency regarding the inevitable consignment of religion to modernity’s

past. Consequently, in North American academia—and elsewhere, of course—to think religion and the modern today means to recognize that phenomena such as the Christianization of the Cold War, the born-again Carter, the Iranian revolution, the rise of the Evangelicals, and the War on Terror are just part of a litany of post-WWII “signs” to be urgently deciphered. This much-vaunted “return of religion” has in its more deconstructive and postmodern varieties led to a rethinking of the term’s relation to secularism, as well as driving the search for new understandings of the “modern.” Within this turn much scholarly energy has been channeled into new “postsecular” critical theorizations of religiosity itself. As part of this, numerous scholars have offered a range of specific interrogative historicizations of religion coterminous with the rise of the nation-state and other political projects. More broadly perhaps, we can say that for many on the “critical left,” religion itself—as well as the purportedly indubitable “experiences” which guarantee it—are being actively rethought as manifestations of an expansively defined “power,” and one far more generative than a mere opioid haze.¹

If such is the contested state of “religion,” then the designation “political theology,” central to this dissertation’s comparative project, compounds the scholastic vertigo. The conjunction of “political” and “theological” is not only embedded in broader religion-oriented debates but is also specifically drawn into streams of critical scholarship on sovereignty itself. The latter have often manifested in studies linked to the work of Carl Schmitt or resulted in one or another instance of what we might, for the sake of provocative convenience, label as

¹ For what is probably the most influential recent work historicizing modernity’s relational binary of religion and secularism see Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003). See also Jun’ichi, Isomae and Talal Asad, *Shūkyō o katarinaosu: kindaiteki kategorī no saikō* (Tōkyō: Misuzu Shobō, 2006). For a useful discussion of the rise of religion as a subjective feeling correlative to the establishment of the nation-state see Peter Antes, Armin W. Geertz, and R. R. Warne, *New Approaches to the Study of Religion* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 2004), 317-345.

postsecular political theology.² Finally, and bringing further obscurity to the boundary lines of “politics” and “theology,” it should be also remembered that these more recent trends have arisen concurrently with the ongoing productions of a long-established theologically apologetic political philosophizing.³

In the above I have suggested a number of interpretive approaches determining much current scholarship on religion and political theology. This dissertation will in fact engage—albeit to quite varying degrees—with all of the above-noted methodologically diverse attempts to “re-articulate” religion. That said, the *transpacific* nature of this study requires me to foreground here the most influential of these recent theoretical challenges to the institutional study of world religions, namely, that which resulted from the publication of Edward Said’s epochal *Orientalism* (1978).⁴ Since that time there has been a barely concealed anxiety among many religions scholars concerning the distinct possibility that “religion,” as it circulates in academic culture, is inherently or unreconstructedly suffused with Orientalist prejudices. In other words, the fear is that the subject itself, as a scholarly classification, is still implicated in the complex needs of nineteenth-century nation-states, “Western” imperialism, the textual prejudices of theologians, and the need to categorize others as “others.”⁵ The post-Vietnam reappraisal of

² I am referring here to the recent theologically inflected work of scholars such as Slavoj Žižek, Catherine Keller, Giorgio Agamben, Alain Badiou, those concerned with the “new” Paul, and so on.

³ Slightly adapting Werpehowski’s definition for this more overtly Christian political theology we might suggest that on an individual level it assumes we have human political responsibilities while, at the same time, claiming human critical independence from those responsibilities through a relationship with God. See William Werpehowski, “Reinhold Niebuhr,” in *The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology*, ed. P. Scott and W. T. Cavanaugh (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2007), 180. See the same volume for a collection of essays by such writers.

⁴ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994).

⁵ Tomoko Masuzawa’s *Invention of World Religions* has undoubtedly been the most influential in this regard within the religions field [Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions, Or, How European Universalism Was Preserved In the Language of Pluralism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005)]. For a discussion of the lineage and importance of her work see Clayton Crockett, *Radical Political Theology: Religion and Politics After Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 26-27.

“difference” in American academia is therefore coordinate with this ongoing crisis of national (in)security.

In terms of the global mapping of world religions, what Said’s and his followers’ insights can direct us toward is the need to consider religion’s role *today* as facilitating a drawing up of the narratives of world history so as to naturalize and authorize arrangements of power in their past and current global configurations. Twentieth-century U.S.-Japanese history is a rather acute case in point given, as this dissertation will show, the pivotal role of “Christianity” and “Other-to-Christian religions” at work in the established cultural and intellectual histories of the time. The political high stakes here—in which these religious delineations are necessarily implicated—must also be borne in mind in assessing these interwar narratives: the legitimacy America as the rightful leader of the post-WWII order has depended to a great extent on the need for the modern American polity to be intrinsically distinct from that which became an imperial Japan. Unpacking this reveals, in turn, other requirements: America must be seen as a country benefitting Japan through the Occupation and beyond, as offering the modern as model and guide, and for America to represent a form of sovereignty which is more just and right than the alternatives, i.e., more than the variety of fascisms, imperialism and totalitarianisms of which interwar and wartime Japan is declared to be one benchmark example.⁶

Given these stakes, and the role of interwar transpacific histories in such a legitimation, have we any reason to be suspicious of the established narratives of this period? More precisely, with popular explanations of the “nature” of “foreign peoples” now almost exclusively cashed out in terms of “culture,” and with religion as the most pervasive synecdoche for this principle,

⁶ I acknowledge the political nature of the varying dates ascribed to the beginning of the Second World War and that of the Asia-Pacific War. For the sake of inclusivity I mean by “interwar” the period 1918-1942.

and, furthermore, as scholars sensitive to an anti-Orientalist hermeneutics of suspicion, is there sufficient reason to initiate a reappraisal? I would answer here in the affirmative. Said's *Orientalism* and the burgeoning interest in transnationalism alone should make us wary for a cursory glance reveals that in the histories of interwar Japan almost all the available scholarship on religion's imbrication with Japanese imperial philosophies of the time takes it as a given that we would call Japanese religious influences—indigenous or indigenized—are precisely, and the only, relevant religious influences here.⁷ In fact, such is the seemingly tautological obviousness of this claim—even post-Said—that it appears obdurately contrarian to suggest otherwise.

In this dissertation I shall, nevertheless, attempt to argue “otherwise.” In essence my thesis is as follows. When we examine the above religious imbrications with Japanese imperialism—and I take the imperial philosopher Tanabe Hajime as much-commented upon example—numerous inconsistencies arise, inconsistencies which point to a larger problem in the construction of post-WWII historical scholarship.⁸ By paying close attention to religious language Tanabe utilizes we find that contra the establish interpretations his work, his imperial philosophies cannot be culturally reduced to an ultranationalism informed by and reworking Japanese religious traditions. In fact, we discover that it is a very “Christian” political theology intended to ground a *certain kind* of imperial management. Moreover, it is one which is to be

⁷ Not only does this include leading American and European scholars on this issue such as James Heisig and Chris Goto-Jones—both of whom are examined later—but also senior Japanese scholars such as Fumihiko Sueki, one of the most influential Buddhologists in Japan at the present time. See, for example, Fumihiko Sueki, *Kindai Nihon No Shisō* (Tōkyō: Toransubyū, 2004), 52-60.

⁸ For a discussion of Tanabe Hajime's importance among interwar Japanese intellectuals and some government policy advisors, see Naoki Sakai, “Subject and Substratum: On Japanese Imperial Nationalism” *Cultural Studies* Volume 14, Issue 3: 467-468. For a consideration of how the work of Tanabe (and that of his protégé Miki Kiyoshi) attracted minority colonial intellectuals to support a Japan-led East Asian regionalism, see Travis Workman, “Sō In-sik's Communism and the East Asian Community (1937–40),” *positions: east asia cultures critique* 21, no. 1 (2013): 133-160. It should also be noted—and will be referenced where appropriate in the following chapters—that Tanabe has at times been used to serve as a *de facto* representative for the entire Kyoto School. While I would certainly not support such an approach, it does add to the importance of critiquing existing studies of his work.

distinguished from the variations of imperialism grounded in Japanese-racial superiority of which he has been accused. Most importantly, however, is the fact that this heretofore misrepresented political theology is strikingly similar to that of the contemporaneous and American public figures Reinhold Niebuhr and John Foster Dulles. As I will show, all three thinkers were attempting to ground a post-national new world order by drawing heavily on post-WWI theological developments. These transpacific commonalities challenge a number of established twentieth-century narratives which are reliant on distinguishing a Christian, progressive, universal Euro-America from a particularistic non-Christian Japan. It is the latter, by virtue of this unmodern cultural hue, which is deemed to have thereby been fated to fall into political darkness.

Given this cultural history, I will focus my critical efforts in this dissertation on the prevailing intellectual histories of the interwar that divide cultures and their inherent political tendencies along religiously informed lines. As a preliminary critical appraisal of such measures of distinction I take up, in Chapter One, the issue of comparison as it orders post-WWII narratives of the interwar period. I argue in this first chapter that post-WWII scholarly discourse on the this period's religio-political developments has been conditioned by a number of "national" needs, needs which must be adumbrated in order to reveal the forces maintaining the established histories of that time. What my analysis suggests is that as the politics of the notion of "difference" within and as a comparative operation becomes more apparent, what comes to the fore is how these rhetorical strategies are used to both mobilize and to disguise different projects of national/imperial sovereignty.⁹

⁹ I use the collocation national/imperial so as to signal a suspension of the assumption of their differences. I examine this point in more detail in the next chapter.

Various strategies of argumentation are used as a means to fend off unwanted attention to these projections of national/imperial power lying hidden within culture-based histories.¹⁰ In Chapter One I argue that these rhetorical moves, when threatened by a critical gaze, commonly respond by retreating into assertions of one kind or another of “deep” cultural difference. This place of refuge, as Takashi Fujitani names it in other contexts, is “culture in the last instance.” I would add here that the concomitant effect of this as such arguments dissemble themselves across the Pacific (past and present) is to reinstate what he calls “the otherness of Japan to America’s modernity.”¹¹

For those hoping to head-off this last line of retreat—as I do—I am suggesting that the territory of political theology offers uncommonly promising resources. This is so because this “culture in the last instance” often resorts both (implicitly and explicitly) to a discourse embedded in the logic of political theology so as to ground violence-legitimizing cultural values. In particular, I believe that precisely by engaging fire with fire, as it were, it is possible to demystify—and ultimately demonstrate a heretofore disavowed transpacific commonality between—the politico-theological assumptions of interwar national/imperial sovereignty. In the context of interwar transpacific intellectual histories this will mean challenging the prevailing story of an ultranationalist accommodation by Japanese religiosity in contrast to an American and fundamentally Christian progressive liberalism. In this way it is possible to force the human relations structuring these narratives out into the open.

¹⁰ The reasons for this are many but certainly include the danger that such questioning may possibly point to a time prior to assumed cultural differences; such questions might also indicate troubling similarities in national/imperial regimes across the various temporal and spatial divisions supposedly bounding global cultures.

¹¹ Takashi Fujitani, *Race for Empire: Koreans as Japanese and Japanese as Americans during World War II* (Berkeley: California University Press, 2011), 15.

In Chapter Two I focus my attention on the political theology of Tanabe Hajime. His work is taken up here both for the reasons ascribed earlier and because his Logic of Species has become something of a *locus classicus* for those discoursing on Japanese imperialism in relation to Japanese Buddhism. In this chapter, contra the received interpretation, I argue for Tanabe's close relationship to the *Christianity* of Hegel and Kierkegaard, his use of their work on repentance, and how this can be situated in terms of his support for a certain kind of imperial sovereignty. I focus in particular on the idea of repentance in this chapter since, as I demonstrate later on, it is also in fact a term quite prevalent in interwar American thinking on how to legitimate varieties of global sovereignty. To my knowledge, this "repentant" connection is wholly absent from the available scholarship on this interwar period.

In Chapter Three I further develop the relationship between Tanabe and Christianity by demonstrating how Tanabe's Logic of Species bears a remarkable approximation to the just war theory of St. Augustine. And this despite Tanabe's attempts to put some dialectical distance between himself and the nominally premodern theologian. My point here in the first instance is to broaden the case against reading the Japanese philosopher as something like a fascist Japanese imperialist grounded in Buddhist metaphysics. I then go on to critique the work of the influential scholar James Heisig in this regard. Linking Tanabe to Augustine also serves the purpose illuminating a direct connection—one of many—between Tanabe and the dominant form of Protestant American political theology of the 1930s. It is in Chapter Four that I turn to more fully explore this interwar America through the writings of Reinhold Niebuhr and John F. Dulles. Taking each in turn, I argue that the political theologies of these two twentieth-century giants of American public life appear to be cut from very much the same interwar theological cloth as Tanabe Hajime and those influences by him.

Finally, in my conclusion I turn to address how in post-WWII scholarship Tanabe's repentance has been presented not as an interwar technology of empire but as a postwar *mea culpa*. Through an analysis of one such widely read account by John Dower, I demonstrate how this postwar misrepresentation is at fault for conforming to the scholarly *dispositif* that has been the object of critique throughout the foregoing chapters.

Chapter 1

Transpacific Comparisons

“Acts of comparison perform important political work as “weapons of reason” in the tactics of rule”

Ann Stoler

This quotation from Stoler reminds us, first and foremost, that comparison is tied to the technologies of rule. In other words, it is about *sovereignty*, a term I use here to denote the arrangements pertaining to who decides the content of laws, as well as the range of their applicability or exclusion. In this formulation I am acknowledging (as a definitional starting point) the influential legacies of the Hobbesian classical formulation of sovereignty.¹ In this lineage the ordering of social formations is characterized by the exertion of force over against other forces—the state against the unruly individual, for example—and has productive-

¹ For Hobbes this was famously manifest in the “sovereign,” the unified body of the absolute monarch [Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Oxford, U.K.: Clarendon Press, 2012)]. This arrangement of powers continued to return in later reformulations such as Rousseau’s general will, or variations on the *representative body* as the analogous “head” of popular constitutional democracies. Such a formulation is also compatible with Schmitt’s much-debated claim that underlying such modern obfuscations, sovereignty is in essence (and indeed, he argues, should lie with) whomever “decides on the exception.” Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters On the Concept of Sovereignty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 5.

destructive consequences both in its original establishment, and in what Benjamin calls its “law-preserving violence.”²

For Schmitt, as is well known, this sovereignty and the ordering principles associated with it are still essentially theological even in their putatively secular manifestations.³ Without needing to enter into an assessment of this claim in its entirety, what is relevant for our purposes here is that the force of law, whether it be as sovereign political power and/or as sovereign theological power, is asymmetrical in its struggle to maintain itself in a given domain. In other words I suggest here that politically sovereignty flows in a dubious circuit of transcendent control over those to whom it is at least nominally responsible; written theologically, it operates as a non-immanent One that reigns and orders the multiplicity of being.⁴ Under the technologies of this power, in the act of legislating, sovereignty produces subjects (or those subject) as such inside, and via exclusion from, the law. In this way, the production of law is in fact separated from popular sovereignty—the popular sovereignty which on some level was/is meant to legitimate law—via a reciprocal construction of laws and those subject-ed to and through them.⁵

This power (*potestas*) of the theological/secular coupling behind the law has been and continues to be the target of innumerable critiques. What is interesting for our purposes is that

² Walter Benjamin, “Critique of Violence,” in Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings, Vol. 1, 1913-1926*, ed. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996).

³ Schmitt, *Political Theology*, 36.

⁴ Crockett, drawing on Deleuze, identifies the theological-secular imbrication of this sovereign power thus: “the active force is replaced by the reactive force, which is the essence of the State as representative and mediating power, as well as God as transcendent sovereign power.” Clayton Crockett, *Radical Political Theology: Religion and Politics After Liberalism*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 68. I would add here that the need for identification with and recognition by the state or “God” arising from the lack of the active would be one accompanying technology of this reactive force of control. As we shall see, there is an acute awareness of this problem at the heart of the political theologies examined in this dissertation.

⁵ The all too evident nature of this separation, a crisis in the very idea of law, has been exacerbated even further with the weakening of the nation-state and the rise of multinational capital. Arguably this drives so much of the recent interest in the question of the force of law and the possibility of a “law” beyond the law.

the febrile crisis-ridden atmosphere of interwar Europe was particularly productive of such “sovereignty subverting” political theologies as seen in the varied writings of thinkers such as Walter Benjamin, Henri Bergson, and Karl Barth. Given this intellectual milieu, it might not seem altogether remarkable to claim, as I do in my later arguments, that other scholarly contemporaries of these major “European” thinkers—Tanabe, Niebuhr, and Dulles—were influenced by the prevailing European theological and political tumult and, more broadly, were also engaged with many of the same concerns. Furthermore, on this basis, it might not seem so outlandish to suggest that these Japanese and American thinkers might *also* be placed at differing points on or around this continuum of engagement with, and criticism of, theocratic modes of political sovereignty. (In other words, Tanabe, Niebuhr, and Dulles would be certain kinds of political theologians against other kinds of politics and political theology.) Yet remarkably, existing commentaries on Japanese intellectual history have almost without exception refused to treat interwar Japanese intellectual productions in a global political theological context.⁶ In the remainder of this chapter I hope to shed some light on why this has been the case, and on what is at stake in this question of transpacific “comparison.”

⁶ As far as I am aware, there are no published studies comparing interwar Japanese philosophers such as Tanabe Hajime with American political theologies of the interwar period. That said, there are studies on the European theological intellectual inheritance of such Japanese thinkers. An important recent instance of this is Ogawa Keiji’s “Kyōto gakuha no tetsugaku to baruto shingaku” in *Nihon Ni Okeru Kāru Baruto: Haisen Made No Juyōshi No Shodanmen* (Tōkyō: Shinkyō Shuppansha, 2009). Ogawa deserves credit for drawing attention to the merits of thinking Kyoto School thought in conjunction with post-1918 European theology. Regrettably, though, his discussions remains entirely biographical. In this sense regions and thinkers remain quite separate and he does not engage with *how* the ideas of political theology intersect with events in Europe, America and the Japanese empire.

A Nonsensical Title?

At first sight, the title of this dissertation invites confusion in its traversing of established spatial and temporal boundaries. In aggregating together analytical categories such as nation, empire, and Japan—each with their own cluster of associated meanings—the title risks its own intelligibility by eliciting a number of possibly aporetic readings. In trying to make sense of such a concatenation of incongruous times and spaces, the reader is confronted by a number of urgent questions: Given comparison’s dubious history of racial/imperial classifications, does the operation itself have any credibility left amidst the dizzying relativism and hybridity of our putatively globalizing world? Or is the difference/comparison operation in some way “re-authorized” through the accompanying (and proliferating) minefields of identity politics? Moreover, how can the transnational comparison suggested in the title move convincingly between ostensibly different modes of sovereignty (i.e., nation and empire, interwar America and Japan)? At the same time, how is it possible to think globally if one is using established and particularized “western” cultural memes (i.e., theology, political theology or “serious,” that is to say, *western* political philosophy)? And, finally, can all this be undertaken inside a judicious historicization of such an intellectually disparate period of the twentieth century?

In reply to these very legitimate concerns what is required first and foremost, so as to enter into this manner of questioning, is a marking out of the various lines of force that in disciplinary and discursive senses police these concepts and questions. Only on the basis of an analysis of this homeostatic regime of knowledge production and control can these questions be properly addressed.

Sameness and Difference Through Acts of Comparison

“As a scholar from Asia working closely with European theory in America, I find myself habitually returning to the implications of this disjuncture: between the self-reflexive and (fashionably) mournful/melancholy postures of contemporary theory on the one hand, and the strange complacency of its provincial contents (its habit to tell the story of only about certain languages, cultures and histories), on the other, is there not . . . a persistent epistemic scandal?”

Rey Chow

In the 21st century, what does it mean to compare transpacific discourses on religion and sovereignty from the previous century? Anyone beginning to address such question immediately confronts the fact that the procedure of global comparison itself is now indelibly marked by a racial indexing and other kinds of imperial scalar classifications. Such is the ubiquity of condemnation for this historical practice—and has become an academic publishing industry in its own right—that anything other than outright denunciation of “comparison” can often appear at best naïve, or at worst, willful complicity in the latest repackaging of “dark continents.”

There is a countervailing force, however. With notable cultural shifts such of postwar feminism, the Civil Rights movement, and the watershed of Vietnam, there has been an anxious undercurrent in post-1960s American scholarship over the meaning of the modern. This has meant that subtending the academics of postcolonialism, minority or gender studies—to name

but three—there has been a strong concern to foreground “difference” in some sense.⁷ As a result, those undertaking transnational comparison today constantly run the risk of being dashed somewhere between a Scylla of racism (lurking under a universalistic or generalizing guise), or a Charybdis of a particularistic and protean identity politics.⁸

How, then, are we to think the triptych of comparison, universalism and the particular? As suggested above in the imbricated history of recent scholarly trends, the two tendencies—the thinking of a universal humanity, and the sense of an irreducible particularity—are mutually productive. Whether or not one sees this as dialectical in some ideal or material sense, what is certain is that the reciprocity of the struggle for a “truer” universal—the singular, as some would call it—can be seen at work inside the process of comparison. That is to say, a comparative operation is something that requires an encompassing universalistic or general concept to allow comparison—e.g., “nation” or “culture,”—and as such, this sameness of quality in the general concept of nation or culture is necessarily already assumed prior to the designating of any difference, e.g., the difference of national culture X from that of national culture Y. Yet, equally,

⁷ The tensions within this “evolution” or race to the singular universal have been further complicated by academic and popular discussions concerns over globalization and (im)migration. Globalization and migration often engender tropes of spatialized traditional pasts while enacting this alongside the vague promise of post-identity cosmopolitan futures converging at some distant future. For wide ranging set of essays on the relation between universalism and the particularities of race (ism) see Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities* (London, England: Routledge, Chapman & Hall, 1991).

⁸ Or at least it could be said that this is how it appears to the majority of cosmopolitan liberals, and the large number of scholars concerned for how their own culturally informed senses of justice inflect their comparative discussions of culture. By way of contrast, Žižek, speaking in a manner echoed by many on the left (who in fact might reject much of the rest of Žižek’s work) challenges the way the liberal conundrum is set up: “What the liberal multiculturalist fails to notice is that each of the two cultures engaged in ‘communication’ is caught up in its own antagonism which has presented it from fully ‘becoming itself’ - and the only authentic communication is that of ‘solidarity in a common struggle’, when I discover that the deadlock that hampers me is also the deadlock which hampers the Other.” Slavoj Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Center of Political Ontology* (London: Verso, 1999), 264.

For a useful discussion of whether those advocating difference (especially postcolonial theorists) fail to replace “old” universalism with a new socially determined, non-homogenizing universal tool of critical analysis, see Kamran Matin, “Redeeming the Universal: Postcolonialism and the Inner Life of Eurocentrism” *European Journal of International Relations* 2013, 19: 353-378.

any comparative operation is itself already trading upon prior posited difference (which gave the idea of Y or a “Japan” as a thing to which a general concept could be applied, since it is believed to be such a thing, for example).⁹ In this sense the terms universal and particular are conjoined and the attempt to find one prior to the other results in an analytical *reductio ad absurdum*. Reflecting this relationship at the level of comparative history, Sluga reminds us “to the extent that nations are imagined communities, they are also imagined through comparison.”¹⁰

There is an additional transcendental dimension here to this relationship that must be acknowledged. Inside the desire that searches for or posits this universal or general term required for comparison, some *unspecified* notion of difference is also always already assumed in that desire to compare, and indeed assumed in the very idea of a nation as a category itself. (Otherwise it would not be a general category but a particular.) Furthermore, without such an assumption, comparison as an activity, from the outset, could only ever rather ashamedly cognize itself as what we might call an immediate levelling or, in its slower form, a subsuming gesture. In fact of course the pressure for comparison to facilitate just such an overcoming or supersession of any named difference—to avoid relativization, for example—may *actually* result in precisely just such a projected particularized universal. Yet despite this the act of

⁹ In trying to think how this is operationalized in the classic social scientific sense, Marilyn Ivy reminds us that the term culture sutures the aporia of, on the one hand, permitting incomparable or essential differences between cultures while, on the other, also allowing for comparison which supposedly reveals these differences. Marilyn Ivy, “In/Comparable Horrors: Total War and the Japanese Thing” *Boundary 2*, 32, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 137.

¹⁰ Sluga, *Comparison and History*, 104. In this dissertation, nations should be understood as *states* since the latter is a more effective way to consider the ways and means of exercising sovereignty. The term “state” allows an analytical range beyond a simple nation vs. empire framework and thereby facilitates a consideration of imperial modes of governance operative *within* a supposedly bounded nation-state.

The political decision to define a nation via a geographical space always tends towards an a-historical snapshot devoid of any analysis of the self-understanding in the supposed nation, a rather important issue in any colonial situation. Regrettably, attempts by certain scholars to deflect attention away from such colonial issues in the history of interwar Japan, including those writing on religion and the Kyoto School, have led to frequent mistranslations of the Japanese term *kokka* as nation rather than state, when it clearly indicates the latter. Specific instances of this will be discussed in Chapter Three.

comparing is still at some level indelibly marked by a sense of possibility of “real” difference. In this way, the desire to compare is enabled by something like a regulatory ideal of non-specified difference which inside actual practice faces demands to convert itself into some (fallen) concrete (often synecdochal) positivity—“In Japan they do this which reflects the fact that the culture is essentially about...”— and retroactively posit it as having been discovered as such. After all, without this difference can be nothing to subsume or even concretely “consider.”¹¹

The other side of this arrival at the “fact” of difference is that the transcendental assumption of the possibility of difference now appears co-opted into the way comparison always maintains an “incomplete relation” to this specific difference. In other words, some incomplete remainder remains since subsumption must never allow itself to get what it thinks it desires or it will lose its ability to maintain itself in difference, in comparison. It was in this sense that Hegel’s *Herrschaft* and *Knechtschaft* necessarily fail to end the death struggle because they *need* the remainder of each other in a series of complex moments.¹² In order to better grasp how this “incomplete relation” can aid our understanding of what transnational comparison has meant and conceivably *might* mean in terms of a more just possibility, it is first necessary to

¹¹ This, I suggest, represents the comparative accompaniment of the antagonism inherent to the universal itself. In other words, that the universal demands the concrete and yet thereby forecloses the possibility of the universal’s manifestation itself. As we will see in the next chapter such an antagonistic universal is integral to Tanabe’s logic of species.

¹² Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Arnold V. Miller, and J. N. Findlay, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 111-119. And the fact that in Hegel’s System the dialectical process must have already been completed before it has begun is, I believe, indicative of this contrarian unity within the desire to compare itself. Which is to say, so as to avoid the Hegelian dialectical process being essentially random, the Spirit already knows itself in the process of coming to know itself; similarly, comparison creates itself/has already created itself in its own self-image through seeing itself in difference; the necessary accompaniment to this is that Hegel’s dialectical moments of *Aufhebung* must fail, so that comparative spirit may continue its self-othering. I discuss these points in greater detail in Chapter Three in my comparison of Hegelian and Tanabean theologies.

examine more concretely the web of regulatory forces determining the field's positing of those errant positivities as well as the analytical frames that accompany them.¹³ To this I now turn.

Modern Time and Postwar Area Studies

I begin this section with a characterization of what a comparison between two “nations” or “cultures” is often taken to be.¹⁴ As discussed in the prior section of this chapter, under a system of comparison between two or more entities designated as not-same, some degree of presumed commonality is required in order to enable a determination of the elements’ difference(s) from each other. Typically, in transnational comparison the mediating frame in this operation is the empty placeholder of “culture,” a term which wavers between historical contingency and an amorphous essentialism depending on the purpose it is intended to serve. Here I reformulate this term into the neologism “culture-as-time” in order to emphasize the inseparability of the idea of culture from an accompanying universal time which, nevertheless,

¹³ What I am suggesting here corresponds to what is now commonly referred to as discourse or *dispositif* in the Foucauldian sense. In his 1977 interview “The Confession of the Flesh,” Foucault describes his notion of *dispositif* in the following way: “What I’m trying to pick out with this term is, firstly, a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions—in short, the said as much as the unsaid. Such are the elements of the apparatus. The apparatus itself is the system of relations that can be established between these elements.” Michel Foucault and Colin Gordon, *Power/knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, 1st American ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 194-228.

Political theology, its definitions and roles as the central theme in this project are elaborated upon at various points in this and other chapters. In the present context, the term’s relation to Foucault can be illumined by highlighting the fact that political theology, whatever else it may be, is a discussion and legitimation of political violence exterior to legislative procedures and established public rules of governance. In this respect Réal Fillions description of Foucault’s project is apposite: “That is, what interests him here are not what might be called the dynamics of history as domination but rather the intelligibility displayed within the ways in which ‘humanity installs each of its violences in a system of rules’; it is the (relative) intelligibility of those ‘installations’ that preoccupied his theorizing.” Réal Fillion, “Moving Beyond Bipower,” *History and Theory* 44, no. 4 (Dec. 2005): 64.

¹⁴ As the integrity of the nation-state as an object of analysis comes under increased pressure from shifts in scholarly paradigms, culture tends to be increasingly used as a safer default term. That said, cultural analysis on a micro-level (a rural family in Gifu Prefecture, for example) or questions about Asia in general almost always return to some idea of nation as a filtering or contextualizing category. This is at least in part due to the fact that the social scientific tools deployed for analyzing areas were originally oriented towards producing knowledge about nation-states.

also contains heterogeneous temporalities (e.g., modern and premodern) about which normative judgments can be made. Thus culture-as-time requires an undivided sense of universal time to act as an instrument permitting cross-cultural/national comparison at all, while also being internally divided.

In suggesting this nexus of culture *and* time, I acknowledge that it is doubtful whether the notion of culture has any remainder outside of those lines of continuity traced by various linear temporal configurations. Yet the ideology of culture (in the sense of culture-as-time) is useful at this juncture in order to highlight the politics of a conventional reading of the title of this dissertation. On such a reading, a “difference in commonality” is secured by choosing two particular modalities of culture in time (Japan and America) within a presumed universal conception of “cultures in time” (modern world history).¹⁵ This way of understanding comparison also guarantees the “continuity in change” which is essential to permit a diachronic comprehension of terms like religion and theology while sustaining their synchronic differences across their respective topoi. For the purposes of this chapter, I denote this schematizing of the world as imperial in that through othering, it posits an intrinsic inequality of capability which, at the same time, represses relativizing experiences of (what appears as) difference or sameness.

Where, then, do we turn to illuminate the academic disciplinary regimes which are allied with such a comparative practice? As numerous academic studies in recent decades have made clear, it is modernization theory—and its cartographic handmaiden in the shape of area studies—which, through applying different temporalities to produce unequal binaries, have had and

¹⁵ There are also of course additional times within times which can in various ways be traced back (at least schematically) to this division between universal time and its internal others. One example here would be the time of postwar Japan (*haisengo*) which is part of Japanese history, Japan’s only history, and also possibly a non-time. For a discussion of this issue see Marilyn Ivy’s reflection’s on Katō Norihiro in Marilyn Ivy, “In/Comparable Horrors: Total War and the Japanese Thing.” *Boundary 2*, 32, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 137-149.

continue to have the most profound effect on postwar “international” scholarship.¹⁶ With respect to Euro-American studies of Japan, numerous scholars have, *inter alia*, criticized area studies methodologies for operationalizing the presumptions of culture-as-time through searching inside bifurcated time for generalized empirical differences (errant positivities) tautologically assumed to be from different cultures.¹⁷ In this way there is a signal failure to theorize the politics of using investigative tools which find the object they seek. This results in the identification of this discovered fact as a synecdoche for an enclosed culture which therefore reinforces/repeats/becomes, through this procedural definition, a different culture.

Contrary to these modernization/area studies approaches to comparison, critics have asserted the various forms of interdependence which subtend the typically posited conceptual or empirical differences outside the “area.”¹⁸ In addition, undermining the distinction between nations in a slightly different modality, it should also be remembered how the non-western nation-state has from its inception always had a degree of double vision, seeing itself as both itself and through western eyes. As a result, the metonymical reading of an empirical or symbolic mark is again complicated by semantic registers external to any nominally homogenous culture. This circuitous rerouting of “Eastern” self-presence via the West undermines the very

¹⁶ For two useful studies see Terence Wesley-Smith and Jon D. Goss. *Remaking Area Studies: Teaching and Learning across Asia and the Pacific* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2010), esp. Chapter 4; and Harry D. Harootunian and Masao Miyoshi, *Learning Places: The Afterlives of Area Studies*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), esp. 157-175.

¹⁷ Harootunian, *Learning Places*, 7.

¹⁸ For example, capital accumulation as driving new distinct identities for consumption and/or a commonality of origins across spatio-temporal borders. Historian Ian Tyrrell suggests both of these in his attack on the way so much historiography buttresses American exceptionalism. Instead he advocates for comparative transnational history: “What is needed is the linking of comparative analysis of settler societies with transnational contexts of imperial power and the expansion of global markets under capitalism. With this modification, settler society models can be useful for enriching American historiography but, rather, to open up new questions and challenge unthinking assumptions concerning unilinear and homogenous national patterns.” See Ian Tyrrell, “Beyond the view of Euro-America: Environment, Settler Societies, and the internationalization of American History,” in T. Bender, ed., *Rethinking American History in a Global Age*, (Berkeley: University of California Press 2004), 176.

comprehensibility of a culturally self-contained people who, due to the unstated implication of its “in itself” natives, cannot go outside themselves and self-transcend. This indicates that the non-modern is in some way “formed” by the modern and vice-versa since this relationship begs an equivalent questioning of the western hegemonic gaze as something that desires the unified particularistic other in relation to itself.¹⁹ I will return to this problem of reciprocally formed identity later in this chapter.

Writing Sameness and Difference Across the Pacific

Given this plethora of theoretical problems and highly contested solutions, how do I intend to justify this comparative project? To answer this, I begin by returning to the list of urgent questions I presented at the beginning of this chapter. There, I indicated a cluster of issues circling around the relation of nation to empire, and the relation of those particular designations of sovereignty to Japan and the U.S., and to each other. In the case of modern post-1868 Japan, the most common textbook accounts of the relation between its national culture and imperial rule—and thus of the contextualizing forces inflecting any analysis of the interwar milieu—mark these two operations of sovereignty in a somewhat distinct and yet parallel manner. On the one hand, it is widely accepted that in some official albeit still unstable sense

¹⁹ Needless to say, these and other criticisms of area studies epistemologies stake their various claims in a hotly contested arena. The anxiety reflected in the disputes surrounding these “post-area studies” attempts to redress the self-serving temporalities of the west/non-west may be usefully read as a disagreement over whether difference, identity, and comparison is always thought too late and requires further analysis of prior historical and material conditions of possibility—for example, whether the possibility that the “past” which is supposed to be prior to the modern imperial is itself only itself a modern construct. For a representative temporality-based criticism of postcolonial theory see the introduction of Harry D. Harootunian and Masao Miyoshi, *Learning Places: The Afterlives of Area Studies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002). See also the essay by Harootunian in Thomas LaMarre and Nae-hŭi Kang, *Impacts of Modernities*, (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2004) and for a criticism of his analysis see Law Wing Sang in the same volume. Also of note here is the criticism of certain critical area studies approaches to the effect that they trade upon poststructuralism and the privileged status of university academics in wealthier countries (Chow, *Age of the World Target*, 49-50).

Japan came into being as a nation-state with the Meiji Restoration. Yet such accounts, usually through distinct ordinally distributed chapters, also describe Japan as an expanding imperial power (almost) from its inception. In this way they prescribe a framework for how these linear stage-like configurations of national and imperial sovereignty are to be thought together in the Japanese case.²⁰

This approach, while often pedagogically convenient, becomes internally problematic when attempts are made to clearly delineate, in conceptual-historical fashion, a “nation” of Japan that is independent of imperial practices. The problem can be seen from at least two directions. First, with the definition of imperial I gave above, it is impossible to find an imperial political arrangement which is not also to be found in the (falsely) distinguished domestic order.²¹ Second, and connectedly, more specific historical inquiries vis-à-vis Japan might ask why the official “Restoration” that is said to launch modern Japan is to be called the founding of a nation, rather than, for example, calling it the ongoing development of a “pre-national” colonial force?²² Similarly, even putting aside “Japan’s” post-1868 military ventures into the Ryūkyū Kingdom,

²⁰ Mikiso Hane’s *Modern Japan: A Historical Survey* (3rd Edition) Colorado: Westview Press, 2001 would be one such textbook example. Relatedly, in his discussion of the field, James Huffman notes that until certain disciplinary shifts in the 1990s—although and indeed still today—the focus of such nation building narratives were the central government alongside state actors [James Huffman, “Restoration and Revolution,” in *A Companion to Japanese History*, ed. W. M. Tsutsui (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell 2009), 142]. This pre-acceptance of the “space” of Japan, naturally encourages a disconnect between thinking the constructed and fluid relation of frontiers and, on the other hand, these spaces of national identity. Recent work by scholars such as Tessa Morris-Suzuki and Brett Walker, however, have challenged assumptions about the center (“Japan”) and periphery (the frontier) in the formation of the Japanese polity. See Michel Lewis’ “Center and Periphery” in *A Companion to Japanese History* for a useful discussion of these recent studies.

²¹ Ann Stoler reminds us that interior annexation where imperialism is internal as well as external, and positing false differences between the two is part of what colonial technologies of rule have depended upon. See Ann Stoler, *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy In North American History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 8.

²² For example, Morris-Suzuki argues persuasively that before the 19th century Ainu and Okinawan identities were used to define an otherness to Japaneseness, but once inside the international order these groups were incorporated in such a way as to define boundaries and Japan itself. See “A Descent into the Past: The Frontier in the Construction of Japanese History.” In Donald Denoon, Mark Hudson, Gavin McCormack, and Tessa Morris-Suzuki, eds., *Multicultural Japan: Paleolithic to Postmodern* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

how are we to accommodate (inside Japan's founding narrative) the Kingdom's tributary relationship with Satsuma (and simultaneously with the Qing Dynasty) from the seventeenth century? In other words, while the inaugural national moment of 1868 or the later/coincident "brute fact" of Japan as empire often passes without contestation in the literature, what is on reflection far less obvious is the extent to which this empire was "originally" or at any point the Japanese nation as opposed to a recurring "imperial" trope.

The above-referenced works of scholars such as Morris-Suzuki and Brett Walker indicate how a reimagined idea of the spatialized interrelatedness of nation, frontier borders and empire can generate a new kind of "post-national" narrative for early Japanese history. Yet the case of Japan's interwar intellectual history presents a very particular set of difficulties to anyone trying to write from a post-national perspective. Specifically, the postwar emphasis on Japanese mono-racial national ethnic identity has pushed a historical revisionism which ignores or disavows Japan's interwar "Japan as a multiethnic state" discourses.²³ Coordinated with this, the most ubiquitous postwar narrative of Japan as originally a nation of sorts that then went imperially bad, only to be made better than new by American intervention, requires a narrative that tacitly suppose a distinction between good nationalism and bad imperialism.²⁴

²³ Certain scholars, most famously perhaps Oguma Eiji, have of course tried to redress this tendency. See Oguma Eiji, *Tan'itsu Minzoku Shinwa No Kigen: "nihonjin" No Jigazō No Keifu* (Tōkyō: Shin'yōsha, 1995). I return to this issue in the context of Tanabe's work in Chapter Two.

²⁴ Probably the most widely read historical account based on this idea of a postwar break in Japanese national identity is found in John Dower's Pulitzer-prize winning book on Japan's defeat. See John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan In the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1999). I will criticize this book's presentation of Tanabe in my conclusion.

For other discussions of how the idea of a prewar/postwar break—with its ramifications for good nationalism and bad imperialism—works against a more rigorous historiographical reflexivity, see Chapter 5 of Toshiyuki Tanaka's *Japan's Comfort Women: Sexual Slavery and Prostitution During World War II and the US Occupation* (London: Routledge, 2002). See also Yukiko Koshiro, *Trans-Pacific Racisms and the U.S. Occupation of Japan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

These divisions and spacings that take place under the conceptual umbrella of nation vs. empire are kinds of frontiers themselves. Such borders have at least two sides along which certain histories are written and which reflect themselves back into their respective side's vision of themselves. Yet however "obvious" these worlds might appear to be, shifts in these borders and the Escher-like contortions that often result, pressure a reconfiguration of the gazes that are constantly struggling to affirm themselves in their respective dimensions. Reflecting this, as an increasingly global porosity of national borders is reflected both materially and in academic exchange, established intellectual practices and parameters have become increasingly unsustainable. As a result, the widespread turn away from the nation as the essential center of historical narratives has certainly become a feature of (at least some) recent U.S. historical scholarship.²⁵

In certain senses this change can be seen as facilitating transnational studies since the consequent loci of study—political theologies, for example—are (in theory at least) going to be less constrained by a prior assumptions of spatialized cultural difference. Resisting this possibility, however—and already conditioning discussions of empire and nation in the history of Japan—is the role of exceptionalism in structuring U.S. historical narratives about itself and its others. To be sure, American history has always exhibited a strain of discourse that protested its own seemingly imperial practices, variously defined from Mark Twain's polemics against the U.S.-Philippine War to the anti-imperial critics of the ongoing War on Terror. But concurrently, an opposing and arguably more influential majority is also very much a feature of this same cultural history. It is in these contexts that the meme of U.S. exceptionalism morphs in order to

²⁵ See, for example, the special issue of *The American Historical Review* on American exceptionalism and transnationalism (*American Historical Review* 96: 4, 1991). For a collection of essays suggesting contrasting roles for the nation-state within a new transnational history see Thomas Bender, ed., *Rethinking American History in a Global Age* (California: Berkeley University Press, 2002).

explain how America's apparent imperialism (usually meaning "abroad") was not or is not imperialism.²⁶ It follows from this that in any discussion of transpacific intellectual history, exceptionalism will inevitably cast a stubbornly resistant shadow over attempts to bring American forms of sovereignty into comparison with those of other "regions." This positioning of America is a common feature of public and academic discourse and inextricably linked to how a national space is maintained as separate and distinct from an imperial space. It is only through this separation that semblances of imperialism can then be publicly cast (for example) as essentially a regrettable, temporary part of establishing or maintaining the virtues of a non-imperial polity.

Keeping foreign and domestic histories in what I call a "distinct alliance" has commonly meant investing the popular and scholarly *dispositif* with a view of American "national" history as already postcolonial. Typically this has meant a presentation of America as having freed itself from oppressive European tendencies and then, in some on balance positive historical fashion, expanded westwards (non-imperially) into a "wild" plain frontier. While academic criticisms of this "invisible Indian" national-imperial history appeared even during the censorious Cold War—for example, in books such as Richard Slotkin's *Regeneration Through Violence*—it was the 1990s which saw an upsurge of interest in how national formations were implicated in overtly imperial projects, both domestically and abroad.²⁷ The upshot of these post-Vietnam

²⁶ As Donald Rumsfeld put it in 2004, "We don't seek empire. We are not imperialistic. We never have been." Cited in Ann Stoler "On Degrees of Imperial Sovereignty" in *Public Culture* Winter 2006 18 (1): 125. See also my Chapter Two for a discussion of America in the age of imperialism at the beginning of the 20th century.

²⁷ For what is probably the foundational text in this turn see Amy Kaplan and Donald Pease, *Cultures of United States Imperialism* (Durham: Duke University Press 1993). See also Edward L. Ayers, "What we talk about when we talk about the South" in *All over the Map: Rethinking American Regions* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996). In his account Ayers ably demonstrates how the racial segregation policies created during the Reconstruction era were derived from British imperial policies.

shifts in U.S. scholarship—when combined with the anxiety of what globalization might mean, or have already meant—is that words such as empire and sovereignty have come to be seen as part of a chain of signifiers with increasingly disputed referents and boundaries.

This dissertation's analysis of Japanese and American political theology in the 1930s is intended to support the transnational reframing of such terms. In saying this I am putting the “American” and “Japanese” writings under discussion in this thesis *sous rature* inside the net of language that has been repeatedly conditioned by the bifurcated temporality of comparison. And the implication of this suspension is that these political theologies must be therefore be re-presented—in other words—within a new temporal frame which avoids complicity with the political and translational ontologies criticized above. On one level, this is required because the existing scholarly presentations of Japanese and American interwar political theologies are mediated via a series of blocks and orderings maintained by an insufficient historicization of the methodologies of the field, or of the (con) textual object in question. Yet at the same time, the re-framing of these texts I am proposing here is also a prerequisite for bringing them into a space wherein they may be encountered as something like present discourse; in other words, to render their contemporaneity or coevalness, as Johannes Fabian puts it.²⁸

Even allowing for the popularity of “contemporaneity” as a topic for discussion in today’s humanities, the sudden appearance Fabian’s term coevalness might strike the reader as somewhat odd. After all, in his book from which I draw the term, *Time and the Other*, Fabian focuses not on the field of history but rather upon the shift away from the contemporaneity of the

²⁸ Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), p. xli.

anthropological encounter towards the “othering” temporality of anthropological writing.²⁹ Nevertheless, I wish to argue here that in the context of comparative historiography, once the history of the Rest is displaced from its bounded non-contemporaneous synchronicity, then the valence of universal time’s “contemporary” (and its noun correlate) can then be meaningfully recast inside a re-temporalized “comparative narrative” encounter. Which is to say: in the encounter I intend in this dissertation, the three-fold semantic ambiguity of the term contemporary—a shared universal time of the interwar *then*; a shared universal time of looking back from *now*; and, thirdly, our period in universal history, a changing “*these days*”—begins to traverse itself. In this way the narrative frame breaks with (bifurcated) universal time, from the *dispositif* policing the infinite deferral of now into the future, as well as destabilizing the infinite spatial deferral of shared temporality as a will-o’-the-wispish futurity (as a past that the Rest can never quite leave behind).

In this dissertation the principal historiographical emplacement used to open and enact this traversing is a comparison of interwar Japanese and U.S. political theology. As outlined earlier in this chapter, the act of “comparison,” when performed through historical narratives enunciated inside the time of the West and the Rest, typically deals with similarities and differences already derivative upon a configuration of spatialized time. While in this thesis such comparisons are at one level unavoidable and exigent in the propaedeutic sense, they will be undertaken here with an awareness of the predetermined and foreclosed nature of same/different (and therefore similarity) across the timelines of this preconfigured bifurcated historicity. Thus in contradistinction to a mere reproduction of this established schematic, my intention in

²⁹ “On the one hand we dogmatically insist that anthropology rests on ethnographic research involving personal, prolonged interaction with the Other. But then we pronounce upon the knowledge gained from such research a discourse which construes the Other in terms of distance, spatial and temporal.” Fabian, *Time and the Other*, xli.

performing the act of comparison is rather to reveal *similitudes*—meaning “likeness,” but also “allegory.”³⁰

The temporality of similitude is contemporary in two senses, which I deliberately conflate: in one sense, the shared time of the interwar period; in another sense, a “shared” and possibly transformative encounter with a traversing contemporaneity that has been dislocated from a sequential-ordinal bifurcated timeliness. Breaking with the conditions of the established spatialized time the impossible and forbidden shared time of both U.S. and Japanese interwar political theology, both under/as empire—is forced into a “now” that is unable to schematize itself inside the spatialized temporality of West and the Rest. This inability is due to the fact that in a contemporaneous and coeval form, as Fabian might put it, the time of the infinitely deferred futural now which haunts and sustains the self-images of the modern is thereby *short-circuited*. This is so because the modern’s own (necessarily undefined because deferred) image of its future self is figured, shatteringly, by this new previously forbidden past appearing in front of it, so to speak, as linear past, present and future begin to collapse in on a very different now.

This rather abstract project outline may sound more or less plausible in theory, but the question remains: How, given the resistances of exceptionalism and the hegemony of the nation/empire distinction, is this actually to be achieved in practice in the writing of transpacific history? To address this very valid concern it is necessary to briefly anticipate this dissertation’s argument as a whole: specifically in this dissertation I will be arguing for a) a recognition of Tanabe’s thinking as an imperial philosopher of a certain sort and b) for the similitudes between

³⁰ I mean allegory here in the senses of veiled language, the figurative and requiring decoding; from the Greek *allos* (different, other) and *ēgorein* – to speak publicly, to polemicize to the assembled. In addition given the problems of thinking sameness and difference across the West and the Rest, this comparative history is also allegory as an extended metaphor of likeness. I will use “similitude” throughout these chapters in an effort to foreground the politics of time and space framing “same” and “different.”

his work and leading political theologians of the time in the United States. This will involve challenging the ideas circulating around a nation and empire distinction, and I will do that in a number of senses. Without needing to discuss those arguments before I have made them, the more general point or challenge, is that, as the above concerns suggest, exceptionalism has a variety of strategic moves to defend itself against all comers. In a broad sense, the first and main line of defense is a form of displacement. Thus while differing national imaginaries within the disunited west certainly exhibit uneven and imperial temporalities in both an intra- and international sense, such complications to a desired internal unity can be projected outwards, both in historical narrative and “today,” via the bifurcated temporalities carved out inside universal time. Historiographically speaking, in the postwar this has been most obvious in the various faces of modernization theory. There, as discussed previously, the distinction between good nationalism and (bad) empire—as well as the very possibility of keeping nation and empire as conceptually distinct terms—are assumptions of the modernization discourse itself.³¹

It might seem that, strategically speaking, the temporality of area studies could best be challenged by suturing together nation and empire inside the symbolic of the West and its others.³² Such work is undeniably of great importance, and indeed I utilized this kind of conceptual-historical approach earlier in my discussion of typical Japanese and U.S. historical narratives. However, for the purposes of this dissertation as a whole I am arguing that this approach exhibits certain weaknesses, especially in regard to this dissertation’s topic. The

³¹ It is also evident in those who collapse this nation and empire distinction while advocating for the legitimacy of a modern day western empire. Thus good nationalism fuses with good empire, bad nationalism with bad empire, and the West and the Rest continues on. Niall Ferguson’s work on empire is representative of such an approach. See Niall Ferguson, *Empire: The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power* (New York: Basic Books, 2003), 314-317. See also chapter 12 of Jean Bethke Elshtain’s influential *Just War Against Terror: Ethics And The Burden Of American Power In A Violent World* (New York: Basic Books, 2003).

³² For an excellent example of rethinking nation and empire distinctions in this way, see Ann Stoler’s “On Degrees of Imperial Sovereignty” in *Public Culture* Winter 2006 18 (1): 125-146.

difficulty lies in the fact that this kind of challenge to the temporality of area studies still allows a Western/U.S. exceptionalism to smoothly don a new mask. In other words, despite the above suturing, and even in the face of say the most striking similarities between say Japanese imperial structures of sovereignty on the one hand, and U.S. political theology during the same period, there is still a most secure location for area studies to retreat to and reassert its lines of force.

Exactly where this place of sanctuary is, and how it is reached can be seen in the following all-too-familiar lines of argumentation. In the first instance, any act of violence conducted in the name of the Euro-America can be justified in the name of survival, for example, to combat the yellow peril, the Communist threat, terrorism, and so on. Secondly—and from which the first line of argumentation is ultimately inseparable—there is another mode of self-exculpation: the superiority of U.S./western cultural values. Whether articulated in nominally religious or secular terms—for example, God, truth, freedom, justice, or self-determination—belief in this civilizational value is that which, in the final analysis, makes the putative West worth defending (perhaps at any cost). It is that which confers value on the fact of mere survival while seemingly resolving the problem of a relativizing equality in the struggle for life with the enemy.

It is due to the availability of such fall back positions that attempts to traverse the West and the Rest, which often means directing charges of imperialism or worse against the putatively anti-imperial/pro-decolonization U.S., can be so incredulously dismissed by its patriotic defenders.³³ (Which, among other matters, leaves the coordinate arising of identities such as America and Japan entirely unthought.) In light of these discursive maneuvers, how can we can

³³ Of course former “national” mistakes can be acknowledged, used to warn of the dangers of those others still mired in the past, and thereby usefully mobilized to support a narrative of progress.

we cut a way into this civilizational thicket, and, moreover, how might a comparative political theology succeed where other comparative approaches can only become mired in cultural essentialisms?

The Imperial Retreat into Culture and (thus) the Importance of Political Theology

I believe one possible “way in” for comparative political theology lies concealed in the tense intersection between the modern/West as “better,” and the peculiar need for this manifest value to then intervene across a spatialized temporality towards the Rest. That is to say, the value of the auratic modern to the moderns is closely tied to the idea that it is the “future,” for the premoderns, the modern’s others. As such, the premodern must in some non-contingent way be moving towards that.³⁴ Consequently, the fact that the modern must openly engage in some seemingly quite “premodern” acts of violence in order to maintain its modern self, or to help the premodern to modernize, is an apparent ana-chronism that needs some explaining.

On a superficial rhetorical level, this reaching out and across the divide is not so difficult to justify: the barbarians approaching the gates can always be blamed for inviting their own punishment. But the tensions become more difficult to gloss as the issue becomes more reflexive, pre-emptive or for example, when after a bloody military intervention, the other still does not appear to be on route to the ordained modern but following a different path. At such a moment everything can still be cast as an ongoing work-in-progress, an overcoming of stubborn

³⁴ Hegel’s *Geist* (which for Hegel is the history of freedom) would be the most influential example of the non-contingent way in which the premodern must develop.

archaic resistance, an attempt to put the future back on track as it were. However, it must be noted—and here is the weakness that allows a “way in”—that this “contingent time” of intervention is *qualitatively different* to the unidirectional time of the movement from premodern to modern. Why and how is this the case?

As outlined earlier, in its non-contingent uni-directionality, the paradigm of the West and the Rest brooks no real contemporaneous comparison precisely through marking all elements of any comparison as a) already *distinct* “comparable” elements and b) by placing an insurmountable spacing between said elements. Yet, conversely, contingent time somehow forms a peculiar bridge over this abyss, a time corridor or impossible translation whose status is unclear in that the violence of intervention—missionaries, capital, drone strikes etc.—cannot necessarily or “officially” be essential for the modern to the extent that its violence would not therefore be contingent and the modern would *eo ipso* be *dependent* upon and /or relative to the premodern.³⁵ On the other hand, however, from the perspective of the modern, such time travelling interventions must be seen by the West as essential to the premodern for the premodern itself to modernize. It must be essential for at least two reasons. First, to avoid intervention being unethical, and perhaps indicative that all is not well or even modern in the modern. Second, if such interventions were not essential then the modern would not be the modern, since the premodern, not requiring the modern, would be a disconnected and incomprehensible otherness. If the premodern could become modern without intervention, then there would always be the disquieting fear that it might have already become its own kind of modern, and thus relativizing the very idea of modern and dissolving its preferred binary

³⁵ For a linking of such attacks to the self-referentiality associated with modernity and America’s post-WW2 world vision, see Chow, *The Age of the World Target*, 14-15.

integrity. Inside these aporias, the category of the modern is in a permanent state of crisis with itself in that what it needs to recognize itself is precisely that which risks relativizing its own measure of distinction.

These tensions between non-contingent and contingent time are constantly being concealed, perhaps breaking out for a moment when doubts arise over overtly weaponized violence visibly enacted across the “time bridge.” It is my contention that it is this very distinction between contingent and non-contingent which must be pressed upon if reframing interwar U.S. and Japanese political theology within a global context is to be effective. A decisive step towards such a transnational comparative intervention across spatialized time would be a demonstration that the Rest itself possesses the same/*similitudinal* structure of legitimation for its pre-modern violent time. If this can be shown, the logical sequence that preserves the ahead-of-the-rest and its concomitant temporality would undo itself in a relativizing encounter with its other. In other words, if it can be shown that the same kind of non-contingent/contingent bridge that leads from the West to the Rest also leads from the Rest to the everywhere else (including the West, for example), then the rhetorical concealments defining the West become even more starkly aporetic since the West’s validation is mirrored even more clearly by the non-West’s validation of itself. Note that my argument here is not one that argues for some kind of cultural relativism but only that the manner of justifying the relationship between degrees of modernity and state actions can be brought into a similitudinal comparison.

Dei Ex Machina

In response to the kind of destabilizing comparison I am advocating for above, the stock reply by a champion of civilizational values—either of the West, or of the Rest—is to negate any such comparison by retreating to a declaration that the other’s core values are *not* the same. Since they are according to this defense “different,” their exceptional or contingent time, as well as the process by which it is legitimated, is not, cannot, be equivalent. This place of refuge, as Takashi Fujitani describes it in other contexts, is “culture in the last instance,” and when dissembled across the Pacific it reinstates “the otherness of Japan to America’s modernity.”³⁶

It is at this point that I believe political theology comes into its own. The retreat into culture that Fujitani observes in many times and places is today inseparable from a more or less avowed return to spatialized religious values. As Clayton Crockett remarks of our postsecular context,

Temporality, which in a post-Heideggerian sense is the essence of being, composes the identity of cultures in a historical sense, with Western culture privileged as always, but now the boundary between its religious and non-religious identity is blurred.³⁷

To most effectively counter this retreat to religious values—whether they are in fact in religious or secular garb—I undertake to compare, specifically, transpacific political theologies. This is for two interwoven reasons. The first of these is that these discourses of political theology, in their very nature, concern the nature and *legitimation* of all established political practices, formal political rules of interaction—religious, secular, postsecular—and potential departure from

³⁶ Fujitani, *Race for Empire*, 15.

³⁷ Clayton Crockett, *Radical Political Theology: Religion and Politics After Liberalism*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 149.

such.³⁸ In this sense it is the discussion most concerned with those cultural values (noted above) that are invoked to justify political ordering and possibly violent interventions. These discourses on sovereignty legitimate or reveal exceptions and contingencies whether in terms of legalistic sovereignty (Schmitt's deciding sovereign, for example), or on the level of individual action (Kierkegaard's Abraham, for example).³⁹ Thus political theology is the articulation of the *limits* (ontological, justificatory, of comprehensibility) of cultural-political values or personal ethical action; it is what permits some presumed essential cultural or personal value to manifest and be justified as freedom, human rights, murder, imperialism or fascism at any moment.

The second and related reason for focusing on this relation of the theological and the political in this comparative study is that many intellectuals in this era, and certainly the ones under consideration here, write their politics theologically (and all with a particular concern for the *agape* of God).⁴⁰ In other words, the interwar cultural-political concerns of the American and Japanese thinkers under consideration—namely, how to maximize finite human's meaningful freedom alongside justice in a post-national global social order—are underwritten by theological analyses. Contra the fields dominant view, I shall argue that the thought of the Kyoto School thinkers in question are not susceptible to any meaningful division in Christian or

³⁸ While this is arguably true for much political theology, it is certainly true of those political theologies arising post-WWI in the shadow of liberalism's crisis.

³⁹ Prefiguring later arguments, what ties Schmitt and Kierkegaard to the Tanabe Hajime, Reinhold Niebuhr and John Foster Dulles is that all of them are concerned with how religio-political life is not to be ordered legalistically but by our capacity for rejecting existing social and legal contractualism and how that possibility must condition our understanding of what a political order should be. And as we shall see, despite their differences, what links these diverse figures as such is their belief that sovereignty in or as (for example) imperialism or totalitarianism, is only ever a matter to be judged by the principles of political theology, not liberalism.

⁴⁰ For Dulles, Niebuhr, Augustine and Tanabe, the love of God, *amor dei* (or the universal), is configured in differing ways in relation to the love for the other (*agape*). These are, variously, such love as a pathway to God or, in contradistinction to this, identical with the love of God. For a discussion of the differences between the two types of love see Reinhold Niebuhr's 1953 essay "Augustine's Political Realism" in Reinhold Niebuhr and Robert McAfee Brown, ed., *The Essential Reinhold Niebuhr: Selected Essays and Addresses* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 135-8.

Buddhist terms.⁴¹ This means stepping outside of the dominant post-WW2 framing of the debate which concerns the superiority of Christian or Buddhist metaphysics, and in fact in many ways challenging the very assumptions of the debate itself. In making this case I hope to block off the retreat to that kind of civilizational mythology which might otherwise be utilized to explain away the incongruities of exceptional time. By forcing a comparison on this “values” level, I hope to undermine the temporal orderings required to separate nation and empire, west and non-west and modern time from contingent time. And as such, comparison is this dissertation’s enactment of what Walter Benjamin called “the shooting of the clock tower faces.”

Up to now this chapter has presented two lines of related criticism which are targeted at the established scholarship on interwar transpacific intellectual history. These were the assumptions of superiority and inferiority inside bifurcated time, and a questioning of the substance of such civilizational binaries themselves. In order to highlight the difficulty in escaping such frameworks I now take up Chris Goto-Jones’ sensitive attempt to incorporate many of these recent criticisms of area studies inside a larger justification for comparing “different” conceptions of the religio-political in general. His work is of relevance here since not

⁴¹ In this way I am challenging the assumptions of most of the major writers in this field concerning the Buddhist nature of Kyoto School philosophy. Not only does this include scholars such as James Heisig and Chris Goto-Jones (examined later) but also senior Japanese scholars such as Fumihiko Sueki, one of the most influential Buddhologists in Japan at the present time. See, for example, Fumihiko Sueki, *Kindai Nihon No Shisō* (Tōkyō: Toransubū, 2004), 52-60.

only does it further clarify the issues at stake in the “crisis of comparison,” but is also explicitly aimed at legitimating a comparison of the Japanese Kyoto School with “western” thinkers.⁴²

A Comparison of the Kyoto School and the “West” in a Post-Area Studies World

In his 2011 essay, Goto-Jones criticizes the more established form of comparative political scholarship by asserting that in their often violent application of “western” conceptual categories such scholarship

works in collusion with a form of politically co-opted ‘area studies’ (as institutionalized in the United States after WWII) to reduce the ‘non-Western’ into objects of study for the so-called West, denying the vast majority of the globe its subjectivity and positing it only as a source of data (for the West to analyze in its own terms) and not of innovation or theory.⁴³

Goto-Jones’ challenge to area studies is centered around his call for a comparative political theory which both acknowledges and engages with what he calls “discontinuities.” He means by this term discontinuities within and between so-called cultural traditions and for him this is a reworking of the idea of *spatialized* differences into a process of deploying particular and “different” religio-political metaphysics to productively criticize a dominant one. By taking seriously these alternative cosmologies we are, he says, engaging with “people like ourselves

⁴² As Peter Osborne describes it, the crisis of comparison is the need for a comparative model beyond area studies and modernization theory, or perhaps reflects a crisis in the very idea of comparison itself. See Peter Osborne, "On Comparability: Kant and the Possibility of Comparative Studies," *Boundary 2* 32, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 3.

⁴³ Christopher Goto-Jones, "A Cosmos beyond Space and Area Studies: Toward Comparative Political Thought as 'Political Thought,'" *Boundary 2* 38, no. 3, (Fall 2011): 91.

who viewed the predicament in which they found themselves quite differently from the way we do.”⁴⁴ As a necessary correction to the modern academic emphasis on western political thought as the *only* political thought, he argues it is now necessary to go outside Europe in our search for thought-provoking historical sources. In outlining his project Goto-Jones is highly cognizant of the fact that deploying “difference” in the context of so-called non-western areas necessarily risks recuperating a dubious spatiality and runs risk of acting out cultural identity politics.⁴⁵ At the same time, however, he argues this danger can be mitigated if we recognize that meaningful discontinuities have no intrinsic western or non-western specificity in themselves. On this basis we can and should simply use these productive discontinuities—which given western hegemony at this time just so happen to be non-western—to challenge our understanding of how to order our political.

Perhaps the most immediate question here concerns how to distinguish a *discontinuity* from just a *different* idea about a cosmological political ordering. On this point Goto-Jones asserts that we must recognize—and he suggests this point is made clearly in Tanabe’s 1940 essay “Historical Reality” (*Rekishiteki genjitsu*)⁴⁶—that at certain moments in historical time, a given historical period, under certain conditions, will be unable to maintain its unity or integrity. Consequently, a structure of discontinuity (*hirenzokuteki na kōzō*) will arise.⁴⁷ For Goto-Jones, explicating his own position as harmonizing with this (his) reading of Tanabe, we have reached such a stage of discontinuity with the Eurocentric spatializing of the world in the twentieth

⁴⁴ Christopher Goto-Jones, “The Kyoto School and the history of political philosophy: reconsidering the methodological dominance of the Cambridge School” in *Re-Politicising the Kyoto School As Philosophy*, ed. Christopher Goto-Jones (London: Routledge, 2008), 12.

⁴⁵ Goto-Jones, “A Cosmos beyond Space and Area Studies,” 100.

⁴⁶ Tanabe Hajime, “Rekishiteki Genjitsu” in *Zenshū* Vol. 8 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1963), hereafter THZ 8. The essay was published in 1940 based on lectures delivered in 1939.

⁴⁷ Goto-Jones, *Re-Politicising*, 11.

century, and non-European sources must now urgently be recognized as (critical and useful) discontinuities. Still continuing to explicate his own position via Tanabe, Goto-Jones goes on claims this discontinuity will encompass the old now fragmenting unities that have historically held sway; old pasts will be reinterpreted and “reinvigorated” as they are so absorbed into the new historical narrative of the present which, in this aspect, is constructive (*kensetsu*).⁴⁸ With specific reference to the Kyoto School, Goto-Jones claims that these scholars as a group were able to see the important discontinuities provided by Buddhism when brought into dialogue with the European history of political thought.⁴⁹ If such a renovation of the political philosophy is undertaken, he argues, then this will be a significant advance on Eurocentric/xenophobic area studies-types of self-reflection—and instead will correctly root discontinuity “in the aspirant universalism of philosophy itself.”⁵⁰

I believe there is much of value in Goto-Jones’ attempt to overcome the limitations of an area studies approach to Japanese and “other” intellectual histories. Notably, he works to avoid the Scylla of parochial universalism on the one hand while also offering a “why” and how of the use for “difference” in some substantial sense. Despite these efforts, however, I believe his work is problematic and because it deals so closely with the methodological legacies which haunt my own comparative project, a critical analysis of his reframing of comparative work is both exigent and instructive.

As outlined above, at the heart of his project is Goto-Jones’ attempt to undermine the cogency of any spatialized tradition through claiming discontinuities within (and potentially

⁴⁸ Ibid., 13.

⁴⁹ He states that “Nishida Kitarō and his Kyoto School affected a very interesting (and discontinuous) synthesis of Western personality and Buddhist selfhood in the early twentieth century.” Goto-Jones, *Re-Politicising*, 14.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 14.

against) all such lineages. In this way he appears to be moving towards an elimination of spatialized continuities within geo-political formations. However, reflecting on this role of disruptive discontinuities it is hard to avoid the sense that this disruption takes away with one hand something which the other then covertly returns: through claims asserting meaningful differences (discontinuities) *between* Euro-American and Japanese cosmological-ontological paradigms—irrespective of the fact that he also highlights internal discontinuities within posited western traditions—his work re-establishes a metaphysical-conceptual proxy for such “different” historical lineages and traditions. The danger here is that this in effect leaves untouched the question of the *politics* of “spatialization” in the Japanese thinker’s own thinking—his criticisms of *later* postwar binary re-presentations of it notwithstanding. What I mean by “politics” here, in the first instance, are the “partialities, erasures, and disappearances that have been inscribed over time into such materials’ seemingly positivistic existences”⁵¹ What I am suggesting is that it is insufficient to *only* consider the later postwar interpretations that have accrued but rather scholarly inquiry must also evaluate the texts as inscriptions of the contemporary forces present at the time of writing. Goto-Jones’ program exerts considerable pressure to abandon this latter kind of interrogation as we move backwards in time, as it were, since otherwise there is the threat of constant deferral of a difference worthy of the name “discontinuity.”

The implication of Goto-Jones’ approach here is that at some point difference must be simply declared, by virtue of the suspension of their investigation. In his defense it might be said here that a *de facto* discontinuity is justifiable as part of some “strategic” or dialectical attempt to

⁵¹ Rey Chow, “The Old/New Question of Comparison in Literary Studies: A Post-European Perspective,” *ELH* Volume 71, Number 2, Summer 2004: 298.

undermine the clear and present hubris of the west. But in response here it must also be said that for this desire and/or strategy to not be self-defeating, these proxy discontinuous lineages would need to effect some moment of “real” discontinuity such that they would not, under the guise of critical thinking, merely be limiting thinking, reinforcing more deeply concealed regimes of knowledge, and so on. To address this pivotal question the following key methodological questions need to be asked: How successfully does this idea of discontinuity overcome the limitations of area studies? Or, conversely, to what extent have those very structural flaws been reproduced in Goto-Jones’ avoidance of the challenge I raised above, namely, failing to think the spatio-temporalization of this “Japanese” thinking itself?

In answering these questions what needs to be foregrounded at the outset is that Goto-Jones’ idea of temporal discontinuity—corresponding, he claims, to the same idea in Tanabe’s essay *Rekishiteki genjitsu*—enacts itself “within” or “as” a very modern temporality.⁵² Putting aside for the moment the rather crucial matter of what *Tanabe* actually means by discontinuity, the problem for Goto-Jones here is that *his* discontinuous temporality, in accordance with a modern temporality itself, is also the organizing principle that is operative in the naturalizing of the intellectual colonialism of postwar area studies. Such a normative spatio-temporal framework manifests in at least the two following senses: a) the modern present now entails the action of reevaluating the past based on futural projection and, connectedly, b) an apparently quite Hegelian idea of assimilation of difference through world history. To understand how area studies utilizes this (in Goto-Jones’ thinking a “discontinuous”) conception of temporality it is

⁵² And this temporality is something which many commentators, including Tanabe himself, argue has been “continuous,” as a cultural-intellectual transcendental condition, for the entire modern era. Tanabe articulates modern temporality—a transforming past routed through the present as it projects into the future—as what defines the modern in contrast to the non-modern (THZ 8, 161-2). As I show in Chapter Two, this is precisely why it is the greater depth of the self-negation offered by the Japanese Empire which makes it more “modern” and superior to other political theologies.

necessary to remember how modern “constructive” (*kensetsu*) temporality—to use Tanabe’s and Goto-Jones’ preferred term—is a mode of self-negation. Most significantly, the negation of one’s past, which can also mean established customs and patterns, is what allows a more modern future. The rhythm of this time as seen in the modernization theory (and, connectedly, area studies) operating through it requires that there be a transcendental “gap” between self as the Idea, reflective subject etc., and, on the other hand, the objects of study as locked in themselves in a particularistic fashion, and certainly not transcending towards the universal.⁵³ This power of transcendence must be denied to the object of study or it ceases to be an object and becomes a rather disconcerting self-transcending possibility. On a cultural level, the level of culture-as-time, this distancing procedure requires a modern temporality in order to offer transcendence towards the future so that the modern can always escape those trying to catch up; at the same time it allows interpretation of the past as a pathway to the future (for others), and justifies the thinking of a hegemonic cultures’ past transgressions as a sign of the truth of this unavoidable and completed march of history. And this history thereby gathers difference into a unifying global narrative that “pasts” its others in the present.⁵⁴

⁵³ Huntington is fairly typical in this regard: “Japan’s loneliness is further enhanced by the fact that its culture is highly particularistic and does not involve a potentially universal religion (Christianity, Islam) or ideology (liberalism or communism) that could be exported to other countries.” Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Touchstone, 1997), 137. For an example of how this tendency pervades even the best scholarship see Takashi Fujitani’s criticisms of John Dower in the introduction to his *Race for Empire* (*Op.cit.*).

⁵⁴ The role of religion as grounding this idea in the scholarly imagination of Japan is difficult to overestimate. Robert N. Bellah, for example, argued in his presentation at the International Christian University in 1961 that religion is the key difference between cultures and the presence or absence of a Protestant ethic is the difference between those that modernized and those that didn’t. See Robert Bellah, “Value and Social Change in Modern Japan,” *Asian cultural Studies* Vol. 3, 1962: 18. See also John Hall’s reference to the importance of this article in his response to Japanese scholars who had pointed out that modernization does not necessarily lead to democracy. John Hall in Robert N. Bellah and Marius B. Jansen, *Changing Japanese Attitudes Toward Modernization* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1965), 30.

With the election of a Catholic Kennedy in November 1961 Bellah’s Protestant emphasis needed be hastily widened out and so he produced the still influential idea of “America’s civil religion.” See Robert N. Bellah, “Civil Religion in America” *Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, Winter 1967, 96 (1): 1–21. Nevertheless, his views on how particularistic religious culture has inhibited Japan’s modernization remain

Given that this kind of approach to excluding the non-western is precisely what Goto-Jones wishes to undermine, I think it is fair to say the onus, at this point, is on demonstrating how the discontinuity that he supports differs from the other more insidious uses to which it has been put in the postwar era. This seems all the more important if we return to the original texts themselves since their context is also somewhat ethically problematic, putting it mildly. So what can we say of Goto-Jones' efforts in this regard?

First and foremost, what is more than conspicuous about the Tanabe essay from which Goto-Jones extracts his argument for discontinuity is that it is an essay overwhelmingly concerned with the potential imperialisms of this modern temporality, and how the Japanese empire, if it had the right intellectuals influencing policy, might be able to avoid these western failings. And yet—to prefigure my argument below—Goto-Jones appears to ignore this (I think) undeniable textual brute fact in his delineation of discontinuity. As a result, he loses sight of the need for the kind of spatial-temporal analysis that he reserves only for postwar re-presentations of this Japanese thought (as well as missing the opportunity to reflect on how uncannily similar these prewar and postwar tropes might possibly be). So what, then, are these arguments about

essentially unchanged: “The underlying premises of Japanese society, though they can be reformulated with great sophistication, cannot be challenged. . . . When in my essay “Values and Social Change in Modern Japan” I spoke of the Japanese “ground bass,” I was referring to this preaxial element in Japanese culture; when I spoke of the “tradition of submerged transcendence,” I was referring to the presence of axial traditions in Japan—Buddhism, Confucianism, Christian, Marxist—that never quite succeeded in replacing the preaxial premises of Japanese culture. This is the first approximation in placing Japan in a comparative framework . . .” Robert N. Bellah, *Imagining Japan: The Japanese Tradition and Its Modern Interpretation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 7.

Bellah's use of culture was not just as an attack on Marxism since he stood in a Kantian lineage that used culture as a term to reconcile the transcendental concepts of reason or social science with empirical and particularistic diversity. In what Kant would call the sensible experience of humans, the notion of a particular culture came to be defined, i.e., communal urges, the “ground base,” of the Japanese while at the same time the capability for self-transcendence that enabled change in those societies was limited to the extent seen in those empirical observations. Thus there is a slippage evident here between the two types of Kantian-influenced ideas of culture: the first where transcendental ideas are a goal—America has reached this—and where culture is a mode of integrating individuals—the Japanese case. In this was culture for Bellah fulfills the function of marking a spatialization of sin, human's worldly nature.

imperialism that so concern Tanabe and so many other intellectuals of his time? And how does this undermine Goto-Jones' argument?

The section of *Rekishiteki genjitsu* that is the focus of Goto-Jones' exposition on discontinuity begins with a brief discussion of Troeltsch and his *Historical Relativism and Its Problems* (1922).⁵⁵ This is indicative since the entire essay can be seen as a theoretical engagement with Troeltsch and other thinkers whose work, above all, is a confrontation with the intensifying crisis of historicism in post-WW1 Europe.⁵⁶ Tanabe's engagement with this theme is an attempt to draw on Troeltsch—and other historically concerned vitalistic thinkers such as Bergson—while rejecting what Tanabe describes as Troeltsch's attempt to “reconstruct” European identity through a new theory of historicity.⁵⁷ On the most fundamental level, I believe that what appealed to Tanabe was Troeltsch's insistence that, as Gabriel Ricci puts it,

history must be liberated from positivism which disregards the holistic or totalizing tendencies of historical development. That is, the materialistic reductionism which informed positivism could not address the vitalistic underpinnings of the historical world.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ THZ 8, 163.

⁵⁶ In short, this was a crisis produced by historical studies of biblical exegesis and theological context, as well as of other value systems outside European Christendom. The increasing importance of scientific objectivity in the latter half of the 19th century sharpened the neo-Kantian problematic of the natural and human sciences, and as a result the historical profession, which had until then by and large concerned itself with supporting the values of the patriotic educated middle-classes, fell into crisis. (See Georg G. Iggers, “Historicism: The History and Meaning of the Term” *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 56 (1995): 139). Paul Herman argues that this was not to be understood as a mere academic debate but was culturally significant since for the *Bildungsbürgertum*, “What was at stake in the crisis of historicism was not in the first place the validity of moral beliefs but their justification.” Paul L. Herman, “A Collapse of Trust: Reconceptualizing the Crisis of Historicism,” *Journal of the Philosophy of History* (2008): 3.

⁵⁷ THZ 8, 163.

⁵⁸ Gabriel Ricci, “Metaphysics and History: The Individual and the General Reconciled” *HUMANITAS*, Volume X, No. 1, 1997: paragraph 7.

In both the European and Japanese intellectual contexts this vitalism should be read as essentially a defense of the role of spontaneous individual action against scientific materialism or against a subsuming Hegelian idealism. Unsurprisingly perhaps given Hegel's civilizational racism and their own positionality, Japanese thinkers displayed an even greater level of aversion to Hegel's Eurocentric ordering of the meaning of history, as well as those of the epochal civilizations arising therein. In Tanabe's case he rejected Hegel's as well as Troeltsch's attempts to rescue European identity from the weight of history and *Wissenschaft*, but was no less concerned to promote the historical importance of the new epoch being constructed in Asia at that time. With this goal in mind, in *Rekishiteki genjitsu* he calls for a new fusion of science (*kagaku*) and spirit (*seishin*) which he believes the west's theological inheritance prevents it from developing.⁵⁹

Seen in this context the idea of discontinuity emerges as a many-headed beast, and certainly not play the solely benevolent role that Goto-Jones sees in it. The inability of Europe to sustain its narcissistic unity which Goto-Jones sees *today* as the moment for an introduction of, *inter alia*, a Kyoto School Buddhist metaphysics, is clearly advanced by Tanabe as part of a criticism of the west at that time. But this is also in the context of this the imperial university professor providing intellectual support for the Japanese empire: Tanabe explicitly states in fact that "it is the vital duty of individuals like myself who are concerned with knowledge and intellectual work" to help guide the construction (*kensetsu*) of the state.⁶⁰ And "state" at this time could only mean empire. Offering his imperial guidance Tanabe suggests it is a Japanese Mahayana Buddhism—superior to its Chinese antecedents—which can subsume (p. 166)

⁵⁹ THZ 8, 164.

⁶⁰ THZ 8, 161. In saying this he is reiterating claims he had made in the early 1930s (and discussed in more detail in Chapter Two).

western theological metaphysics and form, via the mediation of the Japanese state, the principles of a new era.⁶¹ Discontinuity, as Tanabe deploys it, thus plays a pivotal role in rethinking history from a solely linear trajectory—which would forever condemn Japan to playing catch up—to history as a system of concentric and subsuming circles (printed on p.161). It should be noted here that the graphic similarity between this image of “constructing” (*kensetsu*) history through discontinuity with the west, and the cartographic imperial expansion of Japan as constructing East Asia (*tōa kensetsu*) is all too evident.⁶²

It is reflective of his sensitivity to the matter at hand that Goto-Jones does not try to specify in advance what kind of interaction and outcome this Zennish discontinuous metaphysics would have in its encounter with parochial western political theory. However, it is difficult to believe he would want it to be the intellectual equivalent of constructing the East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere. Yet in fact in the very same essay Tanabe argues that it is the ongoing construction of East Asia (*tōa kensetsu*) which is precisely the world historical event that is grounded through this post-western metaphysics.⁶³

⁶¹ THZ 8, 166-167. It is conspicuous that no evidence is given in Goto-Jones' 2008 essay for the connection between Buddhism and the Kyoto School despite his claims to this effect (see footnote 27). However, he does argue for this relationship in his earlier book (Christopher S. Goto-Jones, *Political Philosophy In Japan: Nishida, the Kyoto School and Co-Prosperity* (London: Routledge, 2005). In that monograph, however, we see that his argument connecting Zen (his religious focus) to the Kyoto School consists almost entirely of biographical rather than textual claims, e.g., that Nishida's high school teacher and life-long mentor was interested in Zen, and that Nishida sometimes went to Engaku-ji to study (Goto-Jones, *Political Philosophy in Japan*, 27). His argument essentially comes down to the belief that Nishida draws on his Buddhist heritage and that this inflected Nishida's thinking in a decisive manner (ibid., 49). No argument sustaining a link between Tanabe and Zen is made. Tanabe, as far as I am aware, never discusses any of the particular Zen schools in a philosophical sense although he does frequently mention Mahayana Buddhism. But what Tanabe actually means by this Buddhism is not a simple matter and will be elaborated upon at various points in the succeeding chapters.

⁶² And it became even the more obvious when Tanabe suggested at a secret meeting with Naval staff in 1942 that the relationship between Japan and Manchukuo be renamed “the Greater East Asian Construction Sphere.” Ohashi Ryosuke, *Kyoto gakuha to nihon kaigun* (Tokyo: PHP, 2001), 186.

⁶³ This construction was formally announced as the *Daitōa Kyōeiken* by Foreign Minister Matsuoka on August 1, 1940. In fact, Tanabe had suggested (in an earlier 1938 essay) the formation of a Japanese-led region called *Toa meikyo tai* (East Asian Cooperative Alliance). See Tanabe Hajime, “Tai shina bunka seisaku no shido genri ni kansuru shaken” THZ: 8, 105-116. I am grateful to Takeshi Kimoto for directing me to this earlier essay.

I think it is clear from the foregoing reframing of Goto-Jones' work that the interlaced problems of postwar area studies methodologies, national histories, imperialism, and the civilizational meaning of religious languages themselves must be investigated at a deeper level. It will be the task of the succeeding chapters to undertake this rethinking of transpacific intellectual history.

Chapter 2

Tanabe Hajime and the Time of Crisis

“In the idea of classless society, Marx secularized the idea of messianic time. And that was a good thing. It was only when the Social Democrats elevated this idea to an ‘ideal’ that the trouble began.”

Walter Benjamin

In order to concretely and effectively reframe Tanabe’s Logic of Species in its transnational contemporaneity, it is first necessary to give a brief historical account of Japan’s “time of crisis” (*hijōji*) in the early 1930s. This will enable a historicization of the imaginaries of Japan, the West and Asia circulating during this period and within which Tanabe’s foundational writings on the Logic of Species are discursively immersed.

The Historical Context of the Crisis

“*Ima, nanji?*” “*Hijōji!*”

“What’s the time?” “It’s crisis time!”

Contextualizing this particular instance of gallows humor from the early 1930s, the designation “crisis time” (*hijōji*) can be seen in its contemporary usage—as well as in today’s academic discourse on that period—as an indicator of a diverse range of upheavals and anxieties manifest in Japan at that time. In many scholarly narratives, a consciousness of crisis time is commonly seen as having begun around the time of the Manchurian Incident (*Ryūjōko jiken*) of September 18th 1931, and deemed to have lasted until a measure of confidence in Japan’s economic recovery took hold around 1935.¹ For some years before this period, however, expressions such as “national crisis” (*kokunan*) were widespread, and a number of events prior to September 1931 stand out as either as markers or contributing factors in the development of Japan’s crisis consciousness. Foremost among these was the post-1929 global depression whose ruinous effects were noticeable for their severity in both Japan’s urban and rural areas. It was also a crisis exacerbated by the ineffective response of Japan’s party political system, and, importantly, widely perceived as such.² This crisis of faith in state remedies combined with a

¹ Ōe Shinobu, for example, argues it was the surprise appointment of militarist expansionist Araki Sadao as Minister of War in December 1931 that marked the beginning of *hijōji* (Ōe Shinobu, *Nihon, Shōwa no rekishi 5* (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 1980), 33). However, Sandra Wilson’s more recent study suggests that the expression *hijōji* didn’t in fact come into popular usage until mid-1932. See Sandra Wilson, *The Manchurian Crisis and Japanese Society 1931-33*, (New York: Routledge, 2002), 64. This delay, as well as other considerations detailed in this chapter, suggests that we should err on the side of emphasizing the overdetermination of crisis time consciousness, albeit while acknowledging the crucial role of the Manchurian Incident in the genesis thereof.

² For example, the latter’s failings were rendered all too visible to the general population in the gold standard debacle of January 1930. This, combined with the resulting *zaibatsu* profiteering (as seen in cases such as the Mitsui scandal), led to new depths and breadths of cynicism towards the parties and their role as the “running dogs of big capital.” For Rōyama Masamichi’s contemporary account of these and other causes of *hijōji* see his *Nihon*

lack of any improvement in the economic situation up to September 1931 led to a widespread sense of paralysis (*yukizumari*) pervading the cultural *Geist*. Consequently, the symbolic and quite possibly cathartic sense of “forward movement” brought about by the Manchurian Incident goes some way to explaining why Japan’s military expansion received widespread popular support (support also driven, as it was, by the media’s jingoistic cheerleading). Such reactions evolved over the ensuing months as the immediate distractions of patriotic fervor were replaced by the increasingly prevalent belief that Japanese expansion brought with it some significant prospect of economic salvation.³

For all its fatal promise, however, the Manchurian Incident also reinforced the impression of ineffectual civilian leadership unable to control a restless military. Prior to the Incident, objections by the naval chiefs to the restrictive terms of the London Naval conference in 1930 had already developed into a publicly debated constitutional question over who ultimately controlled the military. Inexorably, the Incident itself added to the prevailing sense of political uncertainty, and such trepidation was soon proved all too prescient: a number of shadowy associations of military and civilian right-wing groups became emboldened and this led to a series of violent attacks on major political and industrial figures. On May 15th 1932 these

seiji dōkōron (Tokyo: Kōyō shoin, 1933), pp. 491-497. We should also note that there were a number of rebellions in the colonies at this time, something often omitted from many of the historical accounts of crisis consciousness. For a summary of these see Ishida, *Nihon no shakai kagaku* (Tōkyō: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1984), 126-7.

³ This hope was primarily driven by the idea of Manchuria as Japan’s lifeline (*seimeisen*), an idea swiftly broadened from its (originally) military significance and popularized as an economically existential one. The term’s popularity was undeniable: *seimeisen* is listed as one of the five *ryōkōgo* (“popular words”) for 1931 in the Japan Broadcasting Corporation’s official history (cited in Wilson, *The Manchurian Crisis*, 56).

The term was tied to Manchuria’s military significance as a provider of the raw materials required to fight off Communist Russia. In addition, for many including Ishiwara Kanji the Kwantung army’s operations officer 1929-32, Manchuria was a strategic necessity given the likelihood of (or, in Ishiwara’s opinion, the inevitability of) a war with the USA. Apart from the matter of raw materials, *seimeisen* also incorporated the idea of emigration to the continent as a solution to forms of unrest attributed to land shortages on the Japanese mainland. Emigration was advocated, for example, by popular pro-expansionist publications such as the national magazine of the industrial cooperative *Ie no hikari* (whose circulation had reached one million by 1935).

culminated in the assassination of Prime Minister Inukai Tsuyoshi, a diplomatic and defensive moderate on the Manchurian expansion. In retrospect this proved to be a watershed in the turn from what had been (at least nominally) party political government, and towards military and bureaucratic rule.⁴ It was significant at the time for revealing not only the breadth of anti-government alliances revealed in the cooperation between members of the military and “the countryside,” that is, militant agrarianists, but the later trial itself was indicative of a great many of the elements of the crisis as present in the public mind. As Smith explains, drawing on Tasaki Nobuyoshi’s media analysis, “the trial (of the conspirators) fascinated in part because like the incident itself it brought together in a single arena what were nominally distinct problems: the rural crisis, political and ideological corruption, fears of military weakness, Japan’s international standing and Manchuria.”⁵

Irrespective of their personal views on Japanese expansionism itself, Japan’s liberal elites understandably viewed these domestic political upheavals of the early 1930s with some alarm. Yet for many members of this class there was another at least equally pressing international crisis. This took the form of growing international hostility to Japan’s military ventures during this period (that is, the Manchurian expansion of 1931, the lengthy Shanghai intervention of 1932, and the establishment of a *de facto* Japanese puppet state via the declaration of Manchurian independence on February 18th 1932).⁶ Above all, what this great power

⁴ In the consequent cabinet reshuffle, military figures and bureaucrats received two-thirds of the seats while Admiral Saitō Makoto was nominated as Prime Minister despite Seiyūkai having a majority in the Diet. The relation between the Manchurian Incident, overseas expansion and the evolving right-wing’s attempts to bring about violent “national renovation” at home is a complex one. It is usefully discussed in Bob Wakabayashi, *Modern Japanese Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 207-256 and in Wilson, *The Manchurian Crisis*, 117-8.

⁵ Kerry Smith, *A Time of Crisis: Japan, the Great Depression, and Rural Revitalization* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 83.

⁶ Arguably the Manchurian Incident itself was far less disturbing to Japan’s western allies than these other developments in China since they posed a more blatant threat to western economic interests. Economic considerations were now more decisive than ever to the extent that the global recession (as well as other factors) had forced the final breakdown of the fragile international accord over sovereignty and economic matters in China.

condemnation signified for these liberal elites was a growing realization that the existing international system was incompatible with how they understood the future of Japan, and therefore, to a large extent, with how they had come to understand themselves. To this I now turn.

The “Liberal” Response to the Manchurian Incident

A few months before his death at the hands of young naval officers, Prime Minister Inukai Tsuyoshi penned the introduction to a book entitled *Japan Speaks: On the Sino-Japanese Crisis* (1932). Its author, Karl Kawakami, explained in the preface that the book was motivated by a desire to respond “as a patriotic Japanese citizen” to the hostile international reaction arising from Japan’s recent actions. In this respect the book’s general thrust was hardly exceptional: many other “liberals” were increasingly vocal in their support for a Japanese Monroe Doctrine during this period.⁷ But as a monograph (sanctioned by the Prime Minister) which was intended

From a Japanese patriot’s perspective, three new factors after 1917 put Japanese involvement in the treaty port system in jeopardy. The first of these was the fact that post-revolutionary Russia was hostile to imperialism and thus Russia came to be seen as even more of a threat to Japan in Manchuria than it had previously. Secondly, Britain and a now stronger USA wanted to restore and strengthen free trade as a way of restraining Japanese expansion. Thirdly, increasing Chinese nationalism and hostility to foreign informal empire made the treaty system increasingly unworkable. This undermined the whole of Japanese theory for how to deal with China and so for many the only remaining viable option appeared to be of a direct military nature. The 1929 crash led to further decline in the treaty port system and certain forms of free trade leading in turn to more exclusive regional economic blocs. Consequently, many in Japan came to believe that Japan’s relationship with China and Manchuria (preferably in some form of bloc/co-prosperity sphere) was more important than the previous approach to international cooperation on China’s affairs. For a discussion of changes in the treaty port system see W. G. Beasley, *Japanese imperialism, 1894-1945* (Oxford: Oxford university Press, 1987), 156-8. See also Bruce Cumings, “Japan’s Position in the World System,” in *Postwar Japan as History*, ed. Andrew Gordon, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 34-63. ⁷ Responses within the liberal classes to the 1931 expansion were varied. The liberal standard bearer Yoshino Sakuzō, for example, rejected the self-defense argument in his *Chūō Kōron* essay of January 1932 and attacked the 1931 expansion as “imperialism.” Yet Yoshino was also an advocate for a Japan-led Monroe doctrine and in condemning the events of 1931 was only condemning a militaristic imperialism, as opposed to an economic imperialism, which he favored. For a more detailed study of the links between Yoshino’s liberalism and imperial aspirations see Jung-Sun Han, *An Imperial Path to Modernity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), esp. chapter 4. For a contemporary account of Japan’s Monroe doctrine see Takagi Yasaka, “World Peace Machinery and the Asia Monroe Doctrine” *Pacific Affairs* Vol. 5, No. 11, November 1932, 941-953. Also see Eri Hotta, *Pan-*

to be widely read abroad—and in fact stretched to three print runs in 1932 alone—the book presents a very rich textual anatomy of liberal Japanese patriotism and its dependency on its others.

Japan Speaks details a lengthy narrative of post-Meiji Sino-Japanese interaction ordered and arranged under the conditions required to maintain the integrity of a certain Japanese identity. With respect to the latter, the essential point that Kawakami wants to convey is how reasonable Japan has been in its dealings with China (and its “obstructive” nationalists) according to the rules of the international system.⁸ His indignation is palpable and the text as a whole reads as a testimony to how those who identified their interests and selfhood with an idea of “Japan,” as well as with a better national-imperial future, were now struggling to reproduce this imaginary in light of the condemnation from the West inside an increasingly untenable world order.

Indicative of this crisis of positionality, the argument contained in *Japan Speaks* reveals a circuitous and conflicted structure as it tries to sustain this identification. Symptomatically the text betrays an anxious need for the West to recognize Japan’s modernization beyond China. Thus China is now presented in the text as a “petulant boy” in relation to the “father” Japan, a child stuck in a medieval mindset which fails to appreciate the hard work of development and civilization necessary to win the respect of the West as Japan had apparently done.⁹ In this

Asianism and Japan’s War 1931-45 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 95-97 for an account of how the Japan’s “Asiatic Monroe Policy” became an openly avowed policy by April 1934.

⁸ Karl K. Kawakami, *Japan Speaks: On the Sino-Japanese Crisis* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1932), esp. 3-128.

⁹ Kawakami, *Japan Speaks*, x, 34, 140, 141. The thinly veiled violence of these familial narratives is revealed in the rather tenuous claims contained within the book. For example, the pages just referenced explain that Japan eliminated Western extraterritoriality through hard work and development. At the same time, in defending Japan’s Shanghai intervention, Kawakami also explains how its business interests and rights in China are merely part of that development. Yet it is extremely difficult to imagine Kawakami supporting China’s removal of Japan’s militarily-enforced privileges in China by citing its own developmental needs.

aspect the argument of *Japan Speaks* is ostensibly an attempt to win western approval and to distinguish itself from the China that Japan saw (in what it believed to be) western eyes. Yet simultaneously, and rounding out the contours of a quite Hegelian struggle in haughty diplomatic tones, Chapter XV comprises a detailed exposition on the hypocrisy of the U.S. in its criticism of Japan's recent military operations. (Though in this respect Kawakami was unable to restrain himself, he is sufficiently composed to omit one rather pertinent aspect of this "struggle," namely, the link between the perceived threat of the U.S. to Japan and the consequent need for Manchukuo itself.)¹⁰

Taking *Japan Speaks* as a historical snapshot of one patriot's psychic juggling act, we can see a number of conflicted projective identities readily apparent even on surface of the text. On the one hand, Japan is no longer Asian, and accordingly requiring recognition by and perhaps "as" the West; on the other, Japan is presented as the head of the Asian family with concomitant rights and responsibilities.¹¹ The implication of the latter, that Japan is therefore locked in some ambiguous degree of existential competition with the West, bubbles away beneath the book's

The striking reversal of Japan's historically subordinate relationship to China indicated by this familial language also serves to emphasize Japan's anxiety with respect to its cultural indebtedness to "China as Asia." In many ways this was Japan's *real* China problem under the "unfounding" forces of modernity.

¹⁰ In a similar vein the threat of the yellow peril is dismissed by Inukai in his introduction, whereas pan-Asianism, which was beginning to feature much more heavily in public and academic discourse after 1932, is conspicuous by its absence. It does creep in though in one of the "dog-whistle" subtexts of the book: Japan's need for its "actions" in Asia to be understood by Japan's present and future colonial subjects as different from an ersatz racist western imperialism. This was presumably one motivation behind Inukai's claim in the introduction that he had supported Chinese nationalists for thirty years (Kawakami, *Japan Speaks*, vii). His concern was also no doubt linked to the threat Chinese nationalism posed for Japanese interests, something highlighted more belligerently by Kawakami in the main text.

¹¹ Shiratori Kurakichi, director of *Shigakkai* from 1929-34, provides a useful example of the "academic" death struggle taking place in the arena of civilizational identity politics. In 1934 he published his thoughts arising from an earlier tour of oriental research institutes in the West: "To prevent the Japanese, the very same orientals from succumbing to this research by European and American scholars, I advocated the necessity of establishing a major association for the research of oriental history by forming a union of scholars, industrialists and politicians and conducting fundamental research on the orient." Shiratori, "Mansenshi kenkyū no sanjūnen," *Kokuhon* 14 (August 1934) in SKZ 10: 403, cited in Stefan Tanaka, *Japan's Orient: Rendering Pasts Into History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 232.

surface. Portentously, and in accordance with modernity's imperative to overcome the old in producing the future self, the path of "tension resolution" here drives an image of Japan as neither Asia *nor* the West, but rather asserts its advance beyond the latter, just as it had taken the "lead" in Asia.¹²

Even though modernity and Hegel can provide a useful narrative principle here for the identity politics of the time, it remains to be asked, "What are the prior historical specificities that joined with these conditions to establish the dominant delineations of Japan in relation to Asia and the West in 1931?" The question is important for our immediate purposes since without such a history, the sedimented civilizational lines of force already working within Tanabe's Logic of Species remain either invisible or seemingly arbitrary in their articulations. Moreover, such a history is required as a preliminary step towards completing this dissertation's transnational account of "crisis time." To this I now turn.

¹² The diplomatic register of *Japan Speaks* also harmonizes discursively with such mobilizations of identity on the level of other cultural productions: "Whereas an earlier cosmopolitanism promoted the ideal of cultural diversity and equivalence based on the principle of common humanity, which also served to restrain excessive claims to exceptionalism, the new culturalism of the 1930s proposed that Japan was appointed to lead the world to a higher level of cultural synthesis that surpassed western modernism itself." Wakabayashi, *Modern Japanese Thought*, 208.

A Japan of the World

“After the Sino-Japanese war, Japan suddenly grew into a Japan of the world. Because of this our national policies have to undergo a thorough transformation so as to meet the requirements of grounding them in an imperialist foundation”

Yoshino Sakuzō, 1914

Atsuko Ueda reminds us that for many years after the Meiji Restoration—and even into the 1880s—designations such as Japan, the West and Asia were still largely undefined in the public consciousness.¹³ Despite this fluidity, however, I would argue that certain ordering principles were already quite apparent. By 1868 the most influential schematizing principle at work was undoubtedly a consciousness of continental Asia (which meant China) as having failed to resist the imperialism of the modernized West.¹⁴ The early years of Meiji saw attempts to form a coalition with China in resisting the west (*nisshin teikeiron*) but China’s apparent failure to modernize meant that such a project became increasingly unattractive. What needs to be remembered, however, is that a rejection of China and a turn to the West—formative designations though they were—is something that can still be thought of as “present” from the beginning of Meiji (1868). From Japan’s perspective not only was a rejection of this Sinocentric Asia implied in a restoration of the line descending from a “pre-Asian” Emperor Jimmu, but the need for western (military) knowledge was widely acknowledged and featured, for example, in

¹³ Atsuko Ueda, “Colonial Ambivalence and the Modern *Shōsetu*: *Shōsetu shinzui* and De-Asianization,” in *Impacts of Modernities*, eds. Thomas LaMarre and Nae-hūi Kang (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2004), 185.

¹⁴ In 1842 and again in 1858 (variously) extra-territoriality, treaty ports, fixed tariffs and most-favored-nation clauses were imposed on China in a consolidation of the western powers’ imperial reach.

the founding Charter Oath of the same year. One implication of the dislocation of Sinocentric viewpoints was that for those who identified with Japan, and Japan's future with the West, the removal of the vestiges of the Sinocentric worldview was a prerequisite for Japan to have this modern future.¹⁵

Events moved rapidly and the status of China in a generalized Japanese imaginary reached a critical juncture by the mid-1880s. China's loss to France in the Sino-Franco war 1884-5 had resulted in loss of control over Annam (present day Vietnam), and this represented a further and major blow to the Sinocentric world order. With respect to Japan's perceptions, China's apparent weakness vis-à-vis France was complicated by the fact that China had still managed an emphatic "proxy war" victory over Japan in the Kōshin Incident of January 1885. While that suppression by a Chinese garrison of a coup led by pro-Japanese leaders in Korea resulted in a period of increased Chinese influence, it was not to last. By the time Japan's victory in the First Sino-Japanese War was sealed with the Treaty of Shimonoseki in April 1895, the ending of Korean tribute to Qing China, and the annexation of Taiwan and the Pescadores forcefully and symbolically confirmed Japan's presumed superiority as the leader of Asia among Asian powers

Japan's victory consolidated certain undercurrents in Japanese perceptions of Asia, changes which schematically at least can be inserted into what the existing scholarship generally presents as the divergent trends of Pan-Asianism (*Ajia shugi*) and leaving Asia (*Datsu-A Ron*).

¹⁵ As I discuss in greater detail below, "modern" at this time and for some time to come was fully compatible with and seemingly necessitated building an empire. James Huffman in his discussion of Howell's essay "Visions of the Future in Meiji Japan" puts the somewhat unifying imaginary of early Meiji thus: "While a number of visions competed – the nostalgia of Saigō Takamori's followers, the democratic goals of freedom and popular rights supporters, the moralistic dreams of rural rebels – the statist view of Meiji officials finally won, in part because foreign threats pushed people to defer to national strength, and in part because the state offered the concept of empire to 'exponents of defeated visions.'" James L. Huffman "Restoration and Revolution" in *A Companion to Japanese History* ed. William M. Tsutsui (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2007), 147-8.

Shimazu, for example, notes that after 1895 there was a growth in Pan-Asian groups advocating for Japan's leadership of Asia and against what they saw Japan's overly pro-western pragmatic approach to the continent.¹⁶ On the other hand, there were those who concurred with Fukuzawa's infamous *Datsu-A Ron* arguing that Japan should treat Asia as the West did, that is, as an object of imperial aspiration.¹⁷ This support for imperialism as a good was symptomatic of wider discourse not only in Japan—where it was often discussed as a world trend (*jisei*) and in terms of social Darwinism—but widely supported by the other world powers.¹⁸ Thus while in early Meiji imperialism was regarded on the whole as a threat, by 1900 it came to be seen more as a natural or essential task for survival of the state.¹⁹

It was in this environment between the 1890s and the Manchurian Incident that Japan's economic development, as well as its military and diplomatic successes, had led to a situation where it had come to view itself as a (non-) western world power. Increasingly though this period also saw an ever deepening concern over the workability of the system of international law within which Japan had struggled to recognize itself. Such concerns arose parallel to a growing awareness of the contradictions and outright hypocrisy in the positions of the other

¹⁶ Naoko Shimazu, *Japan, Race and Equality: The Racial Equality Proposal of 1919* (London: Routledge, 1998), 94.

¹⁷ The precise “meaning” of Fukuzawa's thesis is contested, however. Given China's victory over pro-Japanese forces in Korea in the Kōshin incident noted above, scholars such as Banno have argued that the thesis represents more a concern about Chinese power than an actual school of thought on Asia (Shimazu, *Japan, Race and Equality*, 93-94). Putting aside Banno's specific argument, I would agree that one difficulty in generalizing a narrative of pro- or anti-Asian discourse around this time is that in the work of representative figures such as Fukuzawa, Pan-Asianism's nominally contrary position of “De-Asianization,” can in fact look remarkably similar to Pan-Asianism's aggressive interventionist theories which were justified on the grounds of aiding development and so on. We see this for example in Fukuzawa's 1885 essay *Datsu-A Ron* wherein he advances a “when in Rome, do as the West does” justification for Japanese colonial violence. By way of contrast, three years previously in his “*Chōsen no kōsai no ronsu*” the *Datsu-A-Ron* rhetoric of “severing ties with evil East Asia” was absent, yet force was justified to protect Japan's neighboring countries from the West and to help them achieve civilization.

¹⁸ Myers and Peattie, *The Japanese Colonial Empire*, 64.

¹⁹ This was often glossed in more benevolent language of course. Even Christian socialists such Kinoshita Naoe (1868-1937) described imperialism, when purged of its more aggressive traits, as peaceful globalism (*heiwateki sekaishugi*). Cited in Han, *An Imperial Path*, 41.

major powers. Confusion over the western power's reactions to the events of 1931 was born in part of the fact that Japan's special interests in Manchuria (especially the railroads) had already received *de facto* international recognition. Furthermore, despite post-WW1 homilies concerning a new order of national self-determination and renewed promises of market access, the US, for example, had recently issued its Clark Memorandum (1930) while the British still had their extensive empire.²⁰

The obviousness of such hypocrisy goes some way towards explaining the righteous indignation with which Japan's Monroe doctrine was defended by its representatives in the early 1930s. In other words, an oligarchic imperial world order had been quite acceptable to this "moderate" class of Japan as long as Japan was to have been allowed to ascend to the top table (and with equal dining rights). But it was precisely this assumption that was now ringing increasingly hollow.²¹

²⁰ Another major source of incredulity here was that Japan had previously deployed "western" theories of civilization and enlightenment to justify the colonization of Korea and Taiwan without any great objection from the western powers. For example, England had renewed the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in 1905 and 1911. Although this renewal was arguably for the purpose of limiting Japanese support for Indian nationalism, Japan's colonization of Korea was clearly acceptable to an England concerned about Russia's expansion into China at the turn of the century. In fact many scholars and political figures such as Nitobe Inazō continued to make such a "civilizing" argument in trying to justify Japanese expansion in 1932. See, for example, Nitobe Inazō, "*Kokusairenmei ni okeru manshūmondai*," *Chūō Kōron* 47, No. 2 (Feb. 1932), 41-46. I am grateful to Seokwon Lee for this reference.

²¹ Another major event that helped mold Japan's perceptions of the existing order was America's 1924 Immigration Act which labeled Japanese as undesirable members of the non-white race. For contemporary sources detailing its reception in Japan see Yukiko Koshiro, *Trans-Pacific Racisms and the US Occupation of Japan*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 11. Japanese elites had of course long been wary of this colored ceiling. In Shimazu's persuasive explanation of Japan's call for a racial equality clause in 1919, she argues that the demand was intended by Japan to address the assumption held by the great powers that race *wasn't* an issue, *because* they were all western. Shimazu adds that such concerns were driven, *inter alia*, by America's pre-WW1 anti-Japanese immigration laws which at the time had fostered anxieties that the racism of the great powers would be made manifest through the League of Nations and thereby restrict Japan's imperial aspirations. See Shimazu, *Japan, Race and Equality*, especially 90-91, 112-116. We should also remember (or reasonably speculate) on the inevitable experience of racism and its impact on the many Japanese intellectuals and bureaucrats who had studied abroad in the 1920s.

Of course, this is not to say there wasn't a similar kind of exclusionary racism against whites. In this regard Stegewerns observes a peculiar blind spot in the scholarship on the Pan-Asianism of liberals in the period 1918-1931. As he puts it, "Although the majority of opinion-leaders at the time were not very keen to gather under the banner of Asianism because of its rightist and ultranationalist connotations, there were few who did not support

In the midst of this shifting triangulation of its own self-image, Japanese diplomats and scholars retained and deployed the terms of “western” modernity when it served the state’s interest.²² In many ways such justifications for a Japanese Monroe doctrine in China was a kind of end game, a last ditch attempt to keep international law while breaking free of it. Thus in arguing for China’s status as backward, its sovereignty as a nation state under international law was bracketed thereby enabling Japan a freer hand in “regional development.”²³ To a certain extent these economic justifications for Japanese expansionism can be contrasted with other theories that emphasize a stronger anti-western Pan-Asianism of the sort that became more vocal post-1931. But the point to be remembered here is that gradations between “*datsu-A*” (leaving Asia) and “*nyū-A*” (embracing Asia) need not be seen as resulting from any difference in the valuation of being Asian *per se*. Instead, they were coordinate with the need for discourses to mediate Japan’s perception of itself as more definitively a *competitor* with the Western system, while simultaneously providing legitimating cover for violent Japanese expansionism and the increasingly assimilationist policies.²⁴

its central policy of kicking the whites out of Asia.” Sven Saaler and J. Victor Koschmann, *Pan-Asianism In Modern Japanese History: Colonialism, Regionalism and Borders* (London: Routledge, 2007), 103.

²² This could be seen, for example, in the idea (increasingly prevalent post-WWI) that China was a mere civilization and not a modern state with concomitant rights.

²³ For an example of this see Rōyama Masamichi’s 1929 lecture, “Japan’s Position in Manchuria.” In *Problems of the Pacific: Proceedings of the Third Conference of the Institute of Pacific Relations, Nara and Kyoto, Japan, October 23 to November 9, 1929*, edited by John B. Condliffe (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930). Interestingly, the Lytton report of October 1932 went quite some way to recognizing Japan’s claims in this regard (Han, *An Imperial Path*, 178). In saying this I do not make a claim either way on Bruce Cumings’ argument that Japan was in various senses in fact inside a British-American informal empire at this point; rather, my point here is only to emphasize the public rationale. See Bruce Cumings “Archaeology, Descent, Emergence: Japan in British/American Hegemony 1900-1950” in Miyoshi Masao and Harry D. Harootunian, eds., *Japan In the World* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1993), 97.

²⁴ The popularity of the more liberal and decentralized versions of these theories of assimilation (*dōka*) waxed and waned during the interwar period. In terms of their advocates, Myers and Peattie summarize that for the most part it was liberal-minded scholars such as Yoshino Sakuzō who pushed for anti-assimilationist policies so as to try and counter the inequalities of power and wealth deemed to be morally and strategically untenable in the face of the rising colonial resistance movements after 1919. [See Ramon Hawley Myers and Mark R. Peattie, *The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895-1945* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), 106-7, 121.] Such discussions were ultimately silenced, however, when the rather politically ambiguous but oft-heard call for *isshi dōjin*—impartiality and equal favor (under the Emperor)—was replaced with assimilation as obligation (*Kōminka* or the imperialization

The above summary of the historical, geo-political and socio-psychological forces operative in the early 1930s allows us to now move to address specifically the situation of Japanese intellectuals during this time. Drawing on the above, and prefiguring the discussion below, it can be said that in that time of upheaval and uncertainty what was not in doubt in the minds of the intelligentsia, as well as a great many other Japanese from across the social and political spectrum, was that the system of national sovereignty purportedly operating in the post-WWI world was not fit for Japan's purpose. In other words, a certain "rethinking" was required.²⁵

Intellectuals in Crisis and That Certain Rethinking

As with the liberal elites in general, the majority of non-rightist intellectuals and academics viewed the domestic political upheavals of the early 1930s with deep concern. Such anxieties were also no doubt inflected by the attacks on the left—and free speech in general—which had been intensifying since the apparent success of the Russian revolution. Post-WWI Japan witnessed numerous clashes between liberal intellectuals and conservative activists as well as censorship of the critical press.²⁶ Standing out amongst various attacks on leftist activism was

of subject peoples); this became the dominant logic of sovereignty in Japan's movement towards a state of total war. Indicative of this, Yanaihara Tadao, perhaps the leading critic of forced assimilationist theories, was fired from his position at Tokyo Imperial University as Chair of Colonial Studies in 1937. His works were banned the following year.

²⁵ As the progressive women's magazine *Fujo shinbun* put it in the December 6, 1931 edition: "the respect for territory which underpins all international ethics needs rethinking." It goes on to assert that national boundaries "are not based on logic, economics, social or historical reasons" but are "either random or are the result of selfish spheres of influence of heroes of the past." Cited in Wilson, *The Manchurian Crisis*, 113.

²⁶ See Richard H. Mitchell, *Censorship in Imperial Japan*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1983), 172.

the enactment of the Peace Preservation Law of 1925 which, among other curtailments, banned criticism of the system of private property. This was followed in March 1928 by the mass arrests of JCP members and suspected supporters, repeated on a smaller scale the following year. October 1932 saw a repeat of the mass arrests of 1928 and that same month the Takigawa Incident began, culminating in May 1933 with Takigawa's removal from his post at Kyoto University on the grounds that he was teaching Marxist philosophy. The Takigawa Incident as well as the persecution of Minobe Tatsukichi in 1935, were conspicuous among numerous other signs of the times. Indeed, Minobe's persecution for arguing that the Japanese emperor is only an organ of the state was culturally significant enough that in May 1935 the influential journal *Chūō Kōron* responded with an issue entitled, "The Fall of Liberalism."

Since the liberal elements of academia relied on theory closely tied to the collapsing "western" international system, Japan's national rethinking meant many in the academy faced their own particular methodological emergency. In saying this I am not suggesting that all had been well up to that point: in the 1920s the liberal ideal of an elite-managed civil society had already come under pressure due to its inherent tensions with the emperor system as well as because many of its former leading advocates such as Kawakami Hajime had converted to Marxism with its conflictual view of society.²⁷ But by the early 1930s the promise of liberal theories of sovereignty and civil society had become so discredited in the face of a populist anti-westernism and the ascending authoritarian right that in 1933 Shimizu Ikutarō could claim that there were now only two political paths for Japan, either Marxism or fascism.²⁸ While such a view was obviously reflective of his leftism at the time—he was a member of the *Yuibutsuron*

²⁷ For a detailed discussion of these changes see Peter Duus in Wakabayashi, *Modern Japanese Thought*, 147-204.

²⁸ Shimizu Ikutarō, "Gendai ni okeru ningen no kiki" in *Shisō* No. 142, (March 1933): 305.

Kenkyūkai from 1932—his take on where this left the more mainstream intellectuals and academics is instructive:

Those unable to follow the road of either fascism or Marxism, that is, the intelligentsia, are struggling to manage in the present environment. More keenly than anything else they feel the solitude of Pascal's saying, 'We all die alone.' In this way the intelligentsia become the standard bearers for crisis thought (*fuan no shisō*) and the 'deep' thought concerning humanity's anxious essence.²⁹

In what must have appeared to Shimizu to be merely delaying the inevitable either/or, many of these *fuan* ("anxiety") intellectuals attempted a "rethinking" during this time which, at least on the surface, managed to appear neither overtly Marxist nor openly fascist.³⁰ In fact, despite Shimizu's rather binary portrayal of the political possibilities here, the relationship of *fuan* intellectuals to fascism, Marxism and imperialism was often highly complex and subtended aspects of all three modes of sovereignty. Reflecting this, and to contextualize for a moment in overly broad terms, these intellectuals might justly be labeled imperialists to the extent that they had been actively or otherwise supportive of Japan's colonial operations before 1931, and many

²⁹ Ibid., 304-5. Shimizu is referring here to the broad swathe of Japanese thinkers who took an interest in philosophers of anxiety such as Pascal, Kierkegaard and (by 1933) Heidegger in particular. For example, intellectuals such as Miki Kiyoshi (a student of Tanabe who greatly influenced Shimizu) published various studies on Pascal in 1920s and his writings from 1925 onwards often exhibited influences from the Barthian-inspired Kierkegaard renaissance that he had encountered during his years studying in Germany (1923-1925). Kierkegaard's influence on Miki and others was presumably reinforced by the popularity of other writers such as the Christian existentialist Shestov. By 1933, however, the *somewhat* Kierkegaardian philosopher Martin Heidegger had become *the* decisive thinker of anxious existence and one whose apparent conversion to Nazism caused much consternation to Japanese intellectuals. I return to this issue below.

³⁰ It seems in fact that there was no shortage of options for a scholar intent on avoiding or delaying said choice, even if only through a form of cognitive dissonance. In this regard, Young notes that the increasing repression at home dovetailed with the flow of funds into colonial development projects in Manchukuo thus opening up accompanying research posts for the same leftist, rightist and progressive intellectuals [Louise Young, *Japan's Total Empire*, (Berkeley: University of California Press), 1998, 242]. Some, such as Sinologist Tachibana Shiraki, relocated in the belief that the utopian project offered a space more conducive to actualizing their ideals than the one closing in around them at home. Clearly questions of idealism or self-deluding complicity loom large here as well the issue of faked conversions (*gisō tenkō*) (ibid., 262-282).

more appeared actively complicit in varying degrees thereafter. They might also be labeled patriots and any “cosmopolitan” and “moderate” political sensibilities they might have possessed were no doubt compromised by a keen awareness of a global power struggle which, although it had always been the reality behind the rhetoric, was now in danger of becoming an existential threat to Japan itself. At the same time, these varying shades of imperial patriotism were clearly tempered by concerns about how Japanese expansionism was tied to an increasingly authoritarian and ruthless regime at home and in the colonies.

What we can say for certain is that as the long decade of the 1930s progressed, many of these *fuian* intellectuals were caught up, more or less willingly, in work related to forming new post-national theories of sovereignty, and legitimations of imperial rule. Tanabe Hajime, a professor at Kyoto Imperial University, was just such a figure. Not only did he articulate a rethinking of western liberal political categories in his *Logic of Species* but like many others tried to find a way to intellectually “accommodate” the expansion of Japan into China (as well as the existing colonial regimes) into a political ontology. And he did this while retaining what he believed to be a critical approach to unchecked militarism and the rise of a race-centered fascism.

Before turning to examine Tanabe’s work in more detail, a note of methodological caution is necessary here. For all its utility, the above contextualization of liberals such as Tanabe suffers from one serious shortcoming. That is to say, it is inadequate to the extent that it fails to situate Japanese thinkers within a *global* crisis of liberal theory, and the new political theologies arising in Europe and the U.S. at that time. While this task will be explicitly undertaken in later chapters the importance of this larger picture is to remind us here that for thinkers such as Tanabe, the “crisis of the west” was politically, philosophically and theologically evident long before the Manchurian Incident. Consequently, Tanabe’s

understanding of Japan's *hijōji* "rethinking" and his perceptions of his role as a state intellectual were already influenced in a manner not wholly accessible to solely national or East Asian wartime narratives. Such accounts always run the risk of falling into a postwar amnesia which forgets the global crisis in liberal democratic thought and, instead, presents a more parochial story of Japanese interwar intellectuals overcome by a failing "Japanese" modernity and its authoritarian deviations.

Repenting Philosophy? Tanabe's Political Theology

"There is a moral order which is fundamental and eternal, and which is relevant to the corporate life of men and the ordering of society. We believe that the sickness and suffering which afflict our present society are proof of indifference to as well as a direct violation of the moral law. All share in responsibility for the present evils. There is none who does not need forgiveness. A genuine mood of penitence is therefore demanded of us—individuals and nations alike."

John Foster Dulles, "Statement of Guiding Principles" (1942)

Tanabe's first published essay on the theme of crisis "*Kiki no tetugaku ka? Tetsugaku no kiki ka?*" (1933) is demonstrative of both his European philosophical influences and his concern

with the authoritarian trends of *hijōji*.³¹ Accordingly, it not only declares Heidegger to be the thinker of most interest to the Japanese academic world, but also reveals considerable anxiety with regards to Heidegger's application of the "task of thinking" in support of National Socialism. In this sense the essay is symptomatic of a range of political anxieties concerning Japan which were being routed at this time through Japanese perceptions of the Nazi project, and indeed through the figure of Heidegger himself.³² Tanabe's argument in this *Kiki* essay is essentially that Heidegger's philosophy represents a crisis for philosophy. This is the case since its contemplative existential ontology (*kansōteki jikaku sonzairon*) threatens the true essence of philosophy, namely, that which gives life to the spirit of reason, the practical nature of absolute self-awareness.³³ This contemplative approach to philosophizing, argues Tanabe, results in a failure of philosophy to work with or mediate itself through the concrete historical necessities of modern *Sittlichkeit* (that is to say, family life, civil society, and the state). Alongside this, and in what is surely a plea for the role of intellectuals in the face of Japan's emerging authoritarian order, Tanabe argues the state must not negate philosophy or "it will be unequal to the judgments of the court of world history."³⁴

The air of dogmatic Hegelianism pervading this "think piece" is hard to ignore.³⁵ Yet it should be seen in the context of a slightly earlier essay entitled *Zushiki jikan kara zushiki sekai e*

³¹ Tanabe Hajime, "*Kiki no tetugaku ka? Tetsugaku no kiki ka?*" in *Zenshū* Vol. 8, (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō 1963), 3-9. Hereafter his collected works will be abbreviated as THZ.

³² Among other reasons why Heidegger's association with the Nazis would make him such an object of censure by "liberal" Japanese intellectuals was that, as Tosaka observed in a different context, the philosophies of Nietzsche, Kierkegaard and Heidegger were seen, broadly speaking, as philosophies of a cultural liberalism (*bunkateki jiyūshugi*). See Tosaka, *Zenshū*, Vol. 2, 434. It must also be remembered that the similarities between German and Japanese constitutional arrangements meant that changes in the former were anxiously monitored by those with a stake in the latter. Ader.co

³³ THZ 8, 6.

³⁴ THZ 8, 8. In other words, the state will be unable to dispossess itself of itself and philosophically grasp its own historical meaning in true Hegelian fashion.

³⁵ The *Kiki* essay is interesting in its own right since it bridges the political reality of crisis Japan by arguing that it is the task of the wise to mediate the political necessities of the state with its historical actuality, its institutions,

(1932) which gives a clearer indication of how Tanabe was beginning to distance himself from certain elements of Hegel around this time. The earlier essay also deals with the same basic concerns expressed in the *Kiki* essay—that is, the limits of Heidegger’s philosophy, the importance of dialectics, and the meaning of historically informed praxis—but does so in a much more comprehensive manner. And since it is also the programmatic sketch of what was soon to become *Shu no ronri*, as well as being Tanabe’s first significant discussion of “religious” themes such as sin and rebirth, it deserves examination.

The Sin of Modern Philosophy

“Original sin, with which post-Kantian thought begins, is the reunification of the transcendental subject and empirical consciousness in a single absolute subject”

Agamben (1993, 32)

In order to contextualize the terminology of the *Zushiki* essay it is first necessary to consider the commutativity of the very *modern* philosophical and religious vocabularies within which Tanabe and the Japanese intellectual world were immersed. In this regard I understand Agamben’s rather terse summary of post-Kantian philosophy (quoted above) as drawing

military ventures and so on. This is why at the end of the essay Tanabe suggests this need is “perhaps the meaning of the real is the rational and the rational is the real.” Despite Tanabe’s co-opting of this famous quote from Hegel I will show later in this chapter how his *Logic of Species* contain within it many non-Hegelian and Kierkegaardian elements. As a general rule it needs to be remembered that Tanabe uses very Hegelian language *dialectically*; he often bluntly deploys it to oppose the non-dialectical—for example, with Heidegger—while elsewhere moderating his Hegelianism in order to mount criticisms of Hegel himself.

attention to at least two important memes in the discourse known as modern European intellectual history. The first of these is the constant re-articulation of modernity's so-called "split" subjectivity. At the risk of oversimplifying matters, and while acknowledging the discourse of the divided subject has many differing points of emphases, we might say that the heart of the problem lies in the following: the asymmetry or disharmony between the experience of the diaphanous or ungraspable "self" on the one hand, and, on the other, the experience or conditions of experience which operate with respect to that which appears *phenomenally* as my knowable self, or as "other-to-this-self" (that is, objects or other selves).³⁶ An associated implication contained in Agamben's assertion is that all the moments in this divided and ruptured experience are to be understood as permeated by sin and therefore (already?) reunited in sin and in their potential "salvation" from sin. This in turn brings us to the second meme in "European" intellectual history I wish to highlight here, namely, the constant attempt to overcome this anxiety of difference, this gap, or "sinful" state.³⁷

These two recurring themes in modern intellectual history are relevant and helpful in orienting this thesis in at least the following ways. In the first instance, the most influential post-Kantian attempt to reconcile the transcendental and empirical is found in Hegel, perhaps the most ubiquitous of Tanabe's interlocutors. (And as I show below, Hegel did in fact use original sin in complex ways as a "starting point," or at least fundamental assumption of, his

³⁶ To prefigure later arguments, I demonstrate below that the most influential *modern* discussions of this problem on Tanabe were Hegel's speculative resolution of the divide, Heidegger's ontic-ontological difference, Nietzsche's self-negating Will to Power, and Kierkegaard's repetition. It must also be said that pre-modern St. Augustine anticipates this debate over the self as the ground of being—the assumption of which is in fact his basic definition of sin—and that Tanabe is strongly influenced by his work and his just war theory. This Augustinian connection will be the subject of the next chapter.

³⁷ In modern philosophy such undertakings usually take place through an epistemological or ontological emplacement somewhere between (or attempting to overcome) the poles of a thoroughgoing subjective idealism, or, at the other extreme, a form of materialist reductionism. Analytically, Tanabe's work can be seen as an attempt to move beyond this binary, as he himself claims it to be.

philosophical system.) Secondly, it is certainly true that for Tanabe sin and repentance are critical concepts in his post-Kantian programmatic social ontology. And yet Tanabe is no simple Hegelian disciple. As I suggest below, the discourse on sin and repentance in Kierkegaard is at least as decisive as the Hegelian influence in Tanabe's attempts to articulate a practical subjectivity.

Before turning to address these post-Kantian matters more closely, and in order to understand the process of "reunifying" the subject—whether as acted upon from "outside" or through auto-affective movement, or both—it is first necessary to return to Kant to tease out the transcendental-empirical problematic that a multitude of modern thinkers believed they were confronting. Moreover, for our purposes in particular, it is also necessary to undertake this task so as to bring some clarity to Heidegger's reworking of Kant's schematism since it is Tanabe's critique of this which forms the core of the 1932 *Zushiki* essay, as well as disclosing the intellectual historical foundation of the *Logic of Species*.

The Schematism of the World

It is in the *Critique of Pure Reason* that Kant argues the transcendental I (the unity of consciousness at the root of the pure *a priori* categories) and the empirical I (the contents of consciousness arising from sensuous intuitions) are divided.³⁸ While the transcendental I can never be grasped in empirical consciousness, it is the transcendental schemata, the procedural

³⁸ "But how the I that I think is to differ from the I that intuits itself . . . and yet be identical with the latter as the same subject." Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (New York: Cambridge University Press 1998), B155. Hereafter COPR.

rules which combine sensuous impressions with the *a priori* categories of understanding that bridge this divide.³⁹ According to Kant, the schemata must be the transcendental determinations of time since it is time which, as the “third” common to both intuitions and the categories, links intuitions (which have two forms, time and space) with the categories (for Kant linear successive time is the purest schema possible for a pure concept). The source of the schemata according to Kant is the transcendental imagination, a designation which Heidegger in his *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* (1929) then radicalizes in a more subjective idealistic manner by reducing both intuition and understanding to the synthesizing powers of the imagination.⁴⁰ And from that reduction to the imagination, Heidegger then traces out the different ways in which the cognition derived from this transcendental imagination is temporal in nature, and concludes that the imagination is temporality itself.⁴¹ Once this point has been reached in Heidegger’s thinking it is necessary for this project to coordinate with the possibility of authentic temporality i.e., that which mediates the ontological and ontic gap at the heart of his epochal *Being and Time* (1927). Heidegger does this by arguing that the imagination is spontaneously productive and thus capable of allowing *Dasein* to be the transcendence towards “objects,” constituting their objectivity, rather than objects being wholly transcendent to *Dasein* (which would render *Dasein* a purely receptive vessel).

In Heidegger’s very Heideggerian reading of Kant, the Kantian *Dasein* has become auto-affective as part of Heidegger’s attempt to mediate both subjective and objective readings of the

³⁹ “Without sensibility no object would be given to us, and without understanding none would be thought.” (Kant, COPR, A51)

⁴⁰ See Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. Richard Taft (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 97-112.

⁴¹ “The transcendental power of imagination allows time as a sequence of nows to spring forth, and as this letting-spring-forth it is therefore original time.” Ibid., 123.

“subject” through his existential phenomenology.⁴² What remains unclear in Heidegger’s account of *Dasein*, however, is if the subject is auto-affective in its uniting of the dispersed modalities of time through (potentially) an authentic temporality, and that of history and objects as appearance are derived from this, then what role is there for the “outside” of *Dasein* to be formative rather than merely consequent upon this mysterious auto-affect?

It is precisely through taking up this question that Tanabe criticizes Heidegger for overextending the reduction of the transcendental determinations of sensible intuition and the self as imagination to an autoaffective temporality. In short, Tanabe charges that in the reduction of the subject to temporality, Heidegger is not being concrete enough. This is because “external time” or the “time of world-being,” is not something which can be contained within a separate moment of *Dasein*’s interior temporal horizontal structure. In fact, argues Tanabe, it is in agonistic tension with that very interior horizon.⁴³ It is this “external” to *Dasein* which disrupts its moving horizon of futural projection from out of the past in the present and thus demands a dialectical understanding absent from Heidegger’s *Being and Time*.⁴⁴

In Tanabe’s interpretation, Heidegger’s “thrown projection” hints at but insufficiently thematizes the need for an external time—which includes historical time in the form of the

⁴² As Tanabe puts it, “Heidegger clarified the dialectical character of the transcendental imagination which produces these schemata. In so doing he unifies the ontology of the conscious existence of finite human beings with the transcendental philosophy of the transcendental being of objects into temporality as pure autoaffectation.” THZ 6, 5. This, we might say, is Heidegger’s version of Hegel’s intellectual intuition which, in turn, was Hegel’s attempt to locate the unity of the transcendental I and the empirical everything else in a totalizing return of the latter to the former.

⁴³ “The unity that is formed internally as the potentiality for being of the self is made possible only through the mediation of the tension of the external opposition opposed to it.” THZ 6, 12.

⁴⁴ “In other words, the determination of the inner sense by the outer sense is ignored, and we can say that the dialectical dimension of schematism is not sufficiently developed.” THZ 6, 7. Tanabe is referring here specifically to Kant but the point is then continued into Heidegger’s construal of the transcendental imagination. “As something that determines and constrains us, time belongs to human-being as *world-being*.” (my emphasis, THZ 6, 13). It should be noted that Tanabe uses more substantialist expressions than Heidegger in order to emphasize the oppositional though ultimately dialectical nature of what is experienced in “spatiality.”

“past”—as a constraint on and as an enabling condition for *Dasein*’s futural projection.⁴⁵

Without this we would have something like a mere epistemological “general consciousness” says Tanabe, and (presumably) we could add, the conflictual nature of praxis would therefore be impossible. Thus time is now *spatial*-temporal and the external world is the past to be overcome on the basis of futural projection.⁴⁶ A now mediated primordially of time returns as the spatiality of otherness, re-appropriated by the autoaffection of *Dasein*’s spatio-temporality in and as the mode of its “own” self-othering:

While the self is opposed to the non-self which limits it, at the same time it encompasses the external other within itself and there is a consciousness of that as self. In this way for the first time, the self and time become dialectical.⁴⁷

This dialectical spatial-temporal relationship is Tanabe’s fundamental reworking of Heidegger’s primordial temporality and represents the movement from *zushiki jikan* to *zushiki sekai*.⁴⁸

In summarizing this somewhat technical exposition we can say that Tanabe’s recombination of Heidegger and Hegel takes a philosophy of experience as something we dialectically undergo, and fuses it together with the idea of knowledge as consciousness. Schematically speaking, the result is essentially a modified version of Hegel’s intellectual intuition, that which develops itself in its understanding of itself. A crucial point to bear in mind here that this dialecticism implies consciousness can never grasp itself and is continually rent asunder and reformed in its self-othering. It is a negativity, constantly self-negating and

⁴⁵ THZ 6, 12.

⁴⁶ “Because of this the past and the future are simultaneously in oppositional coexistence in the present.” Ibid.

⁴⁷ THZ 6, 23.

⁴⁸ “This ground which is not only the ground of time but also of space should not simply be called primordial time, but must be understood as the primordially which is the unity-in-opposition of time-space.” THZ 6, 11. It should be noted here that Tanabe retains the projective temporal structure of Heidegger’s *Dasein*—only now its autoaffective nature has been clarified as dialectical.

incomplete (yet paradoxically also an absolutized subject in its un-Kantian godlike intellectual intuitions).

The Appearance of Religion

In the preceding section I demonstrated how Tanabe's reconfiguration of Kant, Heidegger, and Hegel argued for a certain dialectical notion of space-time. Tanabe *intellectually* spatializes the world through tracing back what he sees as Heidegger's error—the claim that “only time is the essential determining structure of being”—to the legacy of Greece. From that starting point he generalizes the theory of Forms as foundational for the “western” tradition. For Tanabe, the civilizational weakness carried by this intellectual meme is that the Forms and therefore on this basis being itself are thereby ultimately envisaged as a harmonious unity.⁴⁹ Of particular concern for Tanabe is the incompatibility of this ontology as a “beautiful image” with certain praxis-related concerns, and more explicitly with Tanabe's own theological concerns. In his opinion in the west's recent intellectual history it is German idealism, as both an inheritor but also partial sublator of this aestheticization, which goes some way towards resolving the problem. To quote from the *Zushiki* essay on the problem of the Greek ideal:

There is no “us” as acting agent opposing being . . . praxis as well is seen as being and so the will is also dissolved in the intellect. Yet German idealism is desirous of freeing the Forms from existence and achieving the active unity of the free Spirit and preserving the

⁴⁹ Which is not to say he conceives of the west as a monolithic tradition. Tanabe is in fact keen to emphasize the west's ruptures and developments (for example, Christianity or German idealism). However, as we shall see later, civilizational unity is recuperated inside the dialectical moments of world history.

spontaneity of the subject. And so this purposiveness of reality cannot simply be maintained as a stage in the beautiful image . . . This individuality is not something which establishes purposiveness as being which is immediate reality: because of the negativity of sin and evil it is only through the absolute nature of the negation of negation that we can enter into purposeful being. In other words, religious salvation which turns upon death and rebirth makes this a possibility. That which still preserves the Forms—which arise from Greek ontology’s beautiful image—in German Idealism’s theory of the free subject, is none other than the dialectic which raises up (*takameru*) the immediacy of aesthetic contemplation through the mediation of Christianity’s religious salvation.”⁵⁰

Reading this extract one could be forgiven for thinking that Tanabe is essentially repeating the historicized narrative of Christianity as outlined in the various versions of Hegel’s *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*.⁵¹ Yet while the Hegelian influence is quite obvious, we should be careful not to push the idea of simple identity too far for at least two reasons. First, other influences are also abundantly clear in this extract where, for example, the term *praxis* registers Tanabe’s interest in contemporary Marxism.⁵² The second reason is that around this

⁵⁰ THZ 6, 16. This said, Tanabe remains critical of German idealism as a whole since as a result of inheriting this harmonizing tendency, Hegel and German idealism have never been able to correctly diagnose the individual’s conflicted relationship with an external other (THZ 6, 15).

⁵¹ See Georg Wilhelm Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion: The Lectures of 1927*, ed. Peter C. Hodgson, trans. R. F. Brown, P. C. Hodgson and J. M. Stewart (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), esp. Part III. The relevance of Hegel is reinforced on the next page when Tanabe emphasizes that his essential critique of Heidegger is his lack of spatiality, that is, self-estrangement through dialectical conflict with what is external. Tanabe states—clearly referring to the ideas just given in the extended quotation—that to ignore this is to return “the concreteness of revealed religion back to Hegel’s idea of the abstractness of aesthetic religion.” THZ 6, 17.

⁵² Tanabe’s relation to Marxist theory is not the topic of this thesis per se, and neither do I consider myself qualified to undertake such a project. That said, some of Tanabe’s explicit (and occasionally his implicit) references to Marxism will be pointed up where and when they are relevant for an examination of his religious vocabulary. On the whole his Marxism, such as it is, remains layered under a prioritization of the transformation of consciousness for any effective “*praxis*.” In the broadest sense, Tanabe acknowledges the certain truths contained in what he sees as dialectical materialism’s criticisms of Hegel (Tanabe, *Hegeru tetsugaku to benshōhō*, 95). Yet at the same time his logic of species is premised on the idea that the practical is “ethical willing action” which is a reconciliation of material or social determinations with freedom which transforms reality (ibid., 110-111). It is Tanabe’s opinion that correct unity of matter and concept requires the practical unity of existential ethics and the religious (ibid., 111-112).

time we begin to see key differences emerging between Tanabe and Hegel with respect to “religion.”⁵³ I now turn to examine these with an emphasis on Tanabe’s turn away from Hegel and his move towards a more Kierkegaardian religious phenomenology. Analyzing this movement not only clarify the relation of his religious thinking to his political theology but will illuminate Tanabe’s place in the global contemporaneity of crisis thought.

Hegel and Christianity

Neither Hegel’s political theology nor Tanabe’s Kierkegaardian reworking of it can be understood without appreciating the importance of the triune God and the centrality of the Christ figure’s resurrection. The latter’s significance is often lost in discussions of Hegel’s dialectic—his most fundamental designation for “reality” as always identity-within/as-difference—because it is most often explained in the quite secularized imagery of its manifestation as world historical narrative, or in the terms of interpersonal psychology.⁵⁴ Such readings are important, of course,

It is this religiosity which defines and legitimates the violent changes in a sociopolitical formation since this religiosity is the whole at the root of the whole while also (more existentially) being the unity of the individual which has the power to go against the universal (ibid., 111).

It is in fact religious and theological language (rather than Marxist terminology) which dominates in both Tanabe’s Hegelian articulations as well as his movement away from Hegel in the 1930s. Of course various historical factors complicate any simple reading of this. The Takigawa incident of 1933 would make any imperial university professor very cautious indeed about showing an interest in Marxism, and the innumerable schisms within Japanese Marxism make it impossible in any definitive way to suggest what a Marxist philosophy would necessarily look like. Nevertheless, Tanabe’s discussion of the virtues and limitations of historical materialism and (as we shall see) his almost full-blooded Augustinian suggest that he at least believed himself to be trying to do something other than write Marxism, whatever that was, in coded form.

⁵³ See THZ 6: 15.

⁵⁴ Even the most recent studies of Tanabe and Hegel operate with a secularized Hegelianism which, accordingly, makes Tanabe’s use of Hegel’s Christian terminology appear to be little more than a crude deification of the state. See, for example, Peter Saures, *The Kyoto School’s Takeover of Hegel*, (Lanham MD: Lexington Books, 2011), 157. In doing so this approach essentially repeats, with minor alterations, the argument made by Tanabe’s most influential commentator James Heisig. I critique Heisig’s understanding of Tanabe and the state in a later chapter.

but what needs to be born in mind for the purposes of this dissertation is that in Hegel's System, dialectics and Christian theology possess a kind of structural isomorphism as "moments":

Everything that surrounds us may be viewed as an instance of dialectic . . . as implicitly other than what it is, (it) is forced beyond its own immediate or natural being to suddenly turn into its opposite. We have before this (Section 80) identified Understanding with what is implied in the idea of the goodness of God; we may now remark of Dialectic, in the same objective signification, that its principle answers to the idea of his power.⁵⁵

For Hegel, God and the world as dialectical movement (its processes, history and historicizing self-reflexive interpretations thereof) are in some sense unified. Yet this cannot be a unity of two separate entities for then that which the term God represents would merely be using the world to secure peace with itself, and remain at the level of the master-slave relationship.⁵⁶ Conversely, a pure identity would be meaningless in the sense that the dialectic or in fact any "experience" would therefore be unnecessary. More seriously, with pure identity nothing would be thinkable for Hegel in the sense that only that which is mediated can be thought since being *is* an "interrelated" mediated totality, an immanent self-othering.⁵⁷ And yet, to further complicate matters, this complete reconciliation of God and world must in fact already

⁵⁵ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Hegel's Logic: being part one of the Encyclopaedia of the philosophical sciences (1830)*, trans. William Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1975), 118. In the *Logic* Hegel defines Understanding, our usual mode of comprehending things as abstracting and universalizing such that the universal and the particular are kept "rigorously apart" and knowledge is essentially Linnaean in its differentiating character (Hegel, *Logic*, Section 80). This clarity and "isness," this "taking things out of their immediate sensuousness" corresponds to the goodness of God "so far as that means that finite things are and subsist." (Hegel, *Logic*, 114).

⁵⁶ I am grateful to Rowan Williams for this observation. See Williams in Philip Blond ed., *Post-secular Philosophy: between philosophy and theology*, (New York: Routledge, 1998), 120.

⁵⁷ For comments on the contested nature of ontology of this immanent self-othering, see Slavoj Žižek, Clayton Crockett and Creston Davis, eds., *Hegel and the Infinite: Religion, Politics, and Dialectic* (Columbia University Press, 2011), 5.

“be” for if it were not, then the dialectic would have no foundation; it would instead risk being no more a meaningless wandering through the debris of aimless sense experience.

The implication of the preceding paragraph is that if being is to *be* through a recognition of a reconciled totality in God, or in secularized terms if the dialectical process is to end in the absolute Idea as thinking transparent to itself, then paradoxically this end must already be “in the beginning.” Hegel’s answer to this problem is to be found in the Trinity of God, Son and the Holy Spirit, a non-identical identity of self-othering in absolute otherness.⁵⁸ It is in this conception that for Hegel, God’s kenotic emptying out of itself as the human Jesus *is* God’s being as absolute self-othering; at the same time this *is* the Holy Spirit in movement thus forming the “eternal triune” process which is present to us as the idea of the universal (which is not yet the realization of the Idea *per se*, however).⁵⁹ In this way the trinity “represents” the ultimate reconciliation—both as Alpha and Omega—of the process of realizing the (paradoxically already) mediated nature of all being.⁶⁰

For Hegel, the story of the Fall and our consequent awareness of sin is a sensible and not-yet-philosophical representation of the cognitive division that is the movement out of immediacy.⁶¹ In other words, sin is the negation of immediacy which appears to consciousness as a threat to *Dasein* in its self-designated unmediated subsisting singularity—the founding moment of the master-slave dialectic. A few pages on from this discussion of the Fall in the

⁵⁸Hegel, *Lectures*, 417-8.

⁵⁹ Hegel, *Lectures*, 418. Hegel observes on the same page that when the Holy Spirit “is expressed in the mode of sensibility, it is eternal love.” I will return to the significance of love as a political force later in this chapter.

⁶⁰ In Hegel’s System, for the Idea to think itself in this Alpha and Omega, this representation (*Vorstellung*) of the Trinity must itself be “thought” (*Denken*) *philosophically*. Only in this manner can the true speculative content of the Christian narrative be retrieved; this is the provocation of the word “implied” in the above quotation (Hegel, *Logic*, 118), and is why philosophy, like the owl of Minerva, only spreads its wings in the twilight of religion. The extent to which this culmination is in fact not a culmination at all but a “not-all” is perhaps the question which lies at the heart of the new readings of Hegel. See the introduction to *Hegel and the Infinite* for a discussion of this debate.

⁶¹ Hegel, *Lectures*, 442-446.

Lectures we find the Hegel's explication of the "negation of negation," the expression utilized by Tanabe himself.⁶² This negation of negation through the resurrection of (the fully finite) Christ is what permits the overcoming of sin and a movement beyond the master–slave dialectic:

So here the abstraction of humanity, the immediacy of subsisting singularity, is sublated and this is brought about by death. But the death of Christ is the death of death itself, the negation of negation ... For the true consciousness of spirit, the finitude of humanity has been put to death in the death of Christ. This death of the natural has in this way a universal significance: finitude and evil are altogether destroyed. Thus the world has been reconciled.⁶³

Faith in this salvific event is crucial here in at least two senses. Firstly, faith is required for the individual to actually enter into a relationship with the Idea and in this way the ultimate "object" of reason and faith are one.⁶⁴ The second reason faith in the redeeming event is important is that faith enables repentance, and it is through faith-repentance that Spirit frees the sinful individual because "evil is known as something that has been overcome."⁶⁵ This allows the Unhappy Consciousness (which is essentially about lack of belief in the good, what Hyppolite called the fundamental thesis of the *Phenomenology*) to finally reconcile with itself for the higher forms of political life beyond sin.⁶⁶ For Hegel this higher concrete freedom can only

⁶² In both the 1832 and 1840 editions of Hegel's *Werke* as pertaining to his 1831 version of the *Lectures*. For a discussion of the editorial variations in the citing of this section see Hegel, *Lectures*, 465.

⁶³ Hegel, *Lectures*, 466-7.

⁶⁴ "For faith is the truth, the presupposition, that reconciliation is accomplished with certainty in and for itself. Only by means of this faith that reconciliation is accomplished with certainty in and for itself, is the subject able and indeed in a position to posit itself in this unity." Ibid., 332, cited in Andrew Shanks, *Hegel's Political Theology*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 40.

⁶⁵ Hegel, *Lectures*, 479. For Hegel true faith is faith that evil has been overcome ("reconciled") such that the subject "has only to make its own will good in order for evil, the evil deed, to disappear," and flowing from this "repentance or penitence signifies that through the elevation of human beings to the truth, which they now will, their transgression is wiped out." Ibid., 478-9.

⁶⁶ Hyppolite quoted in Shanks, *Hegel's Political Theology*, 34.

be achieved through the existence and recognition of political structures that are for the communal benefit/being rather than (mis-) perceived self-interest (which results from individuals failing to grasp their mediated nature). Repentance allows the recognition of this mediation and the overcoming of the subjective ego. Thus the Idea behind this idea of reconciliation through repentance grounds a spiritual community wherein one comes to realize one's being and therefore "interests" are communally mediated. At the same time, this repentance and realization ride on the back of a faith that this subjective willing of the good is at all possible, and this in turn can only arise on the basis of faith in the reconciliation (what appears in Christian imagery as the reconciliation that between sinful humans and the divine good. These various elements are of one cloth in Hegel's political theology. As Shanks puts it, "the problem with any theology lacking an adequate concept of divine forgiveness is that it lacks a proper basis in principle for that free political community of conscientious individuals which is the Hegelian ideal."⁶⁷

In summary, for Hegel reconciliation has been achieved in consciousness—more or less—and this is his fundamental objection to a Kantian idea of progress in the ethical battle between good and evil.⁶⁸ But at the same time does appear to legitimate some conceptions of

⁶⁷ Shanks, *Hegel's Political Theology*, 41. My focus here on Hegel's discussion of religion as facilitating freedom not only reflects Tanabe's interests but also the work of at least some recent Hegel scholarship. As Thomas A. Lewis summarizes, "reflecting widespread academic interest in religion over the last decade, recent scholarship--particularly in German--has devoted significant attention to Hegel's account of the relation between religion and the state. Much of this work has focused on the way that Hegel combines an argument that religion constitutes the foundation of the state, a strident critique of theocracy, and a defense of freedom of conscience. Another focal point of discussion has been the relationship between religion and philosophy. A number of theologically invested interpreters have focused particularly on what is preserved and what is left behind in Hegel's transition from religion to philosophy. As important as these issues are, and while both are related to the issue at stake in this article, centering one's interpretive lens on either of these issues distracts attention from Hegel's powerful engagement with the potential role of religion in enabling a population to find itself at home, and thus free, in modern social practices and institutions . . . he is ultimately concerned with religion's ability—or inability—to enable us to find ourselves at home in a just and rational order that promotes freedom." Thomas A. Lewis, "Religion, reconciliation, and modern society: the shifting conclusions of Hegel's Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion." *Harvard Theological Review* 106.1 (2013): 37.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

forward movement through history as Spirit comes to consciousness of itself; in this sense it inviting abuses since within such readings it could be taken as sanctioning the forgiving of violence, possibly before that violence is even committed, as part of a state's role in fulfilling the world's or the Spirit's historical destiny. We have seen these basic assumptions in modernization theory, of course, although Hegel is far more explicit in his arguments that the matrices of power inherent the master-slave dialectic must be overcome for modern society to legitimate itself.⁶⁹ For the purposes of this chapter, repentance signals two movements in Hegel: that sin has already been overcome—this soteriology is inseparable from justifying any political project and, secondly, that sin is not something which will permanently disable the possibility of a politics beyond self-interest. This, in essence, is Hegel's political theology and, as we shall see in this and later chapters, these are also the fragile assumptions around which a Tanabe (and a Niebuhr) politics turn.

After the above rather lengthy account of Hegel and religion, we are now in a better position to begin to assess to what extent Tanabe's theological language in the context of 1930s Japan is a departure from a Hegelian political theology. (And accordingly as this chapter's role in this dissertation's larger argument, this discussion will help us to situate Tanabe in a global context). In the absence of further evidence, Tanabe's repeated use of Hegel's theological motifs in the 1932 *Zushiki* essay only suggests that he shares a negativity that is dialectical rather than being speculative in the precise Hegelian sense. For example, without addressing Tanabe's frequent use of Buddhist terminology and his indications of its potential equivalence to the truths of Christianity, we are unable to determine the precise import of the narrative or "truth" of the

⁶⁹ In a Hegelian register the critical difference between the two systems would be that in modernization theory the required *Aufhebung* remains at the level of an interior non-dialectical subjective individualism.

death of the historical Christ figure in terms of its speculative content, and thus unable to grasp the form of the Idea which Tanabe might be advocating. Connectedly, saying that Tanabe is dialectical leaves open the question of what this actually means since from within the resources of any (more or less) speculative idealism there is an infinite variety of possible content from which a thesis, an antithesis and a posited *Aufhebung* can be drawn. We must, then, address what “dialectic” means in concrete terms—and indeed this is the task Tanabe assigns himself in the critique of Heidegger contained in the *Zushiki* essay. And for this we must turn to Kierkegaard, the lodestar for Tanabe’s criticism of Hegel in the early 1930s.

Tanabe and Kierkegaard

Written by Tanabe in 1931 and published January 1932, the preface to *Hegel’s Philosophy and Dialectics* reveals the following:

For me the phenomenon of corporeality is the fundamental ground for dialectics. In corporeality for the first time both idea and matter are exceeded and a truly concrete absolute negativity appears in and as the awareness of the tense unity of the two. I have criticized Heidegger’s ontology from this position and articulated a new dialectical anthropology in response to this. Along with the self-evidence of this corporeality’s dialectics, my limited knowledge of Kierkegaard’s ethico-religious existential dialectics have determined my current attitude towards Hegel’s philosophy.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Tanabe, *Hegeru tetsugaku*, 10.

I believe there are two main senses in which Tanabe appropriates Kierkegaard against Hegel, and both must be understood in order to understand Tanabe's political theology. The first of these is discontinuity; the second is sin and its corollary of repentance.

Discontinuity

“It is some confirmation of this description of liberal thought that its European critics repeat as a kind of incantation the words of Kierkegaard about ‘the absolute qualitative difference between time and eternity.’ They also make great use of the word ‘discontinuity.’”

John C. Bennett, “After liberalism – What?” in *The Christian Century* (Nov. 8th 1933)

Typically in representations of “western intellectual history” it is Kierkegaard, the “subjective Christian existentialist,” who, along with Marx, is most often counterposed to Hegel and his idealist dialecticism. Nevertheless, it must not be forgotten that Kierkegaard, despite his withering attacks on Hegelian ontology, is also a dialectician of sorts. Kierkegaard's dialectics, however, are of the uncertain, even abyssal kind. They deal with the transformations of human existential states independent of Hegel's speculations on the objective, rational and real nature of history's dialectical processes. In this respect it's important to bear in mind that a more Kierkegaardian Tanabe can and does remain dialectical throughout this period.⁷¹ So what, then, does Tanabe take from Kierkegaard?

⁷¹ In fact he believes dialectics to be no less than “reality's contradictory unity” (Ibid., 96).

For both Tanabe and Kierkegaard, Hegel is too contemplative in his philosophical idealism and thereby glosses over the existential crisis of ethical action.⁷² Kierkegaard is scathing in his criticisms of Hegel's idea of continuous mediation of "action" inside dialectical logic. His complaint is essentially that it represents a aesthetic contemplative stance which fails to grasp the difference between logic and ethics.⁷³ For the Danish philosopher, lived ethics is a paradox: in ethics there is an ideal, the universal, which must be enacted in the particular activity of the individual in their everyday life; and yet, this ideal is exactly what cannot be actualized.⁷⁴ This crisis of the subject, induced by the impossible ideality of ethics, brings about a transformation of the internal subject in a dialectical leap of faith pushed inward by the "absurdity" of Christian belief.

This transformation Kierkegaard calls "repetition" and is both ethical and religious in meaning:

This is accomplished in such a way that the religious ideality breaks forth in the dialectical leap . . . either all of existence comes to an end in the demand of ethics, or the condition is provided and the whole of life and of existence begins anew, not through an immanent continuity with the former existence, which is a contradiction, but through a

⁷²As we have seen, Tanabe wants to retain absolute spirit in a sense akin to Hegel's intellectual intuition, but in its truest mode this experiencing of the self in the world is labeled "religious" by Tanabe, albeit as a term suggestive of a kind of insight and personal struggle that is inseparable from ethical praxis. Tanabe finds something like this unity in Kierkegaard: "Religion is that which is a return of the whole through itself; it is the power to forge the universal as the particular. Ethics and religion mediate each other as two moments of praxis. Kierkegaard in his criticism of Hegel from the position of existential dialectics says this of course." Tanabe, *Hegeru tetsugaku*, 111.

⁷³Soren Kierkegaard, *Concept of Anxiety*, trans. Reidar Thomte (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980), 12-14.

⁷⁴Ibid., 16.

transcendence. This transcendence separates repetition from the former existence by a chasm.⁷⁵

Kierkegaard explicitly states that this leap is qualitative, and this repetition is self-transcendence or freedom itself, as opposed to the quantitative mediation of Hegel's concepts "which is not movement at all."⁷⁶

I outlined in the previous section how faith, sin and repentance were integral to Hegel's political theology. While it would be impossible to impute to Kierkegaard an equivalent political program his idea of ethics and the exception are an imaging of intersubjectivity and its outside, (if not society *per se*). Kierkegaard's discussion of qualitative change or "leap (of faith)" is linked to sin and repentance in that ethics is destroyed in its idealism precisely by sin. Yet the ethical remains as a call to actuality, one made ever more deeply paradoxical as one simultaneously becomes ever more cognizant and *repentant* of one's sinful nature.⁷⁷ For Kierkegaard this inward contradiction results in even greater discontinuity in leaps, as it were, and ever greater inwardness or "subjectivity as truth." Sin is finally overcome through forcing or emptying oneself this to the extent that grace manifests and allows one to overcome one's sinful state; as Kierkegaard puts it, Christ is, after all, "the most profound expression of repetition."⁷⁸

Tanabe certainly takes on board much of this existential, unmediated and discontinuous understanding of sin. In discussing the limitations of Hegel, Tanabe seizes in particular on the importance of Kierkegaard's qualitative and quantitative distinction. Foreshadowing his

⁷⁵ Ibid., 17.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 30-32. For an interesting discussion on this point and the origins of the term "leap" as deriving from Hegel himself see Jon Stewart, *Kierkegaard's Relations to Hegel Reconsidered* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 406-8. See also *ibid.*, 299-301 for Stewart's discussion of repetition as self-transcendence or freedom.

⁷⁷ "Sin, then, belongs to ethics only insofar as upon this concept ethics is shipwrecked with the aid of repentance" Kierkegaard, *Concept of Anxiety*, 17-18.

⁷⁸ Cited in Stewart *Kierkegaard's Relations*, 299.

conflictual reading of societal progress in his *Logic of Species* (see below), he characterizes the discontinuous and (logically) unmediated nature of the leap as a movement into a unity of universal and particular.⁷⁹ Yet in contrast to Kierkegaard, albeit without abandoning the idea of grace, Tanabe firmly places self-transcendence through repentance as something grounded in dialectical conflictual intersubjectivity. This other is in fact required “to sublimate the negativity of sin and evil, via death and rebirth, to salvation’s absolute negative power.”⁸⁰ Tanabe rejects the Hegelian solution to sin and repentance—that is, he rejects logical mediation/realization—and instead prioritizes the principle of an opposing other’s existence and a responding repentant conversion experience.⁸¹ As argued earlier, this conflict between people was already evident in the *Zushiki* essay in Tanabe’s criticism of Heidegger and although Tanabe does not discuss repentance explicitly in that essay, his comments therein on sin and the necessity of being reborn (*Zushiki*, *passim*) would make little sense if repentance were not available to enable oneself to convert, to die to oneself through the repentant mediation of the other. And as I will argue in Chapter Four, it was also one of, if not the, pivotal terms in the post-WWI American political theological milieu.

As far as I am aware there is no record of Tanabe using the term *zange* until the secret Naval staff meeting of March 2, 1942 mentioned in the previous chapter. Notes from that meeting reveal the context to be as follows:

⁷⁹ Tanabe, *Hegeru tetsugaku*, 116-7.

⁸⁰ THZ 6, 17.

⁸¹ In the political environment of the day the term conversion (*tenkō*) would for readers (and censors) have a resonance inseparable from the “conversions” of Japanese intellectuals, Marxists, colonial intellectuals and other colonial subjects. In its broadest sense, such conversion indicated a claim that the subject, variously defined, could be emancipated through participation in the imperial nation state. My argument in this and the next chapter will suggest that Tanabe’s repentance-conversion dyad is a way of presenting the conflicts of particularities (colonial or Japan-proper ethnic identifications) as resolvable in a higher universal and often justifiable in the name of this promise.

In this time of war, should we not reform the existing capitalist system in terms of its relation to politics and the labor problem courageously and radically? What we need is not to talk of hopes or of structures, but to frankly reflect on Japan's imperialism since the Manchurian Incident. We must repent, become aware of the present failures arising from this liberalism and imperialism, become conscious of the unavoidable need for reform, and for reforming the domestic order as such.⁸²

Looking at this note, the affinities between its dynamics of repentance and those contained in for example the earlier *Zushiki* (1932) ("to sublimate the negativity of sin and evil, via death and rebirth, to salvation's absolute negative power") are blatant. In other words—and to prefigure this chapter's analysis of his Logic of Species, Tanabe's fleshed out imperial political theology—Japan has sinned in its actions (thesis) and through self-negation of repentance (anti-thesis) Japan can be reborn/reformed (*Aufhebung*) through a discontinuous non-logical movement as something manifesting a higher universal.

It is to this Logic of Species that I now turn.

⁸² Ōhashi Ryōsuke, *Kyōto Gakuha to Nihon Kaigun: Shin Shiryō "Ōshima Memo" o Megutte* (Tōkyō: PHP Kenkyūjo, 2001), 185-6. Koyama Iwao (1905-1993), the student of Nishida, also used the term *zange* at the same meeting with a similar intent (Ibid.).

Chapter Two - Part II

The Logic of “Species”

At the outset of this chapter I justified my discussion of the *Zushiki* essay by casting it as a fuller explanation of the Heidegger criticism contained in Tanabe’s first explicit response to Japan’s time of crisis. What that analysis showed was that through reconfiguring Hegelian, Heideggerian and Kierkegaardian themes, Tanabe arrives at the beginning of a social ontology and a political philosophy. In other words, his re-appropriation of Hegel and Heidegger demands a dialectical reality while at the same time foregrounding the idea of (Kierkegaardian) discontinuity and a rejection of (Hegelian) abstract logical mediation. In this way the fixed spatiality of intra- and intercultural difference that restricts the meaning of temporality, and which lingers still in Hegel’s portrayal of the subject as a substantial thing entering somewhat speculatively into the dialectic, is undermined by a return to a more thorough-going discontinuity in social praxis. Whether or not Tanabe can convincingly hold these two repelling forces together—that is to say, spatialized social order, and discontinuity—and at what political cost, is the question at the heart of his philosophy. Indeed, it is the question for all political theology insofar as it is an account of the relation between God and the soul in the time of the world.

By 1934 Tanabe is prepared to give a more concrete form to his developing social ontology, incorporating his preferred religious terminology into a lengthy monograph which explicitly aims to intervene in the operations of an authoritarian Japanese imperialism. He undertakes this task in his essay entitled *Shakai sonzai no ronri* and so to this I now turn.

At the outset of his essay *Shakai sonzai no ronri* Tanabe declares that the essence of all modern philosophy is an attempt to find the principles of modern society. In saying this Tanabe immediately places himself in the lineage of “moderns” for whom, we might say, the critical challenge is to determine the logic of society now that perceived “premodern” social forms are no longer (viewed as) operative, accepted or given. In the early decades of the twentieth century this task seemed all the more urgent in the eyes of interwar Japanese commentators who, while cognizant of Japan’s precarious position within the world system, also observed the alienated and agonistic individuals co-arising with Japan’s rapid social transformation.⁸³ From the end of the 1910s, the developing liberal platform concerned with separating state authority from the emerging concept of “society” led to a focus on social problems (*shakai mondai*) that had arisen as a result of modernizing processes. This, combined with the an awareness of the increasing relevance of Marxist analysis, to lead a two-pronged attack on the concept of over-extended state power and the identification of society with the state itself.⁸⁴ Needless to say, in Japan as elsewhere, once social problems were “discovered,” very different diagnoses and cures from were proposed from across the political spectrum.

For Japan’s liberal intellectuals in the early 20th century, as inheritors of the Enlightenment legacy, this was a situation which seemed to relentlessly demand—and to which “reason” seemed to offer—a mastery of this unquiet self, along with society, nature and the

⁸³ For a discussion of how post-1905 terms like neurosis and *shinkei suijaku* were used in popular discourse to describe the effects of industrialization and modernity see Shunsuke Tsurumi, *Nihon No Hyakunen*. Vol. 7 (Tōkyō: Chikuma Shobō, 1961), 212-216.

⁸⁴ Han quotes the liberal icon Yoshino Sakuzō in 1920 as claiming “the discipline of political science hitherto imposed an absolute value upon states . . . and confused the state with society.” Han, *An Imperial Path*, 121.

culturally or militarily threatening other.⁸⁵ At the same time, modernity had brought with it not only “problems” but a new and disquieting historical consciousness threatening a potentially relativizing spatialized/civilizational consciousness. This was a disturbing challenge to so many of the assumptions about reason’s potential and the meaning of (what was now) “world history.” Amplified by the momentous upheavals of WW1, the rise of Marxism, and the economic travails of the interwar period, this anxiety was clearly visible in the *fuan* intellectual’s absorption with writers such as Nietzsche, Marx, Kierkegaard and Heidegger. As we shall see below (in the section below entitled “A ‘European’ Crisis”) this anxiety manifested in Europe as the crises of historicism, of theology and of European identity; similarly, to be modern and Japanese was also to bear these burdens albeit with the imaginary of civilizational difference being inflected by the positionalities of the non-European. Whilst this goes some way to explaining Japanese thinkers’ great interest in Hegel—the great theorist of reason, social concord, history and civilization—it must be remembered that in those thinkers of anxiety, alienation and discontinuity such as Heidegger, Kierkegaard, Bergson, as well of course as Marx himself, the latent organicism of Hegel’s society, and the subsumption of the individual as an abstract particular unit of a subtending universal social category, were all put into question. Indeed, the alternative religious and political subjectivity (*shutaisei*) articulated by these critics of Hegel were the catalysts for Tanabe’s own evolving political theology.

⁸⁵ Connolly in his influential work *Political Theory and Modernity* puts reason’s promise thus: “Everyday life offers none but perfectly intelligible relations with his [sic] fellows and to nature.” William E. Connolly, *Political Theory and Modernity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 131. Zhang narrows the field of appeal somewhat by saying that the promise was only an offering to the bourgeois universal subject. See Zhang, Xudong. “Political Philosophy and Comparison: Bourgeois Identity and the Narrative of the Universal.” *Boundary 2* 32, no. 2 (Summer 2005): *passim*. *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCOhost (accessed March 11, 2015).

The Logic of Social Identity

Tanabe lays the ground work for his logic of society in the opening sections of *Shakai sonzai no ronri* through a critical commentary on various influential sociologies. His analysis is intended to highlight what he sees as the common error of interpreting the individual person as a kind of particularized subset of society, a smaller thing that is of essentially the same nature as the larger social formation. In other words, he objects to analyses of society which deploy anything like a Linnaean schema of genus, species and particular, as well as the assumptions of a logical-ontological continuity in the mediations between the terms. For Tanabe such a conceptual logic fails on two counts. Firstly, it fails to grasp that human individuals are constantly in a negatively mediated dialectical relationship with those “others” who appear as social identities (*shu*). Secondly, in this agonistic relationship, individuals are being discontinuously mediated (to a greater or lesser extent) by a transcendental ethical “universal” which he usually terms genus (*rui*), or occasionally as God. I shall clarify these two moments in turn.

For Tanabe, individuals are enmeshed in a multiplicity of species or forms of social identity. Furthermore, he is at pains to point out that the individual’s participation here, in contradistinction to a logical Platonic continuum, is marked precisely through its relation of negativity with respect to any existing *shu*. This negativity has a double aspect. On the one hand, it is reflexive in that to have awareness of oneself as anything is already to be in a negative relationship to it/oneself in the sense of having brought it to consciousness, and therefore be reproducing the split between the empirical and transcendental self. The other aspect of this negativity is of an “other or others” who necessarily appear as a/multiplicity of differing *shu*, a

not-I. This double negative aspect is co-arising, however: the thematizing I must by definition be inaccessible to itself, and, connectedly, the very coming to consciousness of oneself as something, for example, as Japanese—albeit also as uncertain self which is other to oneself—is simultaneously a determination of oneself in contradistinction to or conflict with other *shu*-embedded others.⁸⁶ This latter point means that it is only in an awareness of one’s identity in distinction or conflict with any given *shu* that one has a representation of one’s identity to oneself at all. Thus Tanabe points out that the other ego (*nanji*) represents to an individual (*ko*) the essential direction of *shu* determination.⁸⁷ We are mediated by *shu* or species, but never identical or continuous with it.⁸⁸

The Call of Rui, the Voice of God

Looking at Tanabe’s Logic here in the mid-1930s, the question of how and why conflict can be legitimated is unavoidable. This is so not only because the I is involved in social conflict with other *shu*, meaning nation, races, classes, countries and so on.⁸⁹ It is also the question at issue because Tanabe’s claim is that just as we, as individuals, are mediated, so is the will to power mediated through others in its—and therefore our—movement towards self-

⁸⁶ Individuals (*ko*) are separate to *shu* but take on *shu*-like identity/ies. In and as such a *ko* is always at some level in conflict with itself as (single or multiple) *shu*, and others as single or multiple *shu*.

⁸⁷ THZ 6, 126

⁸⁸ THZ 6, 126 and 158. The concerns evidenced here are by no means exclusive to Tanabe: the nature and “resolution” to the bifurcated transcendental/empirical consciousness was a great concern for many Japanese intellectuals in the interwar period. (Discuss Nishitani in the postwar and how the philosophical vocabulary changes to Buddhism?).

⁸⁹ THZ 6, 60

transcendence.⁹⁰ Thus conflict is seen by Tanabe as the prerequisite for self-transcendence and/or societal development. Whether this conflict is a good depends on the precise nature of the relation between *rui*, *ko*, *shu*, and the state that is manifest in any particular instance of violence. Critiquing an authoritarian will to dominance in those imperial times, Tanabe explains that the exertion of power and conflict *can* be the result of *ko* receiving its self-determination from *shu* while at the same time separating from it and trying to monopolize it for itself via the exclusion of others.⁹¹ This analysis would equate to something like the installation of an authoritarian regime which might, for example, posit a certain exclusivist idea of what it means to be Japanese. But the relationship of the parts of the *Logic* can also configure quite differently, suggests Tanabe. It is possible that *ko* is mediated by the ethical universal or call of God and thereby takes on a new identity which inevitably still excludes but will only do so until later on even more just situations arise through new conflicts. In Tanabe's metaphysics what one might simplify as "good" conflict is a necessary step in the negative mediation towards absolute negativity wherein the concrete self is actualized in/as absolute relativity as absolute unity (*zettai no sōtai ni taisuru sōsoku*). And this, he declares, "is the position of religion."⁹²

The difference here between power as domination and power as transcendence of/through power is experienced in the individual's conflicts with the other and, correlatively, in its response to the call of *rui*, the universal. When responding to the call, *ko* is appropriating *shu* in the sense that *ko* mediates a new *shu* through positing itself as the new universal-as-particular. This assertion will by definition be limited (i.e., still the will to power), and this will in turn invite new

⁹⁰ This social nature of the will to power is something that Nietzsche missed, argues Tanabe, thereby ignoring the possibility for genuine resurrection of the self after socially mediated negation. See THZ 6, 125.

⁹¹ "Through monopolizing those determinations for itself, and through excluding others, it tries to take the life of species for itself." THZ 6, 126.

⁹² THZ 6, 127.

negations and mediations with the potential to move towards the truer human universal.⁹³ Thus in Tanabe's social logic, genus or *ruì* both mediates and is mediated by the permanent excess in the social ontological order; there can never be an organic harmonic whole because of the negativity of subject and the violent call of genus for universality, abstract negativity or rebellion. At the same time, the collective identifications of *shu* ground these negativities in providing a resistance for them to work against and to 'be' while challenging other *shu*.

The State

It is because of the conflicted nature of the *ko* and *shu* relationship—combined with the impossibility of unmediated access to *ruì*—that the state is required to mediate these tensions. Alongside this particular kind of theological sovereignty—dominated as it historically has been by prohibitions and regulations of subjectivity—the state's mission as mediator is in fact also to “produce the universal as humanity.”⁹⁴ In other words, the state is an ethical project which must produce the universal individual (*ruiteki ko*).⁹⁵

The role of the state here is complex and prone to abuse. As demonstrated above, in Tanabe's more Kierkegaardian moments it appears that in various senses it would be the

⁹³ The precise content of this moral imperative can plausibly be rendered something like equality or the totality of humanity.

⁹⁴ THZ 6, 132.

⁹⁵ The author of the Logic of Species pushes this to the point of arguing that states themselves must sublimate themselves and approximate themselves to the universal through this production of *ruiteki ko* (THZ 6, 132). In a later essay “*Shu no ronri to sekai zushiki*” Tanabe clarifies how this mission relates to history: “The mediation of history comes about through the *poiesis* of concrete social beings. Furthermore, *poiesis* reaches its highest stage in morality as the subjects as ethical individuals form themselves into concrete individuals as members of the state . . . and forming the state as the totality of genus.” THZ 7: 260.

individual (*ko*) which in its excess to the socio-symbolic order possesses the power to ground the form and content of the political order. Yet clearly the state's responsibility weighs heavily here in mediating this excess. How, then, does this not simply return real power to the deciding sovereign who guarantees the order? In other words, to an unstable benevolent authoritarianism at best. Tanabe is highly conscious of the dangers of the state apparatus becoming the principle of *shu* itself since, to the extent to which that were to happen, the required transformations in *shu* would then fail to be mediated (and a kind of "anti-terrorism" would ensue). From the position of the individual mediating *rui* this action by the individual is necessary justified revolution if the institutions of the state cannot mediate the universal; conversely, that which doesn't allow itself to be mediated in the eyes of the state is just such a terrorist threat. The mechanism of mediation is never quite clear but he does give a non-procedural principle for producing just mediation: religion.⁹⁶

Acknowledging his indebtedness to Bergson's distinction between a closed and open society, Tanabe views religion as having the capability to both produce static closed societies but also open societies which do not manifest theological sovereignty in the manner discussed in this dissertation's opening chapter.⁹⁷ James Burton, in his discussion of fabulation in St. Paul, and Bergson (and Philip K. Dick), articulates closed and open in the following way:

The closed society is that which, on the basis of a universalist politics or open morality, must be recognized as fundamentally incomplete, yet which presents itself, with the help of fabulation and law, as complete. The open society, the future community Paul seeks to

⁹⁶ In the colonial context Tanabe insists on certain principles such as legal equality among the citizens (THZ 6: 151).

⁹⁷ For his account of closed and open societies see Henri Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, trans. Ruth Ashley Audra, Cloudesley Shovell Henry Brereton, and W. Horsfall Carter (New York: H. Holt and company, 1935).

establish, would re-distribute completeness and incompleteness in their proper sites, through a recognition of its own incompleteness as the only route to a genuine universalism.⁹⁸

In Tanabe's idiom, religion at its functional best can be the negating aspect of absolute negativity, i.e., that which mediates *rui* against the state's natural tendencies to become a closed or *shu*-like society.⁹⁹ Religion thereby allows the state to mediate *ruiteki ko* according to the principle of absolute negativity. In other words, any positivity (for example, law or system of state procedural institutions) will have a tendency to ossify, produce identifications etc., in the way that *shu* naturally tends to do. The author of the *Logic of Species* is aware of the dangers that comes with mixing "religion" with the state such that the former might become a mere extension of the latter. As he puts it, "theocracy (*shinsei seiji*) involves the absolutization of the immediacy of the unity of the group, and religion must be separated from that."¹⁰⁰ In what must be considered a coded reference to both Nazism and the racial authoritarian elements of Japanese imperialism he argues (in *Shakai sonzai no ronri*) that "when religion fails to be mediated through the constant conflict between the individual and species then that religion is no more than a form of totalitarianism."¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ James Burton, "Machines Making Gods: Philip K. Dick, Henri Bergson and Saint Paul," *Theory, Culture & Society* December 2008 vol. 25 no. 7-8: 270.

⁹⁹ The negative aspect of absolute negativity is religion and its positive aspect is the state (THZ 6, 147). What Tanabe seems particularly impressed by in Bergson's presentation of the ideal society is his idea that it is beyond family and nation and is unified in love. Yet contra (his reading of) Bergson, Tanabe demands that the ideal society be mediated by the closed society simultaneously rather than consecutively. In this way the *Logic* makes space for morality/societal laws which are combined with a sense of the universal and therefore permits the religious to operate and bring about the ideal society. Bergson's closed society has no moral obligation to anything beyond its walls so therefore an open society suggests a movement from something like a authoritarianism to a more universal or imperial mission.

¹⁰⁰ THZ 6, 149.

¹⁰¹ THZ 6, 68-69. In objecting to theocracy Tanabe is probably merging his concerns with the increasing authoritarianism of what we now call State Shinto with the German term for political theology (*Politische Theologie*). The latter term was by 1934 explicitly associated with the rise of Nazism among the Japanese intellectual class. In their discussion of Carl Schmitt, Scott and Cavanaugh describe the situation in Germany noting

Tanabe returns to this theme of the danger of political theology in another essay entitled “The Relation of Religion and Culture” (*Shūkyō to bunka no kankei*) published in the October 1934 edition of *Shisō*.¹⁰² The essay is essentially a reflection on religion as a possible defense against racist authoritarianism—both German (explicitly) and Japanese (implicitly)—articulated through an analysis of Europe’s most famous interwar politico-theological dispute, the Barth-Brunner debate.¹⁰³ The theology in question was dialectical theology, a movement launched by Barth against the dominant paradigm of 19th-century liberal theology, and in particular its *accommodation* of German militarism in WW1.¹⁰⁴ It was also closely tied to Germany’s post-WW1 Kierkegaard revival and by 1934, according to the author of the *Logic of Species*, was a philosophy whose importance could no longer be ignored.¹⁰⁵

Tanabe reads Barth-Brunner debate as a disagreement over the limits of human finitude, over the discontinuity between transcendent and human powers. Human powers are defined by sinful finitude and in the debate Barth tasks his interlocutor with failing to appreciate the depth

that “with Weimar’s final crisis, however, “political theology” became the refrain of a broad and ecumenical chorus, reaching an adulatory crescendo in the months after Hitler came to power.” Peter Scott and William T Cavanaugh, *The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 115. Given the close links between Japanese intellectuals and the German academic climate, we can assume Tanabe was fully aware of this.

¹⁰² Reprinted in THZ 5, 61-80.

¹⁰³ This debate reached its rancorous climax in 1933-1934. It fundamentally concerned a disagreement over the capabilities of human reason vs. the need for grace, as well as the Church’s need for independence from the German state. In 1934 it culminated in the Barmen Declaration—a document issued by the Pastors’ Emergency League, a group of dissenters from the new “Reich” Church, and mostly penned by Barth. The declaration criticized the influence of Nazism on German Christians and rather bravely, Barth mailed it personally to Adolf Hitler. I take up Tanabe’s reading of the debate below.

¹⁰⁴ Barth’s method is not dialectical in the sense of aiming for a higher resolution but in the sense that the tension of opposites and the experience of the paradoxes of existence are the only real experience of God. It is an attempt, post-WWI, to return God to a place free of the hubris of reason, culture and human history. As Karen Carr puts it, “Two fundamental premises drive Barth’s argument forward: that people long for security, foundation and assurance; second, that not such foundation or assurance is to be had in this life.” Karen L. Carr, *The Banalization of Nihilism: Twentieth-Century Responses to Meaninglessness* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 61.

¹⁰⁵ THZ 5, 62. In this essay Tanabe is very keen to emphasize that he has no religious faith and is unqualified to discuss theology. He adds, though, that the problem of nature (that is, the power of human reason) and grace, religion and culture are of great interest to him. Tanabe was not alone in his preoccupation with Barthian theologies as is suggested by the fact that in the same issue of *Shisō* Watsuji felt obliged to write an essay on dialectical theology and its inferiority to Japanese Buddhism.

of human sin and the need for grace. In other words, of failing to appreciate the folly of this worldly political allegiances which are in denial of this fact. Not wholly unexpectedly, given his Kierkegaardian influences as well as his concerns over Japanese militarism, the language of Tanabe's Logic shares much of the same terrain as this debate.¹⁰⁶ However, the extent to which one could say his Logic is actually *informed* by this theology remains underdetermined. This is especially so because Tanabe's writings on religion around this time are inseparable from his avowed attempts to modify one system of imperial management for a different kind of imperial sovereignty—hardly a project consonant with the terms of the Barth-Brunner debate.¹⁰⁷

With this caveat, the debate—in Tanabe's interpretation—can be summarized in the following way. Having forgotten their infinite origin, finite and relative humans attempt to make themselves infinite and thereby exclude the other person, and necessarily disavow their own sociality. The relative finite is set up against the infinite absolute and in so doing the finite tries to steal the infinite's place (and inevitably fails). Even in their highest form these attempts to give oneself over to the universal are still the doomed work of the ego which can never free itself from its own attachments (*meishū*). We cannot escape from this contradiction by ourselves and religion is the absolute grace that enables us to escape from this contradiction.¹⁰⁸ In this way the self dies to itself and a conversion comes about through repentance. The gratitude for this conversion is the content of faith.

One of the remarkable aspects of this interpretation is that Tanabe is effectively using the Barth-Brunner debate as a proxy to say that the racially stratified authoritarian elements of the

¹⁰⁶ His more or less coded attacks on the will of the state as trying to exceed its own measure of sinful finitude would be one instance.

¹⁰⁷ See, for example, THZ 6: 160.

¹⁰⁸ THZ 5, 67.

Japanese imperial state arise from the ego's inability to deal correctly with its finite relativity, its sinful nature. In other words, the only thing that can transform the morality-religion duality, the *shu-rui* duality, into absolute nothingness is an awareness of one's evil and sin.¹⁰⁹ Ultimately this religious mediation is manifest as "absolute love" since it is only in love that the state's "concrete synthesis of freedom and equality" can come about.¹¹⁰

Tanabe is advocating here a kind of unity between the principles of morality (*shu*-like and immanent) and religion (aspectively *rui*-like and transcendent). Evil and sin destroy the stability of society by neglecting self-other relations and so essentially belong to a closed society. However, as noted above in Tanabe's criticism of Bergson, he insists that both forms of society must co-exist; it is in the open society that one can be saved *by* evil and sin. The suppressed logic of the argument here is that we can only reach love through sin-mediated violence (that is, the Will to Power coming out of the life will) and the social mediation of this as the Will to Power negates itself in self-transcendence.¹¹¹ Thus love becomes the justification of what is otherwise known as violence, a claim inseparable from Tanabe's imperial context. (I will return to this instance of just war theory in later chapters when comparing Tanabe with Augustine and contemporary U.S. just war theory.)

In trying to hold together social morality and religion in a tense unity, Tanabe adopts a seemingly quite Pauline formulation of subjectivity, transgression and the law. In the most general sense, both writers are concerned to take the juridical designation of what we would now

¹⁰⁹ THZ 6, 80.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 153-4. See also pp. 81-82. I am grateful to James Burton for his insight that in Bergson's thinking love must come after faith as the highest principal since the latter can always be recuperated into supporting a closed society whereas for Bergson (and Tanabe, I would add) real love cannot (Burton, "Machines Making Gods," *passim*). For a discussion of Hegel on love see Rowan Williams in Blond, *Post-Secularism*, 122.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 129.

call racial identities (Korean, Jew etc.) and transform them into subjects, an identity based on “internal” orientation—“Neither Jew nor Greek,” said Paul; *rui*-like policies in the colonies, urged Tanabe). Tanabe acknowledges that in practice the various *shu* of any society, and the individuals inhabiting them, will always be structured by a system of laws and prohibitions. Yet he quotes from and argues in support of St. Paul’s declaration that laws produces the very desire to transgress them, and this results in the experience of sin (the desire to go beyond *shu* is both sin and also *rui*).¹¹² In our inevitable life of law, transgression, and sin, Tanabe claims redemption is possible through mediation which results in a genuine acknowledgment of this fallen state. In this way an individual, and indeed a state, can enter into a religious conversion mediated by *rui* and move towards reciprocal relations governed by love, not law. And this is religion’s ultimate mission: to mediate universal love in absolute nothingness through the mediation of sin and evil via repentance.¹¹³ The Japanese empire therefore contains the potential to be the redemption of sin in action, premised upon the need for sin to mediate itself.

Having outlined Tanabe’s Logic, it is worth briefly returning to my earlier argument for the implied nature of repentance *avant la lettre* (implied in 1932, and appeared as *zange* in 1942). According to my explication of the Logic of Species above, Tanabe *must* (in this period of 1934 onwards) be advocating some kind of state repentance for the Logic of Species to make

¹¹² Ibid., 165. The passage that Tanabe takes up concerning Paul is from Romans 7: “For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.” Žižek expresses the Hegelian reworking of this Pauline insight in the following way: “Hegel’s fundamental rule is that objective excess (the direct reign of abstract universality that imposes its laws mechanically, with utter disregard for the concerned subject caught in its web) is always supplemented by subjective excess (the irregular arbitrary exercise of whims).” Slavoj Žižek, “A Leftist Plea for Eurocentrism” *Critical Enquiry* 24: 1000.

It is important to note here that as with almost all major steps in this and other essays, Tanabe is assiduous in carefully explicating his point in philosophical, theological and occasionally Buddhist terminology with no apparent superiority among the three. For example, immediately after this quotation from Paul, he makes a similar point quoting Shinran. That said, occasionally in his essays Tanabe can give the impression of a superiority of Japanese Buddhism over Christian monotheism. I will take up this issue in the next chapter and argue for the somewhat deceptive nature of this civilizational rhetoric.

¹¹³ THZ 6, 162-3.

sense. What I mean by this is that, as demonstrated above, Tanabe is seeking to undermine those who want to create a *shu*-like state premised on Yamato racial superiority or other forms of closed society. This means that if *rui*-like policies are to be implemented in the colonies, as he insists they need to be, the policy makers and the *shu* he is criticizing will have to acquiesce to a larger universal.¹¹⁴ This might happen through their own critical reflection, pressure from other senior figures in the state, a pragmatic response to violence committed by the repressed colonized, or some combination of all of these.

The Logic's argument here is that the only meaningful way these supporters of a dominant *shu*—an authoritarian privileging of the Japanese race over other races, for example—can be changed is through having them repentantly mediate their own particular as universal to a higher universal. Repentance in effect means this kind of conversion/expansion through realizing one's erroneous self-assertion of will to power. Without this conversion their own will to power will fail to mediate itself and they will continue to assert their particular version of a closed society (*shuteki kokka*), for example, and no movement in or as absolute nothingness will occur. Thus every time Tanabe uses the word "sin" or something equivalent, he must be implying repentance or there would be no conversion, no *rui*-like advance. I believe this is what he intends when (albeit in a global context) he says that in the process of the individual negating a particular ethnicity, the state must sublimate itself.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ For example see THZ 6, 160.

¹¹⁵ THZ 6, 132.

Historicizing Tanabe's Relation to Imperialism

In my fairly theoretical account of Tanabe's Logic up to now I have emphasized one main historical condition: Tanabe's desire (in the 1930s) to supply and have implemented a less racist and authoritarian way of thinking about Japanese sovereignty. With this stage of work completed we are now in a position to revisit this historical context—the political dimension—in order to further historicize Tanabe's thinking before, in the next chapter, refocusing on his Logic's religious, that is to say theological and even Augustinian nature. How, then, are we to think Tanabe's use of religion and the political relations of *ko*, *shu*, *ru*i and state in the context of mid-1930s Japan?

Earlier in this chapter I took up the issue of how the economy and the challenges to the party political system had contributed to the sense of crisis in early 1930s Japan. In the years immediately following Pu Yi's installation as Manchukuo's head of state (*shissei*) in 1932, however, the time of crisis began to take on a decisively different hue. Factors such as the improving economy, Japan's continued indignation at Western criticism of its actions, and the increasing military presence in the cabinet all combined to consolidate the legitimacy of or sense of *fait accompli* surrounding the Manchurian expansion.¹¹⁶ It is no coincidence, therefore, that *Shakai sonzai no ronri* appeared in 1934 (rather than 1931 or 1932, for example) and Tanabe, like other Japanese imperial academics, found himself in the role of justifying this “new” and (now more accepted) expansive imperialism.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ See Wilson 2002: 90-92 for an interesting account of how numerous bureaucrats, far from being active supporters of the expansion, saw it as a threat to their domestic priorities and hoped for a reversal of some kind.

¹¹⁷ I am unaware of any writings by Tanabe on Japan's colonial activities in Korea or Taiwan prior to the 1930s. Han suggests that in fact most socialists as well as liberals such as Minobe Tatsukichi were much less interested in Japan's colonial seizures from the pre-1931 period (Han, *An Imperial Path*, 106).

With this expansion came the problem of managing a multiethnic state, staving off potential rebellion, and distinguishing Japanese rule from Western colonialism.¹¹⁸ In this regard, Sakai reminds us that during this period the slogan, “Communism and ethnic nationalism are the twin heads of our empire’s ultimate enemy” was circulating widely at the time in various Japanese publications, posters, journalism and commercial advertisements.¹¹⁹ At an academic level the pressing issue for those who wished to function as imperial intellectuals was to think how to make the empire workable. For Tanabe and others this meant pondering how to maintain a critical posture with respect to a potentially counterproductive racist Japanese authoritarianism while, at the same time, attempting to reconcile (or undermine) colonial or ethnic nationalism with a subjectivity wedded to an imperial identity.¹²⁰ To better appreciate this milieu in which Tanabe found himself, it is instructive to briefly examine the dominant theoretical solution to this problem of sovereignty in Manchukuo around this time—and which functioned as guide and foil to many progressive intellectuals.¹²¹ This is the idea of “harmony of the peoples (or races)” (*minzoku kyōwa*) which by 1933, notes Young, was the “guiding vision of the newly created

¹¹⁸ For example, Japan had for some decades been linking its interventions in China to the moral “the kingly way” (*ōdō*) as opposed to the western military way (*hadō*). The “restoration” of Pu Yi as imperial head of Manchukuo was justified, at least in part, under this banner.

¹¹⁹ Naoki Sakai, “Imperial Nationalism and the Comparative Perspective,” *Positions* 17:1, Spring 2009, 168. Sakai points out in different essay that “a number of publications, such as Shinmei Masamichi’s *Race and Society* and Kosaka Masaaki’s *Philosophy of Ethnicity*, offered systematic philosophical and social scientific critiques of racism and ethnic nationalism as part of the state’s ‘ideological warfare’ (*shiso-sen*) against Anglo-American colonialism, Communism and ethnic particularism.” Naoki Sakai, “You Asians,” *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 99.4 (2000): 789-817.

¹²⁰ In policy terms this meant the authorities emphasized their commitment to equality regardless of race under the benevolent emperor. For a discussion of such imperial technologies see Naoki Sakai, “You Asians,” *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 99.4 (2000): 789-817.

¹²¹ The question of sovereignty in Manchukuo during these years is highly complex. Until November 1931 the Inukai cabinet had intended the Chinese nationalist government to retain formal sovereignty over Manchukuo. However, as a general point, any sympathetic engagement with “Chinese” nationalism was complicated by the fact that numerous senior Japanese military officers had justified the state of Manchukuo by drawing attention to an indigenous movement that aimed to rid itself of interference from China south of the Great Wall. For a discussion of the problems inherent in calling Manchukuo a mere puppet state as well as an account of the tensions between the North China Army, the Kwantung Army and Tokyo, see Suk-Jung Han, “The Problem of Sovereignty” Manchukuo 1932-1937,” *positions: east asia cultures critique* 12.2 (2004): 457-478.

Chinese mass political organization called the *Kyōwakai* as well as a cornerstone of the new state.”¹²²

The most influential exponent of this idea of collective harmony was undoubtedly Yamaguchi Jūji who launched his theory in a prize-winning article in in 1927 in *Kyōwa*, the official organ of the South Manchuria Railway Company.¹²³ Alongside advocating a series of specific economic policies for industrializing Manchukuo, he advanced a policy of racial harmony between the Japanese and the other ethnic groups in the area. This system of governance was based on legally-enforced *minzoku* equality rather than dominance:

Through overcoming the exclusionary thinking born of racial prejudice, those who reside in Manchuria-Mongolia will have nationality in a self-governing entity. Chinese, Manchus, Mongols, Koreans, and Japanese will participate in politics and bear the cooperative responsibility as citizens of the self-governing area equally and without distinction. They will equally share the cultural resources of Manchuria-Mongolia. The

¹²² Louise Young, *Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1999), 287. Young also notes that this idea, despite manifesting concretely as a political party, an organization for local population regulation, and a regime propaganda machine had great appeal to progressive Japanese intellectuals such as Tachibana Shiraki (*ibid.*, 288-9). It suggested to them that the “Japanese” were not essential constituents of the new state and so this allowed said intellectuals to feel they had accommodated Chinese ethnic nationalism and were even perhaps putting power in the hands of the peasants, while also remaining Japanese patriots. While Young doesn’t pursue the point, this suggests an inherent plasticity and heterogeneity in the term *minzoku* since it must represent something like race but also a racially-transcendent politically state (from a “Japanese” point of view). I return to this issue in Tanabe’s Logic below.

¹²³ Yamaguchi founded the Manchurian Youth League which advocated for an independent Manchuria in the late 1920s. The League was briefly to become the *Kyōwatō* which organized lecture tours and contact meeting with Japanese government officials in the summer of 1932. It then became the *Kyōwakai* or Concordia Association on July 25, 1932, was officially recognized in August 1932, and diplomatic relations between it and the Japanese government were established shortly afterwards. I am grateful to David Egler for this timeline. See David G. Egler “Japanese Mass Organizations in Manchuria 1928-1945: The Ideology of Racial Harmony,” Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Arizona, 1977, 226. See also *ibid.*, 247 for the goals of *Kyōwakai* and *ibid.*, 210 for a discussion of its anti-democratic nature.

Chinese and Japanese will merge to form one society and through this the mutual love of humanity will manifest as we live and prosper together (*kyōson/kyōei*).¹²⁴

In Yamaguchi's theorizing of Manchukuo as a new polity, would absorb Chinese *minzoku* identity and channel it into a new Manchukuoan identity. In other words, *minzoku* as one of the five races would transform into a new "*minzoku*" but with a new national identification. The incredible burden of plasticity which the term *minzoku* would have to carry here was not theorized by Yamaguchi and indeed the complex and violent nature of this essentially *poietic* revolution was essentially ignored. Instead this first sense of *minzoku* as something like ethnic race, what he called the idea of group or ethnic prejudice (*shuzoku henken*, *minzoku henken*) was simply cast in a negative light as something to be overcome. In this way he fails to theorize the heterogeneity of the term *minzoku*, this movement from "race" to statehood, and also how the state itself conditions and co-produces the idea of race itself. Instead, in a rather romantic and simple alternative it was to be land, not race, backed by economic wealth, which was to be bind the people as a people. Yamaguchi explicitly states that in this way his Manchukuo would be a movement towards a European conception of statehood, the significance of which would be world historical.¹²⁵

In a number of senses the parallels with Tanabe here are striking: both writers are attempting to influence the Japanese state's racial policy in Manchukuo through a more or less explicit undermining of the very idea of being "Japanese" itself; and both writers also emphasize land over race as a unifying delimitation (see, for example, Tanabe in THZ 6, 160). However, in their actual understanding of *minzoku* (as race) the two men were crucially divergent in that for

¹²⁴ Yamaguchi, quoted by Matsuzawa in *Kokusai Seiji* 1 (1970): 97-98.

¹²⁵ Egler, *Japanese Mass Organizations*, 96.

Yamaguchi *minzoku* was something like a homogenous term to be fused to other homogeneities. For Tanabe, however, *minzoku* as *shu* identity is heterogenous, internally striated by inter- and intrapersonal lines of force and negation. And it is precisely this divided nature which in Tanabe's Logic permits the possibility of conversion from particular to universal. In 1934, Tanabe advances this position through attacking the idea of Japanese racial supremacy as a principle for the governance of Japan's colonies:

In a union of states each county is a particular instantiation of universal humanity and so the union becomes possible. Before the universal human state (*jinruiteki kokka*) comes to mean the union of states there needs to be a state that makes its members universal individuals. The ethnic state even when mediated by a universal human state doesn't lose its *shu* nature completely but only its immediate unity is sublated by the absolute negativity of *rui* and it appears at the level of negativity *qua* affirmation The so-called ethnic state can exist but the universal human state is an absolutely negative potentiality and must always be affirmed in a negative sense. In this way *rui* as manifest existence mediates *shu* . . . and so what appears as the latter is confused with the former . . . what mediates the conversion (*tenkō*) between the two is the negativity of *ko* which mediates the dialectical and antipathetic type of relationships between *rui* and *shu*.¹²⁶

¹²⁶ THZ 6, 133. Manchukuo was recognized as a formally independent state by Japan in 1932. However, Fujitani argues that as a puppet regime, it was in effect an experiment in establishing the "polite racism" of postcolonial client states rather than the less efficient governmentality of "vulgar racism" typically associated with Nazism, for example (Fujitani, *Race for Empire*, 7-8). Although Fujitani does not refer to Tanabe explicitly, the latter's comments on managing the colonies are not wholly incompatible with something like this "polite racism." However, this should not be pushed too far. This is because Fujitani's explanation is heavily dependent upon the exigencies of total war and these are perhaps not fully apparent at this time. I believe the total war explanation is insufficient to explain the universalism of Tanabe in the mid-1930s since it would need to be supplemented by the importance of the Augustinian worldview in the construction of the Logic of Species. I address this matter in the next chapter.

In this quotation the tension between *shu* (for example, an ethnic identity) and absolute nothingness (the call to *rui*) is pushed to an extreme here by Tanabe as he tries to maintain their coexistence. In this sense he co-opts the classical theological dilemma of God or *rui* as transcendent and a human or Christ as the immanent principle to express this potentiality. While I will focus on Tanabe's Christianity in the next chapter it is already apparent here this duality of God/human complements the idea of Japan as the guiding light for lesser mortals, the leader of Asia. At the same time this pantheism enervates anti-Japanese or Chinese nationalist *minzoku* sentiment by making it appear less universal and "retrograde" while sympathetically coopting subjects desiring emancipation into the state's future coming.¹²⁷ In the theories of both Tanabe and Yamaguchi the withering away of *minzoku* resistance movements is simply a part of the process of ultimately allowing a universal love of humanity to manifest. Yet in contrast to Yamaguchi, for the writer of the Logic of Species the violence required to achieve this is explicitly addressed inside the promise of dialectical mediations. In other words, the establishment of a new state, which then unifies a conquering and conquered *minzoku* through the just mediation of the conflicts within it, is a justification for the violent founding of the state itself.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ It would therefore have considerable appeal to colonial intellectuals who were trying to find a way to justify their cooperation with their new masters. The fluidity of the term *minzoku*—which is allowed to range in meaning between ethnic group all the way to something like a state's citizen—helps to facilitate this transition.

¹²⁸ THZ 6, 133. This justification for the Manchurian expansion is coupled with a thinly veiled warning to the Japanese state in Tanabe's assertion that the conquering *minzoku* must not simply turn the conquered *minzoku* into working labor while holding the reins of political and economic power. This would not only encourage unrest but deprive the state of its legitimacy (THZ 6, 160). On the whole, the various manifestations of the Logic of Species retain a distinction between religion, culture and state with the former playing a critical role in mediating against culture's and the state's unadulterated will-to-power and its *shu*-like tendencies. However, as the 1930s wore on Tanabe's vocabulary becomes more ambiguous and the distinction between the three terms less pronounced. In a lengthy 1941 essay *Eien rekishi kōi*, for example, published a few short months before Pearl Harbor, Tanabe still claims that the essence of the state is concretely manifested in the negatively mediated unity of the universal and the

We have already seen how “religion” plays a crucial role mediating this violent progression towards love and therefore in mediating the state’s possible legitimacy. Nevertheless, what this actually means in relation to existing so-called traditions remains opaque. On the one hand he claim that religion (in this benevolent sense at least) can be identified with any religious tradition as long as it has absolute negativity as its fundamental principle.¹²⁹ Yet the religious vocabularies from which Tanabe draws for his Logic are either Christian or Japanese Buddhist. He thereby gives the impression of being quite uninterested in (or skeptical of) the potentiality of other religious philosophies being able to playing the role he envisages. Which begs the questions why Christianity, and why Buddhism? These questions and Tanabe’s use of their respective vocabularies will be the guiding themes of the next chapter.

particular (THZ 7, 111). Yet an eliding of distinctions is now evident. In the essay, drawing on Ranke’s idea of every era being “the immediate to God,” this sense of discontinuity with the chains of historical advance—which was formerly emphasized in terms of *ko* in conflict with *shu*—is now cast more in terms of individual states’ ability to mediate a new epoch in the destruction or preservation of the old. Culture is now very ambiguously presented as the manifestation of this divine immediacy with the power to marshal power politics—precisely whose culture and in what process of transformation is not discussed—whereas previously the gap between critical religion and culture had been emphasized. The state meanwhile retains its power to manage change but it now has a role which makes it look much more like *ko* in its ability to instigate the universal—and in the international political sphere it appears to have a personality of its own (ibid.). The state’s development (*hatten*) is seem as giving spiritual and ethical life to an epoch (TH7, 112) rather than simply playing the role of managing conflicts between *ko* and *shu* and thereby mediating the universal. It’s unclear how much we can say Tanabe has willingly acquiesced to the role of philosopher of statism here though it is certainly true that, as discussed earlier, by this time the assimilation of colonial minorities is now increasingly articulated in terms of state-enforced duty (*kōminka*).

¹²⁹ THZ 6, 152. Tanabe says that this is the essential message of Hegel once it is shorn of its lingering immediacy (ibid., 142), an attachment that in Hegel produces an unfortunate tendency to identify the state with a particular *minzoku*. With respect to Kierkegaard, on the surface at least Tanabe de-Christianizes Kierkegaard to make way for “faith,” or rather any “religion” which has absolute nothingness as its principle. The leap here is not a leap into faith as propositional belief, but an appropriation of the paradoxes that come with faith—for Kierkegaard this is exemplified paradigmatically in the story of Abraham and Isaac. The link between Kierkegaardian repetition (discontinuity) and faith is that both are a movement into groundlessness (absolute nothingness) and thus undertaken with fear and trembling. That in Christianity God is also a man, the eternal is the temporal, the universal is the particular etc., is what drives faith into further absurdity and groundlessness and into “truth.” Tanabe appropriates this internal movement and recasts it in very socially conflictual terms: thus when *ko* challenges the order of *shu*, this is Kierkegaard’s repetition rejecting moral laws.

Chapter 3

Tanabe's Christianity and the Just War

In the introduction to this dissertation I noted how Tomoko Masuzawa's important work had brought a timely critical historicization of the very idea of "world religions." In the case of Japan in particular, other methodologically similar works appeared around this time detailing the reorganization/invention of Japanese Buddhism in competition with a re-imported Christianity in Meiji and early Taisho.¹ In terms of the figuration of Japan's identity around this time (as discussed in earlier chapters) a Japanese Buddhism—which simultaneously repackaged itself as modern while distinguishing itself from its Indian or Chinese antecedents—was seen as a mark of distinction vis-à-vis other modern nations. Relatedly, Jackie Stone observes that in the national universities Japanese Buddhist studies adopted western scholarly techniques and with its output on various forms of Japanese and Asian Buddhism rose to global preeminence and presented itself as the disseminator of true Buddhism to the West.²

These academic memes undoubtedly influenced the content, as well as providing the enabling conditions, of Tanabe's work. In this regard it is conspicuous that his Buddhist

¹ James Edward Ketelaar, *Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 136–220; Judith Snodgrass, *Presenting Japanese Buddhism to the West: Orientalism, Occidentalism and the Columbian Exposition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Noto R. Thelle, *Buddhism and Christianity in Japan: From Conflict to Dialogue, 1854–1899* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987).

² Jackie Stone, "A Vast and Grave Task: Interwar Buddhist Studies as an Expression of Japan's Envisioned Global Role" in J. Thomas Rimer, *Culture and Identity: Japanese Intellectuals During the Interwar Years* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990).

Stone is to be applauded for bravely drawing attention to this huge gap existing scholarship. However, I have strong reservations about the framework within which she understands this future work since it accords very much with the postwar *dispositif* I am challenging here.

references are all drawn from Japanese Buddhism while other “Asian” forms hover somewhere unmentioned and, by implication, all uniformly colored in a “pre-modern” sepia.³ Thus this marking of spatialized time is more complex than a simple displacement of typical Eurocentric imperial cartography. Nominally speaking there are at least two kinds of “reverse” orientalism going on here since, as we have seen, Japan’s distinguishing of itself from Asia and from the West is a triangulation with unequal sides. Asia is certainly not equal in stature to the Christian West in Tanabe’s timeline of world history since the former is both behind but also potentially ahead of the latter. Moreover, Tanabe’s intimate yet disavowed relation with Christianity severely qualifies the value of analyzing his work solely in terms of reversed and displaced Orientalisms.⁴

In the previous chapter I argued for Tanabe’s relation to Christianity in a modern intellectual historical register. There I focused on Tanabe’s intellectual debts to the theological language of Hegel and Kierkegaard. Alongside this, I suggested in the previous chapter’s discussion of Paul that on balance Tanabe appears to give no priority to Buddhist language over Christian terminology. Certainly in contrast to leading inter- and postwar cultural intellectuals such as Watsuji Tetsurō, for example, Tanabe gives no clear priority to Buddhist categories of analysis over, for example, those of sin and repentance found in contemporary dialectical

³ As previously noted, Tanabe does not appear to entertain the idea of religious traditions outside of Buddhism and Christianity as being worthy of serious consideration. In this he repeats precisely the binary terms of the debate wherein so many contemporary western scholars feared a non-monotheistic, universalist Buddhism was the most dangerous challenge to the universal truth of Christianity. Cf. Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions*, 14-20.

⁴ I underscore this point to highlight the dangers of reducing an analyses of the cultural references of the Kyoto School to a reverse Orientalism, despite the value of such work in certain limited senses. For an example of this approach see Bernard Faure’s *Chan Insights and Oversights: An Epistemological Critique of the Chan Tradition* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993), 74-88.

theology.⁵ What, then, of the *political* logic, the imperial logic, of Tanabe's social ontology in relation to Christian theology?

I showed earlier that Tanabe's thought is grounded in the expanding, supercessional and incorporating nature of Japanese citizenry. It also—somewhat more ambivalently—therefore implies the very temporary nature of any exclusively ethnically “Japanese” state apparatus. Crucially, the Logic of Species means that there must be a justification for this colonizer's supposedly benevolent propaedeutic role (over say any other colonizer or “indigenous” movement). Here enters theology since it is the concepts embedded in Tanabe's defense of this provisional, historically occurring Japan as the colonizing, transforming *minzoku* which can be seen to flow directly from the language arising out of the historical and theological crises of interwar Europe. How the idiom circulating in the discourses of the West's so-called decline is channeled by Tanabe here in his *religious* vocabulary will expose his orientation toward the kind of theological sovereignty which so many intellectuals and artists of the interwar period were concerned to either challenge or defend.

I will argue below that the manner in which Tanabe redeploys the language of this theological sovereignty is not only theological (in the senses argued for in the previous chapter) but are also manifestly Augustinian in constructing a “just war” political theology to legitimize Japanese imperial violence. This is so despite Tanabe's attempt to hide his Augustinian inheritance in plain sight. Structurally, I will commence this chapter's main argument by revisiting the terms of the intellectual crises in interwar Europe so as to highlight aspects of the transnational flows between this and Tanabe's work. From there I move to how these were

⁵ See for example Watsuji Tetsuro, “*Benshōhōteki shingaku to kokka no ronri*” in *Shisō* (Tōkyō-to: Iwanami Shoten, October 1934). This essay is in the same issue as the one by Tanabe concerning the Barth-Brunner debate, as discussed in Chapter Two.

deployed by Tanabe in a manner very much in accordance with Augustine's reflections on just war. Finally, using the arguments made up to that point in this and other chapters I critique James Heisig's reading of Tanabe's *Logic of Species* for its complicity with the disciplinary regime set out in Chapter One.

The "European" Crisis

To understand the wider context of Tanabe's religious idiom we must acknowledge that as a Japanese scholar of his generation, Tanabe was immersed in the western social scientific and philosophical texts that were circulating contemporaneously in interwar Europe and Japan.⁶ The level of Japanese intellectuals' interest in Hegel, Heidegger, Kierkegaard and Barth noted earlier indicates that whatever contextualizing interpretations we might put on Tanabe's use of these figures, it is at least clear that he, like so many of his contemporaries, was conversant with the multiple, closely interrelated crises of interwar Europe: the crises of historicism, of theology, and of European identity. In fact it was Tanabe's former tutor Husserl who, in the title and content of his 1936 *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, gave one of the most influential markings of the European intellectuals' own post-Kantian (and post-WWI) *hijōji*.⁷ Wrestling with Hegel's historicist anxieties, and the inescapable immanent facticity of

⁶ He was also a product of the *kyōyō* system of education. As Yoshimoto puts it, "The ideology of *kyōyō* constructed a national culture through a cosmopolitan fusion of the West and Japan, which was opposed to the rest of the world." Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto, "The University, Disciplines, National Identity: Why There is no Film Studies in Japan" in Tomiko Yoda and Harry D. Harootunian. *Japan After Japan: Social and Cultural Life From the Recessionary 1990s to the Present* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 92

⁷ Tanabe studied under Husserl and Heidegger at the University of Freiburg at various times during the period 1922-24. At that time in liberal circles of Weimar Germany the idea of culture as a critique of biological racism was quite prevalent. Many Japanese intellectuals had in fact studied in Germany under Neo-Kantians who supported the idea of culture as transcendental to and formative of the contents of experience (see, for example, Miki Kiyoshi's

Heidegger's *Dasein*, Husserl and the reasonable "Europe" he believed in were haunted by both vertiginous (Eurocentric, we might say) historicist narratives, and a disempowering pre-thetic *Lebenswelt*. The crisis manifest in both its ostensibly secularized forms—Husserl or Heidegger, for example—as well as in the previously discussed and more obviously theological language (as seen in the debates over the capabilities of human reason vs. grace). Inevitably, the political valence of these philosophies of crisis became even more highly charged as the 1930's wore on.

A crisis of European identity necessarily shadowed all these intellectual developments. Consequently, a reaffirmation of Christianity as something essentially tied to the non-relative value of European culture became for many the antidote to the creeping civilizational relativism. We see this, for example, in one of Tanabe's favorite texts, Bergson's *Two Sources of Morality and Religion*. There, staring through interwar political convulsions into a spatio-temporal abyss, Bergson concludes that the universal of true Christian love is the only hope for establishing a global open society.⁸ Tanabe, by "broadening" Christianity out to a new kind of "absolute nothingness" as the *Abgrund* of his social ontology, attempts to counter Bergson's somewhat Eurocentric response to the perceived European predicament. Yet the cluster of interwoven concepts Tanabe uses in this attempt are drawn from the discourses circulating at the philosophico-historical and theological roots of the European crisis itself. To briefly review, these entailed: 1) A reworking of Hegel's project to make a nominally non-western absolute nothingness into history's "cure" for the burden of world historicity; 2) Arguing for the inherent

extensive writings on Rickert's thought). Thus culture was an idea above any particular empirical manifestation of a culture, something like a general concept of what mediates individuals' integration into a society independent of any racial characteristics. For a discussion of how these intellectual forces contributed to the 1920s phenomena of culturalism (*bunkashugi*) see Travis J. Workman *Culture, Time, and Form In Imperial Japan and Colonial Korea*. Ph. D., Cornell University, August 2008. For a useful discussion of the debate over why Neo-Kantianism declined in popularity between the wars see Andrew Chignell, "Kant Between The Wars: A Reply To Hohendahl," *Philosophical Forum* 41, no. 1/2 (Summer2010 2010): 41-49.

⁸ Bergson, *Two Sources*, *passim*. See especially the final chapter.

irrationality of reason in order to facilitate a turn away from the ego towards some form of grace; and 3) Calling for a racist authoritarianism to recognize it is born of an inability to repent of its own finitude, and thereby is unable to authentically mediate *rui* or God.⁹ Viewed in this transnational light, the elements of Tanabe's logic which for expositional purposes were presented previously in a more distinct manner, now take on a different hue inside interwar global intellectual flows and counter-movements.

What, then, is this hue, exactly? Is it one that suggests Tanabe's Logic of species is merely an extension of Europe's historicist debate with itself? On such a reading, Tanabe—and potentially his Japan—are a form of *ko* (the individual) to Europe's *shu* (social identity). Tanabe does appear to see the matter in this way yet this legitimation is peculiar. This is so because on this assumption it needs to make a compelling case as to why there is less hope of redemption via a transforming *ko* discontinuity inside/as European society than for Japan as this agent. After all, sinful actions by states and individuals always have the potentiality to be mediated by repentance and God (*rui*). Tanabe, however, shows little inclination to venture in this direction. Instead, through homogenizing the West, and buttressing his argument by the claim that through the dialectics of history Japan is in some way more “open” to the universal than other political formations, he creates a hierarchy of sinners among all those equal before “God.”¹⁰ When viewed in this light, Tanabe's cluster of concepts defining *his* universal take on other meanings. In other words, the nothingness more universal and Godlike than Hegel's conflation of *Volksgeist* and *Weltgeist*, the *ruiteki kokka* (universal state) which more authentically open than Bergson's unmediated open society, and, thirdly, a racial policy more universal than that of

⁹ See, for example, THZ 6, 87 for an unusually succinct discussion of the relation between absolute nothingness, the powerlessness of logic and the promise of salvation.

¹⁰ In this way all are equally negative, but some are more negative than others. The ability to self-transcend more than others that we saw underlying postwar modernization theory finds one of its many prewar avatars here.

Nazi Europe or a racist Japanese imperialism, all begin to resemble a desire to reinstitute a civilizational hierarchy on the basis of a newly divined and divine universal. With an uncanny prescience, it is as though Tanabe were writing the theory for Cold War area studies programs *avant la lettre*.

From one perspective it might appear ironic that Tanabe's calls for a new universalism in the Asian context trades upon of those very Western racial demarcations which marked Asians as Asians in the first place; it might appear doubly so, in fact, to the extent that these divisions are recuperated and re-cathected in casting out the primitive, because less universal, white man. I emphasize the *appearance* of irony here since the relation may be seen as a necessary one: without the western delineation of Asia there would be a consciousness of neither Asia nor the West, nor a possibility of Japanized Asia "superceding" the West.

The use of these binaries in pan-Asianism was sketched out in earlier chapters but in the present context Tanabe's civilizationalism can be seen as highlighting the (im)possibility of setting oneself against the other without complicity in the other's "system." Specifically, in the colonial situation it is a problem for the colonized, who are trying to resist in some sense. At the same time it is a dilemma for those like Tanabe operating within the colonizer group and who wish to pursue a different path from other colonizers while also "incorporating" the ambitions of the resistant colonized. Within a state's territory, Tanabe's universal plays (at least) a double role in that it is that which permits the particular to believe itself to be the new universal—Asians against White imperialism, the locals against Japanese imperial oppression—and also that which perpetually negates this illusion and prevents social closure through transcendental demands. This dual role plays out in Tanabe's seemingly revolutionary demand for absolute equality in the

Japanese empire combined with the perhaps somewhat less revolutionary call for the state to guarantee mediation of these transcendental demands.¹¹

It is arguable that since the structures of the state are also susceptible to this challenge, and yet because the state institutions have no state to guarantee their own mediation, it seems at times that Tanabe is gravitating towards the sort of “decider decides” concept of a sovereign.¹² What we can say here with more certainty is that Tanabe’s universal or “God” principle is integral to a certain mode of sovereignty. Aspects of this were discussed in the previous chapter but here the politics of an eschatological teleology—Paul’s gospel speaks to “neither Greek nor Jew”—are evident. This can be seen in the identification by citizens with Tanabe’s ideal future state since it allows the citizen the luxury of interpreting themselves as neither this nor that particular other-to-Japanese race or lesser class; rather they can imagine themselves as a free and equal member of the over-arching state, a paradise-to-come.¹³ These notions of universality that are necessary for a state to order its citizen’s subjectivity are self-reproducing: the nation-state, in its particularity, produces *that* state’s universality, and to sustain credibility against relativism inevitably demands its future expansion beyond its nominal boundaries (its “missionary” work) as well as “internally” (a stronger union). This is an ongoing modulation of the instance where

¹¹ “Revolutionary” must be immediately qualified, however, since as Han points out calls for equality between races were a common feature of much pan-Asianist rhetoric in Manchukuo, regardless of the reality on the metropolitan and colonial ground. Han, *The problem of Sovereignty*, 466-7.

¹² I refer here to the immanent-transcendent God-sovereign found in Schmitt’s political theology. Tanabe seems to be more or less consciously aware of this in his talking of the importance of Bodhisattvas in “managing” the state’s role in mediating the absolute and particular (THZ 6, 163). Presumably it takes a certain degree of insight to tell the difference between the mediations of absolute nothingness and threats to the state.

¹³ One could push this further and argue that those alienated economic roles are seen as meaningful and non-alienating precisely through identification with the “universal” state, e.g., “I am Japan as no.1” etc. Žižek, in his book *The Ticklish Subject*, calls this localized universal an internal exclusion within the “real” universality of globalization (Žižek, *Ticklish Subject*, 254.) See Bruce Cumings (insert ref) for an informative discussion of the dynamic presence of global capital in interwar Manchukuo.

any *shu* instantiates itself as the universal, what Laclau calls a “hegemonic relation.”¹⁴ It is also, as we shall see, what Tanabe and Augustine call sin.

St. Augustine and Tanabe Hajime

“But as to those things which truly confer dignity upon mankind, namely, security and good morals, I fail entirely to see what difference it makes, aside from the most empty pride of human glory, that some men should be conquerors and others conquered”

Augustine’s *City of God* V, 17

“The modern age requires an Augustinian reformulation of the problem of life and history”

Reinhold Niebuhr, 1941

In what is widely known as the western canon, it is the work of St. Augustine (354-430 CE) who has played the most influential role in determining what we now call just war theory. While authoring many texts during his lifetime, Augustine’s most cited discussions of just war (*bellum iustum*) are to be found in the *City of God*, written between the years 413-426 CE while he was Bishop of Hippo.¹⁵ His writings thematize the religious struggle facing Christians who were not only tasked with living their earthly lives irredeemably divided between their spiritual

¹⁴ Ernesto Laclau, “The Time is Out of Joint”, *Diacritics* 25:2 (1995), 90.

¹⁵ The Roman imperium had been declared Christian by Theodosius I in 384 CE.

and sensual natures but had to reconcile their faith with committing the violence necessary to maintain a stable polity.¹⁶ Augustine's scathing historical accounts of the development of the Roman Empire demonstrate considerable awareness of the vengeance, cruelty and lust for power (*libido dominandi*) which had driven and was driving the empire's success. But at the same time, he was also intent on reconciling this all-too-human history with the need for believing Christians to fulfil their soldierly obligations as citizens of the imperium. The way Augustine goes about this task has a remarkable resonances with Tanabe, a comparison to which I now turn.

At the risk of taking a certain number of a- or transhistorical liberties, one productive way to enter into an Augustine-Tanabe comparison is to point out certain intellectual challenges common to their respective imperial times. To paint in overly broad brushstrokes, Augustine's work reflects the exigencies of justifying loyalty to the new religion of Christianity against paganism (especially after the sack of Rome in 410 CE). At the same time his work exhibits an increasing focus on how to deal with internal sectarian strife in the more recently colonized region where he lived, and, furthermore, evidenced a concern for Christian citizens to deal with these and growing other external barbarian threats to the empire itself. There are arguably considerable parallels here with the environment surrounding interwar imperial university

¹⁶ Miller puts this quite starkly in claiming Augustine's just war writings were intended as "a workable ethical guide for the practicing Christian who also had to render unto Caesar his services as a soldier." Miller cited in John Mark Mattox, *Saint Augustine and the Theory of Just War* (London: Continuum, 2006), 7. During the period he was composing the *City of God* Augustine was concerned with suppression of the heretics against whom he relentlessly battled—the Manicheans, Pelagians, Donatists and Arians—as well justifying violence against external foes. Augustine died in 430 CE as the Vandals attacked the City.

professors, especially after 1932. As discussed in Chapter Two, there was a “doubling-down” on Japan’s imperial mission from roughly the time of the Manchurian Incident onwards; this brought with it a correlative and increasing need to justify the violence thereby entailed as part of a turn against the old (pagan?) western order, against resisting colonials, and the now (externalized) Allied enemy camped at the gates.¹⁷ Indeed, at numerous points the two political theologians’ biographical similarities in particular begin to verge on the uncanny: a high-born Roman citizen and an imperial functionary as the Bishop of Hippo from 395 CE onwards, Augustine spent much of his life providing theological (and increasingly statist) arguments for “managing” pagans, heretics and Christian schismatics in the interests of empire and the City of God.¹⁸

In the previous chapter I outlined how Tanabe’s ideal state (*ruiteki kokka*) as well as its less open and inherently authoritarian version (*shuteki kokka*) were two distinct cities, as it were, and yet required each other for the purposes of mediation. It was sin as a kind of existential Kantian third term which linked the two as that which must be and yet must not be, the extreme religious paradox which only the mystery of grace through and as self-negation could resolve. As with Tanabe, so with Augustine, to the extent that human’s sinful nature is central to his contrasting conceptions of the City of God (*civitas Dei*) and the Earthly City (*civitas terrena*). While Augustine claims that both cities are allegorical (*mystice*), they are, nevertheless, eschatologically and rather grimly determinate: the Earthly City comprises either those residing in hell, or those who are still on the Earth yet whom, due to the Fall, are subject to the “necessity of death” and damnation; in contrast, those belonging to the City of God are the elect whom by

¹⁷ Technically speaking, the Goths were in fact already inside the gates, having set up a community south of the Danube after Theodosius I failed to either expel or subjugate them.

¹⁸ For a summary of Augustine’s evolving views on religious coercion in the face of heresy see Mattox, *St. Augustine*, 66-7.

God's grace already reside in heaven or who, while living in the midst of *civitas terrena*, are destined to be saved.¹⁹ Whilst the true hearts of men and women are ultimately known only to God, Augustine says that what divides the differing resident populations of the two cities are the objects of their love. Those who have by God's grace made the love of God the object of their will stand in contrast to those dominated by the desire to dominate others, the *libido dominandi*.²⁰ That this tension between the spirit and flesh is within each person, however divine they may believe their object of love to be, is clear from a brief perusal of the tortured introspections found in his *Confessions*. For this and for many other existential reasons life in the *saeculum* is misery (*City of God* XIX, 4) while at the same time this life is a divine and (pre-modern) fateful unfolding wherein humans are tested before the final judgment.²¹

Fortunately we are not limited to making speculative analogies between the work of Augustine and Tanabe since the Japanese philosopher does in fact make a number of specific claims regarding Augustine's political theology. Highlighting its significance in and for world history, the thinker of the Logic of Species states that it is in Augustine that one sees the first

¹⁹ *City of God* II, 19. The degree to which the Church might in some degree be the City of God on earth is highly contested by Augustine scholars. The principal reason for this, as with the problem with simply identifying the earthly City with the Roman Empire, is that Augustine is inconsistent in his statements on these matters. For a discussion of this see William R. Stevenson, *Christian Love and Just War: Moral Paradox and Political Life In St. Augustine and His Modern Interpreters* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1987), 15-21.

Due to this lack of clarity any suggestion that Augustine had a sense of optimism about the official Christianization of the Empire might appear rash and perhaps we could just as easily agree with Markus that for Augustine, "The Christianization of the Roman Empire is as accidental to the history of salvation as it is reversible." Robert A. Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society In the Theology of St. Augustine* (Cambridge [Eng.]: University Press, 1970), 54. Markus does, however, also argue (*ibid.*, 40-55) that for a short time Augustine held the common view that the Christianization of Rome marked the beginning of "Christian times." I will not dwell on this issue in this manuscript since it is Tanabe's interpretation and manner of deployment in the colonial context that is of greater interest.

²⁰ *The City of God* XIV, 28.

²¹ That humans are somehow tested is not in doubt argues Stevenson and quotes Augustine speaking of the effects of the sacking of Rome on its inhabitants: "One and the same force assailing the good tries, purifies, and purges them clean, but condemns, ruins and destroys the wicked." *City of God* I, 8/Stevenson, *Christian Love*, 28. Augustine, it should be noted, never provides a wholly persuasive resolution to the perennial problem of classical theism, namely, that of free will vs. predestination/grace/divine omniscience. See *City of God* V, 9-10 for what I believe is Augustine's best attempt to address this paradox in the context of just war theorizing.

non-contemplative signs of what he, Tanabe, intends by the logic of *rui* and the negativity of the subject.²² Yet Tanabe is careful to distinguish the Christian creator god from absolute nothingness by claiming the former is still absolute being. At the same time, however, and reflecting my earlier argument regarding Tanabe's "perennial" religiosity, he asserts that the divine aspects of Father, Son and Holy Spirit correspond (*taio*) to those of *rui*, *ko* and *shu*.²³ Echoing Augustine's attempts to defend the trinity against the charge of pagan polytheism, Tanabe is clearly intent on stressing the unity of his logic's three principles.²⁴ But in accordance with the civilizational universalism noted above, a few pages later he distances himself somewhat from this position by suggesting the unity of the Christian trinity is not unified enough compared to that of his logic. As one might anticipate given his previous track record, this criticism of Augustine, as with Tanabe's criticism of most of his teachers—for example, Nietzsche, Bergson, Heidegger, and Nishida—centers on the assertion that Augustine's existential and ontological distinctions demonstrate a failure to appreciate the need for practical historical mediation of these apparent dualities. Thus in Augustine's case it is his determination of *civitas terrena* as evil which is rejected by Tanabe for precisely this failing.²⁵

The trouble with Tanabe's assertion here is that it is quite misleading in a number of important senses. In fact, Augustine's actual position on this duality has a great deal more in common with Tanabe's own position than the latter appears to want to acknowledge. Contrary to the impression Tanabe gives of a strict duality (in Augustine's work) between good and evil, Augustine does at times appear to allow for certain kinds of mediation between the cities. For

²² THZ 6, 135.

²³ THZ 6, 136.

²⁴ For a discussion of these charges see Augustine, and Gareth B. Matthews, *On the Trinity: Books 8-15* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 170.

²⁵ THZ 6: 153.

example, Augustine acknowledges that those of members of the elect *benefit* from peace—and hence election is not quite a predetermination. Hence he admonishes the Church “to pray for Kings and those in authority” so that those in the City of God on earth “may live a quiet and tranquil life in all godliness and love.”²⁶ Thus, as with Tanabe, Augustine’s state has a role to deal with or mediate conflict in order to allow the development of the City of God or “*ruiteki ko*” and should be supported in such a role by those who love God (or *rui*).²⁷ For both of these political theologians, but especially for Augustine, the state arises because of the conflict that is the result of a sinful nature and in this sense it stands in contrast to the Greek ideal of the state where, as in Plato’s *Republic* for example, participation is intrinsic to pursuing the human good in the earthly realm. For Tanabe the state is something of a mix of the Augustinian and the Greek sense of the state in the sense that it offers the potential for moral growth but through its own sinful nature.

For Augustine there is no evolution of the state towards god; it is there, and then suddenly not there at the Eshaton. Before the end of times, however, the Augustinian Christian’s belief in God’s omnipotence suggests that even the most wicked ruler is still part of God’s divine plan.²⁸ In this way, even when laws do not bring about peace, the earthly realm is in fact still mediating the City of God. Again, Tanabe says something remarkably similar: for him, as previously discussed, the sins of individuals and the state are necessary to *enable* repentance and the Eschaton is secularized into a brutish matrix of overcoming inside a modern and messianic temporality resting in eternal nothingness. This is highly reminiscent of the words of Augustine

²⁶ *City of God* XIX 26.

²⁷ True peace is found in the equilibrium of absolute negativity’s movements and this concrete synthesis is or should be the principle of the state (THZ 6, 142). Of course for Tanabe religion performs this role. For Augustine it is Christianity which brings justice and happiness to the commonwealth of the earthly City but also blessedness in the City of God. He states this quite unequivocally in, for example, *City of God* II, 19.

²⁸ *City of God* V, 19.

wherein the necessary evil arising from loyalty to the present state is justified as a way of overcoming past evil inherent in Pagan/tribal violence.²⁹ The implication here is that for Tanabe the Japanese empire, under the right guidance, will be a better approximation to the City of God on earth than the Christian west. Tanabe recalibrates the mystery of God's plan by openness to *ru* (or God), yet this itself still takes place within a civilizational Kierkegaardian-modified Hegelian historicist narrative.

If such is the Christian Hegelian-ish legitimation for the state, then there remains for both thinkers a more Kierkegaardian theological lacuna regarding the individual citizen's mediation of the violence of the one city to the truth of the other. Perhaps the closest Augustine gets to explicating this mystery is found in the following:

“Moreover, it was not only for the sake of rendering due reward to the citizens of Rome that her empire and glory were so greatly extended in the sight of men. This was done also for the advantage of the citizens of the eternal City during their pilgrimage here. It was done so they might diligently and soberly contemplate such examples, and so see how great a love they owe to their supernal fatherland for the sake of life eternal, if an earthly City was so greatly loved by its citizens for the sake of merely human glory.”³⁰

In this way allegiance to the state, with all the armed mobilization thereby entailed, is not only part of the divine plan but a spiritual aid for the development of a higher love. Tanabe, I suggest, tries to describe this stage of conversion more precisely than Augustine through his post-

²⁹ “Thus when illustrious kingdoms had long existed in the East, God willed that there should arise in the West and empire which, though later in time, should be more illustrious still in the breadth and greatness of its sway. And, in order that it might overcome the great evils which had afflicted many other nations, He granted it to men who, for the sake of honour and praise and glory, so devoted themselves to the fatherland that they did not hesitate to place its safety before their own, even though they sought glory for themselves through it.” *City of God* V, 13.

³⁰ *City of God* V, 16.

Hegelian dialectics. In his view it is only through conflict that this development or “conversion” can take place. By making a dialectics of the less transparent linkages in Augustine’s theology—his form of predestination—Tanabe is then able to add a new dimension to the argument that sin and conflict are in fact the necessary accompaniment of social order if the latter term is to have any significant eschatological meaning.³¹

Both Tanabe and Augustine are extremely concerned with how in this world of *saeculum* an onto-eschatological locus of the two cities, or of *rui, ko* and *shu*, can manifest justice. Their issue is with what that might mean, and what, accordingly, we might say of a just war or justified state violence. As we have seen, in Tanabe’s case this argument for a complex (violent) mediation and repentance of *shu* identities is to be orchestrated by those more enlightened members of the state and intelligentsia. Inescapably, given the very nature of the Logic, there is the lurking fear that the state and its agents may not be acting according to God’s plan. This anxiety troubles a patriot such Tanabe and so he looks for hopeful “signs” of the righteousness of the mission (or perhaps signs of signs). He believes he finds them in the potentiality of the new universal to be embodied in the Japanese empire and in this regard I noted previously Tanabe’s

³¹ In so doing, Tanabe goes straight to the heart of one of the most potent attacks leveled by 21st-century pacifists against America’s leading pro-war Augustinian-Niebuhr figures such as Jean-Bethke Elshtain. See, for example, Stanley Hauerwas, *Against the Nations: War and survival in a Liberal Society*, 169-198, and any of his many newspaper or journal articles attacking Elshtain. In brief, Hauerwas’ point is that if humans are as sinful as Augustinian-Niebuhrians claim then their talk of interventions in order to secure peace are at best misleading if not downright disingenuous. The implication here in Hauerwas (though not an implication he explicitly states himself as far as I’m aware since his pacifist theology of the cross negates the need) is that given the unsustainability of this peace-loving hawkish claim, there would need to be a (further) justification for sin and violence on an eschatological level. Arguably, there is just such a theo-logic already in the minds of many self-identifying evangelical Christians who support the war on terror, although it can never be an official part of policy. See, for example, recent revelations on the connection between former President G. W. Bush and apocalyptic Christian groups: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/george-bushs-second-coming--dubya-on-a-christian-mission-to-convert-jews-8929958.html>. Accessed 10/12/14.

The most famous theological debate over pacifism vs. Augustinian/Christian realism in 20th-century America was between the two Niebuhr brothers in the early 1930s, a debate triggered by news reports of Japan’s expansion in Manchuria. I will examine this in the next chapter as part of my argument for the existence of transpacific political theological concerns.

assertion that his universal or God-like policies must be deployed in colonial territories or the state will lose legitimacy. It would be unjust.

Augustine appears to be making a very similar point about legitimacy when he agrees with Cicero in saying that *res publica* (usually translated as state or commonwealth) can only be said to exist if there is justice. Yet Augustine is skeptical about the possibility of this ever coming to pass. His argument for this runs as follows: taking the classical idea of justice (*iustitia*) as being a giving of each to its due, Augustine claims that Rome before its Christianization had denied its citizens the true God they were due as their object of love:

“What kind of justice is it, then, that takes a man away from the true God and subjects him to impure demons? Is this giving to each his due? Or are we to call a man unjust if he takes away a piece of property away from one who has bought it and hands it over to someone who has no right to it, yet just if he takes himself away from the lordship of the God who made him, and serves evil spirits? . . . What justice can we suppose there be in a man if he does not serve God? . . . And if there is no justice in such a man then it is beyond doubt that there is no justice in a collection of men consisting of persons of this kind.”³²

This is clearly a justification of for the property seizure etc. that the Roman Empire has been built on but also indicates his unwillingness to allow Roman vanity to recline on its laurels since its only mission must be its religious one. So for Augustine it is because the state consists of mostly those who do serve God there can be no just state and therefore the Empire, for all its potential protective utility, hardly qualifies.

³² *City of God* XIX, 21.

Two other points are worth drawing from the quotation just given. First, the orientation towards God is infinitely more important than property. Tanabe, as we have seen, was ambivalent about property rights in his apparent support for the dissolution of class since it is another form of particularistic social identity. That said, at the same time he was also promoting an empire which involved a *de facto* change not elimination of property ownership. He also, to my knowledge, never discussed how the colonial economy would actually work without capitalist classes. All such questions were presumably to be answered in the rebalancing of *shu* towards *rui*; the answers would flow from God, and God would provide, as it were.

The second point of interest here refers to the absence of *res publica*. What is especially relevant about this claim by Augustine in a colonial context is that it is part of an argument premised upon the definitions of people (*populus*), not as members of a just state (since true justice is impossible), but rather “people” as “a multitude of rational creatures bound together by a common agreement as to the objects of their love.”³³ This, Augustine goes on to declare, is “true for every other state that has exercised its sway over a commonwealth.”³⁴ The connection here with Tanabe is that in their theologization of the citizen—as opposed to a Linnean objectification, for example—both writers define and rank the value of a people or *minzoku* in terms of the objects of their attachments. This necessarily means that the idea of race in the modern biological sense is (or would have been) absent since *minzoku* is not only delineated by attachments, but is also heterogenous even within the individual since the latter is internally divided and made discontinuous by sin. Tanabe’s idea of *shu* is an idea of social identity as being defined by the object of love, an object of identification and attachment. Thus Tanabe is

³³ *City of God* XIX, 24.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

essentially arguing in a very Augustinian way that *shu* as race, class, or nation can never be just, because it is what it is as an attachment, and therefore is to be overcome, “justified.” In this way he can defend the need for a Japanese state to foster universal individuals or the City of God—as Augustine does in a more ambiguous sense—because of an absence of justice.

Augustine’s theological assumptions outlined above ground his just war theory in various ways. Augustine sees wars as inevitable in the Earthly City since it is comprised of those who do not make God their object of love. Because of this failing, those residing in the Earthly City do not see the equality of all which stems from the fact that all beings coming from God are by definition good.³⁵ It is pride which drives the individual to put themselves above their absolute equality before God: “it is thus that pride in its perversity apes god. It abhors equality with other men under him; but instead of his rule it seeks to impose a rule of its own on equals.”³⁶ Tanabe relies on a very similar understanding of human sin in that the relative finite is set up against the infinite absolute and in so doing the finite tries to steal the infinite’s place (and inevitably, as with Hegel’s master, fails). Even in their highest form, these attempts to give oneself over to the universal are still the doomed work of the ego which can never free itself from its own attachments (*meishū*). We cannot escape from this predicament by ourselves and religion is the absolute grace that enables us to escape from this contradiction.³⁷

As with Tanabe, for Augustine conflict and war are not only inevitable but nor are they necessarily “wrong.” The ambiguity over the relationship between the two cities is re-presented for the Christian soldier and, famously, Augustine claimed that the wise man *will* wage just wars

³⁵ As Augustine puts it, “The flesh is good, but to leave the Creator and live according to this good is the mischief” *City of God* XII, 8; XIV, 5.

³⁶ *City of God* XIX, 12

³⁷ THZ 5, 67.

though they will lament this fact.³⁸ While Augustine does in fact give examples of what he means by just wars in his texts—mainly defensive wars (e.g., *City of God* IV, 15) and those that were ordered by God to punish the wicked—what is more interesting for our purposes of comparison is how both thinkers incorporate the two key terms of love and sin into their reflections. The theory of the two cities allow Augustine to explain that it is the Christian’s inner disposition, that is, whether or not one’s love is turned towards God, which is key in determining the justice of one’s actions. The action itself is irrelevant in determining the justice of the act. As suggested in the quotation given at the beginning of this chapter, in the context of war, what is “wrong” with war for Augustine is not that people who would die anyway at some point happen to be killed, or that others happen live in subjection. Rather, war’s disvalue is to be found in dispositions turned away from God and towards power, lust, and cruelty (“Love, and do as you will” as Augustine famously put it).

It is here in the context of conflict that Augustine and Tanabe yet again re-enter each others’ somewhat anachronistic orbit. We have seen how for Tanabe love is something which develops through or is mediated by conflict with social identity (*shu*) when this encounter is followed by an accompanying repentance that turns the individual away from pride, ethnic identification etc., and towards the universal as God. It is this process, he claims, which allows particular commonalities to expand or particular ethnic myths to purify into universal love, for “God to become love.”³⁹ The troubling qualification to this movement in both the Augustinian and Tanabeian accounts of “love as justifying conflict” is that original sin prevents anyone from knowing whether they or their rulers are truly acting out of “right love” or other more nefarious

³⁸ *City of God* XIX, 5-7.

³⁹ THZ 6, 77.

motives. As Stevenson astutely notes, in the Augustinian context, this means one is damned due to pride for acting, or ill-faith and cowardice if one doesn't.⁴⁰ In response to this difficulty both Augustine and Tanabe often appear to fall back on serving the existing order (as part of God's "plan") since even actions which appear sinful might have merit in some hidden and/or "repentance-producing" way.⁴¹ This might cut both ways, of course, and even the seemingly benevolent use of power by rulers might not in fact be so benign. Yet this possibility is subordinated by both thinkers to the call for the individual in almost all cases to fight for the survival of the empire despite (or even because of) its sinful structure. In so doing they are prepared to kill or die for the relative advantages for the City of God, or for the advance of a more just state.⁴²

In support of this reading it is significant that in discussing the similarities between his interwar Logic and Augustine's thought, Tanabe's only direct textual reference to Augustine's corpus is Book VIII, Chapter 7 of *De Trinitate*.⁴³ This chapter of *De Trinitate* concerns the relation between the Holy Trinity and love and it is referred to in the context of Tanabe's desire to show the importance of the will as a negating force leading to God (*rui*). We have already seen how the three of Trinity is seen as dialectical and corresponding to *rui*, *ko* and *shu* (THZ 6, 136) but in the *De Trinitate* section just referred to, Augustine claims that our love of God is the same as our love of man and in coming into accord with this love—a love which is God's acting

⁴⁰ Stevenson, *Christian Love*, 108.

⁴¹ See, for example, *City of God* V, 19. Relatedly Augustine regrets the lack of consent by the conquered but on the whole sees the order of Roman law as a good thing (*City of God* V, 17).

⁴² "They who have waged wars in obedience to divine command or in conformity with His laws have represented in their persons the public justice or the wisdom of government, and in this capacity have put to death wicked men; such men have by no means violated the commandment, "Thou shall not kill." (*City of God* I, 21). In general, political authority, in keeping the peace, helps humans "to recover their true nature" through contemplation of their nature and grace (Stevenson, *Christian Love*, 59).

⁴³ THZ 6, 135-6.

essence or volition (*dilectio*)—we desire that men live justly and “we should despise all things mortal.”⁴⁴ This means for Tanabe that we must by will negate the existing order of society in the name of justice and rise towards God. The other side of this call is that not only that we should be prepared “to die for our brethren,” says Augustine, but also on this basis be prepared to kill (some of?) them in the process of pursuing justice since mortal death is unimportant compared to spiritual death-and-rebirth. Such a salvific philosophy is echoed in Tanabe wherein *ko*, in rebelling against *shu* in the name of *rui* must be prepared to kill—and then figuratively die oneself to be reborn through repentant conversion—or be killed in an obviously state-serving sense.

“Internally” directed and “externally” directed violence by state forces or citizens are effectively indistinguishable here in the expansive imperial context. But what of the right to revolt against or resist the encroaching state? Augustine (as just indicated) is broadly in favor of obedience to the rulers due to our ignorance of god’s plan and his focus on non-temporal salvation. Yet given the supreme importance of obeying God above all, various scholars have explored the idea that disobedience or self-defense would be justified in cases where God’s will is clearly contravened.⁴⁵ This returns to the problem of ignorance caused by sin, of course, and thus again the onus is on faith in God’s plan over faith in one’s own perspicuity. Thus it is not only reason that requires faith (as Hegel argued) but faith, it seems, requires reason and then faith again.

⁴⁴ In discussing the differing terms Augustine uses for love, that is, *amore*, *caritas* and *dilectio*, O’Donovan describes it in the following way: “*Dilectio* and *caritas* are words more suited than *amore* to express a love directed at worthy objects, a love which may be approved and encouraged. . . . The rule about *caritas* is consistently observed: there is no *caritas* of evil or worldly things, but only *cupiditas*. Between *dilectio* and *amore*, however, Augustine shows no very clear resolve to distinguish.” Oliver O’Donovan, *The Problem of Self-love in St. Augustine* (Connecticut: Yale University Press 1980), 11.

⁴⁵ See, for example, the historically influential article on this topic by Louis, Swift. Louis J. Swift, “Augustine of War and Killing: Another View.” *Harvard Theological Review* 66 (July 1973): 369-383.

Returning our attention to Tanabe, it is possible to see that as part of his prescription for the colonized and the colonizers, transformative violence against any existing order is legitimized through identifying the oppressed particular group as a superior manifestation of the universal. In the imperial context this might be seeing the higher universal of Asians under a particularizing global white hegemony. Correlatively, through this formulation the colonized who understand themselves as the oppressed particular-universal are being called to integrate themselves into the new higher universal beyond their particularity. Importantly, this identification can only be cathected by *rui*-minded individuals, whether they be functionaries of the Japanese state or the colonized whom the empire wishes to coopt. This identification has a number of forms bound up inside repentance. Specifically for the colonized, repentance converts one to seeing the potentiality for the new universal in the Japanese state, and to repent their obstinate ethnic particularity and/or their attachment to false white universals.

The passage to greater universality from out of a (sinful) particularized system must be one that allows the more or less universal forms of social identities in any society to transform the existing hegemonic particular-as-universal into a particular-as-more-universal.⁴⁶ For our purposes here, which is the issue of the justification of imperial violence, the question becomes to what extent this kind of politics, even in theory, can realistically fulfill the promise of liberation and justice in the colonial situation? In the broadest sense, it's difficult to know why any instance of violence would be unjustifiable for Tanabe as long as it was in some way connected with overcoming the differentiations of *shu* which were a barrier to the ideal state. The only major constraint is, as discussed above, that the state apparatus is to mediate such

⁴⁶ The analogies between this political subjectification and a Christian subjectification have been taken up by a number of scholars. See, for example, *Race and Political Theology*, ed. V.W Lloyd (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2012), 85-87.

conflict and to determine, *inter alia*, what we would today call terrorism. The dangers of self-serving, non-universal expanding decisions in this regard are all too apparent, as Tanabe was well aware since the Logic is an attempt to combat one form of it. Yet there is always a grey area in Tanabe's work here. The ambiguity can be seen in his previously noted suggestion that the state needs to repent like the individual. While his rhetorical intention here of attacking "bad" Japanese imperialism is fairly apparent, more problematically the state cannot relate to *ruì* or God as an individual would in turning against *shu* and repenting since there is no state to mediate the state. What this signals is that to the extent that the state's powers are involved at all Tanabe really leaves unaddressed the question of how the definition of the expanding universal is determined as such, and what is excluded from the universal, and therefore when repentance for violence is deemed unnecessary.

Agamben's notion of the damned (*sacer*) is useful here to the extent we wish to at least identify the structure of sovereignty operating here (and perhaps how "Buddhist" or "Christian" it might be). Agamben argues that *Homo Sacer* is a "bare life" outside the juridical order such that their death, is not therefore a sacrifice to the God(s), not a purification, nor we might add a sacrifice to *ruì*).⁴⁷ It is not we might add in Tanabe's idiom, a life whose death is to be repented. At the same time bare life is that which via the state can be mediated to the good life (*eu zen*).⁴⁸ But is this not exactly the structure of sovereignty exhibited by the Japanese state with regards to other Asian *minzoku*? As ethnic particularities their deaths may be repented if they derive from some false Japanese particularistic universal but, on the other hand, if colonial resistance is the terrorism of those who will not give up their own particularity, they are outside the juridical

⁴⁷ "Homo Sacer belongs to God in the form of an unsacrificeability and is included in the community in the form of being able to be killed." Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998), 82.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 107.

order and would not be repented. In other words their sacrifice would not enable a closer approximation to the universal or God. Is this a non-Christian Eastern politics? Certainly not, according to Agamben, who states:

“Politics [as biopolitics] appears as the truly fundamental structure of Western metaphysics insofar as it occupies the threshold on which the relation between the living being and the *logos* is realized. In the ‘politicization’ of bare life—the metaphysical task *par excellence*—the humanity of living man is decided.”⁴⁹

Having argued in this and the preceding chapter for the political theology of Tanabe in the interwar period it is now possible to evaluate the arguments made by the single most influential scholar on Tanabe’s work, James Heisig. I show in my analysis that Heisig’s work exhibits a series of misreadings and rhetorical equivocity that conform broadly to the *dispositif* of the area studies paradigm discussed in earlier chapters.

An Analysis of James Heisig’s Discussion of Tanabe’s Logic of Species

The focus of this section will be Heisig’s essay “Tanabe’s Logic of the Specific and the Spirit of Nationalism.”⁵⁰ Published in 1994 in a generally well-received collection, the editors’

⁴⁹ Ibid., 8. Given that biopolitics is arguably another name for the metaphysics of nihilism, one direction for future research would be to think Tanabe’s structure of sovereignty in relation to the (numerous) attempts to present the Kyoto School as concerned with overcoming of Western nihilism.

⁵⁰ The essay is published in a volume entitled *Rude Awakenings: Zen, the Kyoto School, & the Question of Nationalism*, ed. James C. Heisig and John C. Moraldo (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994). I believe Heisig’s more recent work shows no significant departure from this slightly earlier piece. Cf. James C. Heisig, *Philosophers of Nothingness: An Essay On the Kyoto School* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2001). Due to

introduction tells a brief intellectual history intended to illuminate the motivation behind the book's publication. For the most part, the book's lineage is attributed to a timely reflection on the relation between "philosophy"—as a not necessarily political activity, claim the editors—and interwar fascist politics. Such a revisiting, they explain, has been made all the more urgent by recent scholarly anxieties over the Nazi-related activities of interwar thinkers such as Heidegger and Paul de Man.

This framing of the book project arguably represents a somewhat revisionist revisionism of 20th-century intellectual history; as such it has been subject to severe criticism from certain quarters, and I do not wish to dwell further on that narrative debate *per se*.⁵¹ Instead, I wish to provide here a more formal analysis of the rhetorical and translational moments of Heisig's interpretation of Tanabe. First and foremost, this is intended to further validate my earlier arguments pertaining to the bifurcated temporality structuring and suppressing the discourse of transpacific political theology. At the same time it will also provide a segue to the American political theologies presented in the next chapter. In the approach I take in this second part of Chapter Three it will be Heisig's internal inconsistencies and aporetic translations which will do the most work in driving my critique. Crucially, such a formalist structural examination allows the presentation of arguments that have—as much as they ever can—a logical force that traverses the field's well-bunkered and highly politicized camps.

its clearer and more extensive focus on Tanabe, I have chosen to discuss this 1994 essay for the purposes of my analysis.

⁵¹ See, for example, Naoki Sakai, "Imperial Nationalism and the Comparative Perspective" in *positions: asia critique* (Volume 17, Number 1, 2009): 159-205.

In assessing Tanabe's religious philosophy, Heisig focuses primarily on Tanabe's lengthy 1934 essay *Shakai sonzai no ronri* for his sources.⁵² *Shakai sonzai no ronri* represents the second essay of Tanabe's publications concerned with the Logic of Species and, as the first in the series to explicitly detail the relation between religion and politics, I certainly do not wish to take issue with Heisig's choice of sources.⁵³ What is more problematic, however, is that on the first page of his account, before any discussion of this or any other of Tanabe's texts, Heisig declares "that a small resistance of thinkers, Marxists as well as Christian thinkers, were quick to identify this new logic as cut from the same cloth as the rhetoric of the ultra-nationalist government."⁵⁴ Through such remarks the assumptions being put into the reader's mind regarding how to think Tanabe's "religion and politics" are, of course, already political to the core: the "Logic of the Specific"—Heisig's translation of *Shu no ronri* is in this preamble framed as nationalistic, and neither Christian nor Marxist.

This manner of pre-orientation to the texts is fully in accordance with the arrangements of culture and history that I have shown earlier to be integral to area studies' policing of Japanese religion. This is evidenced in at least two senses. The first of these is that in his conflation of Tanabe's work with some variety of particularism, there is either willful complicity with, or insufficient caution paid towards, the rather checkered history of the term "ultranationalism."⁵⁵ The second of these senses follows directly from this prefiguring of Tanabe's work as not universal but particularistic in its cultural-ethnic exclusivity. Accordingly, by opposing Christian

⁵² THZ 6, 51-169.

⁵³ This monograph prefigures many of Tanabe's judgments on relation of religion to politics in his widely read 1946 *Philosophy as Metanoetics*. It is all the more surprising, then, that after focusing on this essay for his main conclusions about the politics of "interwar" Tanabe, Heisig then goes on to claim that the *Metanoetics* is a "supremely nonpolitical book" (Heisig, *Rude Awakenings*, 272). I will return to this issue in my conclusion.

⁵⁴ Heisig, *Rude Awakenings*, 255.

⁵⁵ See the Appendix for a discussion of this issue.

thinkers to Tanabe's logic, Christianity is posited as distinct from this particularistic nationalism. This carries with it and therefore reinforces the unarticulated assumption that if Christian means theology then true political theology is not compatible with the particularism.⁵⁶ This is a constant meme in Heisig's work and I shall return to it in due course after a more complete elaboration of his exposition on Tanabe.

Leading from this first page, then, Heisig continues his strategy of coloring the readers' expectations by summarizing, without comment, five of Tanabe's critics. Given that, as he puts it himself, he is letting these assertions "stand by and large without comment," we do not in fact reach Heisig's actual exposition of Tanabe's logic until we are nineteen pages into the thirty-three page essay.⁵⁷ And this is only after the reader has repeatedly, and without argument, been assured of Tanabe's fascism and ultranationalism.

Heisig finally begins his exposition of the Logic of Species by stating the following.

For Tanabe, the dialectic of absolute mediation was the keystone to the metaphysic of

Absolute Nothingness that arched over his mature work. In essence it accepted Hegel's

⁵⁶ Heisig is hardly alone in opposing Japanese Christians to Tanabe and his therefore implied non-Christian ethnic fascism. See, for example, Andrew Barshay's discussion of Nanbara Shigeru's criticism of a non-Christian Tanabe [Andrew E. Barshay, *State and Intellectual In Imperial Japan: The Public Man In Crisis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 106]. In order to maintain a consistency here in separating interwar Japanese thought from Christianity, and that interwar period from Tanabe's apparent conversion to Christianity in the postwar, Barshay reduces Tanabe's postwar repentance to merely that of individuals repenting their own personal moral failures in supporting the war (ibid., 243). My later discussion of John Dower will elaborate on the difficulties of sustaining this position.

Interestingly, given the later discussion of Augustine in this chapter, Barshay also claims that "for Nabara, the whole of reality was represented in the Augustinian formula of the two cities, *civitas Dei*, and the *civitas terrena*" (ibid., 59). I hope to take up the similarities between Nanbara and Tanabe in future research.

⁵⁷ Heisig does in fact comment on Tanabe's critics to the extent that he writes a short section on Tanabe's responses to the general thrust of these criticisms. What is curious about the *structure* of this section is that it almost entirely takes place through Tanabe's post-WWII retrospectives on his interwar work. This would obviously suit any post-WWII disciplinary constraints that both U.S. and Japanese scholars might be subject to as opposed to an assessment of the historical circumstances inside which and for which Tanabe was writing in the 1930s. It is not clear why we should suddenly accept at face value Tanabe's postwar interpretation of his own wartime activities any more than those of Maruyama Masao (See Appendix One), postwar area studies' scholars, or those philosophers whose post-WWII "hidden" complicity with fascism apparently inspired *Rude Awakenings* in the first place.

idea that the particular beings that make up the real world are granted their individuality not by virtue of some mysterious essence . . . but rather by virtue of relationship with other individuals.⁵⁸

Despite alluding to the commonalities between the German and the Japanese philosopher's views, Heisig then states that the "metaphysic of Absolute Nothingness" is something which Tanabe "added" to "the philosophical world *after* Hegel."⁵⁹ Thus we can see in this act of give and take that Tanabe's indebtedness to Hegel is acknowledged but then immediately removed from the scene. The reason for this apparent bait and switch become clearer when we observe that on the same page (p. 276), Heisig links Hegel to Christianity. The immediate need to then detach Tanabe from Hegel and "Christianity" –a complex relationship I have examined in detail in Chapter Two—leads to the following page where, without argument or citation, Heisig introduces "Buddhism" as the *arche* of Tanabe's logic: "for Tanabe the only answer capable of satisfying all the critical demands lay in the Buddhist notion of Nothingness, which Nishida elevated to the status of an Absolute Nothingness."⁶⁰ Reinforcing this Orientalizing of Tanabe Heisig (without comment) then asserts (without context) that Tanabe distinguishes this nothingness from Christianity. Heisig then agrees that the Buddhist principle of ultimate was well suited to fill the gap left by the Supreme Being (the latter having been rejected by Tanabe) thus firmly tying Tanabe to Buddhist thought.⁶¹

Heisig, having "established" Tanabe's Buddhist credentials, must then segue these into the repeated claims made in the first half of the essay concerning fascism and ultranationalism.

⁵⁸ Heisig, *Rude Awakenings*, 275.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 275-276. My italics.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 277-8.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 278.

He initiates this argument with a brief, dense preamble concerning how this Buddhist reality principle lacked an ethics and that the logic was to provide this link between what ultimately “is,” and what “ought” to be, for the historically acting subject.⁶² The problem here for Heisig, however, is that this is not the best place to start an argument moving from “is” to “ought” to an ultranationalist ought, as Heisig intends. The reason for this is that the “is/ought” distinction, is by this time a ubiquitous problem taken up by many interwar intellectuals—Japanese or otherwise—who are attempting to resist the kind of scientific positivist materialism and/or ethnic racism that was becoming predominant during this period. In terms of the intellectual history of the time, the failure of the Kantian/neo-Kantian supporters’ idealistic *Sollen* (ought) to appear relevant in the crises of the post-WWI period saw its transformation into an essentialist *Sein* (being or “isness”).⁶³ This in turn, provided succor for a politics of “blood” or “national community” and hence produced a conflux of writers arguing against this tendency, or against other forms of mechanized or materially reductive dehumanization.⁶⁴ It is hardly surprising, then, to find that whatever else he may be doing, Tanabe was challenging an essentialist “is” with a different reality principle and reintroducing a form of “ought.” And there is no reason at all reason to assume this is *really* about Buddhism, at least without significant further argument, which Heisig does not provide.

⁶² Ibid., 278-9.

⁶³ Cf. Andrew Chignell, "Kant Between the Wars: A Reply to Hohendahl," *Philosophical Forum* 41, no. 1/2: 41-49.

⁶⁴ To reiterate and prefigure: these latter writers ranged from Heidegger and his concerns over ontological difference, to interwar theology’s relentless concern with discontinuity (discussed in Chapter Four), to Tanabe’s putting of social identity (*shu*) into question by *rui* (*Sollen*), while retaining the importance of *shu* itself. This reintegration of *shu* indicates that in certain respects Tanabe’s *Sollen* is not a Kantian ought but a more Bergsonian one. I will return to this point below in my discussion of Bergson. As a final point on these writers, there are of course severe qualifications which would need to be made so as to make my general point applicable to the particular example of Heidegger. I only wish to highlight that the idea of *Dasein* in *Being and Time* is intrinsically non-substantial, despite its brazen cooption into an idea of non-dialectical community in certain sections of that work.

Heisig inconsistent in his occasional recognition of Tanabe's rejection of this politics of *Sein* while on the whole offering an explicit and implicit description of Tanabe as thoroughly implicated in such a nationalism. In fact, this unresolved contradiction appears in many ways to drive Heisig's thinking on in a search for a conciliation. This results in a shuttling between the two positions, usually coded as West and East, since his area studies premises already schematically foreclose the integrating pathway his thinking seeks. Symptomatically, and pivoting backwards from his opaque account of is and ought, Heisig returns Tanabe, briefly, to the (Christian) West:

While the absolute dialectic and its grounding in Absolute Nothingness may have been a direct result of his reading of Hegel and his reaction to Nishida's logic of place, the catalyst to the introduction of the "logic of the specific" seems to have come from outside, namely from Bergson's idea of an "open society."⁶⁵

So how are we to interpret this return? On one level Heisig is quite right to remind us of the importance of Bergson which, as shown in Chapter Two, Tanabe explicitly acknowledges in *Shakai sonzai no ronri*. Yet this textual maneuver by Heisig is also significant since it must be both a mediation of this western influence and an obscuring of the fact that—as argued *passim*—Tanabe is not talking about "Buddhism," *as that to which his thought can be culturally reduced*. Heisig's need to Orientalize Tanabe is overdetermined but of great import here is the fact that any linking of a Japanese imperial intellectual to western thought raises to a precarious degree the level of conceptual artifice required to then achieve a cultural reduction to something non-Christian. This tendentiousness is evident in the very next paragraph following the above

⁶⁵ Ibid, 279.

quotation. There we see an immediate attempt to extricate Bergsonian political theology from the machinations of a Japanese imperial logic. I quote in full:

“In *Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, which came out a mere two years before Tanabe introduced his logic of the specific, Bergson draws on Durkheim’s sociology to distinguish between “open” and “closed” societies. Tanabe immediately recognized that Japan’s engagement in Asia were grounded on the ideology of a racially based totemically sealed clan mentality of the closed society, and that it would never be able to join the great open societies of the world without first recognizing this fact.”⁶⁶

In reading this quotation it is difficult to avoid some confusion over what Heisig was intending in his earlier intimations of Tanabe’s fascism and ultranationalism if the Japanese philosopher is indeed opposed to a closed society. The hermeneutical exit road Heisig could take to move beyond such inconsistencies, namely, the fact that “open” and “closed” societal formations may not be incompatible (to say the least) is one path Heisig is seemingly unable to consider. This is despite the fact that it is something which Tanabe, as we have seen, is very keen to point out in his criticism of Bergson, Augustine, and Heidegger.

What the above quotation on open societies adds to Heisig’s previous analysis is the heavy implication that Tanabe believed there to be such things as great open societies of the world, and that this belief aspirationally configured Tanabe’s criticism of racism. This is a remarkable claim for a number of reasons not least because surely Heisig assumes Tanabe is referring here to the U.S. and presumably non-fascist Europe. But if so then how would that be reconciled with the article Heisig focuses upon in his essay, *Shakai sonzai no ronri*, since it is

⁶⁶ Ibid., 279.

almost entirely preoccupied with the *failure* of liberal capitalist political theory, i.e., these “open” societies, to resolve their internal and external contradictions?⁶⁷

More remarkable than this, however, is Heisig’s apparent failure to reflect on the context of Europe and the U.S. in the early 1930s and ask how credible it is to read a cosmopolitan intellectual like Tanabe as having such a rose-tinted view of the West. After all, this was a man who, like many Japanese intellectuals, was greatly concerned with the meaning of the crisis of European identity after WWI. Since this was in effect the same as being concerned with the meaning and identity of a relationally defined Japan, the patriots among them were understandably curious. While thinking of America such intellectuals would surely be mindful of its recent 1924 law banning immigration by East Asians, Arabs and Indians as well as America’s ongoing institutional racism against non-Whites woven into the material and institutional legacies of slavery.⁶⁸ They would also surely have noticed the human catastrophe of America’s recent Great Depression along with its accompanying protectionism believed by many to have driven the Japanese search for a *seimeisen* (lifeline) in Asia through military means.⁶⁹ Given, as I will show in the next chapter, how leading American political theologians were also acutely aware of these issues—and often indeed calling for a new world order—it is not such a stretch to imagine their Japanese contemporaries holding not wholly aspirational feelings towards Euro-American society. In summary, Heisig’s need to force a reconciliation between a

⁶⁷ I would also note here that I have as yet been unable to find any positive references to existing “open societies” in any of Tanabe’s works.

⁶⁸ With specific reference to Tanabe’s *Logic and the Heisig’s* view of the great open societies, it should be remembered that Tanabe is not wholly supportive of democracy since it is too abstract and does not allow real mediation between social identity and the individual (THZ 6, 158). Yet such indications must be thought in comparison with the framers of the U.S. Constitution whose goal was, some argue, to “permit political participation but prevent democracy in the United States.” J. F. Manley and Kenneth M. Dolbeare, *The Case Against the Constitution* (London: Routledge, 1987), x.

⁶⁹ As outlined in Chapter Two, this military expansionism arguably led to an authoritarian Cabinet. Consequently many Japanese blamed western protectionism for their increasingly authoritarian masters.

civilizational binary and the actual global socio-cultural history of the interwar period brings us almost to the point of absurdity.

I return to the previous quotation and its acknowledgement—a confusing one in light of his earlier claims about Tanabe—that in some sense Tanabe is critical of closed society, and that in some sense this criticism relates to imperial “Japan.” Reflecting this, on the next page (p.281) Heisig then declares that in its positive aspect, the Logic is not just critical of closed societies but can “enable a move” towards a more open society. Rather confusingly, however, Heisig *then* claims that this aspect of the logic of the specific was **not** directed critically by Tanabe against “the irrationality of the Japanese nation.”⁷⁰ The “reason” (p.281) for this, the reason for why Tanabe didn’t wasn’t criticizing Japan by comparing it to the great open societies, and presumably the reasoning behind how Tanabe can be criticizing Japan while at the same time not criticizing Japan is, according Heisig, Tanabe’s belief that, “the one remaining reality that qualified as a blend of the real and the ideal made concrete in time and history was—the Nation”⁷¹ What Heisig is suggesting here is that for Tanabe the ideal—which he correctly believes is something like the Bergson’s open society, and incorrectly believes Tanabe associates with non-fascist Euro-America—can only take place concretely at any moment in time through support for this entity called “Nation.” Heisig provides no explanation for why this is form of sovereignty is capitalize nor does he provide a quotation to support this. But clearly Heisig’s intention here is have the reader assume for Tanabe this ideal is at least in the 1930s compatible with a closed virulent nationalism and moreover one which shares a great deal with the empirical reality of

⁷⁰ Ibid., 281.

⁷¹ Ibid., 282.

Japan at the time. It is this harmony which explains why Tanabe's apparent criticism of Japan is actually a kind of support for the existing Japanese "nation."

I believe this tortuously acrobatic reading of Tanabe should be understood as a symptom of the impossibility of Heisig engaging with one of Tanabe's main arguments, namely, that open and closed societies are in a mutually mediating relationship, i.e., with the first must come the second. This strikes at the heart of the rhetoric of bifurcated temporality which must state, even at its most compromising, that there is something fundamentally different about the way "open" and "closed" are relate in Tanabe's Logic that is less free and virtuous than in the West's open societies. And on this difference turns the narrative history of the modern world and the free future to be determined.

In responding to this presumed open/closed distinction division, I have at a number of places in this dissertation suggested (in a general theoretical language) that there are difficulties in separating the actualization of an aspirational universal—whether in the East or the West—from a manifesting of various particularisms. In Heisig's defense his theoretical masters could perhaps publicly justify a closer approximation of "open and closed" in limited state of emergency contexts, e.g., American wartime propaganda and regulations.⁷² But fundamentally, however, they must posit a difference in kind since the *validity* of their state's existence depends upon it. Regrettably Heisig does not enter into a theoretical discussion of this relationship of the universal and the particular, or the open and the closed. Thus any defense we might consider him making must be drawn from Bergson and Bergson's argument for the nature of the great

⁷² Such a movement would be something like a governing technology that was equivalent to what I called the "time corridor" in Chapter One. On this point the relationship between sovereignty and a *permanent* State of Emergency is clearly of interest but beyond the scope of my project here.

open societies which Heisig cites since it is this which he is evidently relying upon for his theoretical scaffolding.

Turning, then, to Bergson's discussion of an open society it should be noted that as the title of his 1932 book indicates, there are for him two distinct sources of religion and morality. One of these is essentially the habitual glue of a societally enforced solidarity within a delimited group; the other, a qualitatively different and "universal" way of acting in the world.⁷³ The former defines a closed society—which includes parliamentary democracies, since they inevitably define themselves violently against in/outsideers—while it is the open form of religion, a qualitative discontinuous leap into love, which defines relations in an open society. The difficulty for Heisig here is that for Bergson it is patently clear from his definitions that there are in fact no open societies in the world. Moreover, if they were ever to appear, they would certainly not be the kind of democracies he, Heisig, seemingly wishes to declare as "open" in contrast with a closed imperial Japan.

In reply here Heisig could regroup somewhat and concede that whatever one says about open societies, their empirical existence, Tanabe's view of them, and their reciprocal relation with particularisms, it can still be said that Tanabe is much more allied with a closed nation than he should be, and that he is undeniably articulating such a position in Buddhist language, not Christian terms. Without in fact *explicitly* making these concessions in his essay, Heisig does in

⁷³ Of the former Bergson says: "it is at the surface, at the point where it inserts itself into the close-woven tissue of other exteriorized personalities, that our ego generally finds its points of attachment; its solidity lies in its solidarity." Bergson, *Two Sources*, 15. Of the open formation he says: "The other attitude is that of the open soul. What in that case, is allowed in? Suppose we say it embraces all humanity: we should not be going too far, we should hardly be going far enough, since its love may extend to animals, to plants, to all nature. And yet not one of these things which would fill it would suffice to define the attitude taken by the soul, for it could, strictly speaking, do without all of them. Its form is not dependent on its content." Bergson, *Two Sources*, 38. This new way of being in the world cannot be predicted and this assertion relates back to Bergson's earlier work rejecting actuality as more real than, and following on from, apparently antecedent possibilities. In other words, the interwar anxieties over ontological difference are apparent here.

fact regroup in such a fashion by quickly qualifying the above quotation on the “Nation” with another extract from Tanabe:

In the sense in which the nation achieves unified form as an absolutely mediated unity of the specific and the individual in religion, the nation is the only absolute thing on earth.⁷⁴

Heisig then immediately in the next sentence re-attaches Buddhism to this absolutization of the nation, thus deflecting attention away from any such complication of open and closed in the Christian west:

In line with the shift from the Judeo-Christian myth to the Buddhist one, Tanabe was thus able to speak of the nation of Japan as moving beyond the Judeo-Christian idea of ethics incarnated in Jesus to an eastern ethic that sees the nation as the embodiment or *nirmānakāya* of the Buddha.⁷⁵

Heisig further supports this idea of the nation as the embodiment of the Buddha by giving the following quotation from Tanabe (taken from a much later essay by Tanabe without context or justification):

“such a comparison, I think, helps better explain what I mean by asserting that our nation is a supreme archetype of existence and that, as a union of objective spirit and absolute spirit, it manifests the absolute as a Buddha-embodiment.”⁷⁶

On Heisig’s reading, then, it appears Tanabe’s logic has implicated Buddhism in a religious absolutization of the nation-state.

⁷⁴ Heisig, *Rude Awakenings*, 282.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Heisig, *Rude Awakenings*, 282. In fact the quotation is not on THZ 7, 30-32 as Heisig indicates but is to be found on THZ 7, 42-43.

As a response to this equation of Buddha-embodiment with some absolute nation (or “Nation”) I take up each side of the equation in turn. Of the term “Buddha-embodiment” one can only say that this translation is misleading. We see this, for example, when we turn to the closest term to Buddha-embodiment given in the quotation Heisig draws on. This is “應現” (*ōgen*) in the clause “應現的に絶対の現成をなすこと.”⁷⁷ In certain contexts this *ōgen* might mean something like the adjustment to real conditions by a Bodhisattva to further salvific aims. But it might also only mean that the state—and I shall return to Heisig’s translation of “state” as “nation” below—is trying to mediate the highest values while having to deal with some less-than-ideal political reality. Of course this could mean something politically malevolent—and in numerous ways it did—but more importantly in this context is that could also be heard in any White House press conference today without drawing critical comment.

But what of the Buddhist term, *ōgen*? Is it in fact “Buddhist”? Tanabe, in fact, emphasizes the similarity between his claim here and Christianity, something which is obscured in Heisig’s ascription. In this clause’s preceding two sentences Tanabe asserts that his philosophy of state demythologizes the dialectical nature of Christianity and although it displaces a mythologized Christianity, it retains structural affinities with it in that it remains dialectical.⁷⁸ We should note this essential dialectical structure is emphasized on the same page in his idea of the state as a synthesis of the (Hegelian) objective and absolute spirit—the Hegelian rather than Buddhist terminology cannot be ignored. Furthermore the state is not “absolute” in many senses

⁷⁷ See previous footnote.

⁷⁸ Can such demythologizing be seen as a Buddhist reading of reality? This would be a difficult case to make not least because the popularity of Rudolph Bultmann at this time ensured there were a great many self-identifying Christians who also wished to demythologize Christianity. There are also a wide range of dialectical theologies circulating at this time. Interestingly, the emergence (in the USA) of a dialectical process theology, arguably in response to liberation theology, that was led by leading figures in the ubiquitous post-WWII Zen-Christian dialogues is a topic that appears to have received very little scholarly attention at all.

in that for Tanabe it can only have come about through dialectical mediation, and will continue to do so. As with so many previous instances, we see in this quotation's full context that rather than prioritizing one religion, Tanabe presents his ideas using Christian, Buddhist and philosophical language in a complex (often itself) dialectical relation. Can we really call this "Buddhism" in the sense Heisig requires it to mean?

Even if the answer to this last question is a resounding "no," we are still left with what appear to be troubling references to an absolute nation. The Tanabe extracts just given, if read in the way Heisig suggests, certainly cast the Japanese philosopher in such a light as to make the ascriptions of ultranationalism, totalitarianism and fascism appear far more plausible than I have suggested. In reply, I return to Heisig's translation of Tanabe which asserts, "the nation as the only absolute thing on earth." I contextualize this assertion by presenting the sentences just preceding it in Tanabe's essay. (I also leave the term *kokka* untranslated; my intention here is to bracket for a moment the meaning of the term *kokka* which Heisig translates as nation). The sentences together read as follows:

You can say that *kokka* as this stage is the absolute society in that it synthesizes species and individual. Thus we cannot understand *kokka* simply as a phenomenon of culture, in fact it has a culture-negating religious meaning, absolute mediation through negation and affirmation. *The absolute nature of kokka depends on this.* In the sense in which the *kokka* achieves unified form as an absolutely mediated unity of the specific and the individual in religion, *kokka* is the only absolute thing on earth (my italics).

I think it is clear that in the fuller context, the absolute nature of *kokka* depends upon it somehow actualizing a culture negating role in a yet-to-be-defined "religious" way. And this albeit rather abstract characterization accords with the analysis of religion and state examined at some length

in Chapter Two. There we saw that whatever else it may be, religion is integral to a critique of Japanese racialism and to a totalitarian theocracy. Given the extent to which we might normally associate totalitarian nationalism with an essentialist (and aesthetic) reification of an auratic, a-historical “culture” of beliefs, spirit, and identities, it is therefore not at all clear how Heisig would want us to understand this negation and mediation. Nor is it apparent how he sees these latter transformations as being compatible or incompatible with whatever is essentially “bad” about the political formation known as fascism. What does appear to be less uncertain is that *kokka* is only deemed absolute on this basis of being negated and mediated and this, I have shown, reflects in turn a blueprint for a working empire.

In other words, it is misleading to translate the word *kokka* as nation in a particularistic sense but rather it must be read as meaning “state” in a more universalistic sense. This is so since, as shown above, *kokka* must ultimately transcend race, custom and class. For Tanabe this move to the universal must, be beyond family and nation,⁷⁹ and only on the basis of equality and assimilation in a religious way can the state be deemed absolute.⁸⁰

In the first part of this chapter I sought to develop and strengthen the ties between Tanabe’s imperial thinking and the theology of a Christian just war philosophy. I have also, in the second section, rebutted an all too prevalent reductionism of Tanabe’s work to Buddhism and

⁷⁹ THZ 6: 75.

⁸⁰ THZ 6: 150.

a racial superiority of a fascistic variety. If my arguments in this chapter are broadly correct then Tanabe's work now lies open to a recontextualizing inside different spatial and temporal parameters. I now turn to this task by presenting the similitudes of his work with the dominant political theologies in the United States at the time. This will demonstrate the need to think Tanabe's imperial philosophy in a *global* interwar context and therefore rethink the Christian/non-Christian schemas into which interwar imperial history has typically been written.

Chapter 4

Across the Pacific:

From Reinhold Niebuhr to John Foster Dulles

In the preceding three chapters of this dissertation I have argued for the way in which Tanabe Hajime has been presented—and misrepresented—in accordance with the exigencies of the post-1945 geo-political order. It is now time to undertake the second goal orienting this dissertation, namely, to reach “impossibly” across bifurcated imperial time, and convey the similitudes between such a “Japanese” political theology on the one hand, and, on the other, the contemporary interwar politico-theological zeitgeist of the United States. In one sense the latter is of interest because, as Cecelia Lynch has suggested of interwar diplomacy, “Christian justifications for US-led universalist practices through global forms of governance have helped shape the structure for state and multilateral diplomacy ever since.”¹ More importantly for the goals of this dissertation, it is a *necessary* undertaking because those US-led universalist practices themselves—as well as any “Japan-led” equivalents —have been chronically misunderstood in the absence of such a transnational comparison. Extending this point, it is the

¹ See Cecelia Lynch, “Christian ethics, actors, and diplomacy: mediating universalist pretentions” *International Journal* 66.3 (Summer 2011): 616.

shared political moment that is of decisive relevance here in making these transpacific figures contemporaneous rather than any calendrical convergence (although they are also synchronous in that way).

Critically examining the term “transpacific” as a conceptual organization of time and place offers the opportunity to critique existing schemas of world history to the extent that the civilizational divide between the Pacific’s “East and West” is put into question. Caution though is required here since under the terms of even such a critical investigation, any locating of a transpacific event solely along and between the circumference of the Pacific rim risks complicity in other kinds of political cartography.² To ward off such dangers, it is necessary to briefly revisit the post-WW1 tumult in Europe’s political theology since it is from there that the story of its migration into the heart of interwar American intellectual life begins.

² One relevant instance here would be the divisive deployment of such terms as the Old World and the New World as part of a dissociation of European political formations (e.g., fascism or imperialism) from the debate over the potentialities of American political system. For a more detailed consideration of the term fascism in European, American and Japanese historical discourses, see Harry Harootunian, “The Black Cat in the Dark Room,” *positions: east asia cultures critique*, 13:1 (2005): 137-155.

Transatlantic and Transpacific

Nathaniel Berman's recent research on religion and the European nations during the interwar period provides a summary of Europe's crisis which accords with that outlined in my earlier chapters:

While Bataille and his circle, many of whom gathered in the late 1930s in the Collège de Sociologie, were a small group, they participated in a broader cultural phenomenon of their time. Across Europe in the first few decades of the twentieth century, avant-garde writers, theorists, and artists, as well as critical, mythological, existential, and revolutionary theologians, not to mention messianic anarchists, were advancing primal notions of 'the sacred', often in opposition to organized 'religion', as a response to a perceived 'crisis of civilization'. One might even extend the phrase 'theology of crisis', a term associated with the 1920s writings of Karl Barth, to describe this heterogeneous ensemble of responses to the collapse 'in the trenches' of the First World War of any 'harmonistic understanding of world, God and man' - and even more so of any optimistic teleology of the progress of 'civilization'.³

On the same page, Berman goes on to note that in contrast to this yearning for some primordial religiosity, there was an attempt by the mainstream (in what he calls "western civilization") to use religion as a force for stability. I believe this dual task for religion should be seen as mapping onto the uncertain status of the post-WWI nation-state. The perceived failure of the colony-nation-empire world order, and perhaps the modern order itself, was coterminous with an

³ Nathaniel Berman, "'The Sacred Conspiracy': Religion, Nationalism, and the Crisis of Internationalism" in the *Leiden Journal of International Law* (25, 2012): 11.

attempt to retrieve a more workable idea of national sovereignty in a global context.⁴ This hunt for a solution by political elites was voiced, for example, through the (usually self-serving) rhetoric of self-determination, accompanied by the chorus of aspirations surrounding the League of Nations. The failure of “civilization,” a bourgeois legal and cultural framework for social relations, had of course been rejected in the later nineteenth-century works of Nietzsche, Marx, and many others. But the war had intensified such a sense of crisis by bringing death and trauma into the very material lives of all classes. As a result, the fundamental assumptions regarding how to organize global and local society were now up for discussion in the Euro-American public realm in a way that had not been possible before.

Important for our purposes here is the fact that religion and the sovereignty of the nation were in many instances foregrounded inside this public cultural anxiety.⁵ Most influentially, in post-WW1 intellectual Europe it was first Barth and then major figures such as Carl Schmitt and Hans Kelsen who orchestrated the terms of the debate.⁶ The increasingly visible onset of extreme nationalist politics both energized and fed on such supporters and critics. In this milieu the intellectual “world” saw a variety of seemingly religious responses ranging from Barth’s religious and secular divide to Schmitt’s political theology, to Heidegger’s religiously saturated

⁴ Lynch draws out the tension by suggesting that “in the early 20th century, ideas about the ethics of governance and the use of force intersected with universalist projects, which both reaffirmed and called into question traditional territorial boundaries, settling on instantiations of US dominance (diplomatic and material) in schemes of global governance.” Lynch, “Christian Ethics,” 622.

⁵ “The vicissitudes of the relationship of religion, nationalism, and international order in both the European and colonial contexts were also debated in the Permanent Court of International Justice and in League of Nations forums charged with overseeing the minority protection and Mandate Systems. Albeit in dramatically different ways, these rather heterogeneous discourses all elaborated the notion of grave dangers putatively posed by perverse forms of the intertwining of religion and nationalism, proposed ways to reorder their relationship that aspired to be true to the essence of each as well as beneficent for humanity, and emphasized the high stakes for internationalism in this quest.” Berman, “The Sacred conspiracy,” 13.

⁶ The Carl Schmitt and Hans Kelsen debate launched in 1922, with their positions most clearly stated in the publication of the former’s *Political Theology* and the latter’s article entitled “God and the State.” For a clarifying discussion of this debate see, for example, S. Baume, ‘On Political Theology: A Controversy between Hans Kelsen and Carl Schmitt’, *History of European Ideas* 35, 2009.

existential phenomenology, to Bergson's *Two Sources*, and to Tanabe Hajime, among others. Turning our attention to interwar America, it is difficult to overstate the influence of the Barthian turn on Reinhold Niebuhr, and through him to his devotees such as Dulles. Such an influence is also of obvious significance if a persuasive case is to be made for the very notion of transpacific political theologies. The next section of this chapter will therefore concern itself with the development of Reinhold Niebuhr's post-Barthian Christian realism, and Dulles' absorption of that and Bergson into a framework for a new global order. At various junctures the similitudes between these American thinkers and Tanabe will be highlighted.

Reinhold Niebuhr

“Niebuhr is the greatest living American political philosopher”

Hans J. Morgenthau, 1961

“Niebuhr is the father of us all”

George Kennan, “The father of containment”

Hardly an obscure character put up for the purposes of an esoteric comparison, Reinhold Niebuhr stands at the pinnacle of influence in twentieth-century U.S. theology; moreover, as the

above quotations suggest, he can also lay claim to being America's most influential twentieth-century political theologian bar none.

Numerous stages in Niebuhr's life and writings might be deemed relevant to this study. Above all, however, stand his ubiquitous attacks on liberal theology and, by association, the liberal progressive politics to which it was wedded. Such a stance, born of a return to the implications of sinful human nature, is evident in his theology from the time immediately after the Great War. As such it inflects his later analysis of the Manchurian Incident, his gradual disenchantment with socialism in the 1930s, and his decisive shift towards a more thoroughgoing Augustinianism as his belief in socialist solutions waned. Perhaps most importantly for his public persona, it was his deep and eloquent reflection on human finitude that led to his leadership of the Christian realist movement (with its decisive influence on John Foster Dulles, among many others). Although by certain measures his influence declined as the friend-enemy rhetoric of the Cold War deepened, this must not obscure his unparalleled and transformative effects. As one leading scholar has put it, the Niebuhrian turn in American theology in the 1930s and 1940s "traded the language of process, moral progress and evolutionary idealism for the orthodox sounding language of sin, redemption, tragedy and transcendence. In the course of ending the reign of liberalism in American theology, the Niebuhrian revolt made "liberal" a sneer word among theologians."⁷

Immediately, a note of caution is apposite here. The multivalent nature of the term "liberalism" in the American lexicon, its shifting historical usage, and its often contradictory application to realms such as economics, politics, and theology, requires us to exercise great care

⁷ Gary J. Dorrien, *The Making of American Liberal Theology: Idealism, Realism, and Modernity, 1900-1950* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 435.

in any discussion of Niebuhr's criticism of "liberalism." Hardly unaware of this dilemma himself, throughout his writings Niebuhr probed its meaning and his debt to liberalism in pointedly argued, often polemical prose. His targets were many and numbered among them liberal theology, Deweyan rationalism, Woodrow Wilson's (racially weighted) idealism, free-trade liberalism, and the optimism of the Social Gospel movement. Nevertheless, as a unifying thread, I suggest here that Niebuhr's critiques rested on his core belief that "liberalism is a kind of blindness . . . it is a blindness that does not see the perennial difference between human actions and aspirations, the perennial source of conflict between life and life . . . the tortuous character of human history."⁸

To elaborate on the relation of this critique to the prevalent political theological motifs of the time, it is appropriate to consider the background against which Niebuhr and his followers came to prominence. In the widest terms, and reflecting a transnational phenomenon, it is justifiable to label this historical context as America's own interwar liberal, theological and intellectual *hijōji* (crisis time). During the 1920s American theologians wrestled with the political and religious implications of the war as well as viewing with alarm the new gods of materialism and glamor society had come to revere.⁹ Inevitably, the status of the clergy, church

⁸ Reinhold Niebuhr "The Blindness of Liberalism," *Radical Religion* 1 (Autumn 1936): 4-5.

⁹ It was a feature of America's so-called roaring twenties that big business appeared to so many to be capable of delivering a promised land of hitherto unrealized wealth. A return to "normalcy" after the war and recession, as well as the dramatic and distracting cultural shifts of the time lent a stabilizing force of dreams and preoccupations to this house of cards. Featuring heavily among these props were a wealth of new forms of entertainment coupled with an idolization of sporting heroes, movie stars and businessmen.

This is not to say that there was not also a widespread awareness of the corruption inherent in this promise. As Sarah Churchwell notes of *The Great Gatsby*, published in 1925, "Gatsby is as much a post-recession novel as it is a boom novel, and it associates boom with corruption. Gatsby is linked to every fraud of a fraudulent era: bootlegging (the equivalent of drug-dealing today), financial swindles, gambling, and even the oil business, which by 1924 was a byword for government corruption in the wake of the Teapot Dome bribery scandal." Sarah Churchwell, "The Great Gatsby Delusion." *The Daily Telegraph* June 8, 2014, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/10862625/The-Great-Gatsby-delusion.html>

attendance, and the felt need for American liberal Protestantism declined.¹⁰ At the same time, the exorbitant optimism of wealth and the popular paradigm of business America meant that the very idea of an alternative society—one mediated through the existing political system—had drifted away from the minds of the majority of the public.¹¹

The presence of this snake-charmed America furnished oxygen of a sort to those for whom the Great War and the ensuing materialism of the times was a spur to critical reflection on what had led to this hollow state of affairs. To many such women and men, whether they identified as secular or religious, the decline of religion was the key starting point for many in their thinking.¹² In the theological world a predominantly (but not exclusively) younger generation began in the aftermath of WW1 to formulate their criticisms of liberal theology's premises. In particular, and mirroring the thrust of Barth's work, they attacked liberal theology's failure to distinguish sufficiently between religion and culture. Their concerns centered on the monism that this failure to separate the two realms had led to: in effect this collapsing of Augustine's two cities had meant constant apologias for the existing political reality and a blind faith that whatever the political order was, it was in some way part of the coming of the Kingdom of God.

Against this unswerving faith in a better tomorrow, those whose optimism about progress had been punctured by the recent past and present could no longer rest comfortably with such

¹⁰ "Liberal theology, the dominant ideology in America for nearly half century, lost its hold among the thinking public." Heather A. Warren, *Theologians of a New World Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 35.

¹¹ Despite the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920, F. Scott Fitzgerald observed that "it is characteristic of the Jazz age that it has no interest in the political at all." F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Echoes of the Jazz Age" [<http://pdcrodas.webs.ull.es/anglo/ScottFitzgeraldEchoesOfTheJazzAge.pdf> (p. 1)].

¹² The atheistic humanist Walter Lippmann, for example, began his *A Preface to Morals* (1929) with a discussion of how the acids of modernity had destroyed a belief that humans were capable of bending an omnipotent god or a disinterested universe to their will; the problem, he observed, was to find something to replace these fictions. Walter Lippmann, *A Preface to Morals* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1960).

political assurances of God's inevitable advance in the world. Nor could they abide with the liberal ideal of Jesus as an ideal to be emulated in order to hasten God's Kingdom.¹³ For these troubled members of the postwar generation, the gap between God and the world appeared more stark than ever, and those swimming in such intellectual streams had a clear affinity with (and an intense interest in) those emanating from Barthian Europe.¹⁴ That said, at this stage these young women and men "in crisis" were more readily defined by what they were turning against rather than as yet having a clear alternative to previous discredited political theologies. And it was to be the theology of Reinhold Niebuhr who, for so many, appeared to answer this need.

Niebuhr himself had begun to produce and reproduce many of these Euro-American postwar theological memes with increasing clarity as the 1920s wore on. In 1927, in his *Does Civilization Need Religion* (mostly written two years earlier), he advocated for the need to separate religion from politics and/or culture so that the former could act as a critical force against the latter.¹⁵ Simultaneously, he began to make a place for the individual whom he believed had certain moral potentialities not operative in larger social groups; a theme which quickly moved to the heart of his developing Christian realism. Linking the individual with religion, and recasting their negativity in his pulpit idiom, Niebuhr believed that religion will endure and can revive since it "is the champion of personality in a seemingly impersonal world."¹⁶ A religious dialecticism between the individual and the group under God is also

¹³ See, for example, Henry P. Van Dusen's popular *In Quest of Life's Meaning: Hints Toward a Christian Philosophy of Life for Students* (New York: Association Press, 1926). Dusen was later to edit a collection of John Foster Dulles' essays entitled *The Spiritual Legacy of John Foster Dulles* (see bibliography).

¹⁴ Once it had spread to America, Barthian theology was referred to by its sympathizers as "crisis theology." This was so since, as we saw in the language of Tanabe, a crisis occurs in each individual when confronted by God and therefore with a choice of new life through death, or continued death. To its detractors, on the other hand, it was generally known as neo-orthodox, "because it was always talking about original sin, creation ex-nihilo, and the divinity of Jesus." Warren, *Theologians of a New World Order*, 41.

¹⁵ This is of course also one of the decisive themes that runs through Tanabe's prescriptive social ontology.

¹⁶ Reinhold Niebuhr, *Does Civilization Need Religion?: A Study In the Social Resources and Limitations of Religion In Modern Life* (New York: The Macmillan Co, 1927), 4.

evident in this 1927 work. This is most apparent in his polemics against a fashionable creative evolutionism which refuses to see the necessity of failure as part of Hegel's "God":

whether we view the inorganic world, the organic world or the world of personal and moral values, each new type of reality represents in some sense a defeat of God as well as a revelation of him. . . . Modern liberalism is steeped in a religious optimism which is true to the facts of neither the world of nature nor the world of history.¹⁷

In contrast to a liberal political theology, he declares himself as desiring to reinstate the many dualisms that have been lost in liberal monism.¹⁸ With clear affinities to Tanabe, Niebuhr's criticism of Hegel center on the same lack of discontinuity in the political and moral order which allow (liberal bourgeois) "moral enthusiasms" to operate in an illusory all-too-monistic *shu*-like space, regardless of the dialectical gloss being applied.¹⁹

In the mid to late 1920s, translations of Barth into English continued apace and in 1928 Brunner himself gave a series of lectures on the new theology at numerous leading American universities and seminaries. In response, the liberal theology under attack—as is often the way with ideologies in decline—found itself fragmenting, and regrouping, into fundamentalists and modernizers. Thus against a background of early 20th-century urbanization, this period saw an ever sharpening of divergences among three types of theological proponents: of fundamentalists with their anti-intellectual cultural and political implications, the increasingly defensive liberal theologians, and those crisis theologians still searching for an alternative.

¹⁷ Ibid., 9.

¹⁸ Ibid., 209-10.

¹⁹ Ibid., 203-4.

With respect to the last of these three, the new European theology was in some sense offering to fill the abyss between the first two groups with its call for a revitalized role for a less progressive religion that still accommodated itself to science. Furthermore, it offered a kind of realism and non-relativism seen as absent from a liberalism that saw all roads as leading to Jerusalem via Rome. Nevertheless, as noted above, crisis theology as it arrived in America was still far from being the socially and politically engaged theology which the war, nationalism, domestic racism, and endemic social problems called out for. Barth's theology, in its abyssal spacing between god and the world, was inherently ambiguous or even "a-political" from a number of what we might call "activist" standpoints. Indeed, from the Barthian point of view, as Stone points out, Niebuhr's *Does Civilization Need Religion* had not yet come to turn wholly against an optimistic and progressive liberalism since the book was still permeated by Niebuhr's early Social Gospel reconstructivist attitude towards society.²⁰

With no clear politico-theological alternative in sight in the 1920s, Niebuhr's answer was to turn increasingly to socialism since he believed it offered both an appreciation as well as an analytic understanding of capitalism's injustices.²¹ As a consequence the metaphysical dualisms noted above were fused with his socialist analysis of the post-1929 "west" and resulted in his 1932 magnum opus *Moral Man and Immoral Society*. The book, often identified with the launch

²⁰ Ronald H. Stone, *Reinhold Niebuhr, Prophet to Politicians* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971), 44. For the social role of religion in the text see, for example, Niebuhr, *Does Civilization Need Religion*, 16.

²¹ Niebuhr joined the party in 1929 and co-founded the Fellowship of Socialist Christians with John C. Bennett in 1930. Niebuhr then ran for congress as a socialist in 1932 claiming along the way that only socialism can save western civilization. In the secondary literature on Reinhold Niebuhr the typical narrative is of Niebuhr's "early" socialism which is then abandoned for his (far more acceptable) Augustinian religious views. While there is some truth in such accounts, what most commentators fail to emphasize sufficiently is that for Niebuhr there was no clear distinction between socialism and religion in the first place. For example, in his article "Radicalism and Religion" (*The World Tomorrow*, October 1931) he discusses the relation between Marxism and religion and notes that, "The Marxist dialectic merely uses nineteenth-century scientific jargon to express religious hopes. It is certainly not science. Nevertheless it is a potent spring of social action." Reinhold Niebuhr, "Radicalism and Religion" in *The World Tomorrow*, October 1931: 326.

of Christian realism, was an unrelenting assault on what Niebuhr saw as the liberal illusions of so much contemporary theology.²² The book's significance was such that "with the publication of this socio-ethical and political blockbuster," observes Dorrien, "old-style liberal theology was dethroned."²³

Reflected in the book's title, its central theme is the discontinuity between the moral potentialities of individuals and the dangers of groups. The implication that Niebuhr draws from his meditations is that it is impossible for groups to act or be held accountable in the same way as individuals. Liberalism and liberal theology's erroneous assumption, argues Niebuhr, is that ultimately the development of the individual and that of the group will coincide to bring about a better future:

The perennial tragedy of human history is that those who cultivate the spiritual elements do so by divorcing themselves from or misunderstanding the nature of collective man, where the brutal elements are most obvious. These problems therefore remain unsolved, and force clashes with force, with nothing to mitigate the brutalities or eliminate the futilities of the social struggle. The history of human life will always be the projection of the world of nature. To the end of history the peace of the world, as Augustine observed, must be gained by strife. It will therefore not be a perfect peace.²⁴

²² Patterson describes the stance of Christian realism thus: "The idealism that they were rejecting combined optimism in human progress through reason and technological advancement with a political commitment to the restraint of force in favor of law, negotiation and arbitration. Moreover in America and to a lesser extent in Britain, these liberal values were part of a larger idealistic expectation in the church and society that man could overcome the dilemmas of its past." Eric Patterson (ed.), *The Christian Realists: Reassessing the Contributions of Niebuhr and his Contemporaries* (University Press of America, 2003), 10.

²³ Dorrien, *The Making of Liberal Theology*, 447.

²⁴ Niebuhr, *Moral Man*, 256. Despite Niebuhr's gradual disillusionment with socialism and his turn to a more pronounced Augustinian realism, he was not wholly uncritical in his support for Augustine. In one sense these reflected variations on doctrinal differences between early Catholicism and much later Protestantism. More interestingly, by the early post-WWII era his views on Augustine had come to mirror those of interwar Tanabe in arguing—contra their readings of Augustine—that love of God and love of self are not separate cities but a conflict

What is striking about the central argument of Niebuhr's *Moral Man* is how closely it parallels Tanabe's contemporaneous discourse of the Logic of Species. Just as Tanabe had rejected the Linnean continuum between *shu* and *ko*, so Niebuhr emphasizes the moral discontinuity between potentially moral individuals and immoral groups. Niebuhr is not positing a simple opposition between the individual and society on a personal and mass psychological level; for both thinkers this tension between the group that conditions on the one hand, and the universal individual on the other, is the ontological break between (respectively) the will to power (Niebuhr's "world of nature") and repentance. They are the labyrinth of sin and Ariadne's thread, respectively.²⁵

I demonstrated earlier how in Tanabe's work "repentance" was mobilized to criticize one form of imperial sovereignty and to justify a different model. How, then, for Niebuhr does this fact of discontinuity inflect the nature of ethnicity, something which as a political problem also preoccupied so many Japanese imperial thinkers? In the broadest sense it could be argued that Niebuhr's European heritage and worldly experience stretched his range of concerns to cover European ethnic groups, as well as more immediate examples of the plight of what he calls "the colored men" of America. The fundamentals of his anti-racism program are in fact expressed as early as 1928 in an article entitled "Confessions of a Tired Radical." Contained therein is the argument that all groups, even the most oppressed, precisely because they are groups, will inevitably exhibit oppressive behavior against members of other groups or their own. This fact is

"in every soul". Reinhold Niebuhr, "Augustine's Political Realism" in Reinhold Niebuhr and Robert McAfee Brown, ed., *The Essential Reinhold Niebuhr: Selected Essays and Addresses* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986.), 135-6.

²⁵ Eric Patterson points out that for Niebuhr people is not *essentially* sinful since this would obliterate all moral distinctions; rather, they sin in the sense that they rely on their own efforts and call it freedom, making themselves the end of their own will to power instead of submitting to God (Patterson, *The Christian Realists*, 27-28). This tendency to make itself an end in itself is much worse on a group or nation-state level (*ibid.*, 32).

obscured, laments Niebuhr, in the rush to castigate victimizers and to focus upon their “abject apology” for their sins. He argues instead that the solution necessitates a turn to the universal as an intellectual and ethical principle:

The sins that the white man has committed against the colored man cry to heaven. But it may not be well for the ultimate peace of society if intelligent white men and colored men studied and analyzed these sins not so much as the peculiarities of race, but as universal characteristics of Homo Sapiens, so-called?²⁶

If sin is universal then so is its accompanying concept repentance, and it is this two-fold which, as in Tanabe, is posited by Niebuhr as permitting mediation of this universal:

World peace and social harmony wait upon the men who make common war against the defects of the human heart and the deficiencies of the human imagination and intelligence . . . but which are always more universal than they seem to be. To realize this fact is the basis of mutual repentance and forgiveness by which social harmony must be attained.²⁷

Although his calls for harmony were soon to give way to a more “pessimistic” or “Christian realistic” Augustinianism, the need for repentance remained a constant in Niebuhr’s work.²⁸ And, as with Tanabe, it is religion which is for Niebuhr “fruitful of the spirit of contrition” and so politically essential.²⁹ Niebuhr wishes to distinguish his position here from

²⁶ Reinhold Niebuhr, *Love and Justice: Selections from the Shorter Writings of Reinhold Niebuhr*, ed. D. B. Robertson (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1957), 121.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 124. For a brief discussion of how sin allows for justice see Patterson, *The Christian Realists*, 41.

²⁸ “It must also be recognized that it is not possible to eliminate the sinful elements from political expedients. They are, in the words of St. Augustine, both the consequence of and remedy for sin.” Richard Niebuhr, “Why the Christian church is not Pacifist,” in Richard B. Miller, ed., *War in the Twentieth Century* (Louisville, Kentucky: John Knox Press, 1992), 40.

²⁹ Niebuhr, *Moral Man*, 51 and 255.

Barth for whom (in Niebuhr's opinion) fall and creation become practically identical, and thus the distance between the two cities is erroneously exaggerated. In this way, Niebuhr criticizes both Barth and Augustine by arguing that with their dualism of religion and the profane there "is a tendency of religion to obscure the shades and shadows of moral life."³⁰ Thus, as with Tanabe, we see Niebuhr attempting to find a space for political praxis, as well as the possible just deployment of power. This is despite alienation from the universal which at its root results from sin and yet through sin-and-repentance there is hope of its own overcoming.

Coterminous with the opening of this space of moral shades, and also implied in his group vs. individual discontinuity, is the inevitability and necessity of violence within and by the state. This is so on one level simply because as Niebuhr assumes, social cooperation on a large scale requires overt or covert coercion to resolve conflicting interests. Thus in dealing with groups such as nations, moral infringements are permitted which would not be condoned in individual to individual relations (e.g., murder). Precisely because society and the individual are not continuous, a dual ethics becomes discernable. Thus we see that recognizing the freedom of the individual to oppose the state also justifies the violence of the state against state. It also permits coercion of the individual by the state correlative with a deflections against thinking, for example, how that individual has been constructed through state apparatus. This discontinuity in its Niebuhrian form legitimates particular meaning of social cohesion, namely, the dominant group (as with *shu*) imposing itself to ensure stability, and on the other hand, the ethical calling which he portrays as individual consciences trying to work out "uneasy compromises."³¹

³⁰ Ibid., 68-9.

³¹ Ibid., 3-4. Violence appears to be the absence of pure love for Niebuhr. He explains that, "the relations between nations and economic groups can never be brought into terms of pure love," and so, "justice is probably the highest ideal towards which humans can aspire." (Ibid., 14).

Crucially, these moral negotiations are not for Niebuhr simple actualizations of desires by individuals meeting mere utilitarian calculations by the group. In Niebuhr's political theology they instantiate a more overtly metaphysical "justice" the advancement of which becomes a second legitimation for violence itself (beyond a kind of natural law justification for the preservation of the group).³² To clarify the nature of this "policy eschatology," and simultaneously to situate the context of Niebuhr's thinking in closer proximity to Tanabe's own political engagements, I now turn to Reinhold Niebuhr's debate with his brother over the legitimate response to the Manchurian Incident.

The Niebuhr Brothers and the Manchurian Incident

In the March 23rd 1932 edition of *The Christian Century*, Reinhold Niebuhr's brother Richard, a highly respected theologian in his own right, published his opinion on how America should respond to the Manchurian Incident. In a short piece entitled "The Grace of Doing Nothing," he supported a pacifist response based on two arguments.³³ The first of these—and confirming the importance of repentance as the political theological *mot du jour*—was that to "do nothing" was the original meaning of repentance, and one which had regrettably been lost due to recent "emotional debauches in the feeling of guilt."³⁴ Richard Niebuhr suggested that

³² In modern states the idea of "culture in the last instance" discussed in Chapter One of this manuscript would seem to be a conflation of the two metaphysical planes.

³³ Richard Niebuhr, "The Grace of Doing Nothing," in *War in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Richard B. Miller (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992), 6-12.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 11. As with his brother but more so Richard Niebuhr wishes to draw a strong distinction between repentance as guilt and that of theological self-understanding in personal and political manner. In my conclusion I will return to how and why this distinction was collapsed in post-WWII histories of the 20th century.

while there were various ways to “do nothing” in the face of Japanese expansionism, the path he advocated was one that,

appears to be highly impracticable because it rests on the well-nigh obsolete faith that there is a God—a real God. Those who follow this way share with communism the belief that the fact that men can do nothing constructive is no indication of the fact that nothing constructive is being done. Like the communists they are assured that the actual processes of history will inevitably and really bring a different world with lasting peace. They do not rely on human aspirations after ideals to accomplish this end, but on forces which often seem very impersonal—as impersonal as those which eliminated slavery in spite of abolitionists. These forces may be as impersonal and as actual as machine production, rapid transportation, the physical mixture of races, etc., but as parts of the real world they are as much a part of the total divine process as are human thoughts and prayers.³⁵

It is because we reap what we sow, claims Richard Niebuhr, that the individual and national self-interest which has led to Japanese imperialism cannot be countered by more of such action. It will only result in more of the same.³⁶ However, that this cycle of violence *does* take place is part of the divine process, argues Richard Niebuhr, although not one in which the Christian should get involved. Instead, radical Christianity should manifest as small cells of inactivity within each nation which divorce themselves from nationalism and capitalism.

³⁵ Ibid., 9.

³⁶ That this is already happening is reflected in his claim that “China is being crucified by our sins and those of the whole world.” (Ibid., 11).

Reinhold Niebuhr's reply to this, his brother's argument, begins with an acknowledgement of how America's sins must frame any particular understanding of Japanese aggression. Displaying a critical attitude towards the nation-state in a form that was to be later repeated almost verbatim by Dulles (see below), Reinhold Niebuhr offers almost an apology for Japanese aggression:

It is true that we have helped to create the Japan which expresses itself in terms of militaristic imperialism. The insult that we offered her in our immigration laws was a sin of spiritual aggression. The white world has not only taught her the ways of imperialism but has preempted enough of the yellow man's side of the world to justify Japanese imperialism as a vent for pent up national energies. It is also true that American concern over Japanese aggression is not wholly disinterested. It is national interest which prompts us. . . . It is true in other words that every social sin is at least partially the fruit and consequence of the sins of those who judge and condemn it.³⁷

But Niebuhr does not simply articulate this "repentant" position in order to immediately move to a then suitably qualified and contrite call for violence in the name of the greater good. While arguably he does, in fact, ultimately advance something *like* this latter position, his political theology engages with his brother on an eschatological level, rather than a culturally pragmatic or utilitarian one.

Reinhold Niebuhr summarizes the eschatology of his brother's pacifist position stating that, according to Richard,

³⁷ Reinhold Niebuhr's "Must We Do Nothing?" in Miller, *War*, 13.

The Christian will try to achieve humility and disinterestedness not because enough Christians will be able to do so to change the course of history, but because this kind of spiritual attitude is a prayer to God for the coming of his kingdom.³⁸

Sympathizing with his brother's position, Reinhold Niebuhr immediately claims that contra liberalism, "a proper eschatology is necessary for a vigorous ethic."³⁹ Where Reinhold differs from his brother, however, relates to God's grand plan (counsels) and the problem of evil:

"What makes my brother's particular kind of eschatology impossible for me is that he identifies everything that is occurring in history (the drift towards disaster, another world war and possibly a world revolution) with the counsels of God, and then suddenly, by a leap of faith, comes to a conclusion that the same God who uses brutalities and forces, against which man must maintain conscientious scruples, will finally establish an ideal society in which pure love will reign.⁴⁰

In other words, against his brother Richard, Reinhold Niebuhr the Christian realist argues that if violence is good enough for God, it must be good enough for humankind, however sinfully and failingly the latter must enact it.⁴¹

In this rebuttal of his brother's theology, Reinhold Niebuhr is attempting to walk a very thin line indeed. He attempts to reject a liberal idea of progress while supporting the rather Hegelian idea that violence is part of God's plan and therefore must be part of our plan as God's

³⁸ Ibid., 15.

³⁹ Heidegger's *Being and Time* (1927) makes a similar point in more personal terms through his analysis of authenticity and Being-towards-death.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 15.

⁴¹ "I should think it would be better to come to ethical terms with the forces of nature in history, and try to use ethically directed coercion in order that violence may be avoided." (Ibid., 16). Note that here the ambiguity in Augustine over the utility of society for the spiritually elect is far less evident; instead an eschatology is now deployed to bring societal progress in terms of justice and spiritual progress in its own terms closer together.

followers, a plan which ultimately will result in a good (if done repentantly). What intensifies the difficulty is that individual perfection—presumably even perfect repentance at any particular moment—cannot release “the redemptive powers of God for society.” Any aimed for ideal must not only be activated by an eschatology, a salvation at the End, but also limited by the same eschatology in the sense that the ideal cannot—and should never be—understood as being made manifest in human time. “The goal which a sensitive individual sets for society,” declares Reinhold Niebuhr, “must always be little outside and beyond history. Love may qualify the social struggle of history but it will never abolish it.”⁴²

Reinhold Niebuhr clearly acknowledges a relativity of *national* interest in general, and also that the U.S. and western powers are in large measure responsible for Japanese militarist imperialism. Extrapolating on the basis of his larger theory of groups and ethics, we may suppose that what is bad about imperialism (both Japanese and western) is that it comes out of immoral group ethics—the latter manifesting in its extreme form as military violence—and this has combined with the economic self-interest of nations.⁴³ There is an inevitability here since wars will continue to happen and it is a conceit of liberal thinking about education or moral perfectionism that individual ethical action can necessarily stop them. All one can do is act as ethically as possible in accordance with the repentant and eschatological framework outlined above. Thus Reinhold Niebuhr’s objection to the Manchurian Incident is that Japan is acting

⁴² Ibid., 17. Reinhold’s brother, who has the last word in the exchange, gives a memorable reply to this picture of active violent love: “The method which my brother recommends, that of qualifying the social struggle by means of some Christian love seems to me to be only the old method of making Christian love an ambulance driver in the wars of interested and clashing parties.” Richard Niebuhr, “A Communication: The Only Way Into the Kingdom of God” in Miller, *War*, 21.

⁴³ “The ambition of a tyrannical imperialism is different only in degree and not in kind from the imperial impulse which characterizes all forms of human life” Reinhold Niebuhr’s “Why the Christian Church is not Pacifist” in Miller, *War*, 40. Also, “imperialism is the collective expression of the sinful will to power which characterizes all human existence,” (ibid., 42).

unethically, which is why Euro-America needs to be more ethical (than we *have* been, than they *are* being) even if that means using force itself.

Looking more closely at this argument it is not entirely clear how Reinhold Niebuhr is to justify this violence with respect to Japan, whether that be sanctions—the only realistic option at that moment and distance—or more direct interventions. One difficulty with assessing Reinhold Niebuhr’s argument is that up to now it has been necessarily theological. As such a certain materiality has been missing from the theorizing. In trying to restoring the balance by addressing the “realism” half of “Christian realism,” one issue is immediately apparent: to criticize Japan’s actions Niebuhr needs to make an argument for preserving some idea of territorial integrity which has been compromised by Japanese aggression, or, failing that, he needs to argue for why the Japanese empire is less just than the alternatives. The trouble with the former approach is that he has already cast a great deal of doubt on the virtues of the nation-state *per se*, and certainly he provides no sufficient reason to argue for the importance of maintaining existing boundaries over say erasing them in the name of justice. Turning to the second possibility, Niebuhr needs to argue why the Japanese empire is, say, more inherently unjust than the image of American justice he wishes sanctions or military action to bring about. Given the racism (and inequality) of the U.S. in 1931, something which he readily acknowledges, Niebuhr must somehow separate that from another kind of justice, a more just justice, which “America” cannot only understand, but think clearly and repentantly enough to bring about through its intervening institutions.

Is this credible, given what Reinhold Niebuhr says about the fragile ethics of the group? It would only appear so on the basis of some assumption about American culture having capabilities Japanese “culture” lacks. This is obviously a very difficult route for a truly repentant

theologian to go down and returns us to the theological cultural essentialism discussed in Chapter One. Viewed in this way, there appears to be some slippage between Niebuhr's own sense of an individual ethical responsibility on the one hand, and, on the other, the assumptions he wishes to make about the group (of which he is in some way a member). Revealingly, this is *precisely* the kind of *shu*-like claim that both he and Tanabe would predict (predict of themselves?), require, sinfully enact and then repent. In this light the discourse of repentance allows one to achieve something bordering on the miraculous: an ability to explain the sin of imperialism, acknowledge its violence as such, and yet justify its Japanese imperial continuation or a possibly violent American response—all the while being structurally equally sinful. Tanabe, as we have seen, deploys history, dialectics and discontinuities to try to keep all these balls in the air at the same time. Reinhold Niebuhr, however, cannot officially resort to dialects because they smack of liberal progress. In justifying attempts to build justice in these strange days of sinful futile action before the end of history he can only rely on right repentance, and this, as we have seen, appears behind the humility to be an assertion of one's own (country's) moment in time. Is this not essentially a dialectic of history that does not acknowledge its relative moment as such?

Further parallels with Tanabe here are conspicuous. Tanabe himself objects to the Japanese imperial violence coming from a Japanese authoritarian particularism, and advocates a repentant (although still violent) attitude to reclaim the moral (more universal) high ground. For both men there is a prophetic minority whose responsibility it is to call states to account in this manner.⁴⁴ In addition, there is the law of love which cannot be and must not be seen as the message of the gospels (Niebuhr), or actualizable in this world today (Niebuhr, and also for Tanabe for whom no love can develop without a dialectic). Yet for both thinkers this love is still

⁴⁴ For Niebuhr on this see Patterson, *The Christian Realists*, 44.

the criteria for judging the relative justice of the methods and the coercions of the state which are required to regulate any community.⁴⁵

For both Tanabe and Niebuhr, a society armed with love as the lodestar and engaged in violently overcoming and repenting particularistic nationalisms must produce a new form of sovereignty. By definition some conception of a universal-pursuing larger *post-national*-but-still -necessarily-violent state must come to exist as the next moment of justice in the world. Which brings us to John Foster Dulles—political theologian and acolyte of both Reinhold Niebuhr and Henri Bergson.

⁴⁵ Niebuhr's most mature position on this in the interwar period is his 1940 essay "Why the Christian Church is not Pacifist." There, he sharpens his earlier insight that the message of the Gospel is not love: "The good news of the Gospel is not the law that we ought to love one another; the good news of the gospel is that there is a resource of divine mercy which is able to overcome the contradiction within our own souls, which we cannot ourselves overcome." Miller, *War*, 29. This concern can lead to ascetic withdrawal and an abnegation of social responsibility, notes Niebuhr, although most modern forms are based not on this understanding of sin but on the "ridiculous" idea that the gospel is about enacting perfect love. The later Niebuhr suggests such absurdity is like the communist belief that sin results solely from class organization and can disappear in a classless society (*ibid.*, 30). Lumping the pacifists and the communists together with Russell and Huxley, Niebuhr summarizes their aggregate failing thus: "They all come finally to the same thing. They do not believe that man is a tragic creature who needs the divine mercy as much at the end as the beginning of his moral endeavors." *Ibid.*, 31.

After the Nation – John Foster Dulles

“A religion itself seeks universality, and if it seeks to spiritualize desires and inculcate a willingness to sacrifice, then it cannot fail more broadly to project the ethical solution”

War, Peace and Change – John F. Dulles (1939)

Genealogically speaking, it could be said that Dulles was well positioned by birth for a career that fused politics with religion. His father was a Presbyterian minister and one of his grandfathers, as well as one of his uncles, had been Secretary of State. Certainly, he seemed unwilling to settle merely for one vocation or the other and announced soon after his graduation from Princeton that he had determined he could make a greater contribution to the world as a Christian lawyer than as a minister. With this goal in mind, but only after one-year studying under Henri Bergson in Paris (1908-1909), he attended law school at George Washington University. After completing his studies there he promptly turned to specialize in international law at the Wall Street firm of Sullivan and Cromwell. Professionally, this grounded his future diplomatic political career. It also, one might speculate, colored his views on the benefits of “market diplomacy,” not least because he played a major role in designing the Dawes Plan and brokering loans to Germany in the 1920s.

In the early 1930s Germany’s intentional defaulting on these loans were one of many signposts that marked Germany’s lurch towards a more internationally (and domestically) aggressive national socialism. Back in the U.S., this shift rightwards led to an increasing focus

on Germany's racial and nationalist terminology among a variety of concerned protestant theological groups. Of particular importance for the American Christian communities was the 1933-4 establishment of the unified state Reich Church and its harmonization with many aspects of National Socialist doctrine.⁴⁶ Nationalist rhetoric had of course been under critical scrutiny since WW1 among those sympathetic to Barth. But these events in Germany had led to a sharpening and greater urgency visible in the critiques.⁴⁷ As a direct consequence of these anxieties, in January 1937 a meeting of the leading lights in America's version(s) of the theology of crisis movement met to prepare for a conference they deemed to be of global importance. This was "The Conference on Church, State and Community" to be held in Oxford from July 12-26 of that year. The Oxford conference (its informal title) is of interest here since it was there that Dulles presented a relatively concise (and often ignored) account of his Christian realist-inflected free-trade isolationism, along with related thoughts on Japanese imperialism.

One other reason why the Oxford conference is significant for this dissertation, and also especially significant for Dulles, was the turning point it marked in his evolving political theology. Indeed, he claimed as much in his May 16th 1944 address to the Princeton Theological Seminary where he disclosed how major an impact it had had on his life and thinking. In

⁴⁶ For a wide-ranging discussion of this in the interrelated European and American context see Warren, *Theologians*, 56-75. Warren makes the following observation of American churches regarding the link between holding a critical stance towards nationalism, and the need to replace liberalism: "The German situation presented the younger American theologians with a new focus for their inquiry and analysis, pushing them to formulate a positive alternative theology. . . . Though not all American theologians made the same assessment of liberalism's responsibility for this, they now finally broke with liberalism over it. The heterodox theology that sanctioned the Third Reich and its expansionist ideology required correction by an orthodox theology equally as public and persuasive." Warren, *Theologians*, 60.

⁴⁷ We see this concern, for example, in an essay by Niebuhr's close associate John Bennett that was pointedly titled "After Liberalism—What?" In this essay Bennett advocates for Christianity's ability and responsibility to transcend national boundaries, loyalties and identities. John C. Bennett, "After Liberalism—What?" *Christian Century*, November 8, 1933: 1403-1406.

explaining why, Dulles confessed to his audience that by 1937 he had come to view his prior efforts at “promoting peace and decent national relationships” as one of “complete futility.”⁴⁸

This sense of failure, he explained, prompted him to take time out to search for the causes of his ineffectiveness. He immediately goes on:

In that effort I obtained great enlightenment from one international event that, to me, out above all others. That was the 1937 Oxford Conference on Church and State. It was made up of men and women who, like those who gathered at Pentecost, ‘came from every nation under heaven.’ There was but one bond of unity—that was faith in God as revealed by Jesus Christ. As at Pentecost that bond of unity enabled us to understand each other. We discussed matters which before I had seen always give rise to violent dispute.⁴⁹

Dulles proclaimed that his and others’ earlier efforts at peace were undone by the fact that that the participants had not learned the lessons Christ had taught them. As a Christian realist, Dulles was not advocating a Social Gospel witness, but rather a learning from Christ in two senses. The first of these was that idolatry, selfishness, and hypocrisy had been the block to finding “intelligent practical agreement as to how such matters should be dealt with.”⁵⁰ Second, it was a failure to understand that Jesus taught “not a purely contemplative religion but a dynamic faith which would make men strong and powerful in action.”⁵¹

⁴⁸ John Foster Dulles, *The Spiritual Legacy of John Foster Dulles*, ed. Henry P. Van Dusen (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), 25.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 27.

It is in this term “dynamic,” and its counterpart “static”—terms which Dulles uses repeatedly, and often intertwines with expressions of his Christian faith—that we find the hermeneutical key to unlock the principles of his new world order.⁵² These terms—as examined in earlier chapters— are Bergson’s, and of decisive significance to both Tanabe and, I argue here, Dulles as well. In short, both men draw heavily from Bergson’s analysis of the two types of religion and morality, the static and the dynamic, in an attempt to forge a “progressive” reworking of the existing world order of nation states.⁵³

⁵² For example, in 1936 Dulles summarized the entire European crisis as the “struggle between the dynamic and the static—the urge to acquire and the desire to retain.” “Peaceful Change Within the Society of Nations” speech at Princeton March 19 1936, Dulles Papers and cited in Townsend Hoopes, *The Devil and John Foster Dulles* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1973), 46.

⁵³ Dulles’ writings display a conspicuous reluctance to admit the degree to which he was influenced by Bergson (under whom he studied at the Sorbonne from 1908-1909). For example in his first book *War, Peace and Change* he gives his most explicit definition of the dynamic and the static but makes no mention of Bergson [*War, Peace and Change* (New York: Harper & brothers, 1939), 30]. It is my suspicion that Bergson’s religious background may have played a role in Dulles’ silence. Bergson was born into a prominent Jewish family but converted to a non-Catholic Christianity in 1921. He was, however, by many accounts, inclined to Catholicism (despite their banning of his three books in 1914 as a result of his denial of Aquinas as the final philosopher). In fact his decision not to convert to Catholicism towards the end of his life has sometimes explained not so much as a lack of faith but resulting from a decision to show solidarity with the Jews under the Vichy regime. Dulles may have had a number of reasons for keeping quiet on his Bergsonian influences but surely a Catholic-Jew would not be welcome as the inspiration for the great new Protestant religious cause of preparing for a durable postwar peace.

Intriguingly, Dulles virtual silence on the matter is echoed in the almost complete absence of commentary on this Bergsonian relation in the secondary literature. For example, in what I believe to be Dulles’ best biography to date—Richard Immerman 1998—Bergson is passed over in a few sentences [Richard H. Immerman, *John Foster Dulles: Piety, Pragmatism, and Power In U.S. Foreign Policy* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1999)]. On a more popular level, in Dulles’ Wikipedia entry, Bergson is omitted completely from his timeline thereby giving the erroneous impression that directly after graduating from Princeton in 1908, Dulles went directly to law school. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Foster_Dulles) accessed 1/08/2015. While this later silence hardly constitutes proof of my overall thesis, it is exactly what one would expect if my argument in the first chapter is broadly correct.

Dynamic and Static Societies

If there is a consistent and unifying theme to Dulles' pre-Cold War political theology, it is surely his repeated attempts to think through a just management of societal and global changes.⁵⁴

Change, he claims, is not something to be shunned, but rather embraced,

Change is itself a prime *desideratum* with many, just as a maintenance of the status quo is desideratum with others. It is necessary that the rules be such as to maintain a reasonable balance between these opposing and partially irreconcilable desires.⁵⁵

Dulles immediately goes on from the quotation just given to declare that these opposing tendencies will hereafter be known as static and dynamic. He describes them thus:

By static we refer to those who are sufficiently satisfied with what they have—in the way of possessions and opportunities—not to want any important change in the structure of society in which they live. By “dynamic” we refer to those who desire that the structure of their society to be changed or their group enlarged in order to give greater scope to their energy or adventurous disposition or in the hope of thereby improving, relatively or absolutely, their material or social status. . . . We refer to nations as “static” or “dynamic” according to the preponderant characteristics of their members. But of course all states embrace both static and dynamic elements.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ “Change,” he states in 1936, “is the ultimate fact to which we must accommodate ourselves.” “Peaceful Change Within the Society of Nations” speech at Princeton on March 19 1936, Dulles Papers and cited in Townsend Hoopes, *The Devil and John Foster Dulles* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1973), 46.

⁵⁵ John Foster Dulles, *War, Peace and Change* (New York: Harper & brothers, 1939), 30.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

Dulles argued at the Oxford conference that these two kinds of energy must be given adequate release by the state if destructive intra- and interstate violence is to be avoided.⁵⁷ Focusing on the international situation the principal thrust of Dulles' address was that often national boundaries constrain dynamic energy to the extent that the latter can only then but escape in a regrettably destructive fashion.⁵⁸ It is for this reason that he suggests the League of Nations, in its manifestation as a mechanism designed to maintain these rigid boundaries, is ironically "an invitation to extreme nationalism."⁵⁹ Historicizing this moment it should be remembered that the conference took place from July 12-26, 1937 and the Marco Polo Bridge Incident (July 8) was at that time being channeled in the Euro-American press as the international crisis of the day. The story's newsworthiness was driven at least in part by the fact that the Incident was yet another body blow to the existing concept of a West-centered world order: Japan had already left the League and was now advancing militarily in the region where it significantly outnumbered European forces. In this atmosphere when Dulles argued that such a strategy of "releasing energy" must also be applied to international affairs, he would certainly be heard as speaking directly to the ongoing Japanese expansion.

What, then, was his alternative to this system of autonomous nation states, to what Dulles calls the "war system"? Rejecting the idea of abolishing all national sovereignty as an unrealistic aspiration, Dulles argued that "what we need are safety valves cut through the barriers of

⁵⁷ John Foster Dulles, "The Problem of Peace in a Dynamic World" *Religion in Life* 6 (Spring 1937): 194, 197-8.

⁵⁸ This might result from the state mismanaging dynamic energy such that it rises to a dangerous pitch due to the "hypnotic stimulus of leaders," and/or because the national territory itself "is inadequate to permit the normal expenditure of energy" (ibid., 194). This latter constraint suggests a need to redraw national boundaries. Such potentially catastrophic blockages also occur when the free flow of capital and ideas are similarly limited by national allegiances. Dulles acknowledges what the post-Freudian scholarly literature might now call the psychological projection (or post-Kleinian projective identification) by the individual onto/into the nation-state (ibid., 206). But Dulles believes that the release of dynamic energy achieved through free trade will blur national distinctions and thus make war less likely (ibid.). Thus Dulles does not anticipate that globalization could strengthen nationalism or similar *shu-like* allegiances (ibid., 199). I will return to this point below in my discussion of accumulation.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 196.

boundaries . . . in order that the dynamic forces will peacefully diffuse themselves.”⁶⁰ And to permit this healthy vitalism, Dulles suggested something like the federal U.S. Constitution be implemented on a global scale since this would thereby allow the interstate movement of people, goods, ideas and capital.⁶¹ Interestingly, when discussing practical steps towards this goal Dulles advised that the industrialized nations must not suddenly be thrown open to competition from the less developed since this would disturb the established outlet mechanisms of the more economically advanced territories. In fact, apart from a reduction in tariffs and blocks to trade, the only economic responsibility of the advanced countries that Dulles spelled out in his presentation was the pegging of international exchange rates to each other.⁶² And this would be framed within the other major recommendation of his presentation, a Wilsonian mandate-type policy where more “advanced” countries would administer the less advanced until they were ready for the world on equal terms.⁶³

In making a preliminary assessment of this proposals it is hard to avoid the impression that Dulles is offering something like an earlier version of modernization theory with a bifurcated temporality of advanced and developing regions. Viewed with a contemporary and critical eye, these policy prescriptions concerning national sovereignty, immigration, protective tariffs, currency arrangements and political mandates appear as a plutocratic imperialism hiding under the guise of market liberalization. But how then does he relate this to Japan? And where exactly is the political theology?

⁶⁰ Ibid., 197.

⁶¹ However, migration would be limited to an elite of “unusual strength and character” (ibid., 201).

⁶² Ibid., 200. He did not, however, enter into a discussion on how the net effect of this would be to eliminate export competition from less industrialized parts of the globe.

⁶³ Ibid., 201.

Dulles, Japan and Empire

“There is a moral order which is fundamental and eternal, and which is relevant to the corporate life of men and the ordering of society. We believe that the sickness and suffering which afflict share in responsibility for the present evils. There is none who does not need forgiveness. A genuine mood of penitence is therefore demanded of us—individuals and nations alike.”

John Foster Dulles, “Statement of Guiding Principles” (1942)

This quotation from post-Pearl Harbor “wartime” Dulles displays a certain hardening of his Niebuhr-influenced Christian realism. By this time what we might call his fairly isolationist interwar “economic imperialism” had become unsustainable but I suggest here that interwar and wartime Dulles are very much kindred spirits. Moreover, Dulles’ thinking across the interwar and wartime period offers up numerous similitudes between Dulles’ political theology and Tanabe’s Logic of Species. Entering into this comparative operation, however, invites the possibility of a return to something like a competitive retreat into cultural essentialism—“It may look like your imperialism, but it’s different, or certainly will be in the end, since it is in essence...” In what follows, then, and for the reasons given in Chapter One, I try to minimize this risk of such a return to non-engagement by focusing on similitudes of a political theological nature.

On one level, Dulles regrets, or rather *repents*, the current Japanese aggression since it has resulted from a misshapen world order in which the U.S. is more than complicit. At the

same time, as discussed in earlier chapters, this repentance here should “also” be seen as a movement integral to condoning or justifying state violence. And Dulles articulates this atonement in a way strikingly similar to Tanabe with both thinkers deploying the language of Bergson, and contemporary theology.

Dulles explains in his 1937 presentation that Japan is an unfortunate case where, through the constraints of national sovereignty, “energy is developed to an abnormal pitch by recourse to emotion and semi-hypnotic influence, and where, on the other hand, the national domain is limited in area and natural wealth.”⁶⁴ In saying this he mirrors the substance of Tanabe’s and many other Japanese intellectuals’ concerns over the increasingly authoritarian state as a threat to the imperial polity.

In prescribing a solution, Dulles presentation in that summer of 1937 makes it plain that there is no way to put Japan’s genie back into its bottle. Moreover, the world should not want to suppress such vital spirits anyway, and the situation should be allowed to stand.⁶⁵ This grace or blessing originates from Euro-American repentance on its past errors on the one hand, and the act of “release” by the Japanese, on the other. This is one way in which repentance justifies violence ex post facto via naturalizing its causes as a movement transgressing artificial national boundaries towards justice (a mediation of *rui*). Significant for our purposes is that for Dulles—as seen in his description of the dynamic given above—this movement, Japan’s “release,” is a struggle for parity or equality, a kind of natural justice or natural law in Dulles’ system.

Ultimately, the forms of equality and parity between conquered and conquering are to be

⁶⁴ Ibid., 202.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 203. Given Dulles’ other arguments, we can presume this grace or blessing was to take place inside a mandate system of the “advanced tutoring the less developed” (and, therefore, something very similar to the paternalistic relationship towards China advanced in *Japan Speaks*.)

achieved by allowing dynamic energies of both to reach a managed equilibrium. (Failure to do so leads to justified revolution against the state or other states, for example.⁶⁶) In this way Japan's blocked energies are (in a regrettably violent form, which America repents) achieving the justice that comes from "area and natural wealth."

The (qualified) global free market ideal that Dulles promotes is to allow this universal to manifest on earth, or at least is the best mechanism for its closest approximation; a Christian *capital* realism, as it were. In this way, the Augustinian two cities are now recoded as the duality of the ideal of perfectly flowing commodified labor and capital on the one hand, and barriers to this, on the other. How permanent these barriers are is left somewhat unclear. Sin puts up barriers and this is reflected politically, for example, in the above-referenced impossibility of removing all vestiges of national sovereignty (the equivalent of original sin). But apart from this seeming repentant caveat, Dulles goes where Niebuhr feared to tread: in other words, a return to the goal of establishing the Kingdom of God on earth—a realm of equality and wholesome interpersonal relations brought on by capital's ultimately therapeutic possibilities. This goal of an earthly paradise, lurking in so much liberal progressivism, was of course that which Christian realism was supposed to have rejected. But Dulles is somewhat selective in his creed, that is to say, he acknowledges the significance of sin and repentance but leans towards eschewing an eschatology determinate of salvation from outside at the End. Instead makes his righteousness almost indignant:

"Christ has taught that we should render unto God that which is God's. We have been rendering unto Caesar that which is God's. The finest qualities of human nature are at

⁶⁶ Ibid., 194

once too delicate and too powerful to be put blindly at the disposal of other humans who are primarily concerned with their own kingdom—not the bringing into being of the Kingdom of God”⁶⁷

In this cosmology, sin in its most fundamental form is cast as attachment to the humanly-instituted barriers preventing the free flow of goods and services. Only after dynamic energy has begun to flow globally will such boundaries then able to exist in some beneficial way without being an impediment.⁶⁸ But war is inevitable up to that point, says Dulles, and the best we can do is use force to minimize this sinful inevitability while trying to pay attention to our own shortcomings.⁶⁹ As a pillar of his interwar/wartime political theology Dulles argues that national sovereignty breeds identification with the state which, in turn, reinforces a pride both national and individual. He adds that such pride and selfishness are barriers to the new order and he suggests they cannot be eliminated by will but “by replacing them with a sentiment more dominant and gripping and which will contain in it the elements of universality as against particularity.”⁷⁰ Somewhat surprisingly, Dulles credits both communism and fascism with moving in the direction of this universality wherein dishonesty, pride and prejudice are “replaced by courage, self-sacrifice and discipline.” Swiftly though, he qualifies his admiration by declaring that the ideals of these political movements are flawed since it is only Christians who are capable of taking the spiritual lead on establishing this new world order.

Dulles’ presentation at the Oxford ecumenical conference ended with a call for spiritual leadership to achieve these goals. His formative political theology of 1937 was then crafted over

⁶⁷ John Foster Dulles, *War, Peace and Change* (New York: Harper & brothers), 17.

⁶⁸ Dulles, “The Problem of Peace in a Dynamic World,” 204.

⁶⁹ Dulles constantly reminds his readers that no nation has a monopoly on virtues or vices. For example, *ibid.*, 206.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 206.

the succeeding two years and appears in a more complete form in his 1939 book *War, Peace and Change*. Among its other themes, Dulles' 1939 book gives extended treatment to the idea that the people of any particular nation-state tend to anthropomorphize the polity. In practice, Dulles points out, this entails subjects ascribing to their nation various human qualities such as honor, pride, and status, as part of their own need to projectively identify with a greater whole (one instance of Tanabe's *shu*). In what can be seen as Dulles' re-presentation of Schmitt's claim that all significant political concepts are derived from the theological, Dulles explains this "national-deity concept is responsive primarily to the yearning of human beings for identification with some spiritually superior entity."⁷¹

It should be remembered here that such identification equates with sin in the Augustinian sense to the extent that one imagines oneself as self-sufficient without God in one's national pride, and thereby indulges in an ego-centered self-aggrandizement. Such projections facilitate war, argues Dulles, and he laments that in the world today the chances of eliminating such causes and effects are very slim indeed. That said, he also claims "substantial progress" may be made with respect to the tendency to vilify other states that so often goes hand-in-hand with the valorization of one's own homeland. In this representative modality of repentance, an appreciation of the relative positionality of one's condemnation of others allows an advance towards a more ethical universal.⁷² Contextualizing this penitent attitude, Dulles (in this 1939 publication) again comes to the defense of the Japanese empire by reminding his readers how for the Japanese, China is the recent aggressor—as *Japan Speaks* also suggested—and that the

⁷¹ Dulles, *War, Peace and Change*, 115.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 111.

English seizure of Hong Kong in 1839 can, contrary to the British interpretation, be seen as analogous to the current Japanese case.⁷³

For those acquainted with Tanabe's systematization of repentance, Dulles' argument is uncannily familiar. Tanabe demands a negation of what is immediately *für sich*—a *shu*-like operation blind to the universal—and this is to be obtained through the negating repentance that leads to a higher unity. Certainly this appears to be what Dulles is advocating when he speaks in his preferred diplomatic idiom:

There are only rare occasions when those who condemn should not couple their condemnation with repentance, in word and deed, for the causative part played by their own nation. If religious and peace organizations would come to a realization of these facts, they could prevent the unthinking acceptance within one state of the devil characterization of another.⁷⁴

Note that the implication of repentance here is also correlative with a shifting away from national, “particular” allegiance. This is not to say that “national” isn't also a universal in certain senses—for example, in the sense in which a citizen is supposed to be as equally a national citizen as all other citizens—but Dulles' point is that even *that* relative universal itself must be purged. In turn, and according to the implications of his broader theorizing, the reader will note that this movement toward the universal eases the flow of deterritorialization/reterritorialization. The territorial control and boundaries which remained would be less of an obstacle *per se*.⁷⁵

⁷³ Ibid., 108.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 114.

⁷⁵ The universal of globalization can of course be accompanied by and produce new particularistic, even national identities. My point at this juncture is that these under Dulles' system these would be a managed creation and in this sense less of a barrier—I return to this issue in the context of accumulation below. For a broad discussion of the return of boundaries under today's global sovereignty, see Mehmet Akif Okur "Rethinking Empire After 9/11:

Both spatially and temporally, Dulles' new world order appears to manifest the *tendency* to move from 19th-century imperial nation-state modes of sovereignty towards "Empire," as defined by Hardt and Negri.

The concept of Empire is characterized fundamentally by a lack of boundaries: Empire's rule has no limits. First and foremost, then, the concept of Empire posits a regime that effectively encompasses the spatial totality, or really that rules over the entire "civilized" world. No territorial boundaries limit its reign.⁷⁶

In terms of an accompanying temporality of Empire, the authors claim the following:

Second, the concept of Empire presents itself not as a historical regime originating in conquest, but rather as an order that effectively suspends history and thereby fixes the existing state of affairs for eternity. From the perspective of Empire, this is the way things will always be and the way they were always meant to be. In other words, Empire presents its rule not as a transitory moment in the movement of history, but as a regime with no temporal boundaries and in this sense out-side of history or at the end of history. . . . Finally, although the practice of Empire is continually bathed in blood, the concept of Empire is always dedicated to peace—a perpetual and universal peace outside of history.⁷⁷

Towards A New Ontological Image of World Order," *Perceptions, Journal of International Affairs*, Volume XII, Winter 2007: 61-93.

⁷⁶ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000), xiv-xv. For the relevance of "tendency," see Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri. *Multitude: War and Democracy In the Age of Empire* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2004), xiii. These authors, like Dulles and Tanabe, are greatly concerned with change, movement, and the preoccupations of speculative philosophy.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.* Tanabe of course retains a *shu*-like worldliness in mutuality with transcendence. This, however, must operate in a different register of worldly passions or the idea of a *rui*-like state or City of God would have little meaning.

Viewed through these spatio-temporal lenses, what comes into focus is the imminent prospect of timelessness in Dulles' cartographic imagery. The principle of repentance involves reflection and conversion whether on a personal or international level. Contained within this—and Christian realism in general—is an atonement for the past in that the past and the dead are now gathered into a present which is accepted on the grounds that greater justice is now manifest. The past is made timeless in its gathering of time, and the promise of the moral Kingdom on earth mixes this present with (its thereby created) future time. The image of the peaceful salvific future outside of time is in this way permitted to bleed into the present—in essence what Barth objected to—and in this way pressures the experience of a right and timeless now. In Dulles Christian capital realism, the coordinate fantasy is that of repented blocks to trade, free labor flows and a past that is no longer a “past” but mere empty change. Such is Dulles' messianic time.

Through introducing the much-discussed concept of “Empire” I do not wish to imply my agreement with Hardt and Negri's analysis, nor a rejection of the important criticisms made of their somewhat historicist narrative.⁷⁸ Instead, their influential analysis is useful for sharpening

⁷⁸ One critic of this teleological aspect of their work is Slavoj Žižek: “However, although NH [Hardt and Negri—ed.] see today's capitalism as the main site of the proliferating multitudes, they continue to rely on the rhetoric of the One, the sovereign Power, against the multitude; how they bring these two aspects together is clear: while capitalism generates multitudes, it contains them in the capitalist form, thereby unleashing a demon it is unable to control. The question to be asked here is nonetheless if HN do not commit a mistake homologous to that of Marx: is their notion of the pure multitude ruling itself not the ultimate capitalist fantasy, the fantasy of capitalism's self-revolutionizing perpetual movement freely exploding when freed of its inherent obstacle?” (Slavoj Žižek, “Blows Against the Empire?” lacan.com (2007). Retrieved February 2 2015). For Žižek it is the inherent contradiction between the form and potential of capital which is this “obstacle” and thus can never be eliminated except in a utopian fantasy.

It has also been suggested by other scholars that the emancipatory potential in Hardt and Negri's *Empire* has much in common with that justifying the subject's participation in Tanabe's national-imperial logic: “Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's *Empire* make historical arguments for the real subsumption of the globe into a political and economic system while at the same time basing the possibility for emancipatory political thought in the superior subjective flexibility offered up by the imperial nation-state.” Travis Workman, *Sō In-sik's Communism*, 149.

and contextualizing my account of Dulles, as well as directing us to the crucial task of clarifying what, exactly, could be seen as problematic in Dulles' particular use of timeless time and unbounded space, (as well as perhaps being implicitly problematic in Hardt and Negri's work). Which is to say: Given, in Dulles' work, the function of repentance in advancing de/reterritorialization with the accompanying territorial recapture, and, furthermore, given the ongoing management of new, colonial or postcolonial identities formed through this reterritorialization of imperial or "Empirical" space, then repentance as coming of the "universal on earth," as the other to the will-to-power, must be interrogated for its ambivalent mediation of (or catalyst for) the particularizations that arise from violence and through such universal-oriented violence. If these new particulars are not some "universal particular" in a less sinful sense then Dulles' universal project itself is necessarily put into question.

Under this critical gaze at least two difficulties with Dulles' position become apparent. First, for Dulles' concept of repentance to have positive futural effects, the trauma caused by the violence of capital flows or other state-mediated violence must not ultimately inhibit the move to a higher universal. In other words, traumatized victims—and also traumatized victimizers, since none are solely one or the other—must, according to these theories of repentance, be capable of reflective transformation "in" their experience of the other, a movement that overcomes or "works through" the need to project antipathetic stereotypes and false limited perspectives onto said other.⁷⁹ In reframing the question in this way I draw on Freudian terminology because he

⁷⁹ In questioning the efficacy of the pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of pain—the mission statement of capital, we might say—Freud introduces a number of terms—among which trauma is decisive—to complement his idea of the human need to managing overwhelming excitation and stimulation. As he states in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, "We describe as 'traumatic' any excitations from outside which are powerful enough to break through the protective shield. . . . A particular way is adopted of dealing with any internal excitations which produce too great an increase of unpleasure: there is a tendency to treat them as though they were acting not from the inside, but from the outside, so that it may be possible to bring the shield against stimuli into operation as a means of defense against them. This is the origin of projection, which is destined to play such a large part in the causation of pathological

was not only a contemporary of Dulles and Tanabe but because this language is still authoritative in both popular and certain clinical discourses on trauma.

Is Dulles defensible here? I suggest not in that immediately we confront the problem that the manifestations of trauma resulting from violence either entail or perhaps even *are* precisely this kind of projection, as Freud suggests. The temporality of trauma is such that it continually attempts a return to the most violating moment. It thereby carries or projects its environment—especially on to those people that intensify or trigger such a need—in that attempt.⁸⁰ Can these two forces, an antidote to a poison—capital breaking down barriers—that is itself a poison—producing said barriers through trauma and projection—be thought together?⁸¹ Certainly Dulles and Tanabe try to in their respective attempts to mix the transcendence of free flowing capital “against” the sin of attachments, projections and othering (Dulles), and in the need for *shu*-embedded *ko* and *rui* to mediate each other differently to these operations and toward the higher universal (Tanabe). But is this convincing? I submit it would only be so were the encounter to at least demonstrate in its effects, actual or proposed, that this temporality had transformed a *shu*-like relationship with self/others, rather than merely producing the same as different. Reflecting on the work of Dulles and Tanabe, their conceptions of a universalizing *shu* identity are certainly more “universal” in the sense that a category of commonality is nominally applied to a greater

processes.” Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* Standard ed., trans. James Strachey (New York: Norton, 1989), 33. In citing Freud’s 1920 text here I do not wish to ignore the work done on the shifts and apparent incongruities in Freud’s views on trauma [see, for example, Ruth Leys, *Trauma: A Genealogy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000)]. Rather, to extend the point made above, to speak in this register of that time allows a defensible and accessible way to reframe Dulles’ work.

⁸⁰ Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 36-37.

⁸¹ The implication of opposites being contained within each other in this sense is reminiscent of Derrida’s *pharmakon* since this undecidable is the medium of the new differentiations formed under a new ordering: “The ‘essence’ of the *pharmakon* lies in the way in which, having no stable essence, no ‘proper’ characteristics, it is not, in any sense (metaphysical, physical, chemical, alchemical) of the word, a *substance*. . . . It is rather the prior medium in which differentiation in general is produced.” (Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination* (Chicago: University Press, 1981), 125-6. A key distinction to be made with regards to Tanabe and Dulles, however, is that *pharmakon* is non-dialectical in its play, threatening dialectics from within.

number of individuals (i.e., subjects of the Japanese empire, or global consumers/laborers). But the potential objection to be made here is that if such an extension is accompanied by a disavowed displaced intensification and/or extension of othering elsewhere, then it would be fanciful to claim the “working through” of the higher universal had somehow occurred.

I believe this legerdemain is at work. In Dulles’ case, the difference between a positive energy flow (capital) and the violent release of repressed energy—a distinction which forms the pillar his foreign policy prescriptions—trades upon a selective forgetting of the prior colonial and/or other violent history. How so? Because to say that 1930s Japan lacks resources and is constrained by national boundaries, and that as a consequence its explosive energies cannot but be violent, is to ignore the fact that—as discussed in earlier chapters—it is already “imperial,” and that the founding of “nations” and their maintenance is always already violent.

Presuming Dulles means in his discussion of the “nation of Japan” something like that of the Meiji Restoration, then *that* Japan is inextricably linked with capital flows—the so-called opening of the country to trade, or the need to be an empire or colony (which, as previously shown, was commonly accepted among the major powers of the time). The real difficulty for Dulles here is that there is no available concept of “nation” which is independent of the violent energies he says are a result of unsustainable and inequitable conditions among said nations. In other words, he claims that the nation is in various ways the obstacle to peaceful capital flows when the nation’s creation was in fact inextricably tied to capital. This “forgetting” avoids a closer analysis of exactly how releasing this “good” dynamic energy might result, and might have resulted, in such “bad” consequences. It also therefore tries to sidestep the issue of whether this production of static, inhibiting energy may be an intrinsic condition of, the very possibility

of as well as a result of, the supposedly good dynamic energy. This returns us to the contradiction of form and potential of capital that Žižek remarked on earlier.

In theological terms this disavowed repetition requires us is to ask if the Christian realism of Dulles (and others), for all its concern for the difficulty of establishing the Kingdom of God on Earth, has not here fallen into precisely the liberal capitalist fantasy the rejection of which was supposed to be its core principle? If there is something other to that sinful energy—the premise of Dulles—then we search in vain in Dulles’ work if we wish to find it. It is rather only retrospectively assumed and posited inside the story of sin, repentance and the justifiable new. Without giving persuasive reasons for this separability in the sense that permits a move to a more than traumatically displacing and projectively repetitive pseudo-universal, the formation of particularized units (e.g., the nation) looks quite intrinsic to the universal of capital. In fact what we see is a stream of particularized pasts that are suppressed as the messianic temporality of the modern continuously resets itself, its own origin. In terms of economic imperialism, repentance is readily complicit in this resetting since it obscures the power relation that pertains to the different positionalities. The repentance of the powerful legitimates the status quo and future violence, whereas the repentance of the weaker can only therefore, as weaker, accommodate the former.

In the forgoing assessment of Dulles I have ventured into the realms of what might appear to be a kind of economism. This should be all the more conspicuous because until now this dissertation has largely eschewed attempts to directly “translate” political theological terms into those of a more economic frame of reference. There are many reasons for this avoidable but among these, first and foremost, is that such an architectonics risks misrepresenting my thesis: my argument is *not* an attempt to translate from one presumed-to-be roughly distinct

cluster of terms (e.g., interwar politico-theological language) into another (e.g., an archive of Marxism[s]). Somewhat less ambitiously, I *am* concerned with reframing the content adumbrated by the *borders* of heterogeneity and homogeneity so as to challenge aspects of the currently established discursive regime of transpacific interwar history.⁸² To facilitate the latter—and to not fall unnecessarily into the reductionism of the former—it is germane to persist “untranslating” the established narratives with one final logic. I do this by now drawing on the “political theological” motifs of Marx’s writing on accumulation. This is not to reduce but rather to reveal commutativity or similitudes between discourses, something which in turn undermines binary representational ontologies—in this context, a Christian west and a co-arising other-to-Christian Japan.

In the first volume of *Capital*, Marx claims in the chapter entitled “The Secret of Primitive Accumulation” that “this primitive accumulation plays in political economy about the same part as original sin in theology.”⁸³ In saying this, Marx is indicating his concern with the ambiguity of origins, particularly with regard to what drives accumulation. He reminds his readers that the fall from Eden—which led to the need to survive by the sweat of one’s labor power—resulted from the desire to bite an apple; similarly, he observes, the historical narrative of primitive accumulation tells of how the conditions for the commodification of labor took place inside a pre-capitalist system. The stories are therefore the stories of an original fall from some pre-capitalist community into a very new set of social relations.⁸⁴ Since capitalism requires “primitive accumulation” before capitalist accumulation *proper* can take place, Marx sees these

⁸² The other significant reason for this avoidance is that the very idea of economic base and superstructure analyses has come under repeated challenge by scholars of Marx themselves—see Michèle Barrett, *The Politics of Truth: From Marx to Foucault* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1991), esp. 35-49.

⁸³ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Karl Marx, Frederick Engels: Collected Works, vol. 35, Karl Marx: Capital, vol. 1*, trans. by Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling (International Publishers, New York, NY, 1996), 704.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 704-5.

somewhat chicken-and-egg-like elements as analogous to the consuming of the fruit as a precursor to the Fall.

Whichever desire it was that led Adam and Eve to the forbidden, Marx claims that inside capitalism such “original sin is at work everywhere.” This is so since it is also emergent in the capitalist for whom the process of accumulation itself eventually becomes much more closely tied to a desire for previously forbidden pleasurable and conspicuous consumption. Indeed, this becomes a necessity for accumulation itself.⁸⁵ Such passages as this indicate an instability in the distinction between the drive behind primitive accumulation (i.e., original enclosure and the establishment of labor power as a commodity) and, on the other hand, some idea of capitalist accumulation “proper.” Marx’s “political theological” analysis here—as I call it in a blatantly *ad hoc* manner—delineates a feature of capital which sheds light on the problematic separation of the two energies in Dulles. In other words, the separation between primitive and capitalist accumulation is fraught with difficulty in that it seems impossible to think a concatenation of forces which are present at that formative moment and which can then be said to be absent in later forms. This fact is obscured by Dulles’ progressive linear narrative structure which trades on the forgetting of the past in the infinite invisible circular nows of modern time. Within this

⁸⁵ “But original sin is at work everywhere. As capitalist production, accumulation, and wealth, become developed, the capitalist ceases to be the mere incarnation of capital. He has a fellow-feeling for his own Adam, and his education gradually enables him to smile at the rage for asceticism, as a mere prejudice of the old-fashioned miser. While the capitalist of the classical type brands individual consumption as a sin against his function, and as “abstinence” from accumulating, the modernized capitalist is capable of looking upon accumulation as ‘abstinence’ from pleasure. . . . When a certain stage of development has been reached, a conventional degree of prodigality, which is also an exhibition of wealth, and consequently a source of credit, becomes a business necessity to the “unfortunate” capitalist.” Ibid., 589-90.

now a mutually constitutive dialectical structure of universal and particular is both admitted and suppressed.⁸⁶

What is forcefully shaped here in the “logic” of both Dulles and Tanabe is a bringing into relation of previously differently placed, in-, or non-commensurate *Dasein*, as consumer/laborer, or as Asians, so that modes of governance can be systematized. It is repentance which modulates this encounter but in so doing regulates that moment which could define the universal in a way that, for example, may have had nothing to do with creating an Asian and an Asia, or labor power. It might indeed have undermined such a project. Instead, the conversion experience of the so-called encounter is not contemporaneous, but only lived backwards: formative encounters are constantly effaced as the other is *remembered* as something, some identity, which was more or less justly treated. It is this repentant remembering which forgets the potentiality of the encounter and instead posits a “bad projection” on to a (retrospectively) defined other, as having been the projection which was the barrier to the universal. In neither thinker does their logic honestly address the traumatic process of destruction and creation required for the universal’s advance. I have argued this above with respect to Dulles, and likewise there seems to be no reason to think that Tanabe has reconciled these contrary forces.

This avoidance of a more genuine encounter is facilitated by thinking in terms of sin and repentance as housed within the complex of modern linear time. The way in which trauma unsettles this view is suggestively signed towards by Freud himself. In his preamble to the above-noted comments on trauma, and writing in the immediate aftermath of WW1, he states:

⁸⁶ Repentance in Dulles and Niebuhr is among other things an acknowledgement of responsibility for producing a violent other in the form of Japan. However, it should be remembered that the West was not acting as a “right universal” when doing this, and the national particularity this “bad universal” worked upon in that way—in making it more aggressive for example—has itself a prior history which is omitted.

As a result of certain psycho-analytic discoveries we are to-day in a position to embark on a discussion of the Kantian theorem of that ‘space and time are necessary forms of thought’. We have learnt that unconscious mental processes are in themselves ‘timeless’. This means in the first place that they are not ordered temporally, that time does not change them in any way and that the idea of time cannot be applied to them. . . . This mode of functioning [linear time to screen/mediate the return of unconscious timelessness—ed.] may perhaps constitute another way of providing a shield against stimuli. I know that these remarks must sound very obscure, but I must limit myself to these hints.⁸⁷

Obscure though they may be, these speculations signal toward the role of disavowed trauma in compromising, and possibly driving, the temporality of linear optimism—and inside that repentance—that was supposed to be absent from Christian realism.

Freud’s putting into question this subject in Euclidean time and space returns us to where we began Chapter Two’s exposition of Tanabe’s post-Kantian political theology. There we saw Tanabe articulate a personal (and indeed civilizational) dialectics of which one avowed aim was to overcome “projections” for the sake of a higher universal. To put it in other terms, as Agamben was noted in that chapter to have observed, “Original sin, with which post-Kantian thought begins, is the reunification of the transcendental subject and empirical consciousness in a single absolute subject.” The role of repentance in all three figures examined here accommodates this goal to the rhythms of modern time as well as the personal and political exertions of the will to power that repentance purportedly sought to transcend in the aftermath of

⁸⁷ Ibid., 32.

the Great War. This suggests, and here I affirm, that in terms of its political program Tanabe, Niebuhr, and Dulles are in so many senses only variations on a global theme.

I close with Richard Niebuhr's reflection on the Christian realism of his brother, a lament, we might add, which also speaks to the political theology of Dulles and Tanabe:

The method which my brother recommends, that of qualifying the social struggle by of some Christian love, seems to me to be only the old method of making Christian love the ambulance driver in the wars of interested and clashing parties. If it is more than that it is a weakening of the forces we think are necessary for a juster social order. For me the question is "either-or;" either the Christian method, which is not a method of love but of repentance and forgiveness, or the method of self-assertion; either nationalism or Christianity, either capitalism-communism, or Christianity. The attempt to qualify one method by the other is a hopeless compromise.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ Miller, *War*, 21.

Conclusion

“Articulations of Christian ethics are an essential component of the diplomatic history of the west, and increasingly the global south. As a result, we need to drop the assumption that Christianity no longer figures in western diplomatic practice. During the interwar period, the ethical and territorial bases of diplomacy were informed by Christian arguments about politics and theology, legitimating in very powerful ways the normative bases of the post-World War II world order.”

Cecelia Lynch

Among historians it is a commonplace—and in certain registers, justifiably so—to claim that in the wake of World War I, the very idea of empire as the building block of a sustainable world order was more widely put into question than ever before.¹ Regardless of the extent to which this wave of anti-imperialism merely carried old wine into new bottles, I have shown in this dissertation how liberal protestant theology, linked in the minds of so many with the pre-WWI national/imperial order, underwent its own post-WWI crisis and reevaluation. As evidenced in the work of numerous figures referenced in the forgoing chapters, this was crisis of faith in the workability of established mechanisms of intra- and international sovereignty. In the most general sense this new political theological movement was undergirded by a renewed

¹ For a representative view of this claim (and a discussion of its impact on Japanese foreign policy) see Suk-Jung Han, "The Problem of Sovereignty: Manchukuo, 1932–1937," *positions: east asia cultures critique* 12, no. 2 (2004): 462.

emphasis on human finitude. This manifested in a focus on sin, a suspicion of liberal optimism, concern for the weakness of all-too-human democracy, and the need for repentance (variously defined). And it is one of the sad ironies of this movement that by the 1930s its critical force had been coopted into providing a religio-cultural legitimation for new modulations of violent imperial sovereignty on *both* sides of the Pacific.

This transpacific history of political theology between the wars is a story that is not told. In Chapter One I argued that the reasons for this are to be sought in the policed discourses of culture and history that have been marshalled under certain meta-narratives of the modern and its others. There I indicated how the scholarly use of the “modern” is coordinated with the needs of states to secure effective sovereignty via the production of subjectified loyal identities conscious of their distinction to other state formations. Important within this apparatus of post-WWII governance has been the need to alleviate the anxieties of relativism vis-à-vis these others through their demonization—communism, Islam, the internal threats to “freedom,” and so on. And coterminous with this has been the need to provide justifications for the violence required to sustain these images of cultural superiority. For the reader of *interwar* political theology it is uncanny how much of that writing was concerned with illuminating precisely those aspects of the human condition which enable and tempt just such “sinful” technologies of population management—demonization of the others, the dangerous ethics of the national mindset, liberal progressive justifications for intervention . . . the list goes on. It is therefore perhaps hardly surprising that the rather troubling similitudes and comparisons articulated in this dissertation have not yet received their scholarly due, as any academic library search will immediately confirm.

To illustrate and justify my claims regarding the politics of comparison in the telling of twentieth-century history, my second and third chapters were concerned with historical and textual specificities intended to persuasively disrupt the bifurcated temporality of East and West. I undertook this task through making the case that in contrast to the established scholarship, the work of Japanese imperial theorist Tanabe Hajime could not be reduced to a Japanese (Buddhist) religiosity in any meaningful sense. Instead, I argued for how he was immersed in “Western” thinking with particular reference to his use of Hegelian and Kierkegaardian ideas of discontinuity and repentance. This theology was then shown to be coordinate with his imperialist policies.

Of course, it is hardly very original to make the claim that Tanabe (and, by extension, the Kyoto School as a movement) were influenced by western thinking. My point was rather to show—through an analysis of James Heisig’s representative work—that the way “western influences” are acknowledged, handled and then disavowed is precisely what is of interest because of the *dispositif* thereby revealed. In Chapter Three I also initiated a bridge across the Pacific through showing how Tanabe’s Christianity stood in relation to Augustine and his just war theory. The abutment was secured on the far shore in Chapter Four where Augustine’s influence on Niebuhr was noted and framed within the larger context of his Christian realism.² More broadly, Niebuhr and Dulles were shown to have appropriated sin, repentance and discontinuity to legitimate their reading of how just and violent action in the present can and must be mediated through an eschatological framework. Certainly there are differences yet

² Augustine’s just war theory has also more recently played a significant role in justifying America’s ongoing War on Terror. The most conspicuous example of this is in the arguments made by the highly influential Jean Bethke Elshtain on the importance of Augustine for Niebuhr, and of Niebuhr’s thought in justifying the War on Terror. Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Just War Against Terror: Ethics And The Burden Of American Power In A Violent World* (New York: Basic Books, 2003), 50-58, 99-111.

whatever the shifting points of emphasis, crucially, all three of the figures discussed here have been shown to have written political theologies with the intention of grounding a Japanese- or American-led new world order.³

Tanabe continued to write, prolifically in fact, in the aftermath of the Japanese defeat. And it is due to his publications during this period, most famously his *Philosophy as the Way of Metanoetics, the Philosophy of Death* (*Zangedō toshite no tetsugaku, shi no tetsugaku*), that his name is so closely bound up with the idea of repentance.⁴ Considering the importance of this religious expression for my overall argument it would be unjustified to pass over this matter without comment. Moreover, if my argument in the preceding pages is correct, we would expect the most influential accounts of Tanabe's post-1945 repentance to exhibit the weave of textual omissions and rhetorical maneuvers associated with the post-WWII *dispositif* already argued for. I want to suggest here that this is exactly what can be shown. To demonstrate this, and as

³ In other words, all three were presenting an interpretation of what might be labeled “messianic time.” What I mean by this is the attempt to understand how action in a sinful finite present can live a promise of justice in the context of an eschatological or soteriological future, a time that is other to time. Such a temporality accords with a pseudo-divine modern subject in that such subjects are kenotic and self-othering, and repentance mediates this, however failingly, in some effort to return (God) to God or the universal *at the end of time*—“So long as one thinks time in relation to its end—the end of metaphysics, the end of the West, the end of Christianity, the end of time itself—it is thoroughly messianic and inherently Christian. And furthermore deconstruction has shown that this end never arrives.” Crockett, *Radical Political Theology*, 156.

This pseudo-divine subjectivity is clearly appropriated by all three political theologians into being-for the state formation however post-national that was to have been. Similarly, the transpacific intellectual history told here has been concealed in large measure because of the way this messianic time, in its state-oriented progressive form, has structured 20th-century global histories. In making this criticism I am in effect criticizing the postwar *dispositif* itself as an exemplar of “bad” messianic time. What I mean to say here is that it is incapable of even thinking the present in relation to an eschatological future—let alone reflecting on what might be other to messianic time—because its understanding of its present is permeated by its own unacknowledged “sin,” as demonstrated in this dissertation by its attachment to a linear bifurcated time of West and the Rest.

⁴ *Zangedō toshite no tetsugaku* was written from 1944-46 and published in April 1946. Tanabe Hajime, *Zangedō toshite no tetsugaku – shi no tetsugaku* [Philosophy as the Way of Metanoetics, The Philosophy of Death], Hase Shōtō (ed.), (Kyōto: Tōeisha, 2000). Its translation into English popularized the original text after its publication in 1986. Tanabe Hajime, *Philosophy As Metanoetics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

the capstone to my overall argument, I turn to briefly examine the most widely read account of Tanabe's postwar *zange*, contained in John Dower's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Embracing Defeat*.⁵

As a preliminary to any examination of Dower's work it is necessary to revisit the forms a post-WWII account of Tanabe's repentance would be expected to take. The implication of my argument in Chapter One was that Japan's turn to imperialism could not, in the post-WWII world, be presented as having resulted from any inherent failings in the "modern." The fact that Tanabe (*Logic of Species*), Niebuhr ("Immoral Man") and Dulles (*Christian realism and the troublesome national formation*) all argued in their own way that there *was* something deeply problematic with modern nation states was hardly going to be a popular scholarly topic in the Cold War era. Such suspicions would cast an unwelcome light on the structures of sovereignty in the post-WWII non-Soviet West, as well as potentially undermining the legitimacy of America's postwar occupation of Japan itself (along with the salvific narrative it has told of itself in this context). Instead, Japan's interwar failings were sought below Japan's ostensibly modern appearance on a culturally essentialist level. As we saw exemplified in with Bellah's Cold War and present day scholarship, it was Japanese culture which either undermined whatever trappings of civilization Japan might have once accrued, or which meant they suffered from a congenital weakness at the outset. Nevertheless, and in some tension with such assertions, there must at least be/have been the *appearance* of the possibility of any country developing into the true modern for the western modern to be the beacon of hope to others, for U.S. interventions to be justified, and to sustain the logic of a bifurcated temporality.

⁵ John W. Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan In the Wake of World War II* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1999), 496-501.

In the telling of Japanese history these various requirements have coalesced into the need for a decisive pre-war/postwar discontinuity. Given this, and if the logic of my overall argument in this dissertation is correct, then this prewar-postwar break must re-present Tanabe's post-WWII discourse on repentance by a) distinguishing it explicitly from (or completely omitting) any comparable interwar American intellectual meme and b) separating a post-WWII Tanabean repentance from its prewar forms, again either explicitly, or by silent omission. The question becomes, then, whether and how Dower's account meets these criteria.

Dower's informative and expansive account of Japan in the immediate aftermath of WWII acknowledges that Tanabe was regarded as "the most influential Japanese philosopher of the early postwar years." Reflecting this estimation, and perhaps for other reasons as well, Dower in fact gives a full five-page section over to a detailed discussion of Tanabe's end-of-war writings on the way of repentance (*zangedō*).⁶ Very early on in Dower's account the first conspicuous sign of his accommodation to the established narrative appears when Dower states that "Tanabe did not develop these thoughts in reaction to the surrender. His "way of repentance" grew out of his experiences in the final months of 1944."⁷ Responding to Dower here, I have shown this to not be the case; thus by ignoring Tanabe's "interwar" repentance Dower meets the above criteria b). But the issue of course is not just that Tanabe's repentance predates 1945 but that it was thoroughly embedded in a logic of "open society" nation/empire,

⁶ Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 496-501. The section is titled "Buddhism as Repentance and Repentance as Nationalism" and so at first blush this suggests just the kind of argument I have attempted to debunk in the preceding chapters. But to clarify: Dower is talking here of Tanabe's end of/post-WWII *zangedō* (he does not in fact acknowledge any earlier instances of repentance). Subtle shifts in Tanabe's work towards a more nationalistic and less imperial vocabulary after 1945 mean that Tanabe's post-WWII *zangedō* can in *certain* respects be seen reflecting a more Buddhist and nationalist vocabulary. My point here is not to engage with post-WWII Tanabe *per se*—something beyond the scope of this present work—but rather to investigate Dower's accordance with the post-1945 construction of transpacific interwar history.

⁷ Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 497.

not, as we saw in Heisig's account, some particularistic (ultra)nationalism. Dower's silence on the complexity of this issue—and his use of subheading such as “Repentance as Nationalism”—implicates him in this obscuration.

How, then does Dower fair in terms of a) above, the transnational nature of repentance? Dower states that Tanabe's *zange* resonates with “suffering and emptiness, despair and negation, conversion and rebirth.” And this he interprets as a sign of Tanabe's allegiance to Shinran and his religious philosophy.⁸ I concur that certainly this language can be associated with a reading of Shinran, and Tanabe does make such representations. However, as I have shown, it is also the language of the theology of crisis as well as that of Kierkegaard, and many other streams of interwar political theology. In an area-centered approach to Japan this fact can be quietly omitted.

Finally, how does Dower orient himself to the larger twentieth-century narrative of a fallen Japan requiring absolution and guidance (from the U.S. in particular)? Dower, I suggest, maps his reading of Tanabe on to this “modern but then revealed as not” narrative in a remarkable example of metonymical displacement. To effect this Dower acknowledges Tanabe's western intellectual heritage in a similar way to which one might explain that Japan in the early 20th-century was looking decidedly “modern.” The presence of modernity is implied in this way, for example, when Dower observes that prior to the 1930s Tanabe was “a major interpreter of Kantian and Hegelian philosophy.”⁹ Yet two rhetorical effects should be noted here. First, while drawing attention to this Western and even Christian heritage, Tanabe's specific links with theology are omitted. Second, as discussed earlier, (neo-) Kantianism and

⁸ Ibid., 498.

⁹ Ibid., 499.

Hegelianism were fading intellectual movements in post-WWI Europe and so in this way Tanabe's "Europeanism" is implicitly suggested to already be on the wane leaving him open to "darker" influences. Buttressing this textual arrangement, the only other major western philosopher Tanabe is linked to is the Heidegger of the 1930s. And as we saw in Heisig's work, Heidegger all too easily stands as shorthand for intellectual Nazism, and therefore guilty by association. Immediately following this mention of Heidegger, Dower then suddenly lists a number of Tanabe's peculiar mannerisms and idiosyncrasies.¹⁰ The impression given is that the Japanese philosopher was "like us normal moderns, but also not."

What appears surprising at this point in Dower's analysis is that he then goes on to declare that effectively, until the end of the war, Tanabe never "rebelled against his European Gods."¹¹ In contrast to Heisig then, Dower maintains that Tanabe's affiliation with Buddhist thought is limited to only "some prior engagement."¹² This certainly appears *prima facie* to be an improvement on Heisig, and even to challenge the thrust of the argument I have made against Dower above. Nevertheless, in assessing Dower's claims regarding Tanabe's European allegiances, it must be remembered that Dower still faces same problem that haunted Heisig's hermeneutical contortions, namely, how to separate Tanabe's western thinking from some variant of ultranationalism. Dower in fact manages to square the circle here by presenting Tanabe's repentance as repentance for having his true European principles corrupted by the wartime mood.¹³ In this way Dower and Heisig embrace each other once more in that while

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid. Needless to say, linking Tanabe to European gods rather than to gods shared by American's as well allows for a placing of America ahead of Europe on the modernity index.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., 497. Dower cites Tanabe to support this claim but it is difficult to engage Dower on what this might mean and *why* Tanabe might have said this because Dower does admit to the existence of a transnational interwar discourse on repentance. Connectedly, neither does Dower appear desirous of engaging with the possibility that

Heisig explains Tanabe by reduction to cultural symbolism of the non-West (Buddhism), Dower explains Tanabe's repentance by pointing to the loss and absence of western thinking. Thus for both scholars the loss or absence of true modernity is recuperated into the explanation of an ill-defined Japanese imperialism. Lest here be any doubt on this scholarly collusion, in the next paragraph Dower specifically contrasts Tanabe with Nanbara Shigeru who, in the U.S. scholarship on this period, has become something of a poster child for the "Good Japanese," and whose Christian faith is repeatedly emphasized.¹⁴

Throughout his account of postwar repentance, Dower presents this affect as a form of regret followed by either an openness to what Japan had mistakenly turned away from (e.g., the case of Nanbara), or, alternatively, as something like personal guilt followed by defiance (e.g., Tanabe).¹⁵ Accordingly, the tension between repentance as guilt and apology on the one hand—offered up to the victor—and, on the other hand, as a dialectical and/or discontinuous confrontation with one's own particular projections of the universal, is a matter that remains unaddressed and unacknowledged in Dower's book. This failure all the more conspicuous given that many of the quotations from Tanabe that Dower cites clearly signal towards the interwar complex of repentance that this dissertation has staked out. I shall end with one such example since despite or perhaps because of its overdetermined imperial provenance, it stands as an

whatever "European principles" are, exactly, they might not be incompatible with a violent nationalistic imperialism.

¹⁴ See, for example, Heisig, *Rude Awakenings*, 257-8, or Bellah, *Imagining Japan*, 49. As a general comment on the field, I believe further research is required on how Christians who had been complicit with the wartime regime were protected in the postwar and have been so in the histories written since that time.

¹⁵ Nanbara, it is explained, equated repentance with "embracing the 'reason and truth' that were to be found in western thought." Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 497. For an example of what Dower implies is little more than defiance see Tanabe's call for repentance from the victor not just the vanquished (below). Without understanding the postwar modulations of Tanabe's interwar concept of repentance, it is hard to see how Dower could read such apparent protestations in any other way.

uncannily prophetic warning against the coming postwar universal under which Tanabe and so much Japanese history was to be written:

“Obviously we are not the only country that needs *zange*. Other nations too should undertake its practice in a spirit of sincerity and humility, each acknowledging its own contradictions and faults, its own evil and sin. *Zange* is a task that world history imposes on all peoples in our times.”¹⁶

¹⁶ Ibid., 501.

APPENDIX

I think it is fair to assume that Heisig's use of "ultranationalism" here is largely dependent for its historical and conceptual integrity from Maruyama's influential postwar essay on this theme.¹ In this latter essay the Maruyama of the immediate postwar period advocates for a modern autonomous subjectivity as the essential heretofore missing element required for Japan to become a modern nation-state. Reflecting both the prewar and postwar interest in a Protestant subjectivity as a hallmark of modernity, Maruyama claims that recent Japanese history is a legacy of the failure of the post-Restoration government to ensure that "questions of thought belief and morality . . . were guaranteed their subjective 'internal' quality."² Writing in the postwar it is clear that the "nation," by which he means an idealized western formation, has become the future. And to the extent that there is a universal pattern of historical development there is (to be) a universal form of modern nation and of subjectivity. Yet as Hirotaka Kasai notes in his critical appraisal of Maruyama, this narrative involves an exceptionalizing of Japan's (ultra)nationalism, a particularizing of Japan in a universal framework of modern nations.³ Certainly this appears to be the case and seems to mark a divergence from Maruyama's 1944 essay where he claimed that *every* nation manifested a unique people.⁴ In the same wartime essay, however, Maruyama also claims that Japan's ethnos is unique in being racially pure and homogenous.⁵ We can say that with some prescience with respect to the coming post-1945

¹ Masao Maruyama, "The Logic and Psychology of Postwar Ultrnationalism," in *Thought and Behavior In Modern Japanese Politics*, ed. Ivan Morris (London: Oxford University Press, 1969).

² *Ibid.*, 3.

³ Hirotaka Kasai, "Maruyama Masao's Japan," in *Deconstructing Nationality* edited by Naoki Sakai, Brett de Bary and Iyotani Toshio (Cornell: Cornell University East Asia Program, 2005), 188.

⁴ Masao Maruyama, *Studies in the Intellectual History of Tokugawa Japan*, Tr. Mikiso Hane. (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1974), 324.

⁵ *Ibid.*

zeitgeist, this tension suggests Maruyama is rewriting the meaning of *minzoku* under the multiethnic empire in accordance with the U.S. postwar prescription of Japan as “particular.” Furthermore, Nakano makes a critical intervention when he shows that Maruyama’s wartime publications demonstrate that he was already aware of the failure of western states to maintain the distinction between internal values—which Maruyama claims drove Japanese nationalism—and external laws—a distinction which marks healthy modern western states.⁶ In this sense Maruyama knowingly produces a ‘false’ particularization of Japan through insisting on the particular causes of Japan’s recent imperial history.

⁶ Toshio Nakano, *Ōtsuka Hisao to Maruyama Masao* (Tokyo: Seidosha, 2001), 194.

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