
Community and the Law of Return *Between Ethics and the Question of Being*

Wirk nicht voraus
Sende nicht aus

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1. The Telos Named "Destiny"

Watsuji Tetsuro's *Ethics* was almost the only systematic work on ethics to be written in modern Japan, and perhaps the only systematic philosophy. Both the methodology and content of the work show the strong influence of Heidegger's *Being and Time*, and yet, strangely enough, it denies that *Being and Time* has the qualifications of a philosophy of "historicality" [Geschichtlichkeit: to be distinguished from Historizität, which is translated as "historicity."]

He [Heidegger] excavates only so far as the being of the individual for the location of temporality, and does not succeed in reaching human Being [which is a unity with a dual structure of individuality and sociality]. For him, *Zukunft* is the awareness of an isolated self before the inevitability of death, *Gewesen* is the determining finitude of the self who has come to this awareness, and *Gegenwart* is its specific situationality. The self that is said to return to itself in the unification of these temporalities is, in the end, no more than an isolated self. ... Thus, *his temporality is never embodied as historicality*, and plays only the role of radically founding "what is" as an object of the individual

consciousness.¹

Watsuji is no doubt aware that Chapter V of the second division of *Being and Time*, “Temporality and Historicity,” is intended to be an “interpretation of Dasein’s *historicality*” by means of “a more detailed refinement of temporality” (2/505; E/434). But in view of Watsuji’s own position that “the historicality of human Being” is possible only when temporality is “realized as a moral structure”²—specifically, as a “nation-forming people” (11/34)—he probably does not recognize Heidegger’s analysis, which does in fact seem to give clear precedence to the “isolated self,” as being “a more detailed refinement of temporality.”³ Nevertheless—or rather, precisely *because* Watsuji’s interest was directed towards the close and indivisible relationship between “historicality” and “nation-forming peoples—it is strange indeed that his reading of Heidegger ignores the *clearly stated* intention of an “ethno-ontology” that is to be found in the same section of *Being and Time*.

... if fateful Dasein [das schicksalhafte Dasein], as Being-in-the-world, exists essentially in Being-with-Others, its historizing [Geschehen] is a co-historizing and is determinative for it as destiny [Geschick]. This is how we designate the historizing of the *community* [Gemeinschaft], of a *people* [Volk]. Destiny is not something that puts itself together out of individual fates, any more than Being-with-one-another can be conceived as the occurring together of several Subjects. Our fates have already been guided in advance, in

1. *Gesamtausgabe* Vol. 10, p. 233. Citations from Heidegger refer to volumes of the *Gesamtausgabe* published by Vittorio Klostermann (Frankfurt am Main), and indicate volume number followed by the page number (vol/page). An “E” indicates that the English translation has been referred to, followed by the appropriate page number. The following translations have been used:

Being and Time, tr. John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson (London, 1962).

An Introduction to Metaphysics. tr. Ralph Manheim (Yale University Press, 1959).

2. *Complete Works*, Vol. 10, p. 30. Citations from Watsuji refer to the Japanese editions included in the *Complete Works of Watsuji Tetsuro*, (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1962).

3. In *Climate and Culture*, Watsuji had already criticized Heidegger’s “historicality” because it “does not appear in sufficient detail” (8/2).

our Being with one another in the same world and in our resoluteness for definite possibilities. Only in communicating and in struggling does the power of destiny become free. Dasein's fateful destiny in and with its 'generation' goes to make up the full authentic [eigentlich] historizing of Dasein (2/508; E/436).

Heidegger is not merely juxtaposing "fate," which is the "authentic historizing" of singular existence, and "destiny," which is the "authentic historizing" of an ethnic community. Nor is he unilaterally reducing the latter to the former—that is, to the authenticity of the "isolated self"—as is often believed. He is stating, very clearly, that the "fateful destiny" of Dasein—the "authentic historizing" of an ethnic community—is the "full authentic historizing of Dasein." In other words, although the "authentic historizing" of singular existence may be that which constitutes the "primordial historicity" of Dasein (2/510; E/438), *by itself it remains incomplete unless it is led to the "destiny" of the ethnic community.* The anticipation of death of singular existence may be a necessary condition for the "full" authenticity of Dasein, but it is not a sufficient condition. In order for Dasein's authenticity to be "full," the "fate" of singular existence must be led to a further "destiny"—a *telos*. Thus, the movement of return to authentic Being is clearly regarded here as including a teleological movement from an "isolated self" to a "people."⁴

This intention of an "ethno-ontology" clearly cannot be looked upon as a foreign element that has suddenly intruded upon Heidegger's philosophy from outside assumptions—as something unrelated to the

4. Löwith argues that Heidegger's post-*Being and Time* turn towards Nazism should be seen in the light of a "substitution" of the singularity of "Dasein" with a "German Dasein," and Habermas has also taken this view in recent years, but this view is insufficient in itself. It is ambiguous to speak of "priority" being given to "individual Dasein" in *Being and Time*, because Heidegger says that "resoluteness" does not simultaneously "isolate it [Dasein] so that it becomes a free-floating 'I,'" and also because he confirms that "resoluteness... is *authentically* nothing else than *Being-in-the-world* [and thus, nothing else than Being-with-one-another]" (2/395; E/344). On the other hand, the idea that "one who is irresolute... cannot have a 'destiny'" is not restricted to *Being and Time* as Habermas says, but is also to be found in the later "ethno-ontology," as we shall see. (cf. Habermas, J., *Der philosophische Diskurs der Moderne*, Suhrkamp, 1986, p. 187.)

arguments of *Being and Time* as a whole (in its published form). Already near the beginning of the second chapter of the first division of this work, Heidegger writes that Dasein “can understand itself as bound up in its ‘destiny’ with the Being of those entities which it encounters within its own world” (2/75). This chapter, with its title “Being-in-the-world in general as the basic state of Dasein,” is an attempt to sketch the framework of the constituting moments of Being-in-the-world before going on to concrete analyses of those moments, and also to determine the fundamental direction that all subsequent analyses will take. This being the case, the entire argumentation for a “fundamental ontology” in *Being and Time* can be said to have been developed with a view to the “full authentic historizing” of Being-in-the-world, and in anticipation of the definition in Division Two, Chapter 5, of “destiny” as the authentic historizing of a “community” as a “people.”

It is true that the intention of an “ethno-ontology” is no more than an intention, and that it was never “embodied” in *Being and Time*, just as Watsuji says. Nevertheless, it seems to me that the intention, as such, already provides a rough sketch of the “ontology” that was to be. Heidegger’s “ethno-ontology” takes clear shape in a series of commentaries on Hölderlin begun in 1934, which followed various texts that testified to his manifest involvement with Nazism, but one can already see previews of this development in certain concepts introduced in *Being and Time*.

Here, let me call attention to the following three assertions:

First, “Destiny is not something that puts itself together out of individual fates, any more than Being-with-one-another can be conceived as the occurring together of several Subjects.” Just as Dasein’s “Being-with-one-another” cannot be regarded merely as the coexistence of numerous subjects as “person-things” [Personding], so also, “destiny” cannot be regarded as the mere sum of numerous “fates” within certain bounds. In accordance with the basic guidelines of the analysis of Being-in-the-world as a whole, the authentic Being of ethnic communities should be found beyond all “presence-at-hand” [Vorhandenheit].

Secondly, in order for this dimension of “destiny” to be possible,

the numerous “fates” must “have already been guided in advance, in our Being-with-one-another in the same world and in our *resoluteness* for definite possibilities.” For Dasein, which is Being-in-the-world, the Other always appears to him “out of the world” (2/159; E/155), but with the authentic historizing of an ethnic community, a “Being-with-one-another in the same world” comes to pass, through the mediation of resoluteness. The “world” in *Being and Time* may be embodied in “different possibilities” such as “the ‘public’ we-world, or one’s ‘own’ closest (domestic) environment” (2/87; E/93), but it is clear that the only possible “full authentic” form of the world is the *ethnic world*.

Thirdly, “only in communicating and in struggling does the power of destiny become free.” In order for resolute Daseins to inhabit “the same world” and to achieve the historizing of the ethnic community as a “free power,” they must in some way come together as a whole, although not as a “present-at-hand composition” of individual “fates.” One of the means to this end is “communication” [Mitteilung] and the other is “struggle” [Kampf].

“The phenomenon of communication must be understood in a sense which is ontologically broad,” says Heidegger in a preceding analysis (Section 34). It must not be understood, for example, as an “assertive [aussagende] communication” such as in “giving information,” but as a “communication which is grasped in principle existentially,” of which the former is merely “a special case.” “Communication” in this sense is the “articulation of Being-with-one-another-understandingly” and it is precisely through this type of “communication” that “a co-state-of-mind [Mitbefindlichkeit] gets ‘shared,’” as well as “the understanding of Being-with” (2/215; E/205).

We should note here that Heidegger says in the same context: “In ‘poetical’ discourse [*dichtende Rede*], the communication of the existential possibilities of one’s state-of-mind can become an aim in itself, and this amounts to a disclosing of existence” (2/216; E/205). In *Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (1927), a series of lectures delivered in the same period as *Being and Time*, Heidegger also says that poetry is none other than the elementary “coming-to-words” or “uncovering”

of existence as Being-in-the-world (24/244). Taking some lines of Rilke's "*Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge*" as an example, he shows how the poet can see the "original world" and how his expressions make the world "visible for those others who were previously blind." The privileged status which Heidegger bestows upon the poet in his later "ethno-ontology" is to be previewed here in the form of special notice given to "poetic" communication as a type of "communication" that can "liberate" the power of destiny."

The concept of "struggle," unlike that of "communication," is not specifically analyzed at all in *Being and Time*. It is, however, the dominant concept behind the "attitude of deliberation and query" set forth in *The Self-assertion of the German University*.⁵ This was Heidegger's inaugural address on becoming rector of Freiburg University, and has come to symbolize "Heidegger the National-Socialist." If, as Karl Löwith testifies,⁶ Heidegger himself admitted that his philosophy of "historicality" was indeed the "basis" for his involvement with Nazism, then it is no wonder that nearly all of the traits of his "ethno-ontology," including his concept of "struggle," should be found in *The Self-assertion of the German University*.

First of all, Heidegger says that he has accepted the position of rector in order to pursue the possibility of an "internal gathering" [innere Sammlung] of the [German] people.

In those days, in the movement that came to power, I saw the possibility of an internal gathering and of a renewal of the people—I saw a path that would lead to the historical-occidental mission of our people. I felt that the self-renewing university had been entrusted with the common mission of contributing its leadership to this inner gathering of the people.⁷

"The German university" should be "the center of the most serious

5. Heidegger, M., *Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität*, Das Rektorat 1933/34, Vittorio Klostermann, 1983, p. 28.

6. Löwith, K., *Mein Leben in Deutschland vor und nach 1933*, J.B. Metzler, 1986, p. 57.

7. *Die Selbstbehauptung*, p. 23.

gathering dedicated to the greatest service to the people [Volk] by its state,”⁸ but the “*gathering*” must be “internal” from beginning to end, and is immune to any idea of “present-at-hand synthesis.”

Secondly, the university’s contribution to “the internal gathering” derives from its power to form “the *one* spiritual world [die *eine* geistige Welt] of the people.”⁹ This is because “The German people will arrive at its fate¹⁰ by throwing its own history into the light of the overwhelming force of all the powers of world formation possessed by the human Dasein, and by continually renewing its struggle for its own spiritual world.”¹¹ “One spiritual people” must jointly possess “one spiritual world.”

The spiritual world of a people is neither the superstructure of a culture, nor is it a factory for producing useful knowledge and values. It is a power that takes the Dasein of a people to its greatest inner heights and gives it sway over the greatest expanses, and as such, it is a power that conserves a people’s earth-and-blood forces [erd-und bluthafte Kräfte] at their deepest. The one spiritual world is that which secures the greatness of a people.¹²

The “world” of Being-in-the-world clearly appears here as “the spiritual world of a people [Volk]” and as the “world” which “conserves a people’s *earth-and-blood* forces.” And the “spirit” which assumes this “world” is one that is defined in *Being and Time* termi-

8. *Die Selbstbehauptung*, p. 18.

9. *Die Selbstbehauptung*, p. 17.

10. In *Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität*, “fate” [Schicksal] is allotted to “peoples” and “destiny” [Geschick] to “nations,” respectively. For a discussion of the translation of “Volk” and “Nation,” see also the lecture notes of Helene Weiss (based on the 1933 lectures on *Basic Problems of Philosophy*) found posthumously among her belongings and quoted by Farias: “The German people [Volk] will find a path of return to itself, and will find also great leadership [Führung] for that undertaking. Under that leadership, the people who have returned to itself will create its own state [Staat]. The people will shape itself in that state, and further develop into a nation [Nation].” (Farias, V., *Heidegger und Nationalsozialismus*, S. Fischer, 1989, p. 190.)

11. *Die Selbstbehauptung*, p. 15.

12. *Die Selbstbehauptung*, p. 14.

nology as “an originally *attuned* intelligent *resoluteness* that is directed towards the essence of Being.”

Thirdly, the inaugural address introduces “labor” as a momentum that makes possible an “internal gathering,” which is a substitute for “communication” in *Being and Time*, and also gives maximum emphasis to the significance of “struggle.” For Heidegger, “the German university” was none other than a “community of struggle [Kampfgemeinschaft] of teachers and students”:

The wills of the two [teachers and students] must struggle with one another. Every faculty of will and thought, every force of the mind, every power of the body must be developed through struggle, heightened in the struggle, and continually conserved as struggle.¹³

When “the original and full essence of science” has been created through such a “struggle,” then and only then will the German people have “won *by struggle*” [er-kämpfen] a “spiritual world” worthy of their habitation. Not only the university, but the whole of the German people are a “community of struggle,” and in order for the people to achieve “full Dasein,” they must dedicate themselves to “struggle” as well as to “labor.”¹⁴

The concept of “struggle” was originally a concept of *Being and Time*, as we have already seen, and is also used in the Hölderlin lectures and in *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, as we shall see later. Therefore, although it may clearly reverberate with National-socialistic ideology, along with other Heideggerian concepts of this period, Heidegger’s explanation that what is truly in question is “the essence of a philosophically contemplated ‘struggle’” is not entirely false. This “struggle” is “contemplated in Heraclitus’ Fragment 53” and does not signify “war” or “fighting” in the usual sense, but rather a “confrontation [Aus-einander-setzung] in which the essences of those which confront one another are exposed to the Other, through which they make themselves present, or, to use a Greek expression, become that

13. *Die Selbstbehauptung*, p. 18.

14. *Die Selbstbehauptung*, p. 16.

which is disclosed or true.”¹⁵ “The essence of *polemos* is in *deiknunai* [zeigen/showing] and *poiein* [her-stellen/bringing forth], to use a Greek expression; in putting forth [hervor-stellen] something as open and visible.”¹⁶ This interpretation of *polemos* as *deiknunai* makes one wonder if Heidegger’s interpretation of *logos* and *aletheia* [truth], which were presented in *Being and Time* as being a “radical repossession” of a thinking that began with Heraclitus, “that most ancient of philosophical traditions,” is not closely tied to the concept of “destiny,” which is also a concept which belongs to *Being and Time*, through the mediation of “communication and struggle” [*logos* and *polemos*]. And if *polemos* is also *poiein*, one may also wonder if Heidegger’s “Work-philosophy”¹⁷ [Werk-Philosophie], which, according to Alexander Schwan, was apparent in its entirety by 1935 at the latest, and the bestowing of special privilege upon the poet, which was clearly stated for the first time in the 1934 Hölderlin lectures, cannot both be traced back to *Being and Time* if one follows the concept of “struggle” as a guide line.¹⁸

15. *Die Selbstbehauptung*, p. 28.

16. *Die Selbstbehauptung*, p. 29.

17. Schwan, A., *Politische Philosophie im Denken Heideggers*, Westdeutscher Verlag, 1965. In this book, basing himself on a study of *The Origin of the Work of Art* and *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, Schwan attempts to understand the Heidegger of 1933 by looking for his “political philosophy” in the Aristotelian definition of “politics as a work of truth.” Lacoue-Labarthe’s recent study (Lacoue-Labarthe, Ph., *La Fiction du politique. Heidegger, l’art et la politique*, Christian Bourgois, 1987) can be regarded as a further development of this idea in relation to the modern “German Tradition” as a whole. Further, Kobayashi Yasuo analyzes the 1935 private edition of *The Origin of the Work of Art* and points out that Heidegger’s “fascist ontology” is to be found in his idea of a “people” as a “work” (“The Destiny of the Question of Origin” I & II, in *Gendai Shiso*, April & June, 1988; later reprinted in *Kigen to Kongen* [Miraisha, 1991]).

18. I do not mean to say that the Aristotelian assertion of the priority of praxis over *poiesis* is not yet firmly stated at the time of *Being and Time*. However, *poiesis* in this case is a “present-at-hand” ontological concept, and cannot be regarded as identical to *poiesis* which has undergone a “true ontological restoration.” Concerning this point, see: Taminiaux, J., *Lectures de l’ontologie fondamentale, essais sur Heidegger*, Millon, 1989, pp. 147 sq.

2. Logos, or “Being” as “Identity”

“Germanien” and “Der Rhein,” the Hölderlin lectures begun in 1934, are, together with *An Introduction to Metaphysics* and *The Origin of the Work of Art* of the next year, the most comprehensive expressions to be found of Heidegger’s “ethno-ontology.” Although Heidegger introduces some new pivotal concepts such as the occasional use of “Seyn” for “Being” [Sein], the lectures nevertheless “derive from,” “depend upon,” and “are related to” the thinking of *Being and Time*.¹⁹ This is to be seen especially in their revelation of the “historicality of Dasein” as the historicality of a “people,” and in the structure of that revelation, the basics of which were sketched out in *Being and Time*.

The reading of the poem “Germanien” at the beginning of the lectures already indicates the ultimate interest of the Hölderlin lectures. “Germanien”—Germany—is, for both Heidegger and Hölderlin, the “Fatherland” [Vaterland] as “origin,” “our Fatherland,” “this people in this land, who as a historical people are taken up into a historical Being.”

Once again we must avoid the mistaken notion that “the people” are something “already present-at-hand” (39/147). The “Fatherland” is “not something that lies behind things or floats above them.” It is “the most forgotten of things in the day to day operation of being” (39/121). To say that it is an “origin” means that it is “the last, because it is basically the first” and therefore “the *farthest* and the heaviest, what we meet at last under the name of Hölderlin” (39/4). “We” must take this, which is an *arché* and therefore also a *telos*, and make it into a “gathering.”

In the Hölderlin lectures, as in *Being and Time*, this “gathering” still demands as a prerequisite a return to “authenticity” at the level of individual existence.

19. Greisch, J., *Hölderlin et le chemin vers le sacré*, in: *Martin Heidegger*. L’Herne, 1983, p. 404. Taminiaux, J., *op. cit.*, pp. 259 sq. However, for some reason, neither Greisch nor Taminiaux make any mention of the chapter on “historicality,” even while pointing to the overwhelming presence of *Being and Time*.

Poetry—is no play, the relationship to it is no playful relaxation in which to forget oneself, but the awakening and the tearing out of the *individual's most individual essence*, [the act] through which the individual *reaches back to the ground of his Dasein*. If each individual comes from that ground, then *the true gathering of individuals into an original community* has already happened in advance (39/8).

The return to “authenticity” entails, of course, that individuals become “resolute” existence.

This Being of ours is, however, not that of an isolated subject, but... that of an historical Being-with-one-another as Being in a world. To say that such a human Being is mine [=my Being] does not mean that this Being is “subjectivized,” or limited to the isolated individual and defined by him, but simply that this historical Being-with-one-another lastly and firstly and always must go through a *decision* [*Entscheidungen*] which no one can take away from any other (39/174 sq.).

Individual “decisions” and “resoluteness” are not intrinsically the same, but “resoluteness” can “exist” only as particular “decisions” (2/395). Decisions which lead the individual to a “true gathering” and to an authentic “historical Being-with-Others” must, in the Hölderlin lectures also, in the most radical sense pass through an awareness of “death.”

The death that each individual man must die for himself, the death that isolates each individual to the utmost, death and the readiness to be sacrificed to it, it is precisely this which creates first and beforehand the space of community from which comradeship is born. ... Unless we force a power into our Dasein, a power which binds and isolates just as unconditionally as does a death which is undertaken as a free sacrifice, that is, a power that touches the very roots of the Dasein of each individual, and unless we stand just as deeply and fully in a pure knowing, then there will be no “comradeship” (39/73).

The Heidegger of 1934 who makes the authentic existence of an “individual” who has “readied” himself for “death” the prerequisite for a “gathering” of a “community” (a people), and the Heidegger of 1927 who made the “gathering” of a “community” (a people) the *telos* of the authentic existence of the “individual” who has “readied” himself for “death”—both these Heideggers are saying the same thing. In neither case is it a matter of choosing between the authenticity of the “individual” and of the “community” (people), but rather of simultaneously founding both the authenticity of the “individual” and that of the “community” (people) upon a “readiness” for “death.”

As can be seen in the previous citation, the Hölderlin lectures also confirm that “historical Being-with-one-another”—that is, the existence of “a people”—is also “Being *in a world*” (*Sein in einer Welt*). The “world” in this case is an ethnic world, a world that belongs only to “one historical people as a whole.” There is no more appropriate commentary upon this point than a text from the 1935 edition of *The Origin of the Work of Art*.

The world is a union that indicates the various relationships into which are woven all the essential decisions, victories, sacrifices and works of *one people*. The world is by no means the world of all people belonging to a universal humanity; nevertheless, each world always signifies beings in the whole. The world—is for *one people* something that is *respectively allotted to each people*.²⁰

In the inaugural address, the “world” was regarded as that which conserved “a people’s earth-and-blood forces,” but now, in the Hölderlin lectures with their clear insinuations of “blood and land” [Blut und Boden] ideology, the “world” is now founded upon the “homeland” [Heimat] which exists as a “force of the earth” (39/88, 254). A people exist on the “*earth*” [auf der Erde] and in the “world”

20. Heidegger, M., *De l'origine de l'œuvre d'art*, première version (1935), texte allemand inédit et traduction française, Authenticity, 1987, pp. 34 sq. I am grateful to Kobayashi Yasuo for the loan of his book.

[in der Welt], but it is the “basic attunement” [Grundstimmung] of “poetry” that “opens” [eröffnen] the “world” on the “earth.” “The basic attunement opens the world, which has received the stamp of Being in poetical expression [Sagen]” (39/80), and thereby makes the “truth of a people” possible for the first time.²¹

Each ruling basic attunement and the opening of beings in the whole which occurs in that attunement is the origin of the determination [Bestimmung] of what we call the truth of a people. The truth of the people is the respective openness of Being in the whole, and according to that openness, the powers that carry, join and lead receive their rank [Ränge] and attain a unanimity. The truth of a people is the openness of Being from which a people know what it historically wills, by willing *itself*, and by willing to be itself (39/143 sq.).

The words: “the powers that carry, join and lead receive their rank” indicate that it is not only the poet who is awarded a privileged position in this “world.” The “truth of a people” is originally “instituted” [stiften] by the poet, then “conceptually grasped” by the “thinker” in “the authentic knowledge in the sense of philosophy,” then further “given root in the earth and in the space of history” by the “state-builder” [Staatschöpfer] (39/51, 120, 144). It is these “authentic creators” who “originally found the historical Dasein of a people”; they are each “the one true leader [Führer],” and as such, equal to “demi-gods” [Halbgötter] who “mediate” between gods and men (39/210, 259, 284).

The “earth” becomes the “homeland” when it “opens itself to the power of the gods,” and these “demi-gods” being in relation to “the Holy,” they are also “creative violence” (39/105, 144). In *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, Heidegger speaks in detail of how the “poet,” the “thinker” and the “ruler” [Herrscher] must create for the first time “statute and limit” and “structure and order” as “creators,” and how,

21. See Taminiaux, *op. cit.*, pp. 264 sq. for the connection to the analysis of “attunement” [or “mood”] in *Being and Time*.

therefore, they are “violent doers” [Gewalt-tätige] who are permitted to act beyond them [i.e., the laws, etc. which they create] (40/162; E/162 sq.). Their actions found the “polis” first by being “*a-polis*” [non-polis]—polis can be substituted by the “people,” “the there [Da] in which, out of which, and for which history happens”²²—and Heidegger says that this is “politics in the highest and most authentic sense,” and that it transcends the ordinary “political” (30/214).

A “politics in the highest and most authentic sense” that transcends the ordinary “political”—this is no doubt meant to imply that the “violence” of the “creators” is, *in itself*, to be distinguished from so-called “bad violence.” This brings to the fore of course the problem of “struggle” in the Heraclitian sense, and of “the essence of a philosophically contemplated ‘struggle.’” *An Introduction to Metaphysics* makes clear that the “violent acts” of the “creators” are in fact part of such a “struggle,” that they are “not merely attacks on present-on-hand beings,” and that the “world” is born precisely out of these “confrontations” in which beings are “assigned their position and subsistence and rank in presence.”

The battle is then sustained by the creators, poets, thinkers, statesmen. Against the overwhelming chaos they set the barrier of their work, and in their work they capture the world thus opened up. It is with these works that the elemental power, the *physis* first comes to stand. Only now does the essent [Seiende; being] become essent as such. This world-building is history in the authentic sense (40/66 sq.; E/62).

Here also, “authentic history”—what *Being and Time* referred to as “destiny”—becomes history only through “struggle.” Therefore, where “struggle” stops, “decline” [Verfall] inevitably sets in (40/68; E/63).

22. In the *Der Ister* lectures (1942), the polis is neither “city” nor “state.” but a place “where all beings and all those related to beings *come together* [sich sammeln]” (53/106). In the commentary on “Andenken” (1943), it is called an “essential site in the history that was *determined by the Holy*” (4/88).

The situation remains the same in the Hölderlin lectures. In fact, the lectures themselves are developed as a “thinking confrontation” with the poetry of Hölderlin, as a “struggle with ourselves,” a “struggle to find the poetry in the poem” (39/6, 22). And more than anything else, the lectures are an attempt to achieve the “revelation of Being” that Hölderlin has won by means of his poetic “struggle”; hence the motif of “conflict in the midst of Being” which one finds throughout “Germanien” and “Der Rhein” (39/6, 22, 239). It is here that Heidegger summons the name of Heraclitus in such a decisive manner. *Hen panta einai*—all is one—the Heraclitian conception of “conflicting harmony” which is concentrated into this fragment reigns over the understanding of Being throughout “German philosophy—from Eckhart to Hegel, and Hölderlin and Nietzsche—and of course, Heidegger himself.”²³ Thus, the name of Heraclitus is not the name of a “long vanished Greek philosophy” nor the name of a universal thinking,” but “the name of the original force of the western-German Dasein” that stands “in confrontation with the Asian” (39/123 sq.).

Finally, let us consider the matter of “communication.”

In the Hölderlin lectures, “communication” per se is dismissed as the mere “external announcement” or “outer skin” of experience (39/67 sq., 256). However, this concept of “communication” of which “reporting” (39/65 sq.) is a typical example had already been demoted to a secondary class in *Being and Time*. In contrast to this, a more “fundamental” type of “communication” is found in the “*sharing*” [*Teilung*] of the content of “Being-with-one-another,” especially in the “communication of the existential possibilities of state of mind,” which is considered to be the “distinctive goal of ‘poetical’ discourse.”

23. Regarding the relationship between Heidegger’s “ethno-ontology” and earlier German thinking, particularly that of Hegel, see Lacoue-Labarthe, *op. cit.*, as well as Gethmann-Siefert, A., “Heidegger und Hölderlin,” in: *Heidegger und Praktische Philosophie*. Suhrkamp. 1988, pp. 192 sq., Taminioux, J., *op. cit.*, pp. 255sq. However, Hegel, who in the “Germanien” lecture is commended for having thoroughly considered the thinking of Heraclitus (39/129), is relegated to one place behind Nietzsche and two behind Hölderlin in *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, because in repeating Heraclitus, he merely “looked backward and drew a line under the past” (40/135).

If this is the case, is it not possible to consider the fundamental thinking behind the Hölderlin lectures, which assert that a “true gathering” into a “primordial community” will be made possible by “*taking part*” [*Teilnehmen*] (39/58) in the “basic attunement” [Stimmung] of Hölderlin’s “poetical discourse”—is it not possible to regard this thinking as a further development along the lines of *Being and Time*, where an “ethno-community” was to be achieved by means of “communication”?

The decisive factor here no doubt is the concept of *logos*. The “communication” theory of *Being and Time* is presented in the context of finding the ontological foundation of *logos* in the “disclosedness” of Dasein, since Heidegger finds the traditional interpretation of *logos* to be “ontologically insufficient” (2/160–165; E/156–161). From this viewpoint, *logos* is defined as a primordial *aletheuein*—that is, an “uncovering” or “bringing into unhiddenness.” The concept is traced back beyond Aristotle to Heraclitus, author of “the oldest fragments of philosophical doctrine in which *logos* is explicitly handled,” and Heidegger shows that he clearly regards “communication” as being an essential constituting moment of *logos* (2/290 sq.; E/262). In the 1929 lectures on *The Basic Concepts of Metaphysics*, *logos* is considered in its essential relationship to *physis* and is defined, following Heraclitus, as a “drawing out of the reign of being in the whole from its hiddenness,” and is explored down to its roots in the forces of “world-formation,” which is a “formation of unity” (29–30/39 sq., 454, 486). The most primordial concept of *logos* makes its appearance along this line of thought—in the company of “ethno-ontology”—as *logos* as *Sammlung* [gathering] or *Versammlung* [meeting]. According to *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, what is said of *logos* in the Fragments of Heraclitus “corresponds exactly to the actual meaning of the [German] word ‘Sammlung.’” It is a “gathering” and at the same time a “being gathered”; in other words, none other than a primordial “gathering” [das ursprünglich Sammelnde] (40/136 sq.). Nevertheless, this “gathering” is “never a mere driving-together or a heaping up,” nor does it bring about a “harmony that is mere compromise, destruction of tension, flattening.” By uniting opposites, it “maintains the full sharpness of their tension,” and since it is a gathering of

supreme antagonism, it corresponds to what Heraclitus called “conflict” (40/140 sq.; E/134).

In the conflict [Aus-einandersetzung, setting-apart] a world comes into being. Conflict does not split, much less destroy unity. It constitutes unity, it is a binding-together, *logos*. *Polemos and logos are the same* (40/66; E/62).

It is clear from all this that “communication” and “struggle” in *Being and Time* are fundamentally identical to *logos* and *polemos*. “Conflicting harmony” as “*conflicting* harmony” is *polemos*, while as “*conflicting harmony*,” it is *logos*. *Logos* is “the gathering that makes manifest” and thus provides the foundation for the “world” and for “authentic history” (40/179; E, 171).

Hölderlin’s poetry was precisely such a “gathering that makes manifest.” Through a poetic “struggle,” it had won the “revelation of Being,” disclosed the “truth of the people” by “opening” a “world” that he himself had stamped with “the stamp of Being,” and through him, a people realized that it was “itself,” and thereby realized a “true gathering.” His poetry was a *primordial logos* that “primordially gathered” a people; it was the “*primordial language* [Ursprache] of a people” (39/74). “Man inhabits this earth *like a poet*” sings Hölderlin. This means: “In accordance with its historical, history-disclosing essence, being-human is *logos*, the gathering and apprehending of the Being of the essent [being]”²⁴ (40/180; E, 171).

It is time to move quickly on to a conclusion.

As has been made sufficiently clear, Heidegger’s “ethno-ontology” is a philosophy of *logos*. It attempts to show how a people who are a “primordial community” can achieve a “true gathering,” and the grounds for the achievement are ultimately to be found in *logos*—or that which “primordially gathers.” However, we must not make the

24. In Heidegger, the connection between *logos* and listening is clear. In the Hölderlin lectures, “poetry” is regarded as “listening while making poetry”—a “hearing” of “existence” with an “inner ear” (39/197, 202). See also next note.

mistake of thinking that *logos* has the final word in this “ontology,” because the final word is not *logos*, but “Being” itself. Why is it possible for the singing of the song of “Being” or the disclosure of the “Being” of beings to bring about the “gathering” of things? It is because “Being” itself is “that which gathers” and because *logos* is none other than “Being” itself. “*Logos* is the steady gathering, the intrinsic togetherness of the essent [being/Seiende], i.e. Being [Sein]” (40/139; E/130). “Being as *logos* is basic gathering” (40/141; E/133), says Heidegger, and thus is able to identify “Being” with the “Fatherland” through the mediation of *logos*:

The Fatherland is Being itself [*das Seyn selbst*], that which assumes the burden of and defines the history of a people as Dasein from its very foundations; it is the historicity of the history of a people. (39/121)
[Italics Heidegger’s own]

This also allows us to say:

In Heidegger’s philosophy, with its tendency towards an “ethno-ontology,” “Being” ultimately *functions as a principle of* ‹ *identity* › and, moreover, *must function as a principle of* ‹ *identity* ›. “Being” as *logos* is a basic gathering; therefore, no matter what contradictions, what conflicts, what “struggles” it may entail, it ultimately reduces the ‹ Other › in its movement towards the establishment of the ‹ One › and ‹ Same ›—or towards the establishment of the “self” of a “people.” “Being” reveals itself to a “people” and for that “people”; therefore, the revelation can be nothing more than a “return” [Rückkehr] to that people (39/181). *Logos* is such a law of “return”; “Being” itself is a law of “return.” It is a law of the “return” of a “people” to itself, the return to “itself” as a “people,” the return of a “self” to a “people.”

What Heidegger’s thought remains closed to—what it cannot think of at all—is the « Other » who cannot be made the ‹ Same › by any “struggle” whatever—not only the « Other » who stands outside a so-called “people,” but also the « Other » within. For example, those who do not consider the “full essence [volles Wesen] of human existence” (53/52) or the “full and authentic historizing” of Dasein to reside in a “people”; those who do not recognize the “full essence” or

“full and authentic historizing” of human Being at all; or then again, those “dumb from birth” who Heidegger says can say nothing and therefore cannot be silent,” and many more.²⁵ In Heidegger’s world, there are no relationships to such an « Other » that cannot be reduced to the ‹ Same ›—to those who cannot “gather.”

3. “Emptiness” as Logos or “Identity”

As mentioned at the beginning of this essay, Watsuji criticized Heidegger for giving precedence to the “isolated self,” and asserted that the query must go further, from “individual Being” to “human Being.” It is already clear that the criticism stems from a misunderstanding that recognizes only one aspect of Heidegger’s philosophy. Nevertheless, I would like to assert here that Watsuji’s system of ethics, which unfolds as a criticism of Heidegger and which utilizes this criticism as one of its leit-motifs, is in itself an “ethnic philosophy” par excellence—one that is also based upon a law of “return” to the “authentic self” of a “people.”

Watsuji’s starting point is the well-known concept of “human Being” [Nin-gen] as a “*relationship between people*” (10/12).²⁶ People are certainly “individuals” in the sense of being “*nin*,” but the “individualistic view of humanity” which substitutes the individual for the whole of “*ningen*” [human Being] is a “modern error,” since *nin* [=hito/the individual person] can exist only as *ningen*, in a “*relationship to the Other*” (10/53). Watsuji’s arguments are thorough on this point: he refutes all notions of any “individual independence” accord-

25. “We are a discourse [Gespräch].” which means simultaneously and from the same source, that “we are silence” (39/70), says Heidegger. This means that the “mute” is not one of “us.” This exclusion goes back to *Being and Time*, where Heidegger denies the mute the possibility of “reticence” and by this, excludes him from “*man in the sense of animal rationale*” (2/219; E/208). The “mute” cannot achieve “resoluteness” or “true listening” or “clear Being-With-Others” because all of these include “silence” as a constitutive element (2/219, 393; E/219, 343).

26. *Translator’s note: In Japanese, *nin* means “person,” while *gen* means “between”; hence, Watsuji’s interpretation of *nin-gen* as a “relationship between persons.”

ed to either the “body” or to the “consciousness,” and asserts that “individual persons do not exist in themselves” (10/106). Regarding Descartes’ cogito and Fichte’s “Self who thinks about a wall,” he says that these form part of a written or spoken philosophical discourse, and as such, are placed from the very beginning in a relationship with a reader or listener, this being “the inescapable fate of every philosopher who has ever written about the Self.” Furthermore, Watsuji says of this “relationship to the Other” that it is a “relationship” to an “absolute Other.”

Nevertheless, whenever Watsuji speaks of the “relationship to the Other,” he immediately assimilates it into the \langle One \rangle and \langle Same \rangle :

The Self and the Other are absolutely other [i.e., they are in a relationship of absolute otherness]. And people, insofar as they are in the world, are in communion with other people; are a society and never isolated human beings. It is their non-isolation that makes them nin-gen [=a relationship between people]. It is for this reason that *the Self-Other, who are mutually absolutely other, nevertheless become one in a Being-with-Others*. The individual who is basically distinct from society vanishes into that society. In such a way are people a unity of oppositions (10/18).

The “unity of oppositions” is a “dialectical structure” and a “movement of negation.” As such, it is similar to Hegel’s dialectic and is predirected towards the *telos* of a “totality.” Watsuji, [like Heidegger] looks at the “gathering” to the “One” and “Same” and wishes to see in it a “*logos*” that is “*immanent*” to “*Being itself*” (17/431).

For the very reason that the individual is a negation of totality, *it is essentially none other than totality*. This means that the negation is also awareness of the totality. Therefore, when one becomes an individual through negation, the path is opened whereby the totality will be realized through the negation of the individual. *The act of the individual is a movement towards the recovery of totality* (10/26).

“Totality” is a *telos* that is a *telos* because it is an *arché* or was an

arché; it is “what is basically first and therefore last” and it is the “authenticity” that is always willed only as the origin that was lost. This is why Watsuji criticizes Heidegger’s position, which—he believes—looks upon individual Being as the “authentic self” and turns its back upon the “indivisibility of Self and Other.” He says of Heidegger’s viewpoint that “the authenticity and inauthenticity of human Being are completely reversed” (10/236). Furthermore, the process goes beyond the Heideggerian “Being-towards-death” until “*death*” as the self-transcendence” of the individual becomes a “*labor of negation*” that is directed towards a return to the “authentic self,” or a return to “totality” (10/24).

Of course, Watsuji does not immediately equate “totality” with an ethical community. After all, an ethical community is, in the end, nothing but a “limited totality” which ultimately returns to “emptiness,” which is “absolute totality.” The “*logos*” which is “immanent” in “Being itself” is, in fact, a movement of “absolute negation” in which “emptiness empties itself”—a movement of “self-return” to “absolute totality” (10/26). In this context, Watsuji’s “totality” seems to be nothing more than a “metaphysical” principle which to all appearances has nothing to do with the violence of history.

However, this is not the case. Without a “limited totality,” “absolute totality” is nothing. Watsuji’s “emptiness” is just like Heidegger’s “Being”: *it functions in history as a principle of identity, and cannot help but function in this way.*

The movement of negation creates limitedness precisely because it is a movement of negation. ... The absoluteness of absolute negation exists together with this limitedness; it is not an abstract absoluteness that is separated from limitedness. Therefore, *if we are asked to show where absolute negation is to be found, we can only point to individuals or groups who are present before us. ... The sublation of the independence of the individual, which is a negation of negation, always occurs as a return to an ethical whole, and it is in this ethical whole that the individual immerses himself.* This can be a family or friends or corporation or state. In any case, it is through such a union that the carrying out of a supra-individual will or total will or obligatory act

becomes possible. Not only that, but *the realization of a limited totality of this kind is in fact a return of absolute negativity to itself* (10/126 sq.).

“Absolute totality” can appear to “us” only as a “present ethical whole,” and “absolute negativity”—that is, the “negation of negation”—can take place only as a “union” with “family or friends or corporation or state.” Furthermore, when Watsuji says that “this can be a family or friends or corporation or state,” this is only a temporary concession, since for Watsuji also, it is the “people” who are the privileged community, and furthermore the “nation”—defined as “a state-forming people” (10/587)—which is the ultimate community.

The “people,” for Watsuji, begins with the “two-person-community” of “man and wife,” then “rises” through a process of “ethical organization” through “parent-child,” “sibling,” “extended family,” and “local community” relationships, gradually attaining a higher level of “discarding the self,” until it finally appears as “the realization of the greatest conformity of individual and total moments.” This is the “situation in which human beings first become aware of the holy” (10/588) and in which “the person as an individual” can “discard all self” and “return to the holy totality of the people” (10/588, 11/418). The “people,” secondly, are a “cultural community whose limits are drawn by the *common bonds of blood and soil*,” and they are also referred to as “the strongest of *spiritual communities*” (10/585, 588). The sharing of “soil” of course means the sharing of “land,” while the sharing of “blood” is not so much “the fact of blood relatedness,” but “the consciousness of blood unity.” However, where the latter is concerned, Watsuji actually identifies this with “the sharing of language.” Next, a “people” who “share a language” as its “first characteristic” (10/533) now practice a “factual shutting out” [of others] from the “circle of sharing” of “cultural activities” such as “the arts” and “learning” and “religion.” “The arts” and “learning” and “religion” are in essence “*mediators of human unity*” (10/547), but “in fact,” the range of possibility for such a unity has never exceeded the limits of a “people.”

Nevertheless, a people remain incomplete unless it “forms itself into a state.” This is because the “state” transcends all communities,

from the family to the cultural community, while simultaneously “retaining them in itself,” since it is the “ultimate ethical organization” in which the “progressive relationships” between the various communities are “consciously organized” (10/595 sq.).

The highest and most ultimate of totalities is the totality of the state. . . . This totality is already comprehended in the totality of the people as \langle the holy \rangle and therefore as something which has enormous power, but it is only in the state that the holiness and power are clearly brought to awareness and expressed in law as the right to govern. (11/420 sq.)

Of course, it is possible that “the totality of the state and the totality of the people do not coincide.” However, in such a case, the state loses its “link to holiness” and falls from being a “leadership” of “authority” to being a “rule” by “power.” In contrast to this, an “authentic state” must “retain its link to absolute totality through the living totality of a people” (11/421 sq.). The people are the “substance of the state” (10/587) and therefore, the “power of the state” is the “power of the holy,” and its “source” is the “authority of totality.”²⁷ The power of a state is sometimes “a power of arms” and “a power that admits of no opposition” but since its source is “the authority of totality,” “coercion by power” in this case is “by no means an arbitrary coercion, but a \langle public \rangle one.” This power is distinguished as a holy power by “an ethics which form the basis of law” while being itself above the law—that is, by “the self-returning realization of absolute totality” which appears as the “*logos*” which is “immanent” in “Being itself” (10/602 sq.). Watsuji says for example that “since the defense

27. In Japan, it is the Emperor [Tenno] who embodies the “authority of totality.” “When a sovereign rules by holy authority (that is, when the nation becomes aware of its own totality through the expression of its absolute totality), then that rule is absolutely right. It is a leadership by total will, a rule that returns the people to their authenticity. When one says that the Emperor’s rule ‘makes itself known,’ this is the concept that is being expressed” (14/64). When Watsuji becomes a supporter of the idea of a “symbolic emperor” after the war, saying that “it has existed all through Japanese history as a matter of fact” (14/364), he is merely extending his earlier position.

of the state is the defense of the path of ethics, all abilities and all efforts may be mobilized for that end.” Not only that, but “the state demands the unconditional service of the individual for its defense,” since it is “an absolute power with regard to the individual” (11/428 sq.). “*The individual returns to ultimate totality through service to the state*” and thus “*an ultimate shedding of the self is demanded of him, by discarding all of his freedom and immersing himself in the ultimate totality of humanity*” (10/607).

Thus, Watsuji’s philosophy of “totality” is a philosophy of “historicality” and also a philosophy of a “people.” Watsuji says that “the ethical significance of a state is grounded from the absolute” (11/422), but this is only another way of saying that the movement of “the absolute”—or “emptiness” as “absolute totality”—is, for “us” only a return to the “state” or to “a people who form themselves into a state.” The repercussions of such assertions are even more direct in his case than in the case of Heidegger, precisely because Watsuji’s philosophy also attempts to be an “ethics.”

For example, Watsuji claims that “absolute totality” is “the highest value,” and that therefore the “independence of the individual” is ethically “bad” because it is a “separation from the source of the self,” and that the “sublation of individuality” is “good” because it is a “return to the source of the self.” Certainly, since the movement of “self return” “is not possible without the moment of self denial,” “the negation of totality” is “good” insofar as it “leads in the direction of a return,” and “is no longer bad” insofar as it is a “moment that makes possible the good”; yet “*in itself it is bad.*” But if that is so, the denial of the “people” and the “state,” which are the ultimate goals of “return” in Watsuji’s viewpoint, is *the greatest ethical “evil” of all, and can be nothing but “evil.*” (This is because the denial has no higher court to which it may return.)

The limits of Watsuji’s “ethics” are revealed with clarity in the case of *war*. If the “ethnic state” forms the greatest limit within which ethical “good” and “evil” can be defined, then relationships to the « Other » of the “ethnic state”—whether it be an ⟨inner⟩ « Other » or an ⟨external⟩ « Other »—will be ⟨beyond good and evil⟩ and have no ethical significance at all. The law “Thou shalt not kill” is not only

meaningless in war, but from within the “ethnic state,” *murder in the name of “defense” will be the greatest ethical “good.”*

In short, with Watsuji as with Heidegger, there is no « Other ». The « One » and « Same » admit of no « Other ». Watsuji goes so far as to say that “human beings” [Nin-gen] are in themselves “relationships with others,” and that the “Self-Other” relationship is a relationship of “absolute otherness.” Nevertheless, what he calls the “Other” is actually only an other within the same community; only an other among « us »; an other whose “union” with the self is already planned, already assured. Both “human beings” and “ethics” remain within the bounds of a « relationship to the self », not in a « relationship to the Other ».

Abolish the law of return. Appeal not beforehand and send no foretokens. We are from no *arché*, headed towards no *telos*.