CHAPTER SIX

A STUDY OF MAN IN CRISIS: LATE 1932–1935

FAUST: Wings, alas, may grow
Upon our soul, but still our body is
Earthbound. And yet, by inborn instinct given
To each of us, our hearts rise up and soar
Forever onwards […].
WAGNER: I never envied any bird its wings.
But the pursuit of intellectual things
From book to book, from page to page—what joys that yields!

Goethe Faust: Part One

The true artist is the creator of types. Types are neither merely universal
nor merely particular but both at the same time. They are captured within
our imaginations (phantasia) and brought to life by the imaginative power
of the creative artist. Without seeing the self as revealed outside the self,
types cannot be formulated. They are always ideally defined […] and
governed by both pathos and logos.

Miki Kiyoshi Philosophical Anthropology

In The Unspoken Philosophy Miki stated that “in philosophy Kant was
my teacher, but in the arts, it was Goethe.”1 From his days at the First
Higher School Miki had become fascinated by Faust’s notion that “in
my breast two spirits reside alas, and their division sunders my life in
two” and recognised that his own heart was also the locus of “weakness
and contradiction”. On the other hand, he derived hope from
Goethe’s notion that “the spirit which strives to know the heights of
the self also makes use of bad experiences. […] By tasting deep sadness
and pain and then embracing them, our spirits can soar to new
heights.”2 The tension between Faust’s flights of fancy, the irrational
parts of our psyche expressed philosophically as pathos, and Wagner’s
earthbound intellectualism expressed as reason or logos is reflected in
the development of Miki’s own intellectual growth, as indicated in his
analyses of romanticism and irrationalism.

1 MKZ, XVIII, 48.
2 Ibid., 71.
After 1932, Miki appears to have successfully reinvented himself as editor, journalist and leading commentator on public affairs. However, this was a time of great personal as well as national crisis. In the mid-1930s much of his philosophy and journalism appears to be characterised by attempts to reconcile binary oppositions such as *logos* and *pathos*, classicism and romanticism, rationalism and irrationalism, nature and technology. These philosophical discussions address, albeit indirectly, deeper concerns about the rise of fascism and neo-romanticism in Japan. For all those who lived by the pen rather than the sword in the Japan of the 1930s, politics began increasingly to invade the private life of the individual as well as the intellectual life of the nation. Moreover, expelled from the protective towers of academe, Miki was now an ‘outsider’ and especially vulnerable because of being identified with Leftist or Marxist thought. Being attacked by the Left, he found, afforded no protection from repression by the Right. Andrew Barshay has pointed to the importance of a subtle insider—outsider distinction determined by occupation at this time. Insiders included university lecturers, researchers, doctors and public servants working in large institutions, outsiders like Miki were freelance writers and journalists or employees working in the private sector. According to Barshay, from the state’s point of view, an outsider was further from the loci of the essential values of the *kokutai* which revolved around the emperor. Insiders were more easily controlled through well-defined roles and patterns of loyalty. While even insiders were not immune from prosecution for heretical views, outsiders were considered more dangerous since, with less status to lose, outsiders classified as political dissidents were considered more liable to organise and threaten the *status quo*. The ‘dangerous thought’ of outsiders was less tolerable to the authorities and likely to be more severely punished.3

However, most writers, whether insider or outsider, felt increasingly constrained by tightening press controls and censorship which began to play a major role in the government’s attempts to suppress opposition after 1931. Indeed, Louise Young refers to “war-fever” and a broad, popular consensus for military action in China from this time.4 Censorship, therefore, marched hand in hand with a new mood of popular nationalism. Journalists like Miki were forced to keep a weather eye on

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3 Barshay, 15.
4 Young, 114.