

Rethinking History at its Sunset

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I.

History, more than anything else, is the face of ourselves who live in the "now." In order to find clues to resolve the various difficulties we encounter, or sufferings and desires we have in living our present lives, we turn towards the past and bring it close to us ("*kako o taguriyoseru*," in Miki Kiyoshi's phrase). We then listen for the voices that arise from the past and try to make them give us a direction for proceeding towards the future.

However, if we view history in this manner, it must be said that today we are in a particularly paradoxical situation with regard to history. In order to bring the past close to us and listen for voices that arise from it, we need a particular methodology to do so: the past does not speak for us by itself. However, today we are in an extremely difficult situation to acquire or discover this methodology. And it is as a result of the fact that history itself, in trying to be "science," has always endeavored to polish its "method" that we are in such a situation. It is probably safe to say that the time has come whereby history must reflect on its very status as "science," on its scholarly way of approach towards reality.

It is true that such a questioning of history did not begin today. To give a widely known example from the past, Nietzsche had already presented us with this type of question even amidst the height of the nineteenth century known as the "Century of History." He says in "Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben" ("On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life," 1874), the second essay of *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen (Untimely Meditations)*:

For the origin of historical culture...this origin itself *must* be known historically, history *must* itself resolve the problem of history, knowledge *must* turn its stinging against itself -- this threefold *must* is the imperative of the "new age", supposing this age really does contain anything new, powerful, original and promising more life.

In Germany, a classicism appeared that tried to seek categories of universal humanity in classical Greece during the period from the latter 18th century to the beginning of the 19th century, during which Enlightenment reason in Europe, centering on France, was leading the movements towards a radical revolution of the Ancient Regime. What was characteristic of this German classicism was that it was simultaneously accompanied by a positive evaluation of "history," among other things.

"History" was recognized as something that expressed the total process of self-cultivation/self-formation (*Bildung*) of humanity towards rational being. And it was assumed that, only by including him or herself in such a total process of self-cultivation/self-formation of humanity expressed in "history," each individual might mold his or her life towards the ideals of universal humanity in the fashion of those categories demonstrated by classical Greece.

However, after the failure of the 1848 revolutions, history lost sight of this living connection with the total process of self-cultivation/self-formation of humanity. Then, on the one hand, history aimlessly multiplied "historical sense" alone and proceeded to weaken the molding or "plastic" power of life. Moreover, following the direction of positivism, which was gradually increasing its influence as a philosophy of the new era, history strove for elaborating of the so-called "historical critical method" that would make it acquire the status of "science," transformed the past from being "authority" or an ontological base for life to an object of knowledge, and threw itself to the task of criticism and compilation of documents. What Nietzsche, who himself began as a student of classical philology, must have observed was this state of history losing sight of its connection with the total process of self-cultivation/self-formation of humanity, becoming set free from the restraints of life, and propelling itself only towards the haphazard acquisition and accumulation of knowledge of the past. Nietzsche condemned this as the "malady of history," and threw down the above mentioned imperative to his age, urging a fundamental reflection on the scholarly way itself of relating to life.

Today, one century from that time, I think it is required of us to once again "turn the sting of knowledge against itself," following Nietzsche's enjoinder. And we must carry out this task under greatly different circumstances.

For us, the "Century of History" has already gone. What we are living in is an "Age without History." If I may borrow the title of a famous essay written by Hayashi Tatsuo during the Second World War, we are "at the sunset of history." In the midst of a hyper-real self-organizational or autopoietic system-society that capitalism has equipped through the experience of total mobilization and the development of information technology during the two world wars, we are living in an age where something like a "historical sense" and a "historical consciousness" is all but dead, except for the nostalgia of a small group of *ladatores temporis acti*. The Enlightenment reason that strove in the past to be the leader of the revolutionary overthrow of the Ancient Regime has now been completely transformed into an instrumental and functionalist reason that supports a systemized capitalist society. We can summarize what happened to "history" during this great transformation of knowledge as follows: While contenting itself with its status as assistant to the social sciences, which underwent a rapid development as the organ of instrumental and functionalist reason, history proceeded to tirelessly concentrate its efforts merely towards establishing itself as "science," acquiring precision and range far superior to Nietzsche's age with regard to "method." On the other hand, skepticism towards the very possibility of grasping "truth," which Nietzsche sowed more than anyone else, is strengthening its degree of intensity more and more,

together with the advance of the so-called "linguistic turn." In such an "Age without History," we must once again attempt to return to Nietzsche's enjoiner.

Let us now look a little more concretely at locating this problem, based on my own personal experiences from when I entered university to the present.

II.

I just used the term "Age without History." However, when I entered university in 1960 -- just around the height of the struggles against the first revision of Japan-US Security Treaty -- "historical consciousness" was overflowing among Japanese radical intellectuals.

To give an example of something that impacted me greatly back then, there are a series of essays by Hashikawa Bunzo on "historical consciousness," which undertook a critique of Japanese Romanticism. These are gathered in the book, *Rekishi to Taiken (History and Experience)*, 1964). Concerning these Hashikawa's essays on "historical consciousness," Noguchi Takehiko, a literary critic of my own generation, revealed an interesting episode in the afterward of his book, *Edo no Rekishika (Historians of the Edo Period)*, 1979). It is an episode regarding the term "historical consciousness" (*rekishi ishiki*), which serves as a key word in Noguchi's book. Noguchi writes:

I first had a superficial understanding of this term [*“rekishi ishiki”*] in June of 1960. From nowhere else but Hashikawa Bunzo's *Nihon Romanha Hihan Josetsu (Prelude to a Critique of the Japanese Romanticists)*. Still at the height of my youthful impudence of around age 20, an older friend took me to my first meeting with Prof. Hashikawa. He said to me softly, "So, why are you joining in the anti-security treaty (*ampo hantai*) demonstrations?" I most likely replied something to the effect that I wanted to be present in the actual scene of history or that I wanted to grasp it deeply. He said, "You know, my friend, that's historical consciousness." I still distinctly remember having no words to say.

The subtitle of Noguchi's book is "The Poison of the Name, History." In that period, we were truly intoxicated with the poison of the name "History." And while being drunk with this poison, we were attempting to instigate change by using history.

However, during the period from the end of the 1960s to the 1970s, in the context of high-speed economic growth, we came to have a sense of an "Age without History" as the very sense of our era. This sense is, for example, symptomatically expressed in Mishima Ken-ichi's essay appeared in the October 1974 issue of *Shiso (Thought)*: "Towards a Historical Consciousness of an Age without History" ("Rekishi naki Jidai no Rekishi Ishiki e"). This was an essay that tried to seek the possibility of regenerating "historical consciousness" by returning to the "life-world" (*Lebenswelt*) of Edmund Husserl, while taking up a Nietzschean questioning of the usefulness of history for life within the line of hermeneutical reflection starting from Wilhelm Dilthey and going

through Martin Heidegger, and finally leading up to Hans-Georg Gadamer. Mishima wrote also an excellent discussion of Nietzsche entitled "Keiken to Hansei" ("Experience and Reflection") as a continuation of this essay in the February 1976 issue of the same journal, *Shiso*, where the problematic I described in Chapter One is clearly spelled out.

Now, at the beginning of Mishima's essay, "Towards a Historical Consciousness of an Age without History," there is a reference to Giambattista Vico's theory of *senso comune* (sensus communis, "common sense") through statements in Gadamer's *Wahrheit und Methode (Truth and Method, 1960)*. And the period from the late 1960s to the 1970s was precisely the period in which I myself began to take up the thought of this 18th century Neapolitan philosopher in earnest.

In the spring of 1968, I stopped my course of study in graduate school and began my new free, i.e. disoccupied life at my wife's country town in Hokuriku region by reading Husserl's *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie (The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology, 1936/1954)*. My research theme in graduate school was fascism. It was when I set out to first survey the interpretive history of fascism up to then in order to proceed with my research, and so studied the views on fascism by representative intellectuals in Italy during the fascist period, beginning with Benedetto Croce, that such questions as "What is learning?" or "What is it to deal with the world in a learned, scholarly manner?" aroused in my mind and I fell into a state of not knowing what to do anymore. Perhaps one might call it the problem of rationalist mistake that accompanies the scholarly understanding of the world. In fact, modern European scholarship has completely driven away most of the life-historical facts of the common people as being irrational, while achieving an understanding of the real as immediately rational, and the rational as immediately real. The views of the Italian intellectuals I examined towards fascism are one typical example of this kind of scholarship. Yet isn't there a grave mistake here, a mistake that originates in the system itself of scholarly knowledge? I thought that it was probably necessary to go back to the origin or starting point of the scholarly way of knowing and to reflect on it. To speak in Nietzschean terms, we must attempt a genealogical reflection of learning.

Under the spell of a terrible obsession, I decided then to re-question everything from scratch. And, in the hope that a "science of the life-world" that Husserl tried late in his lifetime would match with my task, I began to read *The Crisis*, using as a guide the Italian phenomenologist Enzo Paci's commentary on *The Crisis* entitled *Funzione delle scienze e significato dell'uomo (The Function of the Sciences and the Meaning of Man, 1963)*, in which the author suggested that Husserl's "science of the life-world" was "a new science (*neue Wissenschaft*) in Vico's sense." This was the very occasion I began to take up Vico.

One more occasion was that Husserl attempted to realize his "science of the life-world" through a mediation of the field of inter-subjectivity of language. This attempt, which means to re-ask a question of the usefulness of the sciences for life from the

standpoint of the life-world seen as a field of originary meaning-formation, was perhaps originated from its connection with hermeneutics of Dilthey and Heidegger. But it led me to Motoori Norinaga's philological method. He grasped "things/events" (*koto*) and "intention/meaning" (*kokoro*) in a unified manner in "words" (*kotoba*) and persistently tried to interpret the world in accordance with "the practical scene of language" (*monoihi no sama*), in which, taking a cue from Muraoka Tsunetsugu's *Motoori Norinaga* (1928) and others, I found something quite similar to Vico's *New Science*.

The New Science was an extremely difficult book. However, it was also a book that was rich in implications and suggestions. And there was no doubt that in terms of the ideals and methods of learning, certain things meshed with Husserl's and Motoori's.

The passage at the beginning of the section called "Method" after "Principles" in the first volume of the 1744 version of *The New Science* is one good example. Vico starts by writing "This Science must begin where its subject matter begins." As shown by the full title of the work, "*Principi di Scienza nuova d'intorno alla comune natura delle nazioni* (*Principles of New Science concerning the Common Nature of the Nations*), *The New Science* sought to explicate the "common nature of the nations," and "humanity" (*humanitas*) was its subject matter. Therefore, what was required was to begin by inferring from the point in time of the establishment of humanity, when "the first men" began "to think humanly," and humanity was established among them. Although, Vico says, "we cannot at all imagine and can comprehend [such a primitive state] only with great effort." He adds, "To discover the way in which this first human thinking arose in the gentile world, we encountered exasperating difficulties which have cost us the research of a good twenty years."

When I encountered this passage, I was assured that I discovered a Motoori Norinaga figure trying to force his way into the world of the Ancient Chronicles (*Kojiki*) of Italy. Moreover, I understood this journey of Vico and Motoori into the primitive origin of *humanitas* as something that corresponded to Husserl's attempt to go back to the origin of scholarly knowledge. In the "Axioms" section, there is the following passage:

It is another property of the human mind that whenever men can form no idea of distant and unknown things, they judge them by what is familiar at hand. This axiom points to the inexhaustible source of all errors about the principle of humanity that have been adopted by entire nations and by all scholars.

And under this heading, Vico gives two types of conceit: "the conceit of nations" and the "conceit of scholars." It would probably not be wrong to see this "conceit of scholars" as pointing to the danger of a rationalist mistake contained in the scholarly understanding of the world in general. Starting from a clear self-awareness of such a danger, Vico developed his science, while satisfying the demand to maintain the fundamental difference separating self and other; that is, a sense of historicity. Moreover, while this was no doubt an attempt to found a new science, at the same time, there is an element here of a constant relativization of this very scholarly attempt at

founding, an element of transcending it self-reflexively. I had completely become a captive to Vico.

I referred to my encounter with Vico in the beginning section of a dialogue, "Rekishi no Ronri to Keiken: Biiko "Atarashii Gaku" e no Shotai" ("The Logic and Experience of History: An Invitation to Vico's *New Science*") which is included in the "History" volume, edited by Kabayama Koichi, part of the *Shakai Kagaku e no Shotai* (Invitation to the Social Sciences) series, published by Nihon Hyoronsha in 1977. Also my short autobiographical essay entitled "Yoroppa-teki Shogaku no Kiki ni okeru Biiko: aru deai no naka kara" ("Vico in the Crisis of European Sciences: from out of an encounter"), which was written for a 1987 special issue concerning Vico of the journal *Shiso* and included in the beginning of my own book, *Biiko no Kaigi* (*The Doubt of Vico*, 1988), tells the same story.

III.

"The Logic and Experience of History" was the first essay in which I attempted an intervention in the problem of historical methodology from a theory of scholarship standpoint, using Vico as my base of argumentation. However, in this essay, while referring to the paramount axiom in Vico's *New Science*, "Doctrines must take their beginning from that of the matter of which they treat," which appeared as the epigraph and was discussed its significance for a theory of scholarship in Edward W. Said's *Beginnings: Intention and Method* (1975), my main focus was on Vico's early work in Latin, *De nostri temporis studiorum ratione* (*On the Study Methods of Our Time*). This is a public lecture Vico delivered at the University of Naples in 1708. In his argument I found something that strongly suggests the necessity to now re-consider the meaning of the tradition of humanistic education in order to resolve the aporia that the sciences of modern Europe, which strove to polish their "methods" in their goal to establish themselves as "sciences", are facing today, especially the social sciences.

For example, in this public lecture, Vico says, "The course of action in life must consider the importance of the single events and their circumstances." And he adds, "It is therefore impossible to assess human affairs by the inflexible standard of abstract right; we must rather gauge them by the pliant Lesbian rule [referred to in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*], which does not conform bodies to itself, but adjusts itself to their contours," severely condemning those who "apply to the prudent conduct of life the abstract criterion of reasoning that obtains in the domain of science." Then what about the domain of history? History was originally part of the humanities. However, especially from the beginning of the 20th century, history left the original arena of the humanistic education and tended towards trying to take hold of in one way or another the prestige of "science", in the form of becoming subject to the various branches of the social sciences. But, in the present, when those very social sciences have fallen into a total crisis, what if we were to now return the scene of history, which was originally of the humanities, to its point of origin and look back at this? We would probably be able

to find a way to resolve the total crisis of the social sciences itself. In my essay, "The Logic and Experience of History," I used the expression "thick-headed historians," since historians seemed to be totally unaware of this immense epistemological potentiality hidden within their historiographical work. This evoked reaction from some historians; however, by this expression, I meant to communicate my great hopes toward the study of history.

Concerning Vico's *On the Study Methods of Our Time*, just at the time when I was reading this work with one hand in my Latin dictionary, Shimizu Ikutaro, one of the most outstanding social philosophers in Japan, also took up this work thematically in his series of essays over 2 years, *Rinrigaku Noto (Notes on Ethics)*, which began in the November 1968 issue of *Shiso*, filled with distress on the aporia that the modern social sciences, represented by economics, was coming up against with regard to the question of ethics. Shimizu had read the same work of Vico's in English translation, which came out in 1965. Also Jürgen Habermas referred to this work in his essay "Die klassische Lehre von der Politik in ihrem Verhältnis zur Sozialphilosophie" ("The Classical Doctrine of Politics in Relation to Social Philosophy"), which is included at the beginning of *Theorie und Praxis (Theory and Practice, 1963)*, a collection of essays on social philosophy that appeared in a two volume Japanese translation by Hosoya Sadao in 1969-1970 from Miraisha. Habermas, like Shimizu, begins his argument by looking at how modern social philosophy became "science" and lost its capacity to provide practical knowledge; that is to say, it no longer revealed any practical directions for acting in accordance with the concrete circumstances of the times. He then also refers to the passage I just quoted above from Vico's *On the Study Methods of Our Times*, the passage denouncing those who "apply to the prudent conduct of life the abstract criterion of reasoning that obtains in the domain of science." He writes, "This loss of hermeneutic power [*hermeneutische Kraft*] in the theoretical penetration of situations which were to be mastered practically was recognized as early as by Vico." These reflections by Shimizu and Habermas were guiding threads in my intervention in the historical method. Subsequently, I co-translated *On the Study Methods of Our Times* with the historian of science, Sasaki Chikara, which in 1987 appeared under the title *Gakumon no Hoho (Methods of Study)* in the *Iwanami Bunko* series.

IV.

Looking back, my proposal in "The Logic and Experience of History" for history to return to its original arena of humanities seems to be in concert with movements towards the "Revival of Narrative" in the field of historical study which Lawrence Stone surveys in his 1979 article in *Past and Present*.

However, it was only from the beginning of the 1980s when I began to focus on and directly address this new current in the study of history. In 1981, in his co-authored book with the philosopher Nakamura Yujiro, *Chi no Tabi e no Sasoi (Invitation to a Voyage in Knowledge)*, the cultural anthropologist Yamaguchi Masao introduced

the Italian historian Carlo Ginzburg and his books into the Japanese public: *I benandanti* (1966; English translation: *The Night Battles*) and *Il formaggio e i vermi* (*The Cheese and the Worms*, 1976). These two books aroused in me a deep interest in a new current of historiography which Stone had named the "Revival of Narrative." What especially astonished me was the methodology Ginzburg took to approach his objects.

In fact, what Ginzburg is trying to explain in these two books is the religious attitude or mind of the agrarian society in early modern Europe. He tries to explain this through the voices of the peasants themselves, which were recorded in the Inquisition proceedings. But if this is the case, we can probably guess at how great the difficulties confronting Ginzburg were. It was an age where the people generally did neither read nor write, and even if they could read and write (like in the case of Menocchio, the miller who is the subject of *The Cheese and the Worms*), there were few chances to put their own experiences into writing. In this kind of era, even if it is true that court records are one of the few materials where the voices of the people themselves are recorded, it is also undoubtedly true that, based on the nature of the court circumstances, many distortions and concealments arise in these descriptive contents either from the judges or from the accused. What does one do to break down the wall of distortion and concealment like this? When Ginzburg tried to approach the mind of the peasants through the records of the Inquisition, this kind of difficult question must have been confronting him.

Ginzburg begins, however, first by paying attention to and reading the details of the texts themselves. And, attending to the discrepancies between the questions of the Inquisitors and the answers of the defendants, or between the descriptive contents of the writings Menocchio attests to have read and the way Menocchio himself read them (in many instances paying attention to the slightest discrepancy), he attempts to overcome these difficulties by a unique method of reading that truly might be called "symptom-deciphering." As Aby Warburg says, "the God is in the details."

It was also impressive that Ginzburg gives a frank account of the process of researching and reasoning of his own, and there is no hiding of anything. For me, it was new and original. In *The Cheese and the Worms*, the expression "aggressive originality" is used to describe Menocchio's reading, but this would also be applied to Ginzburg's reading itself. Ginzburg's work gave me an opportunity to think concretely about the practical possibility of "historical study as humanities," which I proposed in "The Logic and Experience of History."

By the way, it is quite clear from reading Ginzburg's essay, "Spie: Radici del paradigma indiziario" ("Clues: Roots of an Evidential Paradigm"), published in the volume edited by Aldo Gargani, *Crisi della ragione: Nuovi modelli nel rapporto tra sapere e attività umane* (*Crisis of Reason: New Models of the Relation Between Knowledge and Human Activities*), that his practice is grounded in a clear, epistemological self-awareness, and that it is not simply the return of the old narrative historical description -- "a new old history" -- in the sense Stone understood it to be. The practitioner of history was also quite an ambitious theorist.

Regarding the work of Ginzburg, I worked on the Japanese translation of *I*

benandanti, which was published in 1986 by Misuzu Shobo as *Yoru no Kassen (The Night Battles)*. And, as a commentary to this translation, I wrote an essay entitled "Ginzuburugu no Ito to Hoho ni tsuite" ("On Ginzburg's Intention and Method"), which was included in my book *Kurio no Tekagami (The Hand Mirror of Clio)* under a different title "Karuro Ginzuburugu to Minshu Bunka-shi no Kanosei" ("Carlo Ginzburg and the Possibility of a History of Popular Culture"). *Kurio no Tekagami* was my second work after *Biiko no Kaigi*, where I analyzed reflections around "history," achieved by the twentieth century Italian intellectuals starting from Croce, through Ernesto de Martino, the advocate of a "historicist ethnology," all the way up to Ginzburg, and examined their epistemological significance.

V.

My dialogue with Ginzburg did not just end there. *Storia notturna: Decifrazione del sabba* -- a report on the journey in search of the folkloric origins of the Sabbath, which he had continued over the course of around ten years immediately after finishing *The Cheese and the Worms* -- was published in the spring of 1989 (English translation: *Ecstasies: Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath*). In this book, he attempted a stimulating methodological experiment on thinking the conditions of possibility for historical knowledge: an application of morphology to historical research. Ginzburg supposes Shamanism to be the origin of the Sabbath story handed down from generation to generation among the people, which was different from the Sabbath image created by the demonologists of the Church. He attempts to verify this Sabbath story-Shamanism relationship historically. The common historical method that pursues a temporally and spatially contiguous relationship is however inevitably forced to break down. Then, he attempts to use morphology here: He identifies the Sabbath story in myths/narratives scattered in each region around the world which possess a morphological affinity by means of a structural analysis, and, based on the formal connections that arise from this operation, attempts to supplement the historical approach. It was an experiment that, more than anything else, looked closely at Claude Lévi-Strauss's structural anthropological research into myth, while taking suggestions from Vladimir Propp's morphology of the folk-tale and from Wittgenstein's notes on James George Frazer's *The Golden Bough*. But, in this method of Ginzburg, there was something that strangely made me think immediately of the method of approaching the world of "*sapienza poetica*" (poetical wisdom) of "the first men" that Vico attempted in his *New Science*. This was a method that sought the "senso comune" (*sensus communis*, common sense) of humanity with regard to that which is necessary and useful for human beings to live as human beings. Based on this "senso comune" of humanity, Vico compiled a "mental dictionary" and attempted to produce a picture of an "ideal eternal history" he imagined as existing at the foundation of history that various peoples or nations traverse within time.

This was the period when I noticed that within Vico's conception of an "ideal

eternal history," there was something deeply consistent with Husserl's supposition of the existence of a "universal, structural *a priori* of meaning," which he suggested in his manuscript "Origin of Geometry" was the condition of possibility for historical study. I had begun some investigations on the meaning of this complicit relationship for a self-reflective theory of scholarship. Ginzburg's experiment provided me with one more concrete piece of material for this my investigations.

Moreover, Ginzburg locates the folkloric origins of the Sabbath in the human nature itself, above all, in the categorical activity of the human spirit that tries to make up the instance of death as a zero-degree bodily experience into a symbolic form. This can be likened to the journey to the realm of "Mothers" that appears in Goethe's *Faust*: that is, the realm of original formation where things that have a form in this world are provided with their form. Mephistopheles explains that "here, there is neither place nor time." Ginzburg's journey was a journey to the land before history where there was neither place nor time. He writes in the Introduction to *Storia notturna*:

A long time ago [in *I benandanti*] I seriously set myself the task of experimentally demonstrating, from a historical standpoint, the non-existence of human nature; twenty-five years later I find myself supporting a diametrically opposed theory. As we shall see, at a certain point my research was transformed into a reflection on the limits of historical knowledge, developed through the examination of what is perhaps an extreme case.

These words also possessed something that really stimulated my interest in a self-reflective theory of scholarship.

Finally, right around the time from 1984 when he wrote the epilogue to the Italian translation of Natalie Z. Davis's *The Return of Martin Guerre* entitled "Prove e possibilità" ("Proofs and possibilities"), Ginzburg began to develop a debate around the significance of concepts such as truth and evidence, focusing on the American critic, Hayden White, as his main target of criticism. White expressed his conception of "poetics of history" in the general introduction to *Metahistory: the Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (1973). This was an argument that was advanced using Vico's investigations into the world of "poetic wisdom" in his *New Science* as a main reference point. In such a "poetics of history" conceptualized by White I found an important path to deepen theoretically what I called "history as humanities" in my 1977 essay "The Logic and Experience of History" or, more exactly, what may be called "historiography as representation" (*hyosho no rekishigaku*). And I had seen within Ginzburg's work one of the most fruitful possibilities for this kind of "historiography as representation." This very Ginzburg put however "representationalism" which he found in White's conception of "poetics of history" directly on the chopping block of criticism. Why was this? Ginzburg's attack on Hayden White bewildered me greatly.

I came therefore to further continue my critical dialogue with Ginzburg. The memoirs of this dialogue were presented in *Shiso* and collected in a book published by

Miraisha in 1994 entitled *Rekishika to Haha-tachi: Karuro Ginzuburugu ron (The Historian and the Mothers: Some Considerations on Carlo Ginzburg)*. A critical investigation of mine into "microstoria" (microhistory) which Ginzburg and the historian of economy, Giovanni Levi, jointly proposed, was also added to the book. I think that the greatest achievement of this dialogue with Ginzburg was that it provided me with an opportunity to reflect on the question of the relationship between the formal-logical level and the empirical level at the point where historical objects are brought to understanding, especially with regard to a transcendental relationship the former has with the latter.

VI.

Now, the year 1994 when I compiled the memoirs of my dialogue with Ginzburg into a book was also the period in which a great change in the way I formulated my question towards history began to arise. I came to face a problematic where I perhaps had to fundamentally rethink the limits of that very "representation" assumed as a key concept in "historiography as representation" of which I had hitherto sought an epistemological possibility.

I think you may be able to confirm my first self-awareness regarding the location of this problematic in a supplementary essay at the end of my *Rekishika to Haha-tachi*, entitled "Aushubuitsu to Hyosho no Genkai" ("Auschwitz and the Limits of Representation"). I examined the presentations of both White and Ginzburg at the conference on the "Final Solution and the Limits of Representation" held at UCLA in the spring of 1990. In these presentations, what impressed me was White's assertion that, since all there is to describe the "anti-representational" reality of an event such as the Holocaust is a literalism that excludes all rhetorical invention, a form of intransitive writing where the subject and the object are not divided is required, such as the one whose original form Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida found within the "middle voice" of classical Greek. Or a descriptive form such as an Auschwitz survivor, Primo Levi, writes about in his work, *Il sistema periodico (The Periodic Table, 1975)*: "An atom of carbon which migrates into a cell in my own brain [is] in charge of my writing [and] makes my hand run along a certain path on the paper." I organized and conducted the Japanese translation of the proceedings of this conference, *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the 'Final Solution'*, edited by Saul Friedlander, which was published after my *Rekishika to Haha-tachi* again by Miraisha in 1994 under the title *Aushubuitsu to Hyosho no Genkai (Auschwitz and the Limits of Representation)*.

But, decisive for me was the essay, "Kiokusareenumono / Katarienumono" ("What Cannot be Remembered / What Cannot be Spoken"), in volume 9: "Tekusuto to Kaishaku" (Text and Interpretation) of the Iwanami Koza "Gendai Shiso" (Modern Thought) series in 1994 by Takahashi Tetsuya, the up and coming Derrida scholar then receiving much attention in Japan, known for his 1992 work published by Miraisha, *Gyakko no Logosu (Logos in Counterlight)*. Taking cues from the definition of the

concentration camps of Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany as "the holes of oblivion" Hannah Arendt gave in her *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, and the essay on Claude Lanzmann's film *Shoah* (1985) entitled "The Return of the Voice" by the Yale School of Deconstruction critic Shoshana Felman, Takahashi discloses an "original violence" that the discourse of history itself, which is woven by way of clearly presupposing "our present," creates towards the Other of history that completely became a past being which absolutely cannot present itself to "our present": he is calling attention to the act of repression and exclusion contained in linguistic activity, including historical description. Consequently, he calls for historians to deconstruct historical discourse itself from an impossible viewpoint of the Other (in the Derridean sense) of history.

This was a calling that truly had an impact on me, for my intervention towards the study of history since "The Logic and Experience of History" was one that placed hope in an epistemological potentiality contained in "historiography as representation," arising from my positive grasp of the nature possessed by historical description as linguistic activity, against the background of a "linguistic turn" that the structuralists and post-structuralists brought to the social and human sciences in general, who assumed the mantle of the "linguistic revolution" by Saussure. Contrary to this orientation of mine was presented a viewpoint that tries to pay attention to the *repressiveness* or to what is "originally violent" in the act of representation performed by "historiography as representation."

Thus, the problematic was forced to shift drastically towards an ethical plane. Gathering clues to resolve the question at this new level, I started to look for what history could learn from psychoanalysis. In proceeding with this work, Dominick La Capra's *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma* (1994), Cathy Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, History* (1996) and my dialogue with the philosopher of aesthetics Taki Koji, which appeared in the July 1995 and October 1996 issues of the journal, *Gendai Shiso*, were of great help to me.

My book *Rekshiteki Risei no Hihan no tame ni (For a Critique of Historical Reason)* published by Iwanami in May 2000 is a kind of mid-term report on my inquiries into the above mentioned ethical question of language and historical discourse: a book that incorporated my series of inquiries under the title "Rekishu no Heterorogiji no tameni" ("For a heterology of history"), which ran in *Shiso* from the fall of 1997 to the spring of 2000 and several related essays beginning with "Haiboku no Kioku to Haikyo kara no Monogatari" ("Memories of Defeat and Narratives from the Ruins"), which appeared in the collection of essays, *Shin Tetsugaku Kogi 8: Rekishi to Shumatsu-ron (New Philosophy Lectures 8: History and Eschatology)* also published by Iwanami in 1998. The term "heterology of history" was coined by me taking up in a different way the necessity for a "heterogenization of history" from the viewpoint of the Other of history that absolutely cannot present itself to "our present," as proposed by Takahashi.

In this my recent book, while focusing on the category of "history as fact (*Tat-Sache*)" proposed by Miki Kiyoshi in *Rekishu Tetsugaku (Philosophy of History, 1932)*, the question of the subject-position (*shutai ichi*) of the historian became a center of argumentation.

In addition, I think that an impossible viewpoint of the Other of history that absolutely cannot present itself to "our present" must be made to cope with "heterotopia" or a heterogeneous counter-place of discourse to which the historian should proceed to dislocate her/himself in a transversal/self-transcendent manner. As I wrote in the opening essay of my book, *Heterotopia no Shiko (Heterotopian Thinking, 1996)*, which bears the same title, the person who provided me with a model for a point of orientation towards such a heterotopia of discourse was Edward W. Said: the very same Said of *Beginnings*, who was the one guiding figure that encouraged me to proceed with my dialogue with Vico. On the other hand, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's book, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason (1999)*, became an important reference for me with regard to the way of making this heterotopian place (or rather, counter-place) of discourse relate to an impossible viewpoint of the Other of history.

In the meantime, Ginzburg, who was an indispensable critical interlocutor for me to seek a possibility of "poetics of history" or "historiography as representation," also seemed to be practicing a kind of heterotopian thinking similar to Said, in conjunction with the shift in his base of activity from Bologna to Los Angeles at the end of the 1980s. On this point, it would please me if you read my essay, "Ginzuburugu ni okeru 'Hyosho to Shinjitsu' Mondai no Sonogo" ("The Aftermath of the Question of 'Representation and Truth' in Ginzburg"), which is the translator's postface to the Japanese translation (2002) of Ginzburg's, *History, Rhetoric and Proof (1999)*.

Although somewhat of an abridged explanation, this is an overview of my thinking since the 1970s concerning "history" at its sunset.

- This paper was delivered at Cornell University, 19 September 2003.