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The Opening: A Philosophy of Actuality (3)

Chapter 2 The Leibnizian Principle and the Kantian Principle

Section 7 Isn't It Astounding That the Objective World Obtains?

Giving Corporeality to Now

Refer to the diagram again. There are possible presents in the second row, right under the past and the future in the first row. Possible presents are, though they are not actually present, times that can be present. (They are in fact times that were present and times that will be present.) Further below, the pasts and futures are located on the left and right of the two presents (of the second row), there are possible presents distributed in the third and fourth rows, and so on.

This means that each of the presents in the second row is also not a mere possible present but is, in the structure, placed as an actual present, in comparison to the possible presents in the rows further down. However, it is not the actually actual present, but an actual present by structure, or, at it were, a possibly actual present.

If the structure holds, cannot we also recognise the actually actual present in the top row as an example of possible presents? Indeed, as we have seen, the special time called the present, constituting itself in this way, is located as an element in the objective form of time. This fact of the present corresponds to the fact that I place myself in the position of 'I', of which anyone can be an example, and constitute this ultimate subjectivity as an objective subjectivity. However, if the actual present or I is entirely incorporated into the structure, and reduced into a possible present or possible I, that would destroy the entire structure.

Even if the actual now disappears, the hierarchical structure can be permanent. It can be preserved as a hierarchical structure that originates from *an* actual now. Even if I die or had never been born, the personal structure originating from *an* actual I can remain intact. I can constitute the objective world including me only in such a way that they are permanent and intact. Thus, in one aspect, of course it could be said that my death is structurally necessary

to the pronouncing of the *I*.¹ But, in another aspect, the existence of the structure *itself* is created by the fact that I am alive. In this way, ‘even if I had never been born’ can only be a subjunctive negative of the actual fact that I was born.

This argument is already familiar (to me), but thinking about it now, I have come up with something different. Though I do not know if it is important, I would like to write about it briefly.

I have a body that I can feel and move, and thereby I am spatially separated from things other than I by clear boundaries. ‘Now’, unlike ‘I’, is not separated by clear boundaries. Although Now can be made into a point without size if we continue to cut it down, it can be *endlessly* expanded if we want it to be; this year or this century is *now* in comparison with another year or another century.

A conclusion that we can notice here first is that soluncism is different from solipsism in the respect that we need not consider it epistemologically. Not thinking that the past and future are recollections and expectations in the present, we could think that the past and future *are* thoroughly now. But if that is true, the same can be said of me if we only consider my mind, ignoring the body. Not thinking that the external world and others are constructed *by me*, we could think that they *are* thoroughly me. That is simply the way of thinking from the standpoint of the opening.

However, conversely, we can give corporeality to now. Let us suppose that our bodies are somehow discontinued with each other, and we have to fall asleep at night—say, at midnight—when a date changes. Our memory is very clear for a day, but dim beyond a night. Our personality also changes from day to day. On this supposition, a ‘day’ corresponds to a body, and ‘today’ gives corporeality to now. Let us look at the figure in Section 6 again. Replace ‘past’ with ‘yesterday’, ‘present’ with ‘today’, and ‘future’ with ‘tomorrow’.

It is interesting to suppose, by taking the analogy with the body more strictly, as follows: whereas we can recollect or expect public events, we can never recollect or expect beyond a day, any private experiences such as a bodily sensation, which others cannot observe. That is, in the way that bodily sensations are ‘private’ in relation to others, they are also ‘momentary’, i.e. limited to a day, in relation to our own past and future. Here, let us also suppose that we do not have the privacy that we do have; private sensations of others are not private, and one can directly observe them by means of the mental functions that stand in the same relation to them as memory does to one’s own past. Of course, as memory can be wrong, this mental function can make errors, and a sceptic could cast a general doubt on its correctness. However, we can suppose that, as correspondence of memory among many people gives

¹ Derrida, J., *Speech and Phenomena and Other Essays on Husserl’s Theory of Signs*, trans. D. B. Allison, Northwestern University Press, 1973, p. 96.

proof of a fact in the past, correspondence of that function among many others gives strong proof of an event in a person's mind; if a person has so-called inverted qualia, for example, it can be known that that person does.

By contrast, on the supposition here, if I have come to have inverted qualia in relation to my own past, it cannot be known that I have. In other words, under ordinary conditions, if I have come to have inverted qualia in relation to my own past, it can be known that I have. Why can it be known? Under ordinary conditions, for one who, from the outset, has an itch in circumstances where he/she should have a pain, one's itch is a pain, but for one who, after some time, started to have an itch in circumstances where he/she should have a pain, the change can be known. For, even if one ceases to feel pain in a normal way, one can remember a pain that one felt in a normal way. That is to say, there exists memory that has an authority independent of actually feeling it. What does not exist in relation to others exists in relation to one's own past. As the thought experiment above shows, it is a mere contingent fact, but it nevertheless has great significance.²

Transcendental Structure in Experience

Now, no-one thinks that the past is merely a recollection in the present. All of us believe that the past really was, and that we recollect it now. For, at any rate, we can remember something only in such a way that 'we remember it because it really happened'. That is, recollection constructs the objective past. (In other words, recollection makes the objective past obtain.)

But *in spite of that*, it may be that everything that we recollect or have in our memory in fact did not happen. It may be that *everything* remembered as having happened consistently with various other events—*everything* that thus makes the past world obtain, in fact did not happen.

Is this scepticism possible? We, or I, always only appear to recollect or have apparent memory, and, in fact, a fact in the past that is remembered is always what did not exist. That seems almost impossible or nonsense. But what if that is the case in reality?

I have just said 'in reality'. But even if what is said above is the case in reality, 'in reality' here would be meaningless either for our everyday life or for my life. We can accept the 'meaninglessness' in that sense. Nevertheless, what if it is *still* the case in reality? Then, what about this thing happening now? It is indeed happening now, but it will not be recollected for good. Five minutes later, something utterly different from this could be

² See Section 2 of Chapter 3 on this point.

remembered. Can we say that this may be always be the case in reality?

The answer should be 'No'. If something utterly different from this will be remembered five minutes later, and if that is always the case, how can we nevertheless say that the time *is five minutes later*? How can we still say that this situation is the future *of the same world*? This would be the crucial refutation of the scepticism.

Does it not also give us a reason why the creation of the world five minutes ago cannot have been five minutes ago at any given time? A world in which all of 'any given time' exist in order is not the one in which we exist. There is no measure that bridges that world with our world. Even if there were, it would only be because the worlds had happened to be created so. The supposition that the world was created five minutes ago at any time demolishes the idea that there was a time five minutes ago, because it denies the presupposition that time is measurable.

I think that the actual world, in which the past and the future are talked about, has one critical characteristic. When we have a dream, we are not conscious that what is dreamed *of will be recollected later*. A dream is suddenly recollected. Even if, while we are dreaming, we have the belief that we will remember our dream, the belief and the recollection are not related. Living in actuality, we already know that it *will be recollected later*. The possibility of its being recollected is known beforehand, and then it is recollected. It is not that the present is found to be the past only when it becomes the past; it is known, at the time it is still present, as what will necessarily become the past. The actual present is known, beforehand in the very act, to be merely one of the possible presents. Our experience has a transcendental structure that stipulates the present moment as one of the possible presents from the standpoints of the past and future.

We can deny a sentence, but we cannot deny a picture. We can make a negative sentence, but we cannot draw a negative picture. Such a fact originates in the essential function of language—that was the fundamental insight of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. If such a fact is true, however, it should also be true that we can change the tense of a sentence but cannot change the tense of a picture. There exists no operation of transforming a present picture into a past picture in the same way that there exists no operation of transforming an affirmative picture into a negative picture. However, there necessarily exists an operation of transforming a present sentence into a past sentence as well as an operation of transforming an affirmative sentence into a negative sentence. For we, as creatures with language, can grasp the actual present as one of the possible presents. This fact is based on the Kantian transcendental constructive activity (as described in his second version).

What we can recognise about tense is applicable to person. We cannot tell whether a

portrait is a self-portrait or not without information from outside the picture. It is because a picture cannot describe person. In contrast, a sentence can include in itself information concerning person. I can grasp this actual I as one of the possible 'I's, and start a sentence with 'I'. For this reason, and for this reason alone, other minds (or others' 'I's) necessarily exist in the same way as presents for the past or future do. After all, this should be the only reason why so-called solipsism is wrong.

We can establish an objective world, which contains now and I, through constructing the forms of objective tense and objective person. People take that fact 'for granted', but it is, in truth, an astounding matter. In other words, the depth of the insight of Kant's philosophy is to be described as earthshaking. To describe it in another way, it is literally exceptional in history.

Section 8 The Absolute Present Is / Is Not Merely One Example of the Relative Presents

On McTaggart's 'Contradiction' and 'Reality'

But I withdraw my words. Kant is not good at all. His earthshaking insight, of course, was not bequeathed to contemporary philosophy, whereas all its bad aspects were. Now, McTaggart's paradox, too, is the problem of locating the opening inside the world opened by the opening. To support what I have just said about Kant, I will discuss it here.

McTaggart says that time has two aspects. One is the earlier-later relation that obtains between more than one time, and it does not change even as time passes. Another is: which a given time is, past, present or future, and it does change as time passes. Indeed, that is precisely what is meant when we say that time passes. This is what is called the A series, and the former, the mere earlier-later relation, is called the B series. The A series is what is essential—or indispensable—for time, but it bears contradiction. Since what bears contradiction cannot be real, time is not real. That is the line of McTaggart's argument.

Can it bear contradiction if it is deprived of reality? That is my first question concerning the form of his argument. Why do we all, regardless of whether or not it is real, succeed in coherently grasping what bears contradiction, and commonly use it? His argument is far from being satisfactory unless that is explained. How can we settle the problem by simply denying reality?

McTaggart's 'paradox' can be summarised as follows. Properties of being past, being present, and being future are incompatible with one another. However, any event must have all of those three properties. For a past event, there must be times at which it has been future and times at which it has been present; for a present event, there must be times at which it

has been future and times at which it will be past; and for a future event, there must be a time at which it will be present and times at which it will be past. Thus, all of the three incompatible properties are predicated of any event, but that is contradictory to the incompatibility of them.

All of us would have the same objection against it; although an event must have all of the three, it has them successively, but not all at once, so why is there any contradiction? For an event that *is* present, for example, there are times at which it *has been* future and times at which it *will be* past. It is not that it is present, is future, and is past.

In reply to this objection, McTaggart claims that the argument will be caught up in a vicious circle. For what is meant by ‘for an event that *is* present, there are times at which it *has been* future and times at which it *will be* past’ is: an event that is present *in the present* is future *in the past* and is past *in the future*. In insisting that the present, past, and future are not contradictory to one another and trying to explain it, we have to employ the present, past and future again. We must employ the A series (or time) in order to show that the A series is not contradictory (or that time is real). Then, we will face the puzzling fact that ‘time is inside time’, and that will continue endlessly. The present, past and future that we have referred to in trying to explain the present, past, and future similarly have to be explained in terms of a third present, past, and future. If that is true, we will never reach a point where we can say that there is no contradiction.

As a supplementary explanation, I would like to illustrate my own interpretation of the meaning of ‘that it is not real’ Let us imagine a huge book on which all facts that occur in the whole universe are written. In this book, literally everything is written down. It is even written exactly how many hairs a cat I saw at West Acton Station yesterday had on its whole body at noon on February the twenty-first, 2004. But in the book, it is not written when now is. Even if the ‘chronological table of the history of universe’ in it has the function of a clock, the clock’s hand by itself cannot show now. The book can appear now only through the fact that we who are outside the book (and inside time) see it *now*.

The same thing, of course, can be said of ‘I’. In the book, it is not written who I am. Similarly, in the case of the clock’s hand on the chronological table of the history of the universe, the book contains descriptions of each person’s self-consciousness, and the name ‘Hitoshi Nagai’ is written.

Neither Now or I can be written in the book in advance. Therefore, those two facts are ‘not real’, just as God’s will is not a part of God’s intelligence.

A Kantian Reading of McTaggart

There are various arguments for and against McTaggart. But it is not so difficult to situate his and other arguments from my point of view.

Let us start with the first part of his argument, the classification into the A series and the B series.

It is said that the B series represents the earlier-later relation between times, and that it does not change even as time passes. But, precisely, what is the earlier-later relation between times? It could not mean anything unless we *hypothetically* put the present in the midst of two times; future and past. If so, is it not already identical to the A series?

Furthermore, the hypothetically positioned present, since it is implied that it is the present, should be moving, on my supposition. Then, if the earlier-later relation obtains, there has to be a change. Even if the earlier-later relation between the visit of Commodore Perry and the Meiji Restoration is fixed, do we not have to presuppose the understanding of change—the fact that what has been future becomes present and then becomes past—in order for there to be the comprehension of the earlier-later relation?

My own objection to the above point is as follows. We cannot say ‘hypothetically’ when the A series is in question. The present is already in the twenty-first century, and it is only there that Now is actually moving and change is actually happening! I am talking about the simple and real transition of time, the transition from the time at which I wrote ‘change is actually happening!’ to the time at which I am writing this. The change from the visit of Commodore Perry to the Meiji Restoration, therefore, simply and actually does not exist. If we interpret the present as the present of the opening, the present that simply and actually opens the world, we cannot think in any other way. I think that there is certainly a sense in which we can say this is so.

However, as we already saw when we discussed Kant, the present of the opening, the present from which the world is opened, is located inside the world only through reducing itself to *one example* of the *possible* presents. Only thus does the actual present become *one* of what can be applied the general concept ‘present’. Therefore—as in the case of ‘I’—the ‘present’ or ‘Now’ also has to have two aspects. And the very fact that it has to possess both of the aspects and make them support each other is what generates McTaggart’s ‘contradiction’.

In a sense, there is indeed contradiction. It is the contradiction between the actual A series, which is all that actually exists, and the possible A series, which appears when a present is *hypothetically* positioned somewhere. In other words, it is the contradiction between the immediate A series, which is simple and actual, and the mediate A series, which

is mediated by the conception of ‘for . . .’.³

Following this argument, we can insist that there is no contradiction. We can insist that, since an event is not in the past, present and future all at once, only one of them can be *actual*, and that there is, thus, no contradiction. And then, we can refuse to replace ‘actual’ with ‘present’. If we take McTaggart’s argument in that way, we will not fall into the vicious circle described by McTaggart. For McTaggart could not, at the very beginning, rephrase ‘M is present, has been future, and will be past’ and say that ‘M is present *in the present*, future in the past, past in the future’.⁴ In fact, the present is not present in the present—for the present—but simply and immediately, i.e. *actually*, present. Today is not today *for* today but, for some reason, simply and immediately, i.e. *actually*, today. This corresponds to the fact that this person is, for some reason, simply and immediately I, not I *for* me.

However, if the above description of the present is interpreted to be applicable to each of all times (or each of all presents at each time), ‘actuality’ itself would be interpreted as a ‘*possible* actuality’, and what would amount to McTaggart’s vicious circle can arise again.

If there were only the immediate, actual A series, the contradiction (or the appearance of it), would not arise. However, it would not even be grasped as a *series*. When the immediate, actual present is put into the atemporal, non-directional series, which McTaggart calls the C series, mediate, possible presents are inevitably added at the same time. Otherwise, it would not be able to grasp itself as the *immediate* present.

This line of thought gives the best proof that what is commonly called solipsism, is false. For, when the immediate I appears in the world, mediate ‘I’s too would inevitably appear in the world. Otherwise, I would not be able to grasp myself as the *immediate* I. By contrast, however, even though what is called solipsism is false, I can appear in the world only as a being that is of a completely different sort from others. I do not think that there can be any thought other than the one above that can give a reason for *both* sides of this contrast.

³ To add a little technical point, those who are called B-theorists, from the outset, understand the A series by confining its meaning to that of a possible, mediate A series, and then try to vindicate McTaggart’s argument of the ‘contradiction’. Because of that, the original philosophical tension inside McTaggart’s own argument seems to have decreased. They say, for example, ‘At three o’clock, i.e. when it is now three, the fact is that a cup of coffee is hot now; and at three thirty, i.e. when it is now three thirty, the fact is that the cup of coffee is cold now. Those are changeable facts’. I think that this is wrong and that the A series in its original meaning has already disappeared in their description. Isn’t it obvious that the A series is parasitic on the B series if we take it in that way?

⁴ Cf. McTaggart, J. M. E., ‘The Unreality of Time’, *Mind*, New Series, 68, 1908, pp. 458-74. See pp. 468-9.

Section 9 Philosophy Has Not Yet Begun

The Conflict between the A Series and the B Series Is Only an Apparent One

What I wrote at the end of the last section is, I think, extremely important, so I would like to put an extra emphasis on it. Philosophers have discussed the falsity of so-called solipsism in various ways. Yet the reverse question is left untouched. One could ask reversely, ‘Why are others not me?’

Others have a mind as I do and differ from me only in properties, yet they differ in one radical way: they are *not* me’. But why are they not me? No one in the history of philosophy has come the least bit close to this vital question. Despite there being those who talk of the end of philosophy or the survival of philosophy, philosophy, I would say, has not yet begun.

Another thing I am unhappy with is that (probably because all prominent philosophers in history have been so, and the greater part of contemporary philosophers has been following them to be intent on working as their subcontractor) no one tries even to approach that question, which seems to me to occur spontaneously if we live normally and foster our philosophical interest straightforwardly.

Is it not obviously meaningless to criticise so-called solipsism, which is only a clumsily exaggerated expression of amazement at a mysterious fact, while leaving the fact itself as if it were a common fact?

But philosophers, who would otherwise have no help at all, have always tended to lean on the traditions or customs or manners or standard tactics (or even on schools or fashions) more than anyone else. That might deserve sympathy, so let us stop blaming them insistently and return to the McTaggart argument.

Let us suppose that there is liquid in a pot. One day at noon the liquid is hot, and later that night it is cold. According to McTaggart, this is not a change since it belongs to the B series. His point is that it is true at any time that the liquid is hot at noon and cold at night on the day; that something that has been hot is now cold or that something that is now hot will be cold is the sort of thing he regards as a change.

In this view, there is an important insight that we must not overlook. First I would like to emphasise that. Nevertheless, the view is wrong as it is expressed in words. If something is hot at noon and cold at night, there must be a change during this period. The described fact is nothing but the record of a change in the A series, a change in which the *actual present* has moved from noon to night, and there is no room to interpret it differently. Even though the actual present no longer exists there, we cannot wipe away its traces (to put it in a somewhat Derridian way). It would be the same even if we shifted the entire argument to the future.

We can also say the reverse. Even if a liquid that has been hot is *now actually* cooling down, that is only *an example* of a change in which liquid that has been hot is cooling down. Language cannot express the actuality in that sense, which appears in many places, after all.⁵ Therefore, the fact that it is *now actually* becoming colder is only an example of a situation where it is now hypothetically becoming colder. That is why it could be true at any time. (In this connection, if we use a Derridian expression again, that is equivalent to the idea that *écriture* always precedes *parole*. The same thing is said by the statement that ‘my death is structurally necessary to the pronouncing of the *I*’, which I quoted in Section 7.)

Not only ‘a liquid that has been hot is *now* becoming colder’, which is called a change of a property, but also ‘the *actual* present is moving from noon to night’, which is called the A change, is only an example of the present’s moving from noon to night in general. That is exactly why it can be understood as a change—i.e. as an example of what is called a ‘change’. For example, ‘tomorrow’ is a location in the A series (supplied with the C series), and ‘the next day’ is a location in the B series (supplied with the C series). (The C series is supplied since this example, unlike the case of the ‘future’, divides time by a unit day.) However, the ‘next day’ means nothing more than the ‘tomorrow’ that is understood when we *hypothetically* think of a certain day as today, and, by contrast, ‘tomorrow’ means nothing but ‘the next day’ from the viewpoint of today. (To put it a little technically, they differ only in pragmatics, and do not differ in semantics.) Therefore, in my view, the distinction between the A and B series does not exist in the way McTaggart uses it or in the way it is commonly used today.

(Incidentally, though McTaggart says that the B series consists of the A and C series, that should be a simple mistake. ‘Tomorrow’ is an expression consisting of the A and C series, but the addition of the C series does not yield the meaning of ‘the next day’, which is a B expression. By contrast, bare A characteristics such as ‘present’, ‘past’, and ‘future’, without the addition of the C series, would be given the meanings of the B series, ‘at that time’, ‘earlier’, and ‘later’, just by being generalised.)

Then, is it enough just to have the A series thus generalised, which is the true character of the B series? No. We simply cannot imagine a world that has only the generalised A series, but not the actual A series.

Let us imagine a world in which there never exists the actual present, a world where we can hypothetically assume any time to be the present. It would, after all, be a world in which all people are free time travellers. In this case, the actual now can be moved anywhere, without being lost at all.

⁵ Putting it the other way around, the essence of language consists precisely in its capacity to thoroughly conceptualise (or, so to say, *possiblise*) the actuality in that sense.

If there were not an actual present, would not the world be lost? A different phrasing of this question is, ‘If there were not the opening, would the world be opened or begin?’ The question is extremely relevant. However, it is always possible to suppose that the world has always been there by itself from the start, without being opened or beginning. For it is only when the world is constructed as such that it becomes *real*.

The A Blind and the B Blind

The conflict is not between the A and B series, but between the A facts that actually exist and its linguistic expression, which is the generalised A series. The existence of the actual A facts cannot be expressed with language. That is my thesis. This will immediately trigger the following objection. It is true that ‘present’, ‘past’, and ‘future’ are merely concepts that are possible whichever time we hypothetically regard as now, but things are different in the case of the tense expressions such as ‘was’, ‘is’, and ‘will be’. Is it that they can only express the actual past, present, and future? No. If I discover in my last year’s diary a description, ‘It *was* cold at dawn’, I can immediately understand it and *think that it was*. If someone tries to refute me by saying that that is because the coldness is in the past even now, I can propose a description, ‘It *will be* cold in the evening’. In the case of the tense expressions too, a signifying act, putting ourselves at a hypothetical present, is fully effective. Otherwise, we would not be able even to understand a diary or any other documents written in the past.

I would like to remind you of the peculiar diagram in Section 6. In McTaggart’s terminology, only the uppermost row is the actual A series. However, we have seen that the very characteristic of ‘actual’ is doomed to be relativised and formalised. At that point, I said that ‘it is necessary for this very conflict between the formal and the actual to be formalised’. The reason was that tense is a special form, including in itself this movement of limitless formalization. (Could the same thing be said of person and modality?)

There is a pair of concepts in Wittgenstein—the ‘meaning blind’ and the ‘aspect blind’.⁶ Applying his problematic and terminology to McTaggart’s categorization of series, we can find a distinction between the A blind and the B blind.

The A blind can understand or use such terms as ‘that day’, ‘the previous day’ and ‘the next day’, but cannot understand or use such terms as ‘today’, ‘yesterday’ and ‘tomorrow’. The B blind, by contrast, can understand or use the terms ‘today’, ‘yesterday’, and ‘tomorrow’, but cannot understand or use such terms as ‘that day’, ‘the previous day’, and ‘the next day’. The A blind lives in the world of possibilities, and does not know that there

⁶ Refer to my book *Introduction to Wittgenstein*, Chapter 5, Section 4 for details.

exists the special instance named actuality. The B blind lives in the world of actuality, and does not have the capacity to grasp actuality as just one example of many possibilities.⁷

Now, which would be the more handicapped, the A blind or the B blind person? Apart from the discussion of the amount of loss, there can be an argument that one or the other is conceptually impossible. For example, there could be the argument that the A blind is impossible as one logically cannot understand ‘that day’, ‘the previous day’, and ‘the next day’ without understanding ‘today’, ‘yesterday’, and ‘tomorrow’. Conversely, the reverse could be argued, that the B blind is impossible, as one logically cannot understand ‘today’, ‘yesterday’, and ‘tomorrow’ without understanding ‘that day’, ‘the previous day’ and ‘the next day’.

Let us apply this discussion to the case of person. We can imagine a person who is able to understand the first person ‘that very person’, the second person ‘the person one is speaking to’, and the third person ‘another person’, and can understand the concept of person, but cannot understand or use such terms as ‘I’, ‘you’, and ‘he (or she)’. By contrast, we can also imagine a person who can understand or use such terms as ‘I’, ‘you’, and ‘he (or she)’, but cannot use ‘that very person’, ‘the person one is speaking to’—i.e. the second person *for the person in question*—and ‘another person’—i.e. the third person *for the person in question*—and cannot understand the concept of person. Here, too, one could ask which person would have the greater handicap. One could argue once more that one or the other is conceptually impossible.

Then, we could also imagine another contrast: one person who cannot understand ‘I think, therefore I am’, but can understand ‘an ego thinks, therefore the ego is’. Another person who cannot understand ‘an ego thinks, therefore the ego is’, but can understand ‘I think, therefore I am’. The equivalent of the A blind here, is not one who cannot understand ‘I think, therefore I am’, but one who cannot see in it any further content than ‘an ego thinks, therefore the ego is’. (He would say, ‘How come the contents of these two are different?’) Then, the B blind here is not someone who cannot understand ‘an ego thinks, therefore the ego is’, but someone who cannot see in it the same contents as his own case ‘I think, therefore I am’. (For he would say, ‘These two actually are completely different. How could you not see this radical difference?’)

If there were a person who had practised methodic doubt, whose expression in words was exactly the same as Descartes’, and had reached the conclusion whose expression in words is exactly the same as his, would Descartes consider this person’s I’s Existence as

⁷ However, from the viewpoint of the ‘actual’ now, which I have been discussing, one who can *always* use ‘today’, ‘yesterday’ and ‘tomorrow’, even if he is B blind, already lives in the space of possibilities. It is only that he is not *aware* of that.

indubitable as his own? Would Descartes understand this person's thought not as 'he thinks, therefore he is', but as 'I think, therefore I am', to the effect that 'an ego thinks, therefore the ego is'? It is clear that this polarity corresponds to the contrast found in tense, i.e. the contrast between the actual A series and the relativised A series (that is distinguished from the B series itself).

'An ego' here, of course, is what I have called a 'depersonalised ego' in Chapter 1. However, if a certain person such as Descartes is an origin from which the contrast is talked about, the actual A series, in fact, is already the mere relativised A series. The two sorts of blind cannot be said to have a correct understanding of language. This is certainly important, but a more important point is that the existence of the actual A facts themselves is hidden in the contrast between these two sorts, as long as the contrast is expressed in language.

If I knew only the actual A series itself and did not have a capacity to relativise it, would I be able to grasp the existence of me (or now)? (That was Kant's question.) In order for me, as a perfect B blind person, to grasp myself (or the present), I would have to, through understanding the *possibility* of other B blinds, understand myself as one of them. But that again relativises the actual A facts, and is a step towards the possession of the B concept.⁸

However, one crucial difference between tense and person is with respect to movement or change. In the case of tense, unlike the case of person, a mere possibility turns into *actuality* through change (called the A change). In virtue of the A change, through which a day that is today turns into yesterday, even the B blind should already know that the same day can be 'today' or 'yesterday' or 'tomorrow', and that different days can be 'today'. This fact suggests that the B blind of tense stands closer to the B concepts such as 'that day', 'the next day', and 'the previous day' than the B blind of person. For the B blind of tense, having movement (or change) as a clue, has the potential to succeed in grasping the structure that today is yesterday *if viewed from tomorrow*.

A generalised A property could even be incorporated into a word. For example, let us think whether the word 'corm' could be used. 'Corm' is an adjective that expresses in a word 'it has been cold *until now* but will be warm *from now on*'. When we want to say such a thing, we only need to say, 'It is corm,' and do not need tense expressions such as 'has been' and 'will be'. What is important here is that if we had a word with such a meaning, it could be generally used. We could always use it! That is, a general A fact can be expressed in

⁸ Let us suppose that there is an oriental despot (cf. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Remarks*, §58), who is a perfect B blind person. In order for him to grasp the existence of himself, he would have to conceive of the *possibility* of other despotic states and put himself on a par with other possible despots. Only then could he become a so-called solipsist in his state.

language.⁹

By contrast, the A facts, which are not generalised, i.e. the actual, immediate A facts themselves, cannot be expressed in language. Even if there were a language that could only talk about or refer to the actual A facts themselves, it would not be able to fulfil its basic function as a language. Indeed, can we, even hypothetically, conceive of such a ‘language’? In trying to conceive of it, do we even know what to conceive of?

Section 10 From Martian Travel to Time Travel

A Short Sequel

Before getting into the discussion on that problem, let us hold on a little longer and make a further inquiry.

I would like to start with a summary. The compatibility seen in the case that an event is past, present, and future and the exclusiveness seen in the case that an event is neither past nor future if it is present, both seem to obtain. This is because the characteristic of ‘actuality’ is classed as one example of the qualities of ‘for . . .’—i.e. the actual now is classed among other possible nows—and the characteristic of ‘actuality’ becomes incorporated into the series of ‘for . . .’ as one of *such* characteristics—i.e. not as existence but as essence. This is an example of the general relation between the ‘opening itself’ and that which is located within the world that is opened.

If such is the case, it would be that McTaggart’s ‘contradiction’ occurred through the verbalization of the opening, or through the relativisation (via verbalisation) of the absolute. The first counter attack against the indication of the contradiction was: any event is past or present or future, and cannot be more than one of them, so there isn’t any contradiction. The counter attack ends here, and therefore there is no contradiction.

The counter attacking should end here. An unnecessary next step causes the alleged contradiction. What the next step indicates is: if an event is present, we cannot say that it *is* past or that it *is* future, but can only say that it *will be* past (i.e. past *for* the future) or that it *has been* future (i.e. future *for* the past). This is just the relativised A series, that is, the B series, in which there are earlier-later relations. ‘The present is past for the future’ directly means ‘a given time is earlier for a later time’, and ‘the present is future for the past’ directly means ‘a given time is later for an earlier time’.

⁹ Even if ‘corm’ were a word that means ‘it has been cold until five o’clock PM on 20 March 2004, but will be warm after that’, It could still be used. Though I do not know how it would be used, it could be used!

Of course, it is not that a given event can be ‘earlier’, ‘at that time’, and ‘later’. For we cannot describe such B characteristics without another event for comparison. If we have another event to compare something to, the original event, in relation to it, is fixed as ‘earlier’, ‘at that time’, or ‘later’. Therefore, we cannot find a contradiction in the B series itself. Why is this so?

As we have discussed, ‘earlier’ and ‘later’ mean the *hypothetical* past and the *hypothetical* future as we put a *hypothetical* present in the middle. Even this hypothetical present must move, in so far as it is a present, so there could come a time when both of the two events are in the hypothetical past. In that case, however, we could not say that the two events have both turned out to be ‘earlier’. Why not? It is because the B series is the mechanism that preserves ‘earlier’-‘later’ relations through always putting a new hypothetical present in the middle of two events.

Therefore, ‘earlier’-‘later’ relations can be rephrased as relations between the ‘hypothetical past’ and the ‘hypothetical future’. But here, if we remove ‘hypothetical’ from them and rephrase them as the ‘past’ and the ‘future’ (describing them in the same words as we use to express the ‘past’ and ‘future’ that are of the non-relational, absolute A series), an apparent contradiction can naturally occur. A contradiction asserts that ‘S is P’ and ‘S is not P’ both obtain. If the two ‘P’s have different meanings, a contradiction is merely apparent.

However, the A series expressed here as non-relational and absolute, should be understood as a ‘series above *each* row’ in the diagram in Section 6. (That is, it is non-relational and absolute relative to the A series that is below and is relational to a ‘series above each row’.) It does not necessarily mean the uppermost series. That is why the ‘contradiction’ brings about an infinite regress.

It is true that the counterattacking party made an ‘unnecessary step’ forward, but we must not make light of the fact it did. That it can make that unnecessary step implies a very important epistemological fact. Remember my comment on Kant in Section 7? ‘Living in actuality, we already know that it *will be recollected later*. The possibility of its being recollected is known beforehand, and then it is recollected. It is not that the present is found to be the past only when it becomes the past: the present is already known, at the time when it is the present, as what will necessarily become the past. That is, the actual present is known, beforehand at the very scene, as merely one of the possible presents. Our experience has a transcendental structure that stipulates the very present moment as one of the possible presents from the standpoints of the past or future.’ That is, epistemologically speaking: there is the transcendental fact (which constructs an objective world) that experience itself is not possible unless present experience includes beforehand the characteristic of ‘will be past’. This is what establishes the objective structure ‘a time is earlier from the standpoint of a later time’.

There is a contemporary conflict between A-theorists and B-theorists. But since the understanding at the outset of what the A and B series are is confused, the conflict and dispute, naturally, are confused. What is clear is that the ultimate ground for A-theorists is the actual A facts themselves. They, however, cannot be expressed in language. So A-theorists have to be at a disadvantage in the dispute of linguistic philosophy. (Incidentally, it seems often true in philosophy that a fascinating point of view and a deep insight are hidden on a side that is at a disadvantage. A side is at a disadvantage when a problem is unsolved or when it cannot solve a problem, while it remains unconvinced by a ‘solution’ given by the opposing side.)

In linguistic philosophy, the starting point for a problem is a statement. A question would be, for example, what the truth condition of the statement ‘it is now three o’clock’ is—i.e. under what conditions the statement is true.

When I say, at three PM, ‘It is now three’, that statement is true, and when I say, at four, ‘It is now four’, that statement is also true. If, faced with this case, we think that they become true in virtue of the A-series facts that they correspond to, it has to be that they both are true, and McTaggart’s ‘contradiction’ results. It would, therefore, be supposed that what makes them true are not the A-series facts that they correspond to. Then, the truth condition would be of the following sort: for any X, statements of the form ‘it is at X’ are true if and only if X is said at X. However, what we have here is the relativised A series, and is virtually the B series. Indeed, there is no contradiction here. From the standpoint of linguistic philosophy, that is a natural line of thought. But that is merely because language, in its nature, requires such a line of thought. If there were nothing left here, such a metaphysical question as, ‘Why is it the twenty-first century now, but not the thirteenth or twenty-fourth century?’ would be nonsensical; the answer would be, ‘It is because the question is being asked in the twenty-first century’. What has been said about ‘now’ can also be said about ‘I’. That is, such a question as ‘Why am I Hitoshi Nagai?’¹⁰ cannot be answered in terms of the truth conditions of a statement. In fact, we should investigate the nature of the thought of truth conditions, or even the nature of language, on the basis of the fact that it makes that sort of question nonsensical.

Time Travel

Now, when I discussed the split of I, I said that the only splits we can discuss parallel to it without losing the philosophical points are the splits of the world, now, and God. Let us, in

¹⁰ Similarly to the previous case, the answer to it would be, ‘It is because it is being asked by Hitoshi Nagai’.

what follows, try to discuss the problem of the split of now.

A thought experiment on the split of now would ordinarily be understood as that of time travel. When I discussed the split of I, I said that the two people after the split are persons with the same contents, so which person turns out to be me is determined only by chance. I also said that a problem arises when the one who has not properly succeeded to my previous memory turns out to be me, and the one who has properly succeeded to it turns out not to be me. According to the Leibnizian Principle, such a thing could happen. Not only could it happen, but in the case of time travel, it is basically all that happens. Now, only now, deviating from the link of contents, flies away to the past or far future. That is, a time which has not properly succeeded to the historical progress turns out to be now, and a time which has properly succeeded to it turns out not to be now.

However, if the Leibnizian Principle operates independently, so that what transfers to another time is literally only now, everything is exactly as if that time had been now from the beginning. If now suddenly became February 16th, 1984, it would be that it *is* simply and normally February 16th, 1984. That is the same as this case: if I became President Bush, it would be that I *am* simply and normally President Bush. (Precisely speaking, the following two cases correspond to each other: (1) when I become Bush, it makes no difference whether I have been Bush *from the beginning* or I became Bush *just now*; (2) when now transfers, it makes no difference whether what transfers is now *for the world* or now *for me*.)

That is why it is indispensable for every occasion of time travel to have a story to contextualise it in according to the Kantian Principle. Even in the case where only a central character travels to the past, for example, his memory must be connected with the time before the time travel; in such a sense, an episode which should occur in the future after the travel still maintains the quality of the past (such that it happened before the travel). This situation corresponds to that in which, when I split into two, the one who has *fewer* characteristics of the person who has been me is somehow me.

Let us recall what we were inclined to say concerning the world: that, if there comes to be a non-actual world that is continuous with the past course of history in the actual world, that non-actual world *becomes* the actual world in virtue of the continuity of contents. Concerning now, however, we cannot say such a thing. Actuality is supported by I and now, so if we suppose that I and now transfer in virtue of the continuity of contents, the transfer creates actuality. But I and now can be directly governed by the Leibnizian Principle. Neither the principle of sufficient reason nor the Kantian Principle can explain the fact that, for some reason, this person is I and this time is now.

How about time travel to the future? D. Parfit's famous thought experiment of travel to Mars¹¹ can be adapted for time travel to the future. All we need to do is just change the destination to the world in the year 2104, a hundred years from now.

In the first story of Martian travel, I on the Earth am destroyed, and I am newly created on Mars by using the transmitted information about the person on the Earth. We could think of time travel to the world a hundred years into the future in the same way. I in the present am destroyed, and I am newly created in the world in a hundred years' time by using the transmitted information about the person in the present. In virtue of the Leibnizian Principle, supported by some part of the Kantian Principle, I could be successfully transported to the world a hundred years into the future.

This story does not seem problematic because it supposes travel to the world a hundred years later. How, then, about travel to the world in ten years' time? I cannot 'encounter' myself in that world as often described in science fiction. To make that encounter possible, there would need to be the other one of my 'twins' who survives in the year 2004 and continues his life ordinarily.

According to a second scenario of Martian travel, I on the Earth also survive because of a malfunction of the operating machine. In the case of Martian travel, this causes a philosophical problem; if it is impossible for two persons to be me, then which person is actually me? How about the case of travel to the future? Whereas it is impossible for me to exist both on the Earth and on Mars, it would be possible for me to exist both in 2004 and in 2104.¹²

Actuality at the Time of Split Vanishes into Nothing

There is a continuation of this Martian travel story. According to the third scenario, I who have survived on the Earth, am announced to be dead several days later. The question here is whether I can be indifferent about my own death if my replica will persist. D. Parfit has answered in the affirmative to that question. When I asked the same question to my freshmen students, more than ninety percent of them gave the answer opposite from him. However, in fact, this is not an important point. What is important is the following fact: for some reason, the person on the Earth is me, and if that person dies, I will cease to exist in the world. Even Parfit himself was developing his argument presupposing this ontological fact. It is not of

¹¹ Parfit, D., *Reasons and Persons*, Oxford University Press, 1986, p. 199ff.

¹² However, in the case of the travel to the world after ten years, the case in which I *encounter* myself in the past or in the future, a philosophical problem occurs; at the time in question, which person is *actually* me? That was the main theme of my past book *Manga Philosophises*, so if you are interested, please take a look at it.

much importance whether or not I on the Earth am unperturbed by my death because I will have a replica.

How about time travel to the world of 2104? More students answered that they did not mind dying in that version. There is a philosophical problem in this change in students' answers. For behind it is their intuition that they could not exist simultaneously on the Earth and Mars but could exist both in the year 2004 and 2104. But it is difficult to find a problem because I am unlikely to live until 2104. I will probably be alive in 2014, so a problem *would* arise here. If I encounter myself in the future (or past), the person I encounter *is* the past or future of this human being, me. Yet at the time I encounter that person, he is not me but another. He is another in terms of tense, not in terms of person (i.e. another person).

In the case of time travel, it seems possible for more than one me to exist without contradiction, since I exist at different times, but once the possibility of 'encounter', which results from the split of me, is presented, the same problem as in the case of Parfit's second scenario arises. Although both of the two could be me, why is it that I could only be one of them when they meet each other? That is the same problem as this: although the one who has travelled to Mars and the one who stays on the Earth are both persons continuous from me, why is it that only one of them could be me? In the time travel case, if I think that the two, though seem to be in the same situation, are in fact at *different presents*, it is possible that both of them are me, but if I think that they share *the same present*, it is not possible that both are me. At least either now or I needs to be divided and pluralised. What if I, who am fifty-two years old, travel over ten years and encounter myself, who is sixty-two, and recall it when I am seventy-two? This case corresponds to one in which I split into two (as in Parfit's second scenario) and then fuse into one later.

Let us leave time travel and interplanetary travel for the moment, and return to and extend the case where I simply split into two—the case considered in Section 5. After the split, while one inquires into this philosophical problem, the other works on miscellaneous bureaucratic business at the university. Even if my intention before the split is to divide my duties in such a way, once the split occurs, the two may quarrel over how the divided duties are assigned. From my viewpoint before the split, the two in the future are both me. However, once I split, the two are others for each other. At that point of time, *if one is me, the other is not me*.

The two born of the split could be called Nagai-R and Nagai-L. After the split has occurred, for some reason, I turn out to be Nagai-L. The significance of this fact is crucial. I cannot operate R's body, I do not feel any pain when R is beaten, and I cannot see the world through R's eyes. Not only because we are separate, but because I am L for some reason, I truly hope that R would accept more unpleasant tasks. R probably thinks the opposite, but

that is none of my business. This is an overwhelming, firm *actuality*.

However, after the two fuse together into one, this overwhelming actuality loses its ground and completely disappears. There would no longer be the past fact that I was L (or it would be that there has never been such a fact). But note that what disappears is not the fact in the past that ‘if one is me, the other is not me’. The Leibnizian meaning of this sentence vanishes into nothing, and the Kantian meaning of the very same sentence survives through time.

Let us suppose that I, after fusion, recall the situation of the quarrel between the two. They were both undoubtedly me who existed in the past, but I cannot recall the situation *from the viewpoints of both sides* at once. I could imagine their facing each other from a transcendent viewpoint, but although they were both me, I can never recall the very actuality *of facing each other* and quarrelling as it was. Things are the same in the case where I travel over ten years and encounter myself who is ten years older, and recall that experience twenty years later. Even though the two are already united as one and the same person who is me, my recollection could only occur from one of the two viewpoints at a time. This is the Kantian meaning that survives.

I would like to emphasise the difference. If *one* is me, *then* the other is not me. This is the premise. Here, the Kantian meaning is that only *one* could be me. That *this particular one* has actually turned out to be me is the Leibnizian meaning. Only in the latter is God’s will exercised. It directly creates the actuality, and vanishes without any trace.

Of course, from the standpoint of the Kantian Principle, I cannot turn out to be Nagai-L, because ‘I am Nagai-L’ thought by Nagai-L and ‘I am Nagai-R’ thought by Nagai-R must both be equally true. Even if it is a serious question which of Nagai-L and Nagai-R turns out to be me, the question cannot be answered by the fact that Nagai-L is me, since there can be no such fact in the world. From this viewpoint, the metaphysical question ‘Why am I Hitoshi Nagai?’ can be answered by ‘because the question was asked by Hitoshi Nagai’, and a question ‘Why is it the twenty-first century now?’ would be answered by ‘because the question was asked in the twenty-first century’. This is the complete form of the objective world, which can only be grasped linguistically. Here, there no longer exists what is equivalent to ‘God’s will’.¹³

¹³ A quest for the essence of ‘I’ as the opening itself ends by arriving at Hitoshi Nagai as a person located in the objective world, and a quest for the essence of ‘now’ as the opening itself ends by arriving at the twentieth century as a time located in the objective time. This process is analogous to a process through which water turns from *that* clear drinkable liquid stuff in *our* environment into H₂O, and the possibilities that the water has turn from the possibilities that clear drinkable liquid stuff has into those H₂O has. The pursuit starts from *that* clear drinkable liquid stuff. Once it arrives at H₂O, the stuff changes into what happens to appear to us in that way in this actual world. Similarly, ‘I’ turns into

Section 11 Even God Needs God's Will in Order to Actually Exist

The Distinction Applies Even to God Himself

Is it not that this distinction applies even to God himself? Is it not that the distinction between God's intelligence and God's will holds of God himself retroactively? For the actual existence of God must also be considered independently of the essence of God. The problem concerning the ontological proof of the existence of God indicates that point. The ontological proof is a proof of the following sort: 'God is, by definition, perfect. If something does not exist, it lacks perfection; if something is perfect, it must exist. Therefore, God exists.' Anyone would think, 'Wasn't that strange?'

It would be more interesting if one who provides (or reads) this proof fully believes in God. Does the proof succeed in reaching *that* God, who should undoubtedly exist? Is *this* God, who has been claimed to exist in the conclusion of the proof, *that* God, who actually exists? Is the meaning of the 'existence' in the proved conclusion 'therefore, God exists' successful in denoting that 'existence', which actually exists?

Let me give a brief lecture again. The first Scholastic, Anselm, was first to present a proof—the ontological proof—to the effect that the concept of God contains the existence itself, that the essence contains the existence. Gaunilo is said to have criticised it immediately after that, by claiming that the existence in definition and the existence in reality differ in their meaning of existence. (He is well-known only for that criticism, though I haven't read his literature.) Thomas Aquinas, who represents the zenith of Scholasticism, offered an eclectic solution. According to his solution, the proposition 'God exists' as such is tautologically obvious, but since we do not know what God is (or the essence of God), the proposition is not obvious for us. We could immediately see that this view, which would remind us of the Leibnizian argument on Yukio Mishima we discussed in Section 1, was developed by a professional philosopher.

At the dawn of the modern age, Descartes revived the ontological proof. A crucial argument against this tradition was given by Kant this time. Kant's idea was that 'exist' cannot be juxtaposed with other ordinary predicates. If we think of 'an organism that is, by definition, cubic, red, light and small', it is, by definition, cubic, red, light and small. If we add 'exist' to this definition, it comes to exist by definition; as it is a necessary truth that it is

the self-consciousness of Hitoshi Nagai, and 'now' turns into the self-reflection of that time. Once that process is complete, there ceases to be a possibility that I am Bush instead of Nagai or a possibility that it is now the thirteenth century instead of the twenty-first century. It is a process analogous to that through which there ceases to be a possibility of water's being XYZ instead of H₂O. That is, the Kripkean story is a variant of the Kantian story. Of course, outside this story, there was, and still is, a possibility that *that* clear drinkable liquid stuff is XYZ.

red and small, it becomes a necessary truth that it ‘exists’. Even if it does, however, it does not come to exist actually. If we, in response to this situation, add ‘actually’ to the definition and define it as what exists actually, it comes to ‘exist actually’ by definition, but never comes to exist actually, as a person dreaming that he is awake and has a billion yen would not be awake and have a billion yen. Here, there is always the critical ontological gap. (See Section 2 of this chapter.)

Kant’s criticism is crucial. Yet Kant bases the difference between conceptual existence and actual existence on a difference of cognitive faculty, i.e. the difference between sensibility and intellect. This makes it seem as if he held that even God, in order to exist, must be empirically verified to be an object in the world by our sensibility. In this respect, Kant faces Hegel’s criticism, which I think is right on this point. The difference between the concept and the actuality is independent of that between intellect and sensitivity.

Hegel nevertheless says that God is different from all other beings in that his concept and his existence are assimilated with each other; according to him, God can be thought of only as existing. Even if Hegel is right, however, it is not proved that God *actually* exists. Does what can be thought of only as existing ever actually exist? Even if we try to be a radical idealist to assimilate thinking to existence, we will never accomplish this.

In Section 1 of this chapter, where we discussed Leibniz, we replaced ‘God’ with ‘I’ in explaining ‘what can be thought of only as existing’. However, in fact, ‘I think, therefore I am’, which is equivalent to the ontological proof in the case of I, fails for the same reason that the ontological proof of God does. Does the proof succeed in reaching *this* I, who should undoubtedly exist? Is *the* I (who have been claimed to exist in the conclusion of the proof) *this* I, who actually exists? Is the meaning of ‘existence’ in the proved conclusion ‘therefore, I am’ successful in denoting ‘this existence’, which *actually* exists? Here again occurs the same problem as in the above case of someone who fully believes in God.

God, Actuality, I and Now

With respect to I too, identification of the concept with existence is not accomplishable. However much emphasis I place on the point that existence follows from thinking only in the case of ‘I’ (who am immediately known to be thinking), that holds of any ‘I’, so the cogito proposition is, after all, reduced to a conceptual relation ‘a person thinks, therefore the person is’ (i.e. ‘an ego thinks, therefore the ego is’). What functions as ‘I’ in this relation is the immediate identity between ‘a person’ and ‘the person’ (which obtains through immediate reflective self-consciousness). It is only a kind of identity relationship in the B series in the case of person.

Therefore, the same thing would happen in the original B series. ‘Now I think, therefore Now is’ is reduced to a conceptual relation ‘I think at a time, therefore the time is’, and what functions as ‘now’ is the immediate identity between ‘a time’ and ‘the time’. However much emphasis I place on the point that this immediate identity is immediately evident not at an arbitrary time but only in the present, the present can be any present, and every arbitrary time is a possible present, so I am unable to say what I want to say.

What holds of ‘God’, ‘I’ and ‘Now’ would also hold of ‘reality’ or ‘actuality’. Kant’s transcendental idealism, which is said to prove the reality of the external world, should be a theory applicable even to worlds other than the actual world. If so, a transcendental idealist imagined to be in an unreal world, e.g. a dream or science fiction, could prove the reality of *that* external world. How, then, are we to secure the privilege of the reality of *this* external world?

To prove that God *actually* exists would be to prove that God exists in this actual world. That would in turn mean that there are possible worlds where God does not exist. That is, it would be possible for God not to exist (while he happens to exist actually). Is such a way of existing not against the nature of God? Did we not see that those possible worlds themselves are primarily only inside God’s intelligence?

The actual world is merely one of the possible worlds. Yet, conversely, we could also say that those possible worlds are merely conceived of inside the actual world (on the basis of what actually exist in it and through altering them). Therefore, we cannot ‘prove’ the existence of *that* actual world. It can only be necessarily presupposed. (This necessity has more fundamental sense than is meant by obtaining in all possible worlds.) Everything begins there.

Since God is the creator of the actual world with such a meaning—with such a duality—God would have the same corresponding duality. Whereas God is a mere contingent being in the sense that he actually exists in the actual world, he is *ipso facto* a necessary being at the same time, because all possible worlds are inside him. (However, since God is a creator who transcends that actual world, we cannot presuppose the existence of God as we presuppose that of the actual world.) In fact, the same is true of I and Now. The actual existence of them also can never be ‘proved’. I and Now are nevertheless different in that what is equivalent to the ontological proof of each of them *prima facie* succeeds on the level of the concept. In any case, there is, I think, almost no doubt that doctrines on the ontological proof of God found in the history of philosophy, debates on the position of the actual world found in the theories of possible worlds, arguments on the A series and the B series found in the philosophy of time, and disputes on the interpretation of the cogito proposition are all on *one and the same* problem.

Section 12 Centred Possible Worlds

Is Actuality a Concept?

Let us now discuss the idea of possible worlds from this point of view. The benefit of introducing the idea of possible worlds is that we become able to interpret different modalities such as possibility, impossibility and necessity in terms of quantification over worlds. To interpret them in terms of the quantitative interpretation of worlds is to interpret necessity as truth in all possible worlds, possibility as truth in at least one possible world, and impossibility as falsity in all possible worlds. Being contingent is being possible while not being necessary, so contingency would mean truth in at least one, but not all, possible worlds.

Adopting such an idea contributes to clarifying what is obscure in our usage of ordinary language. For example, it allows us to distinguish between the following two expressions. (1) Every object necessarily has the property of size. (2) That every object has the property of size is necessary. These are indistinguishable in our ordinary language. However, more precisely stated, the former means that every object (existing in this world) has the property of size in all possible worlds, and the latter means that in all possible worlds every object (existing in them) has the property of size. In the former, ‘every object’ means every object that exists in the actual world (and what is said is that it has the property of size in all possible worlds). In the latter, ‘every object’ means every object that exists in all possible worlds (and it is said that it has the property of size). Thus, we can see that these two expressions differ in their meanings.

In this connection, the former presupposes that things existing in the actual world exist in other possible worlds too. Behind that lies the fundamental metaphysical problem of how we are to think of other ways that one and the same thing (existing in this world) could be. An object *is* trans-temporally; it exists through different times. However, how can an object *be* trans-worldly? How can it exist in the spaces of different possible worlds? Where can we find the base of identity of an object that exists in different worlds? Whereas *things* actually exist in times, they do not actually exist in possible worlds; obviously, they actually exist only in the actual world. Yet we can think of possible states of *the* things that actually exist. We can think of the possibility that Schubert, who actually existed, had finished his Unfinished Symphony. In order that we can think of it, we have to presume that Schubert himself existed over and above various properties actually attributed to him and is referred to by us. It must be that Schubert would still be Schubert even if he had finished his Unfinished Symphony, or even if he had not composed it at all.

S. A. Kripke insisted that a proper name such as ‘Schubert’ is a rigid designator and a purely designative word. We can think of the possibility that the composer of the Unfinished Symphony had not composed the Unfinished Symphony. The term ‘the composer of the Unfinished Symphony’ is a non-rigid designator, and if it refers to Schubert, who actually composed the ‘Unfinished’, we can think of the possibility that Schubert had not composed this symphony. However, we cannot think of the possibility that Schubert had not been Schubert. For it is impossible for the person who actually was Schubert not to be Schubert in other possible worlds. The proper name ‘Schubert’ refers to Schubert himself independently of his contingent properties.

This theory is based not on a contingent property of this actuality of ours but on the essential (i.e. necessary) property of the general concept of ‘actuality’. This property is one which would be instantiated in any possible world if it were actual. Therefore, not only an actual person, e.g. Schubert, has to have that property, but a fictitious person, e.g. Trebuches, would have to have it *if* he had actually existed. *If* Trebuches had *actually* composed the Unfinished Symphony, it would be impossible for him not to have *actually* composed it. (This is the irrevocability of actuality.)

A thing in a possible world can be referred to only through certain properties it has (so there might be another thing with the same properties). By contrast, in the case of a thing that actually exists, whatever properties through which it is referred to, reference reaches the reality using properties that are ‘disposable’, as it were, and therefore it is always possible for a thing to lack those properties used as the medium of referring. When a thing in the actual world is referred to, a referent itself always exists with more contents than a referrer knows. (This is the inexhaustibility of actuality.)

That is not a characteristic of this actuality of ours, but is the necessary characteristic that the general concept of ‘actuality’ has to have.

Behind this is the fundamental problem of the theory of possible worlds. Possibility and necessity can doubtlessly only be thought of in the actual world. Nevertheless, in the theory of possible worlds, the problem of possibility and necessity is transformed into that of whether or not some state obtains in possible worlds including the actual world. On the one hand, the perspective for glancing over possible worlds and examining whether something is possible or impossible or necessary can reside only inside this actual world, but on the other hand, that actual world, which should not be able to have an outside, is reduced to a possible world that stands on a par with other possible worlds.

There are two conflicting positions. One is actualism, which insists that this actual world is the sole world and possible worlds are merely the modal properties it has. The other is possibilism, which insists that this actual world is merely one among other possible worlds.

The reason such conflict arises is that we can grasp even the property of actuality itself conceptually, i.e. as a kind of possibility. We can suppose that a state of affair which is not actually actual, e.g. one where the Unfinished Symphony is finished, is hypothetically actual. We can then suppose, from that point of view, that the state of affairs where the Unfinished Symphony is unfinished is a possibility that could be realised. Here, 'actuality' is defined not by the actual properties of what happens to be the case but by the necessary properties that anything that could be actual has to have.

D. Lewis, a possibilist, is notorious for classifying 'actuality' as one of the indexicals such as 'I' and 'Now'. He is criticised as follows: when I say, 'I am Hitoshi Nagai', and John Smith says, 'I am John Smith', or when one says in this century, 'It is the twenty-first century now', and said in the last century, 'It is the twentieth century now', the two statements are compatible and can be both true, but when I, as a philosopher say in the actual world, say 'This is actual', and I as an astronaut say in a possible world, say 'This is actual', the two statements are incompatible and cannot be both true.

Nevertheless, possibilism has a point. On the one hand, any possible world can be 'actual' in an abstract, possible sense (and in that sense the statements are compatible and can be both true). On the other hand, conversely, I can say that 'I' expressed by everybody other than me is only 'I' in an abstract, possible sense, and we can now say that 'now' expressed at times other than now is only 'now' in an abstract, possible sense (and in that sense the statements are incompatible and cannot be both true).

In other words, the conflict between actualism and possibilism concerning 'actuality' can be applied to the cases of 'I' and 'now'. With 'I', the conflict would be between solipsism and multipism; the former claims that this I is the only I existing actually and other I's are mere phenomena occurring inside this I, whereas the latter takes it that this actual I is merely one of many I's. The conflict concerning 'Now' would be between solnuncism and multinuncism; the former maintains that this now is the only now existing actually and other nows are mere phenomena occurring inside this now, whilst the latter takes it that this actual now is merely one of many nows.

A supposition such as, 'if I were John Smith', can be interpreted in various ways. But ultimately, we can suppose the trans-world identity of I, who is without all properties I actually have. Here, the property of being me is not a property each human being has but is the property of being the centre of the world, which can have only one instance. Therefore, to suppose that I am John Smith is to suppose the world centred on John Smith and opened only from John Smith to be a possible actuality. Of course, the contents of that world, if conceived of without centredness, could be the same as those of this actual world, which is centred on Hitoshi Nagai. If a possible world is considered in the way under consideration here, a

possible world is a *centred possible world*. Identical worlds, when conceived of without centredness, become different possible worlds simply for the reason that the locations of the centres differ.

Then, is the actual world necessarily centred? That is the question I would like to pose. Does the concept of ‘actuality’ contain the meaning that I exist in the centre of it? Is it impossible for a world which I do not exist in the centre of to be an actual world?

It goes without saying that I do not exist before my birth or after my death. But that is nothing else but the past or the future of the world in the centre of which I exist. Is it possible to think of a world in which I do not exist at all—i.e. a world not centred at all? Certainly it is. A world in which I do not exist is possible. It is a possible world (accessible from the actual world). Then, how about an *actual* world in which I do not exist? Is the fact that I exist a mere contingent fact in this actual world? Or is it a necessary property of the concept of ‘actuality’?

The answer, I think, is as follows: whereas an I can actually exist as a necessary property of the concept of ‘actuality’, I must actually exist as a contingent fact in this actual world. This suggests that there are two meanings for ‘the trans-world identity of I, who is without all properties I actually have’. ‘The property of being the centre of the world, which can have only one instance’ has a dual meaning.

The Meaning of ‘I’: Centred Possible Worlds and the Centred Actual World

Let us now re-examine this duality by discussing the problem of the meaning of the word ‘I’. Each user of this word refers to himself/herself. Below can be the first step in understanding the usage of ‘I’:

- (1) In order to understand the ‘I’ used by others, the rule ‘it refers to the person who utters this word’ suffices. But when I use it, I can think of the case where I am not the person I happen to be, so ‘I’ used by me refers to the pure (i.e. depersonalised) ego too, or sometimes can refer only to it.

However, even when understanding the ‘I’ used by others, the rule ‘it refers to the person who utters this word’ is, in fact, insufficient. I can understand the situation where others, in using ‘I’, conceive of *their* having become a different person from the one who utters the word. That is, the understanding of the ‘I’ used by others already involves an aspect of the pure ego. I can understand that each person has his/her own pure ego. Even a robot could say, ‘I wish I had not been born a robot’, or, ‘I wish I were not Robocon (which is his proper name)’. When I believe it, I believe that the speaker has a pure ego even if the speaker is a robot.

How, then, is it possible to describe the fact that there exists this exceptional being, I!, among other subjects that equally have a pure ego? The following would be the only way to think: the property of being I!, unlike the pure ego, is not a property or function of a human being in the world, but is a property of the world itself. Therefore, the following seems to be the correct way to think:

- (2) Either in the case of others or in the case of I, 'I' refers to the person who utters it and to the person's pure ego. But when I use it, it refers, in addition, to the very centre of the centred world too, or sometimes can refer only to it.

However, it is clear from the above that anyone can be the 'centre of the world' in that sense. To put it the other way around, the very concept of the pure ego (or even self-consciousness) can be considered to be a fabrication which has resulted from forcing the property of the world onto individual human beings in the world. The concept might be a fiction generated by bringing centredness into a world not centred. If so, it would follow that to acknowledge the existence of the pure ego is identified with acknowledging the existence of centred worlds. Then, how is it possible to describe the fact that, among centres of such worlds, there is the only one *real* centre of the world? It seems that I should say as follows:

- (3) Either in the case of others or in the case of I, 'I' refers to the person who utters it, to the person's pure ego, and to the world centred on him or her. But when I use it, the world thus centred is the *actual world* whereas worlds centred on others are *possible worlds*.

Therefore, others' are possible worlds that perfectly coincide spatio-temporally and factually with the actual world.

Now, let us raise this question: could there be a world in which, although the word 'I' is used, I, the sole, special centre, do not exist? In the view of the philosophy that sees a world as a centred world, there could not. This is because the concept 'I' already implies the necessity of centredness. But even if we accept it, it remains contingent which centred world is the *actual world* (and whether the actual world in this sense exists at all).

A further question has to be raised here: what is actuality? In trying to answer this question, the conflict between Lewisian possibilism and Kripkean actualism in the theory of possible worlds would be continued in the theory of centred possible worlds. Or rather, it must be in the theory of centred possible worlds that the necessity of conflict and coexistence of the two will be understood. The necessity that one needs and cannot be reduced to the other will then be understood.

However, the above discussion might be given two different interpretations. One could

say that we are actually playing such a language-game as the above. That is, what I have done is extract the rules of the language game we play. The other would say that, by describing such rules, I have shown something that could never be captured by those rules. But I think that that is only a barren repetition of the discussion. The possibility of those two interpretations is the very thing I have discussed.

Chapter 3 What Is the Impossible Private Language?

(translated by Shogo SHIMIZU)

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