Manga and Philosophy
Why Was the Book “Manga Introduction to Philosophy” Written?
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MANGA AND PHILOSOPHY

WHY WAS THE BOOK “MANGA INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY” WRITTEN? (A SLIGHTLY MODIFIED VERSION)

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PROFILE OF MASAHIRO MORIOKA

- Currently teach philosophy and ethics at Human Sciences, Waseda University.
- Background:
  - Physics (three years at UT but now I’ve forgot everything)
  - Wittgenstein (BA, MA)
  - Bioethics (Ph.D.)
MY BOOKS (IN JAPANESE)

- **Bioethics**
  - *Brain Dead Person: Human-relationship-oriented Analysis of Brain-death* 1989
  - *Reconsidering the View of Life* 1994
  - *Life Studies Approaches to Bioethics: A New Perspective on Brain Death, Feminism, and Disability* 2001
  - *A Philosophical Inquiry into Personhood, Dignity, and Brain Death* 2015

- **Criticism of contemporary civilization**
  - *Consciousness Communication* 1993
  - *How to Live in a Post-religious Age* 1996
  - *Painless Civilization* 2003

- **Gender and sexuality**

- **Philosophical essays**
  - *An Intellectual Method of Facing Oneself* 1997
  - *The 33rd Stone: A Philosophy for a Wounded Age* 2009
  - *Connecting the Living and the Deceased* 2012

- **Philosophy**
  - *Manga Introduction to Philosophy* 2013
  - *On Life and Dignity* (201? next book)
  - *Philosophy of Life* (201? next book)

* Some books have been translated into Korean / Chinese, and are currently being translated into Arabic and Indonesian. Some have been translated into English but are currently unpublished.
Manga Introduction to Philosophy
Masahiro Morioka (Text, Original Drawing)
Nyancof Terada (Drawing)

- This is perhaps the world’s first book in which a philosopher himself illustrates his own philosophical investigation into hard problems on time, being, solipsism, and life, in the form of “Manga.”
- This is not a book that illustrates the history of philosophy or great philosophers’ ideas. (Logicomix)
- Original drawings (230 pages) were prepared by me, and the final drawings were made by the professional cartoonist Nyancof Terada.

- I made original drawings with pencils.
- Mr. Terada made final drawings on his PC.
- It took three years of trials and errors to finish the book.

The following slides show my original drawings (right) and Terada’s final cartoons (left).
まんまるくん
Manmaru-kun

いまいまくん
Imaima-kun

先生
Sensei
WHAT I THOUGHT AFTER PUBLICATION

1) There are philosophical thinking and ideas that can be best described in the form of Manga.
   - We can draw “the flow of thinking and/or images” directly in Manga
   - For me, in many cases, a philosophical thinking first emerges as a picture. It makes sense to draw that picture before it takes the form of language.

2) Manga has strong power to attract people’s attention.
   - I don’t know why but even a child can read Manga two or three hours continuously, without rest.
   - A combination of the right brain and the left brain?
   - We’ve found that simply drawn Manga pictures suit well with philosophical contents.
3) There are philosophical thinking and ideas that cannot be well described in the form of Manga.

- It is impossible to draw a Manga picture which describes complicated logical sentences such as: “Because X and Y has such and such relationships, if X includes A, B, and C, then it naturally follows that Y ……”
- Sometimes, a whole page is filled with words.

- It is impossible to draw such abstract concepts as “Nothing(ness)” and “the death of myself”. (This was a very interesting discovery for me.)

I used the word “Nothing 無” to describe the concept of Nothing(ness) after the death of mine.
AN EXAMPLE OF PHILOSOPHICAL DISCUSSIONS IN “MANGA INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY”

In Chapter One “Time”, which deals with the philosophy of time, I discuss the following:

- “The past itself” and “the past that springs up now” is different
- “The future itself” and “the future that springs up now” is different
- “The present this instant” and “now” is different
- “Now” is “the arena of “now””
- “The present this instant” does not exist inside “the arena of “now””
Some pages after

things arise into "now"

change within "now"

and disappear from "now"

Various things spring up into the arena of "now"

But that's not all. "The past" and "the future" also spring up into the arena of "now"

Like this

For example, an atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima in the summer of 1945. Do you remember this?

I hadn't been born yet

Me neither
Some pages after

Let's try thinking about it from a different angle

Normally, we think about the flow of time like this

Time that has already passed

The moment between the past and the future

Time that will occur in the future

Present

Past Future

The flow of time

Let's see what happens when we compare the common-sense view of time described above

and the arena of "now"

Present

Past Future

The flow of time
The past that springs up now

To begin with, while "the past that springs up now" exists inside the arena of "now,"

The arena of "now"

"the past itself" does not, because it has already passed out of it

"Now"

Similarly, "the future itself" does not exist within the arena of "now" either, because it has not yet arrived

"Now"
So does "the present this instant" exist within the arena of "now"?

Yes

Actually, "the present this instant" doesn't exist inside the arena of "now" either.

No way

This is the case because the arena of "now" is made up of things that change.

No matter where you look in the arena of "now," a frozen "the present this instant" that is unchanging as a whole is nowhere to be found.

Frozen
The discussion in the above slides borrows a lot from great philosophers in the past.
- For example, imagine Edmund Husserl’s “Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time” and Aristotle’s discussion of “time.”
- But the way of visualizing it may be original and interesting.
- The discussion in the following slides depicts my own philosophical thoughts on “time.”
Once there is a concept of "past-present-future," it becomes possible to grasp "the past that springs up now," "the arena of now," and "the future that springs up now" as a three-part set.

In other words, these two views arise with each other’s help.
“Past-present-future” is not just a concept. It is a strong conviction held by us who are living our every day life.

Then, how does this strong conviction arise in us?
In order to wholeheartedly take the "next step," I need to believe there is solid ground beneath my feet.

The conviction that "the future itself" exists is the ground that supports "the next step."

To take "the next step" is to walk towards the future.
The conviction that "the future itself" exists arises because our entire bodies want to live.

Not the other way around.

The conviction that the future itself exists

The conviction that the past itself exists

The conviction that the present itself exists as a link between the two.

Convictions are created one after another like this.
CONTENTS OF THE BOOK
Chapter 1 Discussion on “What is Time?”
Chapter 2 Discussion on “What is Being?”
Chapter 3 Discussion on “What is I?”
Chapter 4 Discussion on “Meaning of life”

ANOTHER EXAMPLE FROM CHAPTER 3
• The following is a sequence in which Sensei introduces the mystery of the concept of “I”.

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Let me ask you...

Where is your "I"?

OK

It's right here!

Where, exactly?

In my brain, I guess

Alright then, let's take a look

Giko

Giko
"I" is nowhere to be found
It's the same in my case

"I" can't be found anywhere

In other words, this isn't how it is
In this introductory part, a philosophical issue concerning the existence of “I” is depicted directly and intuitively in the form of Manga.

And the next slides show the conclusion of this chapter.
It is difficult to translate Japanese 迷い into English/French etc.
Sensei distinguishes “true solipsism”, which claims that both other minds and the self are fictions, from “(common) solipsism”, which claims that only “this I” exists.
And Sensei stresses that from the perspective of “true solipsism” the existence of other minds and the self should be considered 迷い (misunderstanding).
However, Sensei concludes that to live is to sincerely live with this 迷い (misunderstanding). In this sense, Sensei seems to affirm (say yes to) 迷い.
ANOTHER EXAMPLE FROM CHAPTER 4

- The following is an introductory part of Chapter 4 “Meaning of Life”.
- Here Manmaru-kun cries out for the question of meaning of life.

When you die everything is over

Why do I have to die?

Why have I been born into this kind of life?

If death is going to make everything become nothing,

I wish I had never been born at all!
• Sensei tries to persuade Manmarukun to believe that one’s life cannot be compared with anything else, hence, his actual life cannot be compared with his counterfactual non-life.

WHY I WROTE “MANGA INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY”

- I have had an interest in the visualization of philosophical ideas/images, and I wanted to try to visualize them myself.
- I wanted to write an introduction to philosophy that can be easily read by teenagers.
- Japan is a nation of Manga and Anime. There are many Mangas that deal with the history of philosophy or past famous philosophers. However, there is no Manga book that is drawn by a philosopher him/herself from his/her own philosophical perspective.
- After publication, I came to the conclusion that philosophy and Manga have good chemistry.
In Japan, not only children and young people, but adults read Manga. Even if professors read Manga in their offices or libraries, no one criticizes them. This is a good environment for professors/philosophers to write Manga books. (What about your countries?)

Now I think I will try to write an “academic” paper in the form of Manga someday.

What differences are there between Manga, Comic, Cartoon, and B.D.?

- Manga Introduction to Philosophy
- Comic Introduction to Philosophy
- Cartoon Introduction to Philosophy
- Bande Dessinée Introduction to Philosophy

What about “Manga Introduction to Ethics”?

- My intuition: “Manga Introduction to Ethics” will be easier to make than “Manga Introduction to Philosophy”.
- But “Ethics” will not become an adventurous Manga book because,
  - 1) it is very difficult to visualize such abstract concepts as “good”, “evil”, “love”, “happiness”, “justice” in the form of Manga, so we are forced to draw “good guys”, “happy people” etc. instead,
  - 2) there have been already many excellent story-based Mangas that deal with “friendship”, “love”, and “justice”.
- “Manga Introduction to Logic” may be interesting and adventurous.
When I was writing this book, I never imagined that academic researchers outside Japan would have interest in this book (because this was a Manga), so I was surprised when Pierre asked me a permission to translate into French.

Pierre and I are now looking for publishers who might be interested in French edition (or other language editions). If you have any suggestions please let us know.

Original Japanese edition at Amazon.co.jp (Kindle): [http://www.amazon.co.jp/dp/B00G1ZUOEK/](http://www.amazon.co.jp/dp/B00G1ZUOEK/)
Amazon.uk: [http://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/4062882167/](http://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/4062882167/)

Author’s website: [http://www.lifestudies.org/](http://www.lifestudies.org/)
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION