

Tanabe Hajime's Social Ontology

From the "Logic of Species" to the "Logic of Love"¹

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Abstract

In recent years, social ontology has attracted significant attention not only from phenomenology and analytic philosophy, but also from the social sciences. Co-founder of the Kyoto School, TANABE Hajime (田辺元 1885-1962), constructed his own social ontology, beginning especially from 1934 and continuing into his latest works. Characteristic of his system is that, rather than entertaining a bottom-up model, whereby the social is established through communication between antecedent individuals, it takes a top-down approach, one that questions the nature of society from the everyday experience of what he calls the power of society to compel. Moreover, with the introduction of a religious Absolute in his later works, Tanabe proposes a religious social ontology composed of the interrelation between individuals, society, and the Absolute.

By clarifying the development of social ontology between the years 1934–41, better known as the “logic of Species,” to the post-war religious system, referred to as the “logic of love,” this paper gives an outline of Tanabe’s social thought. To that end, it clarifies the categories of Tanabe’s social ontology (Genus, Species, and Individual) and identifies Tanabe’s overconfidence in the faculty of reason as a cause for why the early logic of Species developed into the logic of love. This paper offers not only an overview of Tanabe’s social ontology as a whole, but also contributes detailed exegesis of a relationship that has hitherto been neglected in the literature, namely, between the categories of the logic of Species and the “existential communion,” a key concept of the logic of love.

Keywords: Tanabe Hajime, social ontology, Kyoto school, Kant, Hegel

¹ This paper is a substantive rewrite of material from URAI 2018, rendered into English by Sova P. K. Cerda, to whom I give thanks for producing this excellent translation.

Introduction

In recent years, social ontology has attracted significant attention not only from phenomenology and analytic philosophy, but also from the social sciences. “Social groups,” “group minds,” “collective intentionality,” “group agency,” “institutions,” “organizations,” “firms,” “race,” “gender,” “disability,” “money,” “language,” and “law” are just a handful of the diverse range of subjects and themes discussed in contemporary social ontology.²

Co-founder of the Kyoto School, Tanabe Hajime (田辺元 1885-1962), also turned to “social ontology.” Beginning in 1934, he grappled with its problems while seeking to develop a complex philosophical system. His social ontology, initially formulated between 1934 and 1941 as the “logic of Species” (*shu no ronri* 種の論理), was oriented by the following considerations. Our wills are led by a nebulous power at the foundation of society. What is this power? How ought we comport ourselves toward it? How can we reform society, given that it wields this power? The logic of Species thereby evinces a top-down model of social ontology: it depicts the lives of individuals as shaped by the influences of their existing society, rather than, say, taking society to be the product of relationships between antecedent individuals.

Following this early system, Tanabe would develop a markedly religious social ontology, the “logic of love” (*ai no ronri* 愛の論理),³ a project that evolved out his post-war philosophies of religion, including philosophy as metanoetics (*zangedō* 懺悔道) from 1944 to 1953, and the philosophy of death between 1953 and 1962. Its basic structure was founded on the trinity of the Absolute, society, and the individual person. What we find in the religious social ontology is a standpoint reached by a philosopher who, after seeking the reformation of social life with total confidence in human reason, was met with great frustration. With his religious social ontology, Tanabe gives voice to a human way of cooperative life that can only be actualized through coexistence with the Absolute. Still, the “logic of love” has received little attention in studies devoted to Tanabe,⁴ to say nothing of contemporary social ontology.

² Epstein 2018.

³ THZ 10, 221.

⁴ On this point, Tanabe himself says, “the orientation found in the new standpoint of the logic of Species [i.e., in metanoetics] does not entail the abandonment of the logic of Species but rather its development” (THZ 7, 225). It has been indicated in past research that the metanoetics preserves continuity with the logic of Species. HOSOYA Masashi, for example, points out that “Tanabe’s philosophy comprises an ellipse around the two foci of [...] the “logic of Species” and “metanoetics”” (HOSOYA 2008, 103). However, he only takes up the logical structure of Genus-

The aim of this paper is to show the development of Tanabe's social ontology from the logic of Species to the logic of love by connecting the relation between Genus, Species, and Individual (the basic framework of the logic of Species) to the "existential communion" (the core concept of the logic of love) and thus by clarifying that the structure of the social ontology inherent in the latter is derived from the former. The present study is significant in two ways: First, it fills a lacuna in Tanabe research by clarifying the social ontology in metanoetics, an area overlooked in previous studies. Second, it provides an overview of Tanabe's social ontologies, thereby introducing his thinking on society to contemporary discussions of social ontology.

To that end, the paper will be organized as follows. Section 1 introduces how Tanabe conceived his logic of Species to be situated in the history of philosophy. Section 2 clarifies the relationship between Genus, Species, and Individual, the relationship that constitutes the core of the logic of Species. Section 3 examines why the logic of Species had to result in a logic of love. Section 4 considers the change in the placement of "Species" within the logic of love. Finally, section 5 clarifies the relationship between "Species" and "existential communion."

1. Situating the Logic of Species

The argument driving the logic of Species was first made public through his essay, "The Logic of Social Being" ("Shakai Sonzai No Ronri" 「社会存在の論理」, 1934–1935; hereafter, LSB). Tanabe states that, because "the central task of contemporary philosophy is to investigate the basic principles of society ... precisely the philosophy of social being must be the philosophy of today."⁵ One can find a parallel here with Searle's advocacy of not "social philosophy" but a "philosophy of society," that is, "the study of the nature of human society itself."⁶

The logic of Species reaped the fruits of prominent work conducted by the social sciences at the turn of the century. One cannot help but be surprised by the large cast of social scientists who are featured in LSB—Émile Durkheim, Reinhold Horneffer, Otto von Guericke, Theodor Litt, Auguste Comte, Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, Ferdinand Tönnies, James George Frazer, Arnold van Gennep, Lewis Henry Morgan, Georg Jellinek, Hans Kelsen, Franz Oppenheimer, and others. Yet, it

Species-Individual and does not inspect the relationship between the "two foci" in detail. HIMI Kiyoshi occupies a standpoint opposing what will be developed in this paper, writing, "ultimately the logic of Species was not metanoetically reformulated into anything complete and of clear form. Perhaps it can be deemed to have been developmentally dissolved within Tanabe's later philosophical thinking" (HIMI 1990, 162).

⁵ THZ 6, 53.

⁶ Searle 2010, 5.

would be a mistake to interpret the logic of Species as being merely a theory of society constructed in line with their viewpoints. The true foundation of the logic of Species lies in Hegel's *Rechtsphilosophie* and Kant's doctrine of morals. Tanabe states that "the basic thinking of [LSB] owes itself to Hegel's philosophy of right."⁷ Just prior to the logic of Species, Tanabe argues that "the correct understanding of Hegel lies in restoring and radicalizing Kant's standpoint of the 'priority of practical reason,'" while in 1940 he declares that his own philosophical task lies in the "recovery of the Kantian moment [i.e., the doctrine of morals] in Hegel."⁸ Thus, while the logic of Species takes up the latest findings of the social sciences, its primary motivation is to incorporate Kant's doctrine of morals into Hegel's philosophy of right. Specifically, he seeks to connect the Kantian notion of self-legislation to the individual's life within the state as depicted by Hegel.

Tanabe situates this social ontology in the history of Western philosophy by referring to it as "the third stage of ontology." According to him, the first stage is the natural ontology of ancient Greece, while the second stage is the personal ontology represented by Descartes, Kant, and Heidegger. The former is a philosophy that, concerning itself with nature as *hypokeimenon* (substratum; *kitai* 基体), aims for some way of "co-mediating ... *eidōs* and *hyle*, which are mutually opposed as basic principles of being"; the latter is a philosophy concerned with "the rational ego that is self-aware of the being of the self as the subject of autonomous freedom."⁹ Where the one thematizes the "substratum," the other thematizes the "subject." Thus, Tanabe's social ontology, whose lineage he traces to Hegel, is an "ontology of substratum-*qua*-subject [*kitai soku shutai* 基体即主体]," which, by considering the dynamic interrelation of substratum and subject, investigates "historical society as the synthesis of nature and personality."¹⁰

By unveiling this standpoint, Tanabe intended to set himself apart from the greatest philosophers of the day and, in particular, from Nishida Kitarō and Martin Heidegger (both relegated to the second stage of ontology). He thereby claims that their philosophies cannot adequately consider the problem of society. The logic of Species develops a horizon of inquiry beyond what Tanabe thought their philosophies were capable of.

⁷ THZ 6, 399.

⁸ THZ 3, 134; THZ 7, 184.

⁹ THZ 6, 269; 6, 281. Unless otherwise noted, throughout "subject" translates *shutai* 主体, the subject of, say, action, and not the epistemic subject or *shukan* 主観.

¹⁰ THZ 6, 289; 6, 291.

2. Genus, Species, Individual

The logic of Species hangs on the relation between the Genus (*rui* 類), Species (*shu* 種), and Individual (*ko* 個). Tanabe first articulates this relationship in LSB; it would be further revised in “The Logic of Species and World Scheme” (Shu No Ronri To Sekai Zushiki 「種の論理と世界図式」, 1935) and in “The Socio-Ontological Structure of Logic” (“Ronri No Shakaisonzairon-teki Kōzō” 「論理の社会存在論的構造」, 1936; hereafter, SOSL); and it is announced to be provisionally complete in “Clarifying the Meaning of the Logic of Species” (“Shu No Ronri No Imi O Akirakanisu” 「種の論理の意味を明にす」, 1937). This section will clarify the relationship between the Genus, Species, and Individual by focusing on the works from 1936–37.

Genus, Species, and Individual are the categories of Tanabe’s social ontology that he assembles in his logic of Species and would continue to use until his last work, *Mallarmé Memorandum* (*Mararume Oboegaki* 『マラルメ覚書』, 1961). To put it roughly and provisionally, “Genus,” “Species,” and “Individual” correspond to “humankind,” “society,” and “the individual,” respectively. Tanabe redeveloped these theoretical tools in response to the inadequacies that he saw in past attempts to understand society in terms of natural law. Since such attempts amount to no more than “anthropologies of the ‘rational human being’” that could not grasp “that which is unreasonable and impulsive at the bottom of individual being [*kotai sonzai* 個体存在],” they could not develop a meaningful social ontology.¹¹ In order to adequately comprehend the relationship between the state and the individual in the social situation of the 1930s, Tanabe then tries to reclaim these categories from Aristotle and the sociologists who follow him. In Aristotle, the Species merely lies between the whole (the Genus) and the Individual, where a part of the whole is the Species and the smallest structural element of the Species is the Individual. In other words, this classificatory system is composed of categories that express *quantitative* differences. By recasting these categories *qualitatively*, Tanabe developed his own social ontology.

To understand Tanabe’s qualitative conception of Genus, Species, and Individual, it is helpful to begin with the Species, which is characterized as the “substratum that is unaffected by the transience of individual people,” a substratum that lies at the base of a particular society.¹² Tanabe compares this substratum to the “social facts” as “things” (*des choses*) that Durkheim discusses in *The Rules of*

¹¹ THZ 6, 58.

¹² THZ 6, 449.

Sociological Method.¹³ In this sense, the Species is the “thing” that lies at the base of each society, influencing its members through the “power to compel” (*kyōseiryoku* 強制力).¹⁴ For this reason, the Species is said to be the “basic principle of the origin, which tries to negate and bury individuals in the species communal society.”¹⁵ Therefore, even though it is referred to as a “thing,” it is not something that exists as a corporeal body, but is rather an ineffable basic principle that holds sway over society.¹⁶ Tanabe’s *species substratum* is the basic principle that gives rise to what Searle in the language of contemporary social ontology calls “social reality” or what he, Tuomela, Zahavi, and others have called “collective intentionality.”

Next, the particular societies that are influenced by their respective species substrata are referred to as *species societies*. Concretely, species societies are communities of blood and land relations.¹⁷ Blood relations are taken to express “the Species’ aspect of immediate unity” and land relations, especially the issue of land possession, expresses “the Species’ aspect of self-negating division.”¹⁸ We can, therefore, say that the species substratum is the basic principle at the base of communities of blood and land relations. The blood and land relations have their own powers, the former is unifying, the latter dividing, and are thereby in tension with one another. For this reason, the species substratum is said to be “something such that unity itself is at the same time none other than opposition” or the “opposition of unity and opposition.”¹⁹

To understand this “opposition of unity and opposition,” it is necessary to consider the Species’ self-negating division that derives from land relations. Tanabe refers to “the infinite divisibility of the Species,” as he believes that a species society can be infinitely divided through land possession.²⁰ Land

¹³ THZ 6, 449: “The first and most basic rule is *to consider social facts as things*” (Durkheim 1982, 60).

¹⁴ THZ 6, 450.

¹⁵ THZ 6, 308. According to Tanabe, to each society belongs its own basic principle; moreover, he charges his concept of “Species” (*shu* 種) with the meaning of “species” found in Darwin’s *The Origin of Species*, namely, “*shuzoku-teki naru mono* 種族的なるもの” (THZ 6, 449).

¹⁶ Thus, during the period of establishing the logic of Species, Tanabe draws on the notion of “non-being” in Plato’s *Sophist* (247d-e, 258b) and defines the species substratum as “non-being *hyle*” (*hiu-teki shitsuryō* 非有的質料).

¹⁷ At first, “species society” referred only to communities of blood relations, but in SOSL Tanabe writes that “the clan communities of primitive society are related by blood, but must at the same time be territorial communities related by land” (THZ 6, 365), and so species society came to refer to communities of land relations as well.

¹⁸ THZ 6, 365.

¹⁹ THZ 6, 483; 6, 499.

²⁰ THZ 6, 315.

possession is the species society's moment of division, but at the same time its moment of actualization; by settling on land, the species society is established.²¹ A concrete example of this process would be a community settling on some land with a family belonging to that community possessing its own land within the species society. In other words, within the species society of the community, a new species society is established, one constituted by the blood and land relations of the new unit, that is, the family.

That being said, it is the *parents* who have ownership rights to the land, while the children do not possess land of their own. Accounting for this, Tanabe says that "one who comes from the new generation cannot receive ownership of land, but is placed in the position of merely living by offering his labor," and that from this it comes about that society "always contains a moment of division."²² Therefore, at the time of the logic of Species, what Tanabe took to be "the infinite divisibility of the Species" is synonymous with the partitioning of land through ownership. He thought that it was the existence of individuals within the Species who had no land of their own that constituted the possibility of division.

In the above example, both the community and the family within it are species societies, differing only in scale. Yet, a family is not independent of the community but belongs to it as a structural element. This means that every family established through land possession is a Species existing with its own unity, but also belongs within the unity of the community, a Species of greater scale. Hence, Tanabe says that "Species and Species together [belong within] an even greater Species."²³ These Species that contain Species within themselves are said to be Genera, but only in a *quantitative* sense. *Qualitatively*, they are still Species and thus Tanabe refers to them as "genus Species."²⁴ Therefore, Species are relations of tension between the two powers of unity and division. They are under the given unity effected by a genus Species, but also divide into lower-order Species. Tanabe describes the structure of this division as follows:

One can say that the unity of the Species establishes infinite layers within itself through the Species' self-negation and stretches across the tension between itself and what negates it; it possesses a structure such that, horizontally, it establishes an equilibrium through the opposition between itself and its

²¹ THZ 6, 365.

²² THZ 6, 366.

²³ THZ 6, 305.

²⁴ Ibid. As synonyms of "genus Species" (*ruiteki shu* 類的種), Tanabe also uses the expressions "relative Genus" (*soutai rui* 相對類) (ibid.) and "species Genus" (*shuteki rui* 種的類) (THZ 6, 327), but to emphasize that each of these refers to a kind of Species, I have elected the first to be used throughout this paper.

negation and, vertically, it establishes infinite layers within itself, superimposing these on one another.²⁵

Tanabe says that the Species divides vertically and horizontally. “Vertically” there is the infinite division of the genus Species into lower-order Species, the relation we saw above between a community and a family that belongs to that community. “Horizontally” there is the opposition between Species of the same order, between two families, for example. Therefore, the opposition between the orientations of unity and division, on the one hand, and the opposition between horizontally ordered moments, on the other, together constitute the “twofold opposition” that Tanabe says is the basic structure of the Species.²⁶

Tanabe then claims that, in addition, the opposition between horizontally ordered moments is accompanied by an opposition between part and whole.²⁷ So, if we imagine an opposition between two families, their opposition implicates relationships within the surrounding, local society. Thus, there are three kinds of opposition within a given Species: (1) the opposition between the Species’ unity and division, (2) the horizontal opposition between the moments that result from this division, and (3) the opposition between the part and the whole that attends horizontal division.

Still, even with these three kinds of opposition, we do not yet have the resources to consider the Species’ relationship to that which is outside itself. How should we conceive of, say, the relationship between two societies? Tanabe explains this relation in terms of an *outward* opposition that accompanies the *inward* opposition between the part and the whole, or what he calls an “inward-and outward-oppositional, twofold unity.”²⁸ In “The Logic of Statal Being” (“Kokkateki Sonzai No Ronri” 「国家的存在の論理」, 1939; hereafter, LStB), Tanabe explains that “politics [*seiji* 政治] does not remain merely domestic, but develops into outward diplomacy and war, or rather, domestic politics and international politics possess a relationship of mutual correlation” such that “the aspect of species opposition that is inward, i.e., the aspect that opposes the individual person, and that which is outward, i.e., that which opposes a different Species, appear as conflict and strife; this is hard to avoid in the historical world of domestic opposition between the classes, on the one hand, and international opposition and

²⁵ THZ 6, 320-1.

²⁶ THZ6, 480.

²⁷ THZ 6, 481.

²⁸ Ibid.

dispute, on the other.”²⁹ From this state of affairs, Tanabe imagines the “inward- and outward-oppositional twofold unity” as working itself out in the following manner. Imagine two states, State A and State B. Within State A, measures adopted by the state center are in opposition to the policies of an internal group. This opposition between the state center and the group within State A is ‘inward-oppositional.’ Next, say State B adopts measures that oppose State A. The opposition between State A and State B is ‘outward-oppositional.’ Finally, say that State B’s measures agree with the policies of the group internal to State A. The opposition within State A (between the state center and the internal group) resonates, so to speak, with the opposition from without State A (between State A and State B). Through this resonance, the inward and outward oppositions achieve a “twofold unity.”³⁰ In this way, Tanabe treats international affairs as a mediated relation of opposition-type (3), as mentioned above.

Now, when these three kinds of opposition achieve unity, the Species is said to be “generified” (*ruika* 類化). The Genus thereby established is said to be the “whole” that “enfolds individuals” when it faces inward but, when facing outward, is itself an individual (*kotai* 個体); it becomes a “human state” (*jinrui-teki kokka* 人類的国家), one “unified individual” (*kotai*) within the “human world” (*jinrui sekai* 人類世界).³¹ Through generification, the unity of the Genus is actualized. By stopping at this point, the logic of Species only clarifies how a single “human state” could come to be established, and does not explore how such “human states” might then go on to form a unity of the “human world” as a whole.

Tanabe then explains that what unifies the three kinds of opposition within the Species, thereby generifying the Species itself, is the praxis of the *Individual*. In this context, what is referred to as the “Individual” (*ko* 個) is not a given individual person (*kojin* 個人). Rather, Tanabe argues that the individual person *becomes* an

²⁹ THZ 7, 88; 7, 89. It should be kept in mind that 1939 marked the start of World War II, and so this may be what led Tanabe to problematize the theme of war. In fact, this is the only paper in which he discusses war philosophically.

³⁰ To make this more concrete, suppose that State A and State B are politically opposed (i.e., in a relation of outward opposition) and at war. Those who belong to State A but disagree with their country’s policies and stand on the side of State B will be in political opposition with the government of their country (i.e., in a relation of inward opposition). This inward opposition within State A might take the form of, for example, anti-war protests, which could, of course, be temporarily suppressed by State A through mechanisms of judicial or extrajudicial coercion. According to Tanabe, however, this inward opposition will remain essentially unresolved until State A resolves its opposition with State B. In this way, the inward and outward oppositions resolve in the manner of a “twofold unity.”

³¹ THZ6, 507; 6, 481; *ibid.*; 6, 507-8. The Japanese *jinrui* 人類 is a compound of two sinographs, the first meaning “person” (*hito* 人), the second “genus” (*ru* 類). Together, then, we have the “human genus,” or “humankind.”

Individual in the transition from the Species to the Genus.³² For this reason, he states that the Individual “*comes to be* in the transformation to the Genus that is mediated by the self-negation of the Species.”³³ A given individual person is “immediately contained *as a Species* in the [higher order] Species’ self-negated state.” If the individual person and the Species “are immediately opposed to one another, then [the individual person] must itself be classified as a Species and be the relative opposition that establishes the absolute opposition of the [higher-order] Species.”³⁴ That is to say, insofar as the individual person is an *oppositional* moment within the Species, he or she is not an Individual, not a moment generifying the Species, but simply an opposing *Species*. Individual people are first Individuals when they unify the Species’ oppositions through their own praxis.³⁵ In this sense, the emergence of the Genus and the emergence of the Individual are logically simultaneous.

In summary, the Individual exists within the Species as that which mediates the Species’ three kinds of opposition. Through the Individual’s praxis, the power of the Species to compel the Individual is sublated into the unity of the Genus while the species society is sublated into the human state. This sublation is the generification of the Species. So, when the unity of a Genus falls back upon the power of compulsion of the Species, or when the Individual ceases to take part in generification, the Genus and Individual are said to be speciated (*shuka* 種化). In this way, the Genus and the Individual are not complete after having become established, but are always exposed to the possibility of relapsing into speciated modes. In this sense, Genus, Species, and Individual are, for Tanabe, not quantitative but qualitative categories.

3. The Logic of Species and State Absolutism

While the above relation between Genus, Species, and Individual does not change even after the development of philosophy as metanoetics, its content or significance would evolve following the frustration caused by the state absolutism

³² The “becoming” of the Individual involves a complex of ideas including the “transformation of death-*qua*-life” (*shi-soku-sei no tenkan* 死即生の転換) and “death and resurrection” (*shi fukkatsu* 死復活). These notions cannot be taken up here, but for details see URAI 2019.

³³ THZ 6, 484; emphasis added.

³⁴ *Ibid*; THZ 6, 483; emphasis added.

³⁵ Tanabe uses the term *ko* 個 (‘individual’) to refer to both the Individual that mediates generification and the individual person that belongs to the immediate state of the Species, the state prior to generification. When it is important to distinguish between these two uses, I reserve the uppercase “Individual” for the former and call the latter the “individual person.” When this distinction need not be foregrounded, I use the lowercase “individual.”

inherent to Tanabe's initial social ontology. Next, I will examine this frustration by confirming the relationship between reason and the categories pertaining to the logic of Species. It will become clear that the logic of Species was a social ontology based on excessive trust in the faculty of reason.

The unity of the Genus actualized in a Species is called the "eidos of reason" (*risei no keisō* 理性の形相) and the Individual that emerges within the Species is called the "rationalized, individual person" (*risei-teki kojīn* 理性的個人).³⁶ These are the results of the rationalization of a given society and of a given individual person. What rationalizes them is "Absolute Nothingness" (*zettai mu* 絶対無), the fundamental philosophical principle of Tanabe's thought. Absolute Nothingness, also referred to as the "basic principle of dialectic," is the principle that actualizes mediation and sublation.³⁷ Absolute Nothingness is further described as the "Absolutely Rational" (*zettai gōri-teki sha* 絶対合理的者), that is, the origin of rationality.³⁸ When, in the sublation effected by Absolute Nothingness, rationality is conferred upon a given society and a given individual (both classified as Species), the rational unity of the Genus and the rational Individual emerge. With this, the subject and the substratum become rational, together constituting a "rational actuality" wherein "social justice" is actualized.³⁹ That said, we must bear in mind the following remark:

It must rather be said that precisely because the actual state does not correspond to the eidos of state being and is entangled with the irrationality of history, practical reason's rationalizing acts must aim for the actualization of this eidos.⁴⁰

According to Tanabe, the actual state is an *inferior actuality* whose generification, as presented in the logic of Species, has yet to be complete. To actualize the eidos of reason within the state, the state's rationalization must be affected by actions grounded in the Individual's practical reason. Whether or not a state becomes rational and whether or not social justice is actualized in the state depends on the efforts of Individuals. Thereby serving as the "trigger point that subjectively establishes" the Genus, the Individual must endeavor to rationalize the

³⁶ THZ 6, 328; 6, 453. When Tanabe uses "rational" (*risei-teki* 理性的) in this context to describe the individual person, he is referring to someone who actualizes practical freedom, in Kant's sense, someone who is thereby autonomous.

³⁷ THZ 6, 441.

³⁸ THZ 6, 66.

³⁹ THZ 6, 507; 6, 369.

⁴⁰ THZ 6, 454.

actual state.⁴¹ Concretely speaking, such efforts are made by living one's life so as to serve the interests of others and society. Such a life evinces the overcoming of egoism and is taken to constitute the good life within society. When considering the relationship between society and the individual, it is conceivable to seek the cause of the present society's baseness in the baseness of individuals, and to think that society could be improved were individuals to make greater efforts. Far from being inconceivable, such an idea can be understood by anyone who hopes for a better society. To the extent that one makes efforts, one's hope to live with others in a better society can be actualized. From this perspective, it is understandable how Tanabe developed his notion of "self-sacrifice-*qua*-self-actualization" (*jikogisei soku jikojitsugen* 自己犠牲即自己実現), drawing on the relationship between *Sichhingeben* and *Sichgewinnen* that Jaspers describes in *Philosophy Vol. 2* (1932).⁴²

Viewing the issue from a different angle, actively serving the interests of others and society is what achieves the unification of Hegel's philosophy of right and Kant's doctrine of morals. Tanabe's "self-sacrifice-*qua*-self-actualization" is what it means for a life to achieve self-legislation within a state. With this, Tanabe's attempts throughout the 1930s to "make the formalist moral theory of Kant's second *Critique* concrete" came to fruition.⁴³ Yet, those fruits were spoiled by two grave issues.

First, by making the formalism of Kant's doctrine of morals concrete with the introduction of Hegel's philosophy of right, the categorical imperative becomes vulnerable to falling into antinomies. Kant defines one formulation of the categorical imperative as follows: "So act that the maxim of your will could always hold at the same time as a principle of a universal legislation."⁴⁴ It is well known that in §135 of the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel criticizes Kant's doctrine of morals as being formalistic. Because the categorical imperative only indicates the form of maxims, it does not indicate any content or particular duties. Yet, on account of this formalism, as Hegel notes, "where there is nothing, there can be no contradiction either."⁴⁵ There can be no contradiction between duties when no particular duties are specified. Now, Tanabe tries to amend the formalism of the categorical imperative by giving it a specific content—namely, "endeavor to serve the interest of society!"—but in doing so he introduces the possibility of a contradiction. Let us suppose that two courses of action, *A* and *B*, are both within

⁴¹ THZ 6, 507.

⁴² THZ 6, 490; Jaspers 1932, 65.

⁴³ THZ 3, 79.

⁴⁴ Kant 2002, 45.

⁴⁵ Hegel 1991, 163.

one's abilities and both contribute to the interests of society. It is perfectly possible for *A* and *B* to contradict one another. Such a situation would constitute an antinomy in the categorical imperative. For example, imagine a country ruled by a tyrant. If the Individual were, in the "interest of society," to support and assist the head of state, then such an action would prolong the tyranny. Of course, we want to say that this harms the "interest of society." But then would that mean that the "interest of society" would be served by disposing of the head of state and reforming the government? Suppose the new government turns out to be worse than the last. This, too, has an impact on the "interest of society." And if the government is to continue changing hands, this constant strife will impact the "interest of society," also. The "self-legislation" that Tanabe imagined a life could attain within the state can lead to a variety of maxims, and acting on nearly any of these maxims involves the possibility of error. Moreover, these maxims to assist or to dispose of the head of state, for instance, contradict one another, leaving it impossible for us to know which is correct.

In addition to introducing the possibility of antinomy, Tanabe, second, succumbed to the very state absolutism he had criticized when he first presented his logic of Species. In 1939, at the outbreak of World War II, coinciding with a rise of totalitarianism in Japan, Tanabe was all too hasty in formulating his imperative 'to endeavor to serve the interest of society' in a way that commanded "obedience to the orders of the state."⁴⁶ In LStB, Tanabe takes the state to be the worldly manifestation (the "manifest being")⁴⁷ of Absolute Nothingness, the source of rationality, and claims unabashedly that "the autonomy and freedom of morality, so far from being extinguished in serving the state and obeying its orders, is thereby made possible."⁴⁸ While this is certainly one way to understand self-legislation within a state, it completely betrays the ideals of the logic of Species. As Tanabe writes, he had initially set out "to secure the rational grounds [of Japan's manner of governance], but at the same time, to rectify, to the extent possible, the irrational policies of the [ad hoc] realism that had been prevalent at the time in our country."⁴⁹ Betraying this aim was the failure of the logic of Species.

That being said, the problems stemming from attempts to understand what constitutes "the interest of society" do not go away even if we set aside Tanabe's

⁴⁶ THZ 7, 41.

⁴⁷ Japanese: *ōgen sonzai* 応現存在. *Ōgen* translates the Sanskrit *nirmāna*, which, as used for instance in *nirmanakāya*, refers to the Buddha taking physical form to instruct sentient beings.

⁴⁸ THZ7,41. The notion of "manifest being" seems to have drawn influence from Hegel's following claim in §258 of the *Philosophy of Right*: "The state consists in the march of God in the world, and its basis is in the power of reason actualizing itself as will." (Hegel 1991, 279). Manifest being will be examined in more detail below.

⁴⁹ THZ 7, 255.

rash error. Since the knowledge that must ground an action is finite, one cannot know in advance which of a set of demands is correct. Hence, reflecting on the failure of the logic of Species in 1944, Tanabe states, “since one is unable to judge what is the good course of action or the correct policy, one is not merely practically powerless but, with respect to knowledge as well, has a profound sense of powerlessness.”⁵⁰ Due to our finite capacities, no matter how rational we become, and however much we expand our knowledge, we never achieve a condition that could enable consistently correct judgments. Tanabe describes this as “the powerlessness by which the autonomy of reason itself finally reaches an impasse by necessity.”⁵¹ When reason seeks actual content for the categorical imperative, practical reason confronts antinomies. Anyone who attempts to realize the Socratic injunction to “live well!” by seeking self-legislation in a life within the state will arrive at the antinomies confronting the categorical imperative when it faces social reality. It follows that this is not a problem of individual ability, but the fate of rational thinking, the “inescapable destiny of reason.”⁵²

At this juncture, Tanabe's social ontology requires a higher order principle, one that goes beyond Absolute Nothingness, understood as the basic principle that sublates us toward rationality. Tanabe thereby links Absolute Nothingness to the religious Absolute, as that which realizes salvation. Tanabe calls the grief of practical reason's powerlessness “repentance” (*zange* 懺悔), within which we are said to be saved by the Absolute.⁵³ While Absolute Nothingness was the basic principle that served as the origin of rationality and as that which makes society and individual people rational, the Absolute spoken of here is meant to be something higher. It is, in other words, a principle that *forgives* the evils of a society and its individual people, thus saving them despite their inability to become rational. It is the path through which Absolute Nothingness transforms into “Nothingness-*qua*-Love” (*mu-soku-ai* 無即愛), the “love beyond reason” that lies in the background of Absolute Nothingness.⁵⁴ In this way, “Nothingness-*qua*-Love” is not the origin of rationality but the principle that leads the powerless to salvation.

This basic principle of being that lies in the ground of actuality does not make me *be*, charge me with an *action*, because I am qualified to act rationally; it rather treats me, who is unable and constantly deviating from the path, *as if* I

⁵⁰ Z, 16.

⁵¹ THZ 9, 37.

⁵² THZ 9, 52. John Maraldo (1990) has interpreted metanoetics as a crisis that confronts Western reason.

⁵³ In Tanabe's philosophy of religion, salvation is called “death and resurrection,” which is realized by “Nothingness-*qua*-Love” (*mu-soku-ai* 無即愛). For details, see URAI 2020.

⁵⁴ Z, 28.

walked the path and was able; it makes me, who is hardly a man, act *as if* I were one. This is no longer reason: the basic principle that lies at the bottom of actuality and supports being cannot be comprehended by the standpoint of *noetics*, which relies on Logos [*ri* 理] to tell us what ought to be.⁵⁵

With the appearance of “Nothingness-*qua*-Love” following the war, Tanabe began speaking of the logic of Species as the “logic of love.” The religious social ontology of his metanoetics no longer centered upon the state but on “existential communion.” The logic of love, then, appears to compensate for the failings of the logic of Species while putting to use its basic framework. If so, then, as TAGUCHI has pointed out, the logic of Species ‘only exists as a “mediation” within the development of Tanabe’s thought.’⁵⁶

4. Extension of the Species: From the Substratum of the State to the Substratum of Existential Communion

In the last section, we saw how the logic of Species succumbed to state absolutism and how, on the basis of that failure, Tanabe’s social ontology that aimed at bettering society through practical reason arrived at metanoetics. From the perspective of social ontology, the status of the state is dramatically changed. It is no longer the “manifest being” of the source of rationality, but instead it now appears as a mere “skillful means,” so to speak. Accompanying this change is a shift in the role of the Species. As originally formulated, the Species is the substratum of the state, but now it is designated to be the “substratum of existential communion.”⁵⁷ In this section, we will follow Tanabe’s thought as he turned away from the state and came to speak of existential communion as the ideal social shape.

How did Tanabe’s thinking regarding the status of the state change following the frustration of the logic of Species? As we saw in the previous section, Tanabe attributed rational actuality to the state; it was the actualization of social justice. For that reason, already in SOSL it is claimed that “the authority of the state must be the *efficacious compulsion* of moral conduct.”⁵⁸ The “state” referred to here is the “human state” established through the rationalization (generification) of the Species.

This understanding of the state’s authority is connected to the state absolutism of LStB. Tanabe writes, “My philosophy of the state gives the state the status of

⁵⁵ Z, 19-20; emphasis added.

⁵⁶ TAGUCHI 2013, 9.

⁵⁷ THZ 10, 247.

⁵⁸ THZ 6, 374.

Christ, so to speak, making it the manifest being, the substratum-manifestation [*kitai-teki genjō* 基体的現成] of Absolute Nothingness” and, hence, takes the relationship between Absolute Nothingness and the state to be analogous to that between the Father and the Child.⁵⁹ Put differently, the state is the worldly appearance of absolute rationality. Hence, if Tanabe's logic of Species aimed to rationalize society through the mediation of absolute rationality, and the state was taken to be the appearance of this absolute rationality, examining the culpability of the state was then out of the question. After experiencing the powerlessness of reason, Tanabe's position from the standpoint of metanoetics, however, could no longer identify the state with manifest being. A change in the status of the state was necessary.

Thus, in the metanoetics Tanabe reappraises the state, deeming it to be fallible and to participate in radical evil. Tanabe thereby relegates the state and society to the status of Species, redefining them both as mere “instrumental being” (*hōben sonzai* 方便存在).⁶⁰ In Buddhism, *hōben* (Sanskrit: *upāya*) is the skillful means leading to truth. In this sense, the Species is thought to be a “*hōben* [means or instrument] for salvation” and its being has the basic character of *hōben* (he says that, “mediated by Absolute nothingness,” it “acquires *hōben* beinghood”).⁶¹ The salvation effected by Nothingness-*qua*-Love works on the individual person through the mediation of the Species.

By relegating instrumental being to the state, Tanabe seems to now put it at the level of society as was envisioned in the logic of Species. Three years prior to the drafting of LSB, Tanabe writes the following in “The Standpoint of Anthropology” (“Ningengaku No Tachiba” 「人間学の立場」, 1931):

If it is not through the mutual mediation of [on the one hand] a self-awareness of the self's dialectical position as an entity [*sonzaisha* 存在者] relative to the absolute entity, and [on the other hand, a self-awareness of] its communal being [*kyōdō sonai* 共同存在] with other relative entities, then the human way of being ... does not become self-aware. The human way of being is unique in its self-aware being, but at the same time, its necessary moment is the self-awareness that it is a being [*sonzai* 存在] within the eternal Absolute and a being within a historical, social community. The self-awareness of my being is first possible within the self-awareness that is the constitution of a communal being with others, mediated by and within the Absolute.⁶²

⁵⁹ THZ 7, 42. On “manifest being” see note 47.

⁶⁰ THZ 7, 261.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* This will be taken up again briefly at the end of section 5. For details, see URAI 2019.

⁶² THZ 4, 366-7.

While human beings are unique in that they can know, be “self-aware” of, what they are, Tanabe insists that such self-knowledge is not possible merely through the self’s relationship to the Absolute, but is established through the social relations the self has with others, social relations which are mediated by the Absolute. It is not difficult to see here the early stages of such ideas as Nothingness-*qua*-Love and the generified Species (existential communion and the human state), on the one hand, and the Individual as distinguished from the given individual person, on the other. From the beginning, the *Species* of the logic of Species was imagined to be that which enables interchange between Absolute Nothingness and the Individual. In this sense, the Species was taken to be a *means* for the Individual to access Absolute Nothingness. For that reason, in *The Dialectic of the Logic of Species* (*Shu No Ronri No Benshōhō* 『種の論理の弁証法』, 1947) Tanabe states that, when the Species is transformed by Nothingness-*qua*-Love and “acquires *hōben* beinghood,” it becomes possible for the Species to imbue its members with Nothingness-*qua*-Love.⁶³ The original role of the Species is then to serve as a mediator between Absolute Nothingness and the Individual.

That being said, already in LSB Tanabe draws on Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right* to claim that “the state is the sole, worldly absolute” and that “the state is the worldly actualization of divine will.”⁶⁴ This notion overlaps with a paraphrase of “manifest being” used in LStB, namely, “the worldly actualization of the divine ideal.”⁶⁵ Thus, it is hard to maintain that Tanabe’s doctrine of the state made a sharp turn in LStB toward state absolutism. Instead, we should say that, from the beginning, Tanabe’s framework bore an ambivalence that could lead to conceiving the state as either “manifest” or “instrumental” being.

Still, Tanabe commits a clear overreach in LStB when he tries to express the co-mediating relationship between *is* and *ought*—the relation of being-*qua*-ought and ought-*qua*-being—which betrays an equivocation between the state as it actually is and the “human state” as an ideal.⁶⁶ Now, if we consider a point made in *Kant’s Teleology* (*Kanto No Mokutekiron* 『カントの目的論』, 1924), it is possible to make some sense out of what Tanabe wants to say with regard to the reciprocity between the *is* and the *ought*. There he writes, “the ought is impossible without involving infinitesimal actuality.”⁶⁷ He thought, in other words, that anything that actually *is*, in some shape or form, contributes to the actualization of

⁶³ THZ 7, 261.

⁶⁴ THZ 6, 145; 6, 142. See note 47.

⁶⁵ THZ 7, 35.

⁶⁶ Cf. THZ 7, 30; 7, 70.

⁶⁷ THZ 3, 57.

what *ought* to be. However, in LStB, when Tanabe elevates the state to the status of the Child and identifies the actually existing state with the ideal of the state, he deviates greatly from this original intuition. With that conception, the only way to parse “serving the state” is in terms of the Individual’s total submission to the actually existing state.⁶⁸

Above we considered the problems that face Tanabe’s concept of manifest being. When the state changes from manifest being to instrumental being, there is also a change in the conception of the Genus. Next, I would like to examine this change as it occurs in the philosophy as metanoetics.

In *Philosophy as Metanoetics* (*Zangedō Toshiteno Tetsugaku* 『懺悔道としての哲学』, 1946), Tanabe begins overhauling his social ontology by reformulating his state ontology from the standpoint of metanoetics.⁶⁹ Tanabe sets as a goal the “worldly establishment of the dominion of God” [*kami no kuni* 神の国], a goal to be achieved through the generification of the Species. And in *The Dialectic of the Logic of Species*, he says that a state that has undergone “religious salvation” through repentance (*zange*) is an “open society akin to the dominion of God and the Pure Land [*shinkoku jōdo-teki naru* 神国浄土的なる.]” Through this, he prepares the way for a religious social ontology that aims at “the founding of a state that is instrumental [*hōben*] for the Love of divine salvation,” instrumental, that is, for the salvation of individual people.⁷⁰ Tanabe intended to give the state a key, albeit “instrumental,” role in achieving “a world unity of allied states as the manifestation [*genjō* 現成] of religious Nothingness,” thereby giving it a role in achieving “the salvation of humankind.”⁷¹

This aspiration is qualified by the point we noted above, namely, that the state is now taken to be fallible and to participate in radical evil. If that is so, then the presently existing state cannot fill the role of the unity of the Genus. On account of its radical evil, what Tanabe says of the individual’s actions goes for the state as well: “since a hidden, unapparent moment is always overlooked and forgotten by conscious action, no action can avoid sin.”⁷² The state cannot avoid making sacrifices in its governing. The actual state is subordinate to systematic law, but this law, when discharged in the power to compel, perpetrates violence against some members. In discharging its power, it makes sacrifices and commits errors along the way. While over the course of history the state may develop in response to these errors, it never attains the fully rational grounds that Tanabe had tried to

⁶⁸ THZ 7, 41.

⁶⁹ THZ 9, 256.

⁷⁰ THZ 9, 235; 7, 364; 7, 361; 7, 258.

⁷¹ THZ 7, 362.

⁷² THZ 9, 34.

confer on it in the logic of Species. Moreover, even if Tanabe continues to maintain that the state undergoes a qualitative change through the mediation of Absolute Nothingness, it still falls short of the unity of the Genus he had once attributed to it.

For those reasons, the unity of the Genus itself needed to be reformulated and on a level different from the fallible state. This gives us some background context for the introduction of “existential communion” following *Existence, Love, and Praxis* (*Jitsuzon To Ai To Jissen* 『実存と愛と実践』, 1947). At this time, the unity of the Genus was reformulated in terms of a “communion of spirits” (*rei-teki kyōdō* 靈的協同), a “society of spirits” (*rei-teki shakai* 靈的社会), and a “genus communion” (*rui-teki kyōdō* 類的協同).⁷³ Existential communion, referred to as a “solidarity of love” in *Demonstration of Christianity* (*Kirisuto-kyō No Benshō* 『キリスト教の弁証』, 1948), is a communion of people shaped by the workings of Nothingness-*qua*-Love.⁷⁴ Such a communion is established through altruistic actions, actions performed within a Species by “Individuals”⁷⁵ saved by Nothingness-*qua*-Love. In this way, an existential communion serves as the Genus and its establishment depends on the workings of Nothingness-*qua*-Love permeating the Species as either the state society or the local blood community.

Where the logic of Species took the state and the society to be related in terms of Genus and Species, they are now both relegated to the latter category, as the Genus is understood to be the communion of spirits. This leads to an expansion of the scope of the Genus. If the Genus is now understood as a communion of spirits, then it is no longer bound to the state’s sphere of authority. Thus, it becomes possible to speak of a unity that transcends this sphere. In other words, the logic of love is able to speak of unity at the level of humankind, a unity that was not feasible in the logic of Species. In fact, in *Demonstration of Christianity* Tanabe says that, with the communion of spirits being actualized in the species society, a “communion of humankind” becomes attainable.⁷⁶

In section 2, we saw that the Species was held to be infinitely divisible,⁷⁷ and now this idea takes on a new significance. Before, the division of the Species was discussed in terms of land possession. However, the notion of Species—then taken to be land and blood relations—expands once Tanabe associates the Genus with

⁷³ THZ 9, 273; 10, 141; *ibid.*

⁷⁴ THZ 10, 238.

⁷⁵ Specifically, the “Individual who lives a resurrected life” (THZ 7, 267). As this expression suggests, the idea that the “Individual” is ontologically posterior to the Species and emerges through the mediation of Absolute Nothingness or absolute-negative transformation is one held in common by the logic of Species and metanoetics.

⁷⁶ THZ 10, 141.

⁷⁷ THZ 6, 315.

the Christian “invisible church,” on the one hand, and the Species with the “visible church,” on the other.⁷⁸ While, of course, a “visible church” depends on land possession, Tanabe now tries to envision a broader sense of “place.” No longer conceived of as the divisions of land possession based on blood and land relations, the Species is now taken to be any community wherein people encounter one another.

When the Species is divided through land possession, its divisions can be laid out in terms of country, state, city, county, and so forth until we reach the plots of land owned by individual people. The followers of a church, however, do not fall into such simple demarcations. While there are divisions that run between different religions and different sects, these divisions remain underdetermined by geographical limitations. In Tanabe's late “philosophy of death,” he even speaks of existential communion with a loved one who has passed away, further emphasizing that the new conception of the species society is not bound by relations of land. Moreover, because the loved one need not be a family member or relative but can be anyone that the individual encounters, the species society is not bound by relations of blood, either. This is even more salient for us today, as we can have meaningful communication with people around the globe through the internet. Social networking allows us to form communities beyond any imaginable limitations imposed by blood or locality.⁷⁹ A species society that has been sublated to an existential communion then sheds any significance of being merely a locale and now more broadly captures the phenomenon of “commonality,” of participation in something shared in common (*kyōdōtai* 協同態).⁸⁰ Later on, I will call this broader conception of the species society a “species commonality.”

When the Species is the substratum of existential communion, it can no longer be conceived of as something that divides along geographical lines. Its divisions are underdetermined by blood and land relations and participation in it takes on a variety of forms. Likewise, the term “Genus” can expand beyond the state to encompass the entire range of the workings of Nothingness-*qua*-Love. Now, the measure of the qualitative difference between the Species and the Genus is no longer taken in terms of whether some locality is rational or not, but whether a

⁷⁸ Cf. THZ 10, 250.

⁷⁹ Indeed, the other half of this story, as appears in such phenomena as cyber bullying and cyber harassment, is the expansion of the Species' capacity of violence, the broader scope of what Tanabe calls its “power to compel the individual” (THZ 6, 450).

⁸⁰ *Kyōdōtai* is typically written with the Chinese characters 共同体. This usage appears in Tanabe as early as *Philosophy as Metanoetics* (THZ 9, 201) and *Demonstration of Christianity* (THZ 10, 109), but would gain more frequent use in the studies that present Tanabe's “philosophy of death.” Tanabe generally uses the term to refer to the Genus when it constitutes an existential communion, but here I also understand it to refer to the Species as the substratum of the Genus.

commonality has been permeated by Nothingness-*qua*-Love. Such a commonality is the substratum of the existential communion, the *communio sanctorum* emphasized in *Demonstration of Christianity*. Through the reallocation of the roles of the Genus, Species, and Individual, elements that were left unsupported in the framework of the logic of Species gain new support and, in the logic of love, it becomes possible to speak of an ideal unity of humankind.

5. Species and Existential Communion

In the last section, we saw that, after Tanabe introduced existential communion into his system in *Existence, Love, and Praxis*, the Species gained the new role of functioning as its substratum. In other words, the Species shifted from serving as the substratum of the state to being that of existential communion. In this section, I would like to further clarify the nature of existential communion and to connect this idea more concretely with the Species by examining the concept of “species *eidōs*” (*shusō* 種相). This concept is especially important to clarify because, as we will see later, it refers to the concrete form of the Species’ power to compel, and thus, by treating this concept, we can elucidate the relationship between both existential communion and the possible *violence* of the Species, the idea that, “in controverting and resisting [the state and society], the individual person must suffer various kinds of oppression or, at the extreme, be robbed of life.”⁸¹ Through this we can further clarify the relationship between existential communion and the Species in the logic of Species, which has been overlooked in previous studies.

The term *shusō* 種相 already appears in LSB,⁸² yet there it only served as a translation for Plato’s “Idea.” Tanabe would not make this term his own until *The Dialectic of the Logic of Species*. In the logic of Species, the Species was defined primarily in terms of matter or *hyle*, but in this work the Species is said to be the “intermediate being,” that is, a synthesis of *hyle* and *eidōs*.⁸³ Thus, the Species can here be spoken of with respect to these two moments. When Tanabe speaks of the “species *eidōs*” (*shusō*) he then refers to the “*eidōs* of the Species.”⁸⁴

The “traditions and customs of a species society” make up the species *eidōs*.⁸⁵ In the logic of Species, these overlap with the “past social conventions” that comprise the concrete form of the Species power to compel, the power by which it

⁸¹ THZ 7, 259.

⁸² THZ 6, 102.

⁸³ THZ 7, 352. See note 16.

⁸⁴ THZ 7, 345.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

tries to “bury” the individual person.⁸⁶ In this sense, we can say that the species *eidos* was a moment already latent within the logic of Species. In the posthumous manuscript *Philosophy, Poetry, and Religion (Tetsugaku To Shi To Shūkyō* 『哲学と詩と宗教』, 1953-4), Tanabe writes that the content of the Species is the “resistance between the force of [a communal environment’s] preservation of past tradition and the force of its future innovation” and that the Species aims not for a “definitive unity as species *eidos*,” but is instead “that unity’s self-alienating division,” its “inward opposition-*qua*-outward resistance.”⁸⁷ Here, too, the Species shares a structure with the Species discussed in section 2, but by adding the determinations of past and future, Tanabe now seems to take the Species to signify an equilibrium of force between these two orientations. The species *eidos* then refers to the very traditions and customs that comprise the origin of these opposing powers.

We can further establish a connection between the structure of the species *eidos* and the structure of the Species as seen in section 2. In *Existence, Love, and Praxis*, Tanabe says that the *eidos* itself is capable of “infinite” stratification through Genera and Species, that within a species *eidos*, between the highest and lowest Species, there are an infinite number of levels.⁸⁸ What makes this possible, Tanabe explains, is that the species *eidos* contains the self-negativity of non-being *hyle*.⁸⁹ Bringing this idea together with that of the infinitely self-dividing Species that we saw in section 2, we can say that species *eidos* are the *eidos* that are possessed by each sub-divided Species. If so, then a species *eidos* marks a particular division of the Species. Now, as we also saw in section 2, the Species not only divides, but involves the opposition between unity and division. Each Species is contained within the unity of a Species greater than itself. In this case, the divided species *eidos* underlie the species *eidos* of even greater Species. That is to say, a species *eidos* divides into lower-order species *eidos*, but these lower-order species *eidos* lie under the unity of higher-order species *eidos*. To take language as an example, the higher-order species *eidos* “Japanese” is divided into various regional dialects that make up lower-order species *eidos*. These regional dialects oppose the higher-order species *eidos* while also being unified by it.

⁸⁶ THZ 6, 310-1.

⁸⁷ THZ 13, 370. The mentioned “inward opposition-*qua*-outward resistance” [*jikonaitairitu-soku-taigai-teki taikō* 自己内対立即対外的対抗]” is a reformulation of an idea we examined in section 2, namely, the outward opposition that attends inward opposition. Thus, we can say that the three kinds of opposition discussed in “Clarifying the Meaning of the Logic of Species” remained valid in Tanabe’s last works.

⁸⁸ THZ 9, 437.

⁸⁹ See note 16.

As we saw in the previous section, the species commonality divides in such a way as to facilitate a variety of forms of participation. To make that idea clearer, consider the various ways one participates in the social world. Divisions within the species commonality can be seen, where I comport myself differently as a husband in one situation, for example, and an instructor in another, or as a speaker of the Kansai dialect when among friends and a competent user of standard Japanese when I write an article. Where a species commonality so divides at the junctures of particular species *eide*, the individual falls under the powers of compulsion of *all* species *eide* corresponding to the species commonality to which she belongs, and must thereby navigate these powers. Given this, what is the concrete relationship between the species *eide* and the individual within the Species?

The Species, as we have seen, is the origin of the power to compel the individual; it is what draws the individual into the sphere of this power's influence.⁹⁰ Species *eide* are the "particular customs and laws" that belong to Species, and the individual who controverts and resists state and society is said to suffer "various kinds of oppression or, at the extreme, be robbed of life."⁹¹ As mentioned at the beginning of this section, this is the *violence* of which the Species is capable. Whether by murder or suicide, the Species' power to compel can drive the individual to death, a state of affairs that seems unchanged since the time Tanabe initially conceived of his logic of Species. This action of the Species maintains its continuity by eliminating those who do not conform to its *eidōs*.

Now, by enfolding the individual within it, the species commonality sustains itself, but to maintain itself over time, it tries to engulf any who do not belong to it. For, if the species commonality is to outlive the individuals who presently belong to it, then it must draw into the fold those who are not (yet) members. It must therefore embrace new members either from the outside or through reproduction within.

Naturally, any who agree with the *eidōs* of the Species are brought into the fold of the species commonality. However, those who controvert it are forced into membership through various modes of appeasement and oppression. If opposition comes from a single person within the commonality, then she may be treated as a foreign element and, as Tanabe says, "at the extreme, be robbed of life."⁹² But if opposition comes in greater numbers and can generate a force that rivals that of the species *eidōs*, then there is the possibility that the competing species *eidōs* effects a change in the ruling species *eidōs*. In such a case, there is strife between the conservative and innovative forces, and such strife constitutes "the resistance

⁹⁰ THZ 6, 450.

⁹¹ THZ 7, 259.

⁹² *Ibid.*

between the force of preservation of past tradition and the force of its future innovation.”⁹³

However, if it is the case that the conservative (past-oriented) species *eidōs* and the innovative (future-oriented) species *eidōs* merely change hands, then the innovative species *eidōs* merely subjugates the conservative species *eidōs*, resulting in “strife by means of force.”⁹⁴ Tanabe decries such power struggles, saying that the only possible satisfaction that could result from them is that of “animal life, the mere expansion of immediate, self-affirming life.”⁹⁵ In other words, strife between species *eide* merely preserves the stronger species *eidōs* within an existential communion. As a mere struggle for survival, it achieves nothing more than the struggles and satisfactions of an animal life. In terms of Tanabe's categories, different Species merely change hands, a process through which no transformation into a Genus can happen. As we saw in section 2, what is missing is the Individual capable of generifying the Species. Thus, Tanabe says:

The Species as instrumental being [*hōben-teki sonzai*] cannot be eternally and constantly self-sufficient like Plato's Ideas, for, as something always negatively mediated and incessantly reformed, it must be a Naught Being [*mu-teki u* 無的有], that is, that which is generified and which partakes in existence within the resurrected mode of being [*sonzai yōtai* 存在様態].⁹⁶

The species *eide*, quite unlike Plato's Ideas, do not exist beyond the phenomenal world but are entrenched in tireless struggle here in the historical world. As we have seen above, these species *eide* can only be generified through the actions of Individuals. It is only through the praxis of the Individual that a species *eidōs* can change, and only through such change, through the tireless generification of the Species, can it actually become and persist as a Genus, an existential communion.

It is here that the Species must function as the “foundation of repentance [*zange*],” that is, the foundation upon which the individual person is saved.⁹⁷ As we have seen, the Species undergoes stratified division; as the species commonality divides, individual people find themselves living under various layers of species *eide*. These species *eide*, therefore, make various demands on the individual person. When these demands can be coherently followed, the situation is relatively

⁹³ THZ 13, 370.

⁹⁴ THZ 9, 480.

⁹⁵ THZ 10, 14.

⁹⁶ THZ 10, 247-8.

⁹⁷ THZ 7, 254

unproblematic; however, it is possible that these demands are incompatible and even contradictory. Insofar as an individual person must respect contradictory demands, an antinomy of the categorical imperative arises. Incapable of determining the proper course of action, the individual person is driven into anguish. In the midst of this anguish, the Individual is established through the workings of Nothingness-*qua*-Love. This Individual is the trigger for the species commonality's generification into a communion of the Genus, that is, an existential communion.

Conclusion

To clarify the development of Tanabe's social ontology from the logic of Species to the logic of love, we have examined the following points. We began with the categories of the logic of Species—Genus, Species, and Individual; we then saw that Tanabe's state absolutism was based on the logic of Species' overconfidence in reason; the logic of love espoused in the philosophy as metanoetics was then seen to be a religious social ontology meant to amend these grave errors; and finally, we confirmed the continuity that lies between the logic of Species and the logic of love.

If we take in the whole expanse of Tanabe's evolving social ontology, we can look back and see foolish errors made along the way. His initial choice of helmsman steered his social ontology into state absolutism, but it now seems that he tried to escape into a religious philosophy that abandoned reason by putting its confidence in the delusion of a religious Absolute. That being said, the errors of the logic of Species are the fates that awaited his search for the means to the "good social life," the means to live altruistically and for one's community. His errors might be those that await anyone who tries to illuminate the irrationalities of society by the light of reason and make positive change—at least, Tanabe himself understood that these errors belong to the fate of human reason *überhaupt*.

What we can take from Tanabe's social ontology is not the momentary pleasure of rendering judgment on the 'foolish totalitarians' that haunt Japan's past, but the lesson that, when we try to improve society through judgment based on human reason, we may face the same fate. Our society is undergoing transformations with much greater rapidity and complexity than Tanabe ever could have imagined. Therefore, as we examine the societies in front of us and attempt to construct social ontologies adequate to our time, we must bear in mind that any who would be intoxicated by the latest ideologies that purport perfect rationality can expect that the errors of the logic of Species will not remain in the past, but will be awaiting them in the future.

* This work was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number jp19k23025.

Abbreviations

- THZ 『田辺元全集』 [*Complete works of Tanabe Hajime*]. Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1963–1964, 15 vols.
- Z 『懺悔道としての哲学：田辺元哲学選 II』 [*Philosophy as Metanoetics: Selected Works of Tanabe Hajime vol.2*]. Edited by Fujita Masakatsu 藤田正勝. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten. 2010.

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