In Chapter One I talked about the arena of “now.”

I said that the past and the future spring up into it.

When I become aware of it, I have been born

Let’s think about time once more by viewing this arena of “now” as the “arena of birth.”
When I become aware of it

I have been born

Past Future

Arena of birth

When we do so...

**Past** = The direction in which I look back over the chain of events of my life each time I become aware of my birth.

**Future** = Anticipation of the possibility of some kind of new emergence that arises within the present perfect tense each time I become aware of my birth.

This is what we get.
What is important is that what appears in the arena of birth is only “past,” “present perfect,” and “future."

“Now” is nowhere to be found.

You’re changing your story!

Where did the arena of “now” go?
The arena of birth

I have awareness of birth
= the appearance of "past," "present perfect," "future," and "birth"

The arena of "now"

I do not have awareness of birth
= the appearance of "now," "emergence·change·disappearance," and "unchanginess"

I live my life while going back and forth between these two worlds.

This is more or less how I see things.

Our thinking has gone deeper than in Chapter One.
So what happens to “my death”?  

In “the arena of birth,” “my death” appears as part of the future. It manifests as the anticipation of the disappearance of “the arena of birth” itself.

In the arena of “now,” however, “my death” never appears at all. The arena of “now” is a world in which there is no “my death.” Nor is there “my birth.”
In other words, “the arena of birth” is a world in which there is no “now,” the “arena of now” is a world in which there is neither “my birth” nor “my death,” and “my birth and death” and “now” can never co-exist within the same arena.
Now listen carefully.

Since each time I stand in “the arena of birth” and look back over my life it appears remade as a new life up to that point of reflection,

no matter how depressed I may be, no matter how much I may be dissatisfied with my life thus far, wish I had never been born into it at all, and be unable to avoid finding it terribly painful,
logically speaking the possibility always exists that, depending on how I live my life going forward, the entire life I have lived in the past can suddenly come to be seen as a completely different life.

This is always the case, no matter how much a person may be suffering!!

In other words, whether you will be able to think “I’m truly glad that I have been born” depends on how you live your life from now on.
No matter how much suffering and frustration you endure, the possibility that you will nevertheless be able to think “I’m truly glad that I have been born” always remains open right up until the moment you die.

This is the case because even if you cannot say “that was good” about the painful events or failures in your life, it must always be possible for you to say “that was good” about yourself as the person who has lived through these things and made it to this point.
Of course, if the human relationships and social structures around you are unfairly causing you to suffer,

this is a problem that has to be solved.

This can be very difficult.

It is only by having come this far in our thinking that at last it seems possible to obtain an answer to the question, “Why do I live?”
In response to the question “Why do I live?,”

my answer is that I live in order to become able to think “I’m truly glad that I have been born” from the bottom of my heart.

Let’s use the phrase “birth affirmation” to refer to “being truly glad to have been born.”
Alright then, 
so why have I been born?

In response to this question,

my answer is that I have been born
in order to realize in this universe
an irreplaceable path toward
birth affirmation that is only possible through me,

and which allows me to think
“I’m truly glad that I have been born” from the bottom of my heart.
I may be able to say that I have been born in order to achieve in this world a one-of-a-kind form of birth affirmation that can only be attained through the one-of-a-kind life that is my own.

And even if I never obtain birth affirmation, that does not mean my life will have been a failure — as I said earlier, a life is something that happens only once, and so cannot really be compared to another and called a success or failure.
Now let me suggest something to you.

OK, Sensei.

Within the universe, all kinds of living things, including human beings, are being born one after another.

Couldn’t it perhaps be the case that the universe keeps giving birth to these living things...
Birth Affirmation

so that each of them can attain its own irreplaceable birth affirmation?
I've never even considered such a thing.
We are charged with the destiny of seeking birth affirmation...

I’d like to try thinking about it like this.

But I think there’s something wrong with what you just said.

What’s wrong with it?

Somehow I have a feeling that this kind of fixed destiny does not exist for us!
Moreover, if it did exist life would be boring,

and I don’t like the idea of being forced to affirm my own birth.

I too, of course, would like to become able to think “I’m truly glad that I have been born,”

and listening to what you say I get the feeling it will become one of the main aims of my life.
But to say that the universe desires our birth affirmation is just your philosophy, and to me this just doesn’t seem right.

Alright then, why have you been born?

I think there must be some meaning. But right now my head is full, and I can’t do any more thinking.
My thinking may be wrong.

Please have faith in your own intuition and intellect.

My work here is almost done.
I will always protect you, Manmaru-kun.

When things are hard. When things are painful. When you are fretting over the meaning of life.

Come back any time.

I’ll always be here.
Goodbye, Manmaru-kun…

...and thank you.

I’m going back to the ocean now, Sensei.

I’m going to search for my own life without regrets.
Sayonara, Sensei.
Manmaru-kun

Imaima-kun

Imaima-chan

Climax monster
Clima-kun

And our M-sensei!!
Afterword

What did you think of Manmaru-kun’s philosophical journey in the company of his Sensei and some friendly creatures?

For me, this book was a great experiment and adventure. Now that it is over I’m filled with a sense of exhilaration.

Because this is an introductory text, I didn’t stop at a given theme or topic and dig into it more deeply. There were in fact many things I wish I could have considered more fully. There is also a mountain of ideas I was not able to reference, and some assertions that ended up being extremely arbitrary or dogmatic. From time to time the reader may think I have failed to address a crucial point. I will consider these topics more thoroughly in future writings, so I hope I can be forgiven for my lack of detail in the present text.

There are several things I learned once I actually started drawing manga.

1) There are ideas that can only be expressed in
To begin with, there is philosophical thought that can be most effectively expressed using pictures or the movement of frames. For example, the examination of “I” in Chapter Three was particularly effective because of the power of pictures. Manga’s potential as a tool for expressing philosophical thought needs to be pursued more seriously.

Manga has the capacity to dynamically express the flow of philosophical thought. Elements such as points of emphasis in the flow of thought and the development of images that arise one after another can be expressed visually. When I am engaged in philosophical thought, I often notice that I do not think using words but rather using visual images that move around in my mind. Attempting to express the movement of these images directly in pictures is perhaps the best way to communicate this raw aspect of philosophy. I had this thought right at the start of this project. As Aristotle says, in philosophy intuitive understanding (nous) is indispensable. Manga can be an excellent tool for imparting it.
2) *Manga has the power to draw people in*

When reading a book of printed text you sometimes become bored or sleepy. But with manga you can keep reading forever. People talk about the “right brain” and “left brain,” and since manga strikes a good balance in stimulating both through its pictures and text, it can be read for a long time and captivate readers. If you want people to read about abstract thought of the kind found in philosophy, it would be a mistake not to take advantage of manga’s “power to draw people in.”

What I realized in the midst of creating this book, however, is that some styles of art are better suited than others to expressing philosophical thought. The characters in this book are drawn with a simple style, and have a pressed-flat, 2D appearance. This is a good match for the abstract, theoretical content of the text. At first I asked a manga artist to create drawings based on more manga-like characters, but this made the art stand out too much and the philosophical ideas harder to follow. In the
end I settled on asking a different manga artist, Nyancofu Terada, to use my own drawings more or less as they were.

3) *There are ideas that are difficult to express in manga*

Manga makes it hard to do some things well. It is extremely difficult to express complicated things in pictures. In writing you can say things like, “this is like this and that is like that, so if this were like that and that were like this, then the result would be...” but expressing these sorts of relationships in pictures is a Herculean task. If the content is schematic you can of course describe it using a diagram, and I made numerous such attempts in this book, but within abstract theories there are many things that cannot be expressed graphically. When it came to such content I had no choice but to borrow the power of words and present it in long text balloons.

In fact, there were several places in which the amount of text increased, and to go any further in the medium of manga was impossible. Of course, if I had a better mastery
of drawing I might be able to express almost any idea using pictures. Even then, however, there would surely be some things I could only express in words.

*

This manga uses a left-to-right layout and horizontal writing in its speech balloons. This is unusual for a Japanese manga with pages divided into frames. If you look at manga published in Japan you will see what I mean, but normally they are laid out “right-to-left” and the text is written vertically. There is actually a debate on the Internet over whether Japanese manga should be written left to right and horizontally going forward. I wasn’t aware of this at the time, and just happened to adopt this new style. I would be delighted if this approach caused a stir in a Japanese manga community that has long resisted horizontal text.

Finally, let me say a few words about how I went about creating this manga.

To begin with, I drew the frames freehand on a blank sheet of A4-sized copy paper with a
graphite pencil, and then sketched in the characters and text in balloons. Once I had drawn everything, I completed the page by adding lines and shading in the background. When I made revisions I rubbed out everything with an eraser and drew that section over again. Unlike using a word processor, there was no delete button or copy and paste function, so the process felt very inefficient. Even when I set aside an entire day I could usually only finish around seven pages, but I truly enjoyed the time I spent working on this project.

Here are some examples of my original drafts.
Interested readers can find several full-scale sample pages on my website.
<www.lifestudies.org/jp/manga>. I’ve also posted some of my recent essays and papers on “philosophy of life” and “birth affirmation” on <www.lifestudies.org>.

The process behind the creation of this book began with a request from Yumiko Futami, an editor at Kodansha Publications. Ms. Futami was a classmate of mine in university, and did me the honor of asking me to write something for her publishing company. If it weren’t for the persistence of Ms. Futami, who waited patiently for a draft that took a very long time to produce, this book would surely never have come to be. I was also very fortunate to have met Nyancofu Terada, a very talented manga artist, through an introduction from Kodansha’s Takeo Inoue. Thanks to Mr. Terada’s professional artwork, we were able to create a genuine manga introduction to philosophy. I would also like to thank Keiko Nogawa from Kodansha Publications’s editing department who oversaw the details of editing and publication.

Masahiro Morioka
March 20th, 2013

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Postscript — 2021

The Japanese edition of this book also included an extensive guide to further reading. An English version of this guide will be uploaded to <lifestudies.org/manga00.html> in the future.

As I have written elsewhere, this book constitutes the first part of my “Philosophy of Life” trilogy.

Book 1
*Manga Introduction to Philosophy*
(2013, this book)

Book 2
*Philosophy of Birth Affirmation*
(To be published)

Book 3
*What Is Philosophy of Life?*
(The first part, *Is It Better Never to Have Been Born?*, was published in 2020.)

I am now writing *Philosophy of Birth Affirmation* and the second part of *What Is*
Philosophy of Life? This trilogy corresponds to another series of works, my “Life Studies” trilogy.

Book 1
*How to Live in a Post-Religious Age* (1996)

Book 2

Book 3
*Confessions of a Frigid Man: A Philosopher’s Journey into the Hidden Layers of Men’s Sexuality* (2005)

*Confessions of a Frigid Man* has been translated and is freely downloadable on the Internet. The other two books are in the process of translation, so I believe English-speaking readers will be able to read them in the near future. Lastly, I would like to express my great appreciation to Robert Chapeskie, who translated my sometimes unclear Japanese text into transparent and beautiful English.

Masahiro Morioka
January 10th, 2021
About the Author

Masahiro Morioka, Ph.D., is a professor at Waseda University. He teaches philosophy and ethics. His specialties include philosophy of life, bioethics, gender studies, and civilization studies. He was born in Kochi Prefecture, Japan, in 1958. He graduated from the University of Tokyo and worked for the International Research Center for Japanese Studies and Osaka Prefecture University before coming to Waseda. He is considered by many to be one of the leading figures in contemporary Japanese philosophy.

Books

*In English*

In Japanese


*Life Studies for Beginners: A Philosophy for*
Connecting the Living and the Deceased. Shunjū Sha. 2012.
A Philosophical Inquiry into Personhood, Dignity, and Brain Death. Kinokopress. 2015.

Current Positions as of 2021

2015- Professor of philosophy and ethics at the School of Human Sciences, Waseda University, Japan.
2015 Emeritus professor at Osaka Prefecture University, Japan.

Contact address

Please visit:
http://www.lifestudies.org/feedback.html

*Nyancofu Terada was born in Nagasaki Prefecture in 1980. He worked as clinical radiologist before becoming an independent manga artist. He won an honorable mention award in the *Afternoon* Magazine Seasonal Awards.

*This work was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number JP26370026.*
Confessions of a Frigid Man: A Philosopher’s Journey into the Hidden Layers of Men’s Sexuality

Masahiro Morioka


The most striking feature of this book is that it was written from the author’s first-person perspective. The author is a professor who teaches philosophy and ethics at a university in Japan, and in this book he talks about his own sexual fetishism, his feeling of emptiness after ejaculation, and his huge
obsession with young girls and their developing female bodies. He undertakes a philosophical investigation of how and why sexuality took such a form within a person who had grown up as a “normal,” heterosexual man.

This may be the first case in which a philosopher delves deep into his own sexuality and poses an ambitious hypothesis about the formation of male “frigid” sexuality, which might actually be shared by many “normal” men in our society in a hidden way. Reading this book, female readers will come to know, for the first time, some hidden aspects of male sexuality which men have deftly submerged in a deep layer of their psyches.

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*An open access PDF is freely downloadable from the Internet. A paper book is available on Amazon.com.
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The entire book PDF (76MB)

The author’s website:
http://www.lifestudies.org/