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Dialectical Monadology and Innumerable Species

The Concept of Species in Nishida Kitarō's Later Philosophy

Nishida Kitarō is often criticized for erasing the singularity of individuals by introducing the concept of "species" in his later philosophy. However, Nishida instead criticizes Leibniz's monadology that obliterates the singularity of the individual. In contrast, by making the monadology dialectical, Nishida thematizes the relationship between the world and individuals that contains the gap, and attempts to ensure the singularity of individuals. Nishida also criticizes the absence of "species" in Leibniz. This reveals that for Nishida, the concept of species does not obliterate the singularity of the individual but rather enables it. However, this concept has one limitation. The limitation lies in Nishida's belief that the individual has a single species as its root. This creates a mirror-image relationship between species and individuals. However, this concept also has potential. Nishida often emphasizes the "innumerability" of the species. This study focuses on its innumerability and clarifies that the concept of "innumerable species" in Nishida's philosophy guarantees the singularity of the individual.

KEYWORDS: Nishida Kitarō—dialectical monadology—species—individual—world—Leibniz—contradictory self-identity—creation—Artistic Creation as Historical Formative Process—ritual

The most problematic theme in Nishida Kitarō's later philosophy is often considered to be the concept of "species."[1] Kobayashi Toshiaki, for example, argues that Nishida obliterates the singularity of the individual in his late philosophy by combining the concept of species with various ideological concepts such as "national fundamental character" (国体) and "ethnicity" (民族).[2]

Kobayashi's criticism may be summarized as follows: Nishida attempts to discuss the relationship between "the whole and individuals" without erasing the singularity of individuals. His way of preserving the singularity of the individual is to regard the whole as an "absolute nothingness" (絶対無). The reason is that if the whole is substantive, the conflict between the whhole and individuals cannot be avoided. If, on the otherr hand, the whole is "nothing," then it cannot be an inherently substantive power and can therefore accept individuals. Nevertheless, according to Kobayashi, Nishida introduces the concept of species and then links "absolute nothingness" (i.e., the whole) to the "national fundamental character." Therefore, he makes the whole substantive again. Kobayashi argues that the reason why Nishida takes the trouble of introducing the concept of species, despite such dangers, is that he needs to theorize philosophically

1. With regard to the period classification of Nishida's philosophy, the period from *Fundamental Problems of Philosophy* (1933) to his later years will be defined as the later period, in reference to NISHIDA 2021 (1944).

2. By examining the concept of "species" in Nishida's philosophy from the perspective of "biological ideas," SASAKI (2005) indicates that the concept of "species" must be an abstract concept that lacks concreteness. Therefore, Sasaki concludes: "It it must be said that what Nishida should have been aiming at was not social existence as a species, but rather the creative action of individual concrete acts that form society" (SASAKI 2005, 154).

about the national identity of Japan as a modern nation under pressure from Western powers.[3]

Indeed, especially in *The Problem of Japanese Culture* (『日本文化の問題』, 1940) and "Principles for the New World Order" (「世界新秩序の原理」, 1942), Nishida combines the concept of species with ideological concepts such as the "national fundamental character," the "imperial household" (皇室), and "Japanese race" (日本民族). There can be no doubt, therefore, that Nishida attempts to respond to the political situation of his time from the standpoint of his own philosophy.

However, can we assume that Nishida introduced the concept of species into his philosophy solely because of his (conscious or unconscious) desire to respond to the political situation? Did Nishida introduce the concept of species merely to provide a basis for the national identity of Japan?

In my opinion, this presumption is incorrect. As Kobayashi indicates, Nishida attempts to theorize the relationship between the whole and individuals without erasing the singularity of the individual. In his attempt to do so, he introduces the concept of species. If this is true, then it can be inferred that Nishida's intention was to introduce the concept of species as a mediator between the whole and individuals, since the dichotomy of the two could not guarantee the singularity of individuals. Thus, the introduction of the concept of species is rather a strategy to avoid obliterating the singularity of individuals, contrary to the criticism made by Kobayashi.

For Nishida, "the real world is the world of the mutual determination of individuals."[4] In addition, Nishida describes such a world as follows:

> If we speak of the world of contradictory self-identity as the mutual determination of individuals, it may be thought that there are no species. But this is because we do not truly think of the individuals.... On the contrary, the world of contradictory self-identity between the many and the one must be the world of the formations of innumerable species. In the world of contradictory self-identity, the species-being is the mediator between the world and individuals.[5]

This argument can be paraphrased as follows: as long as we rely on the

3. KOBAYASHI 1997, 160–6.
4. NKZ 8: 274.
5. NKZ 8: 336.

dichotomy of the world and individuals (i.e., the whole and individuals), we cannot consider the true nature of the individual. Instead, we must consider the "species-being" that mediates between the two.

Incidentally, because Nishida is preoccupied with preserving the singularity of the individual, he feels an affinity with Leibniz, who attempts to consider the constitution of the world from the standpoint of the individual, (i.e., the monad).[6] Especially after "The Position of the Individual in the Historical World" (「歴史的世界に於ての個物の立場」, 1938), he begins to actively utilize Leibniz's monadology. For example, under the influence of Leibniz, Nishida presents many times the claim that each of the innumerable individuals (i.e., monads) reflects the world and simultaneously exists as a perspective from which the world reflects the world itself.[7] Thus, for Nishida, Leibniz was a major axis of reference for considering the relationship between the world (i.e., the whole) and individuals.

However, clearly, Nishida did not uncritically accept Leibniz. Nishida criticizes Leibniz and develops his own "dialectical monadology." Notably, Nishida criticizes Leibniz for thinking in terms of the dichotomy of the whole and individuals and ignoring the "species" that mediates between the two.[8] Thus, Leibniz's framework does not capture the true nature of the individual and, therefore, the species. In fact, the concept of species is introduced in his motivation to discuss the relationship between the whole and individuals without obliterating the singularity of individuals.

Incidentally, prior studies discussing Leibniz's interpretation by Nishida include Yoneyama Masaru, Itabashi Yūjin, and Shimizu Takashi.[9] These studies praise Nishida for making monadology "creative" through his critique of Leibniz. However, they do not emphasize that Nishida makes monadology "dialectical" and thematizes "species." Therefore, they do not fully unleash the potential of Nishida's philosophy, which attempts to grasp

6. In a letter to Shimomura Toratarō dated February 10, 1939, Nishida wrote: "Mr. Leibniz has been thinking of *de arte combinatoria* all his life, and therefore he wrote monadology as the basis of all knowledge. I would like to give absolute contradictory self-identity the same significance as that. Apart from the differences in degree of precision and depth" (NKZ 22: 211).

7. NKZ 8: 316, NKZ 9: 210 *et passim*.

8. NKZ 8: 331.

9. Cf. YONEYAMA 1999, ITABASHI 2012, and SHIMIZU 2014, 2017.

the relationship between the whole and individuals without obliterating the singularity of individuals.

Itabashi, for example, interprets Nishida's "dialectical monadology" as follows: the singularity of each individual is made possible by its difference from all other individuals. Therefore, an individual can only be an individual by reflecting the whole in itself. Therefore, there is no contradiction between the unity of the whole and the singularity of individuals.

Such an interpretation, however, cannot refute Karatani Kōjin's criticism of Nishida.[10] Karatani considers the setting itself, in which each individual is assumed to reflect the same whole within itself, to be problematic. Therefore, no matter how much emphasis Nishida places on the "individuals," if they are assumed to reflect the same whole, it will lead to the erasure of the singularity of individuals.

In contrast, this study focuses on the importance of Nishida's thematization of "dialectic" and "species" in his criticism of Leibniz, which both the prior studies and Karatani have overlooked. They are indispensable in examining Nishida's theorization of the relationship between the whole and individuals. At the same time, it should not be overlooked that the concept of species, combined with the ideological concepts, has given a nationalistic color to Nishida's philosophy.

What needs to be addressed, therefore, is to clarify how Nishida attempts to preserve the singularity of individuals by introducing the concept of species, and why it is nevertheless combined with the ideological concepts, and in fact, may erase the singularity of individuals. Thereby, we can indicate both the limitation of Nishida's concept of species and the potential for overcoming the limitation. This study addresses these issues by focusing on the "dialectical monadology" mentioned above.

1. What is the dialectic for nishida?

As mentioned at the outset, my aim here is to demonstrate the limitations and potential of the concept of "species" in Nishida's philosophy by focusing on "dialectical monadology." Accordingly, I would like to begin by clarifying what "dialectic" means in Nishida's philosophy.

10. Cf. Karatani 1999.

Nishida rephrases the dialectic as the "contradictory self-identity":

> In the dialectic, opposition is qua synthesis, synthesis is qua opposition, and there is no synthesis without opposition, but there is also no opposition without synthesis. Synthesis and opposition must be two and one at the same time.… Synthesis is not synthesis that denies opposition. Therefore, it also moves self-contradictorily, as contradictory self-identity.[11]

According to him, the dialectic (i.e., the contradictory self-identity) means the overlapping of "synthesis" and "opposition." It is neither a pure identity nor a pure difference. This refers to the duality of being identical and yet having differences. It is this duality that according to Nishida makes "movement" possible.

Moreover, he writes that the world exists as "the contradictory self-identity of the total one and the individual many."[12] Hence, the world includes the "opposition" between innumerable individuals, yet it forms a certain unity as the "total one." The world is a "historical world" that "moves infinitely" because it is dialectical in this sense.[13]

As noted earlier, Nishida seeks to guarantee the singularity of the individual. That being so, we would expect him not to emphasize any "synthesis" of innumerable individuals but only the "opposition" among them. Focusing on their "synthesis" would seem to obliterate their respective singularity. In fact, however, Nishida stressed the overlap between "opposition" and "synthesis." He reasoned that in order to preserve the singularity of individuals, it is necessary, paradoxically, to insists on their "opposition" to one another while at the same time insisting on a "synthesis" that would endanger their singularity.

But now, just what could an overlap between the "opposition" of countless individuals and their "synthesis" mean? And why does Nishida feel the need to give them equal weight?

To answer these questions, let us first suppose that there exist only pure differences among the innumerable individuals that make up the world. In other words, let us assume that each individual is completely self-enclosed.

11. NKZ 8: 380–1.
12. NKZ 8: 511.
13. NKZ 8: 507.

If that were so, it would seem impossible for individuals to encounter and relate with each other. An individual completely closed up in itself would not even be able to acknowledge the existence of others. If there were nothing more than pure difference separating one individual from another, it would be impossible to conceive of any differences at all.

According to Nishida, "I" can define myself as "I" only in relation to others. As discussed in more detail later, "I" can only be "I" when I see myself from the perspective of others. Therefore, if we assume that there is only pure difference among the myriad individuals, it is impossible for individuals to exist as individuals.

On the contrary, what if there were only pure identity? This would erase individuals. Because there would be no differences between individuals, there would be no individuals.

Thus, to explain the existence of individuals, it is necessary to consider the overlapping of difference and identity, i.e., the overlapping of "opposition" and "synthesis." Therefore, Nishida conceived of the dialectical world as something that includes the "opposition" between countless individuals, however, simultaneously "synthesizes" them into a certain unity.

What is important here is that when the world is viewed dialectically, there is a gap between the world and individuals. The world cannot completely "synthesize" individuals, nor can the "opposition" between individuals completely disassemble the world. Nishida focuses on relationships that are neither atomistic nor holistic but rather include the gaps in between. What Nishida means when he uses "dialectic" is this gap.

In addition, as mentioned earlier, Nishida believes that this dialectical gap drives the historical movement of the world. To understand this, it is necessary to take into account the argument that innumerable individuals create new things through mutual actions.

Nishida has a strong commitment to the creativity of the individual (and simultaneously the creativity of the world), as he describes the individual as a "creative monad."[14] As discussed in detail in the Section 2, his criticism of Leibniz's monadology also includes its lack of creativity.

Simultaneously, however, Nishida criticizes both the type of creation in which something arises out of nothing at all and the type of creation in

14. NKZ 8: 350.

which something that already exists in potential becomes actual.[15] Perhaps, generally speaking, the term "creation" conjures up the former type. What kind of situation is "creation" that is neither the emergence from nothing nor actualization of potentiality?

Moreover, what is important here is the dialectical gap, as Nishida writes, "the dialectic must be the logic of creation."[16] In the "dialectical monadology," the actions of individuals do not merely reflect the world. The mutual actions of independent individuals create something that has not existed in the world before. Thus, the previous world is denied and remade. Concurrently, if individuals are completely disconnected from each other, then there can be no mutual action between them. Moreover, while the actions of individuals are not just mere reflections of the world, they are not completely separate from the world. Furthermore, Nishida writes that "production" (制作) via the mutual actions of individuals is a "historical event" (歴史的出来事) that occurs in this world.[17]

What I am trying to say is that the world is remade through the mutual actions of individuals it contains within itself; however, simultaneously, the world continues to maintain its identity. The world is differentiated, yet identical. This is "creation" in Nishida's sense, and it is what drives the historical movement of the world.

This can be better understood via the consideration of how a sense of movement is perceived. If we were really in a pure movement, there would be no sensation of it. For example, the reason why we feel that the bus is moving is because the scenery we see from the window is different from the movement of the bus. If the scenery is moving in the same direction and at the same speed as the bus, then the movement of the bus will not be perceived. However, this is impossible.

Movement is a sense of a gap. The overlap of moving and staying makes movement possible. Thus, it is the duality of being the same while being different, which makes movement possible. Therefore, Nishida believes that it

15. KUMAGAI Seiichirō (2017) has already indicated this.

16. NKZ 8: 255.

17. NKZ 9: 247.

is the dialectical gap between the world and individuals that drives the historical movement of the world.[18]

2. Nishida's criticism of leibniz

In the previous section, I clarified that Nishida's use of the term "dialectic" thematizes the relationship between the world and individuals that contains the gap, and that this relationship makes possible the creativity of individuals and the world.

Incidentally, as mentioned in the introduction, Nishida critically accepts Leibniz and constructs his own theory of the "dialectical monadology." Now that I have clarified what Nishida means by the "dialectic," we can elucidate what he needs to criticize Leibniz for and why it is necessary to make monadology dialectical. We address these questions in this section.

Nishida criticizes Leibniz as follows:

> The true real world must be the world of the mutual determination between the individual and the individual, and the world in which the thing and the thing act on each other. The relationship between the individual and the individual must be, as Leibniz said, a representation (表現). But for the individual and the individual to correlate and act on each other does not mean that they mutually percept each other (相表象する), but it must mean that they make things by acting on each other (相働く).... Leibniz's monad is something that perceives, not something that works.... And what does not act is not a true individual, but only what is thought. The unity of monad and monad is only due to God's creation. The individual and the individual must be independent of each other, yet they must act on each other.[19]

Leibniz describes the monad (i.e., the individual) as a living mirror. The individual reflects all of the other individuals. However, for Nishida, a simple indication of such a mutually "perceptual" (表象) relationship is not enough to grasp what the individual really is. The real individuals act on each other and create something new. There is no preestablished harmony by God.[20]

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18. I have discussed the mechanism that makes possible the historical movement of the world from the perspective of "active intuition" (Sanada 2022).

19. nkz 8: 316–17.

20. nkz 8: 317.

In summary, Nishida criticizes Leibniz for failing to capture the situation in which the mutual actions of countless individuals create something new. However, I have only touched the surface of Nishida's criticism of Leibniz. In this study, I proceed with some more interpretations.

Suppose all the innumerable individuals perfectly reflect the whole world in itself, and the world perfectly reflects all of the innumerable individuals, then there is a mirror-image relationship between the two.

This relationship can be found in the extremes of the two directions of the real world, (i.e., "the world of the mutual determination between the individual and the individual"). Moreover, Nishida refers to this world as "the world of the contradictory self-identity."[21] As I mentioned in Section 1, "contradictory self-identity" means "dialectic," (i.e., the overlap of "opposition" and "synthesis").

Nishida refers to the extreme of "synthesis" in "the world of the contradictory self-identity" as the "immanent pole" (内在極) and the extreme of "opposition" as the "transcendental pole" (超越極).[22] What kind of situation do we find when we push these two directions to their extremes?

> The immanent standpoint is the standpoint in which our self is the self-formation of the oneness as a whole of the world, and the individual self is always considered to be passive. It is a standpoint in which the individual self disappears, and a standpoint of mere consciousness (単なる意識の立場). It is the standpoint of reflecting things (物を映す立場)…. The transcendental standpoint, on the contrary, is the standpoint in which our individual self is utterly the projection point of the Absolute, reflecting by working and working by reflecting. It is the active standpoint of our self, (我々の自己の能働的立場) that is, the standpoint of thought (思惟の立場)…. But to go utterly in the direction of passive consciousness is for the self to lose itself, as well as to go utterly in the direction of abstract thought is for the self to lose itself.[23]

From the "immanent standpoint," the individual merely "reflects" the world. "I" am like a mirror that only reflects it. In this situation, the individual no longer exists. This is because the individual is only involved in

21. NKZ 8: 336 *et passim*.
22. NKZ 9: 295 *et passim*.
23. NKZ 9: 283–4.

the automatic movement of the world and has no independence. Whatever actions the individual takes, they are merely a reflection of the world.

In contrast, from the "transcendental standpoint," the individual actively influences the world through "thought." The individual separates itself from concrete things and attempts to control the world. However, this standpoint also erases the individual. The reason for this is as follows: in this situation, how the individual thinks and acts is the way the world is. However, in such a solipsistic world, there are no individuals. Only in relation to others can I define myself as "I."[24] In a world like a desert island, where there is only "I," there is no "I."

As described above, it has become clear that the singularity of individuals is obliterated when pushed to its extreme in either direction of the "immanent pole" or the "transcendent pole." Therefore, the mirror-image relationship between the world and individuals erases the singularity of the individual. Hence, Nishida rejects this relationship. The two poles above are only set in extremes. For Nishida, both are the abstracted positions of the real world.

Nishida's goal is to theorize the relationship between them without erasing the singularity of individuals. I think that this is the reason why Nishida makes monadology "dialectic." As discussed in Section 1, for Nishida, dialectics is logic for considering the relationship between the world and individuals that contains the gap. Therefore, by making his monadology dialectical, Nishida tries to obscure the mirror-image relationship between the two and center attention on the gap.[25]

This term "obscure" may seem unduly negative, but I am using the term in a more positive sense to guarantee the independence of individuals vis-à-vis the world. As mentioned above, Nishida criticizes Leibniz

24. See Sections 1 and 3.

25. Lucy Schultz also explores the dialectic of Nishida and shows that Nishida attempts to preserve the singularity of individuals. Schultz writes: "Nishida does not suggest that individuals are fully transparent to each other, dissolving their differences into a simple monism" (SCHULTZ 2012, p. 326). Nevertheless, Schultz establishes the mirror-image relationship between the world and individuals, whether intentionally or unintentionally. For example, Schultz writes, "In this dialectic, the objective world unites subjects with their objects as if they were nothing but the world itself..." (SCHULTZ 2012, 325). This is because Schultz's emphasis is mainly on the dialectic's aspect of reconciling (i.e., "synthesizing") opposites.

for allowing the mirror-relationship between the world and individuals to erase the singularity of individuals. It is for this reason that Nishida sought to "obscure" this relationship in order to preserve the singularity of individuals and think about the creative relationship between the "whole and individuals."

3. Innumerable species create the gap between the world and individuals

I am yet to clarify the following: What makes the mirror-image relationship between the world and individuals unclear, and what makes the gap between them possible?

Nishida criticizes the absence of species mediating between the world and individuals in Leibniz's monadology.[26] Moreover, what I find particularly remarkable is the emphasis on "innumerable" species.[27] In my view, the mediation between the world and individuals by innumerable species makes their mirror-image relationship unclear.

However, Nishida does not fully explain the potential of "innumerable species." Therefore, it is necessary to open up the potential of the argument of "innumerable species," which Nishida only suggests. In this section, I would like to address this issue.

For Nishida, the "species" is the "paradigm" of our actions, or the framework according to which we act.[28] In addition, Nishida states that it is in the real world that "historical species"[29] are formed and that they are social.[30] Thus, the species constitute the social framework of our actions.

What is the relationship between individuals and species? An analysis of the formation of an individual will help to bring this out.

Nishida believes that, for the formation of an individual, it is necessary for the individual to "attempt to make the other into the self." Furthermore,

26. nkz 8: 331.
27. nkz 8: 351 *et passim*.
28. nkz 8: 331.
29. nkz 8: 345.
30. nkz 8: 183.

such internalization is "the self becoming the other" simultaneously, or externalization.[31]

However, why is it impossible for "I" to be "I" without internalizing the other as my own? Moreover, what does it mean that such internalization is simultaneously externalization? I interpret this internalization = externalization as the process of overlapping our own gaze with that of others. I verify my hypothesis below.

According to Nishida, the "self-consciousness" exists as the "contradictory self-identity." As confirmed in Section 1, the "contradictory self-identity," or the dialectic, is the overlap of "opposition" and "synthesis." Given this, Nishida's point is as follows: the self-consciousness is a myriad of disparate "many" phenomena of consciousness, and alternatively it is unified as the "one" consciousness of "I."[32] Self-consciousness is neither purely disparate nor purely identical. It contains countless "oppositions" however, is "synthesized" into a certain cohesive whole. Thus, self-consciousness is established as an overlap between being "many" and being "one."

Furthermore, Nishida argues as follows:

> A temporal thing that merely bears the past and conceives the future (未来を孕む) is not an individual. An individual must express itself (an infant becomes an individual when it speaks its own name). To express oneself must be to go outside of the temporal linear series, to project oneself outside of it, and to see oneself from the projected position, from the dialectical self-identity.[33]

The "I" is not a myriad of disparate "many" phenomena of consciousness that emerge and disappear from moment to moment. It must exist as a unified cohesion that can be expressed as "I am what I am." To integrate the myriad phenomena of consciousness into a single "I," it is necessary to have a gaze that is detached from them and confirms them as "I." Thus, it is necessary to look at "myself" as the other (i.e., externalization of our own gaze). It is only through this gaze that the self-consciousness of "I" is established.

The reason why we can have such a gaze is because we anticipate the "I" as seen by others. Thus, we internalize the other's gaze by overlapping our own

31. NKZ 8: 344.
32. NKZ 8: 381.
33. NKZ 8: 316.

gaze with it. Therefore, the internalization of the gaze of others is the externalization of our own gaze simultaneously. This overlap between our own gaze and the other's makes self-consciousness of "I" possible.

Incidentally, how can such internalization = externalization of the gaze be possible? According to Nishida, communal actions make it possible, and they are related to the formation of the "historical species." To examine this, I will refer to the discussion on "rituals" in his article "Artistic Creation as Historical Formative Process" (「歴史的形成作用としての芸術的創作」, 1941). In this study, Nishida discusses the form and framework of "rituals," or ritualistic acts in festivals, drawing on anthropological studies by Jane Ellen Harrison, William Robertson Smith, and Bronisław Kasper Malinowski, among others.

Nishida believes that the following three elements are important in rituals: (1) rituals are communal actions, (2) they involve communal emotion and empathy, and (3) they are repeated many times.[34]

> Our historical society begins with this ritual dance. The barbarians re-enact the same behavior that they enjoyed, and when they are about to do the same thing, they rehearse it. The fixed form of these actions is the ritual. The ritual is a stereotype of such behavior. But mere action is not a ritual. It must be social. Nor is it merely a communal action that constitutes a ritual. It must be accompanied by strong emotions. In a communal dance accompanied by strong emotions, they feel something more than the self, something transcendent. There they submerge their individuality (個人を没して) and become emotionally united.[35]

We empathize with each other through communal activities such as dancing and singing together, and we are caught up in a single emotion. Not only is the boundary with the other lost, but also is the individuality. In this empathy, the gaze of others and "my" gaze overlap. As mentioned above, this establishes the "I." Therefore, the loss of the "I" through empathy in the rituals enables the internalization = externalization of the gaze, which establishes the "I" in reverse. In Nishida's words, the individual "affirms itself by negating itself."[36]

34. NKZ 9: 239 *et passim*.
35. NKZ 9: 269.
36. NKZ 9: 328. The prototype of Nishida's argument that by losing oneself in relation to oth-

However, we can exist as individuals even when concrete communal actions are not performed. How is this possible?

What is important here is the point of "repetition." Ritualistic actions are initially performed as "re-enactments" of concrete actions. As it is repeated, they become "generalized and abstracted" and become "rehearsals."[37] We pull and abstract the communal actions away from their concrete contexts, and internalize only the frameworks of the actions. For Nishida, these frameworks are the "historical species." We always carry them with us, even when we are not concretely engaged in communal actions. Therefore, even when we are alone, we can continue to feel empathy toward others and hold the gaze of others.

This way, the individual is formed through the repetition of communal actions, and, simultaneously, the historical species is formed as a framework of these actions. The formation of the individual and that of the historical species are intertwined, and it is impossible to determine which comes first. They are simultaneous.[38]

Moreover, as Nishida uses the word "rituals" and "barbarians" (which is very problematic from a contemporary perspective) here, he does not merely think of a past phase of human history.

Nishida writes that "the establishment of the historical society from this standpoint [of the rituals], and the process of its development, has not simply passed away. It is still present."[39] We perform "ritual" communal acts even today, although they may no longer be generally called "rituals."[40] As long as we exist as individuals, we continue to form the "historical species."

Let us return to the main topic. Why does the formation of historical

ers, one ends up establishing one's own self is found in Nishida's theory of others, e.g., "Self-Love, Other-Love, and Dialectic" (「自愛と他愛及び弁証法」, 1932) and "I and Thou" (「私と汝」, 1932).

37. NKZ 9: 249.

38. Nishida writes that "individuals do not precede the establishment of the society. However, the society develops through the mediation of the historical operations (歴史的操作) of individuals" (NKZ 9: 256).

39. NKZ 9: 269.

40. For example, under the influence of Marx (and Marxism), Nishida argues that "money" and "commodities" are established in capitalist society by "something like dromenon" (ドローメノン的なもの, i.e., the rituals) (NKZ 9: 256).

species make the mirror-image relationship between the world and individuals unclear, and why is it possible to preserve the gap between them?

If an individual is formed in a single species, then a mirror-image relationship will arise between the species and the individual. This is because the individual acts only in accordance with a single social framework and any action is only a reflection of the species. Indeed, Nishida seems to have fallen into this relationship in *The Problem of Japanese Culture* (1940) and "The Principle of the New World Order" (1942).

Therefore, as I mentioned in the introduction, Kobayashi (1997) criticizes Nishida's later philosophy as obliterating the singularity of individuals. The limitation of the concept of species in Nishida's philosophy is that it singularizes the species that makes the establishment of the individual possible.

Concurrently, Nishida presents a viewpoint that obscures this mirror-image relationship. It is that of there being "innumerable" species. Nishida emphasizes the innumerability of species. For example, he writes that "the world of the absolute contradictory self-identity as the mutual determinations of individuals must be the world of innumerable species."[41] However, Nishida does not fully develop this point, at least not explicitly. I believe that it is in this innumerability of species that the potential of the concept of species in Nishida's philosophy lies. From here, let us examine this potential.

Nishida recreates the concept of the "individual" by drawing on the discussion of "imitation" by Gabriel Tarde (1843–1940), who is a French sociologist influenced by Leibniz.[42] We imitate countless others, whether intentionally or unintentionally. According to Nishida, we can truly be individuals as the "focal points of countless lines of imitation," drawing with countless such others.[43] Thus, individuals are always penetrated by the myriad of relationships they hold with others.

Therefore, I can state the following: as mentioned above, for the formation of individuals, it is necessary to overlap the gaze of the other with their

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41. NKZ 8: 257.

42. An introduction to Tarde's theory of "imitation" has been left out of this presentation owing to limitations of space. See TARDE 2009 (1890).

In addition, see Gōda Masato's earlier study on the relationship between Nishida and Tarde. However, he has not been able to examine in detail the limitation and the potential of the concept of species in Nishida's philosophy (GŌDA 2018).

43. NKZ 8: 354.

own gaze through communal actions and their own abstractions (i.e., the formation of the historical species). However, the overlapping of our gaze does not occur in a single privileged relationship. It occurs in a myriad of relationships with countless others. Therefore, individuals are formed via the formation of "innumerable species" with countless others. We are not committed to a single privileged relationship, however, exist across a variety of relationships.

This implies that the roots of the individual are multiple. The individual cannot be said to be rooted in a single species, such as "the Japanese people." Rather, the ground of the individual is conditioned by various relationships and in various situations, such as spending time with family, playing with friends, and chatting with colleagues. Thus, the concept of "species" in Nishida's philosophy cannot be said to indicate mere "ethnicity," but must include smaller and more diverse relationships such as those just mentioned. We are all rooted in a variety of relationships with countless others, that is, we belong to an innumerable aggregate of species.

That being so, the idea of an individual as a mirror-image of the whole is neither sufficient nor clear. If the species in which an individual is rooted are manifold, the individual cannot be dissolved into a single species. On the contrary, the individual's commitments to a plurality of species have the effect of relativizing its absorption in a single species and to separating itself from any monolithic attachment to species. As a result, having roots in "innumerable species" guarantees, paradoxically, the singularity of individuals.

As mentioned above, species mediate between the world and individuals. Individuals cannot reflect the world directly. They can only access it only through "innumerable species," that is, through a manifold of social frameworks. In other words, the individual is not a mirror that merely reflects the world such as it is, but a singular perspective that is a affected by countless filters. This is why particular individuals do not see the same things in the same way, but see different things and see them differently. In this way, the gap between the world and individuals is preserved by the presence of "innumerable species" between them.

CONCLUSION

The discussion in this study can be summarized as follows. In Section 1, I clarified that Nishida uses the term "dialectic" to grasp the relationship between the world and individuals, which contains the gap, and that this gap guarantees the creativity of the world and individuals.

In Section 2, I reviewed the main points of Nishida's criticism of Leibniz. His criticism is that Leibniz's monadology creates a mirror-image relationship between the world and individuals, and obliterates the singularity of the individual. Therefore, by making the monadology dialectical, Nishida attempts to grasp individuals interacting and creating something new.

In Section 3, I clarified that Nishida attempts to preserve the singularity of individuals by introducing "innumerable species" that mediate between the world and individuals. The limitation of the concept of species in Nishida's philosophy is that singularizing the species, which make possible the formation of individuals, creates a mirror-image relationship between the species and individuals. In contrast, the potential of the concept of the species is found in Nishida's emphasis on the "innumerability" of the species. The potential is that the establishment of individuals is rooted in the "innumerable species," thus ensuring the gap between the world and individuals and guaranteeing their singularity.

Based on this limitation and potential of the concept of species in Nishida's philosophy, I would like to conclude as follows: Nishida should not have sought the root of the individual in the single "species." Rather, he should have developed his own argument of the "innumerability" of species and captured the myriad relationships that make the singularity of the individual possible. Moreover, what we need to do today, as interpreters of Nishida's philosophy, is to grasp the creativity of "I" by focusing on the many nameless "species" that make "I" what I am, which are not encompassed by the single "species."

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