

From Philosophy of the Feminine to Clinical Philosophy

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Introduction

Bearing in mind that Japanese thinking carries traits of marginality and minority in terms of its geopolitical location (one corner of Asia), this paper argues from the perspective of linking women, philosophy, and feminism, and examines the ideological standpoint that opposes the globalizing world. I take the stance of linking feminism and philosophy, but as a woman in philosophy – one on the most androcentric, male-dominated academic areas – and, further, because I distance myself from mainstream feminism, I also explore the significance of philosophizing from this marginal position, while maintaining a critical positionality towards both issues. I focus on “clinical philosophy,” still an extremely minor concept in the philosophy scene, taking the women’s liberation movement’s practice of consciousness raising, which emerged in Japanese feminism in the 1970s, applied them to the narrative community, and connected this to clinical philosophy. I then introduce the perspective of a “(clinical) philosophy of the feminine.”

Regarding “philosophy of the feminine” and “feminism as a philosophy,” see Hiroko Goto’s book *Philosophy of the Feminine* (2000) on feminism and philosophy in Japan. The author shares the same point of view as Goto in many aspects. However, whereas Goto examines the history of the philosophy of the feminine as a minor philosophy, looking at Western modern thinkers such as Drucilla Cornell, Judith Butler, Luce Irigaray, and Gilles Deleuze, this paper raises the theme of “(clinical) philosophy of the feminine” by observing the problems of people who are marginalized and became the Other in modern society, and actively listening to their voices.

I will discuss a variety of topics, including trends in clinical philosophy in Japan, an international conference for women philosophers in East Asia, and the Akihabara Incident, which symbolically reflects Japanese society today and, further, the reality for women in Japanese society, and I will introduce women thinkers who were at the forefront of Japan’s women’s liberation movement. As I connect these topics, I will take the experiences of Bodies caught in the middle of a globalizing world, particularly women, extricating them from the sea of trauma to “create a Bodily (Living) discourse.” This paper will use the Narrative/Trauma Approach towards oppression and violence and link “philosophy of the feminine” and clinical wisdom to make a theme out of “creating an intimate sphere without violence” and “care of Self.” It is through a glimpse at

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“women’s imagined communities” that we can overcome the “fragmentation of suffering” in East-Asian women’s historical past and begin bringing the voices of “comfort women” to the public sphere.

Japanese society and clinical philosophy

One vector for clinical philosophy in Japan has been, as is obvious from the term itself, through the fields of medicine and science, becoming apparent under the themes of thanatology and terminal care. However, interest in clinical wisdom in philosophy in areas other than medicine began to increase, and the 1995 Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, to which 6,500 lives were lost, led directly to the exploration of the possibilities of “philosophy in confronting the problems” regarding a variety of issues. Philosophers left their university research labs to meet with survivors in the field, staying by their sides and listening to their stories that “clinical philosophy” emerged to define the act of “listening” as a philosophical act. Kiyokazu Washida (1999) was quick to take the notion of “narrative,” popular in medical anthropology and clinical sociology, and lead the way towards a valuable perspective regarding the essence of care relations – a type of “power reversal” that occurs. The act of listening to others helps not only the person being listened to but also changes the person doing the listening. By considering care work not just from the perspective of helping others but also as a way to get empowered, a reverse relationship is created whereby the person providing the care is receiving even deeper care from the person needing it. This is also linked to questioning how one is perceived as an Other, and by whom, and it is this awareness of one’s Otherness that will lead to delving into the “relational Self” and “phenomenological Self,” rather than the ego and autonomy in contemporary subject–object dualism, or the theory of Self vs. Other. Philosophy has originally referred to contemplation of the world and human existence, and Self and Subject, according to certain concepts, but here, intellectual workings are emerging to create new concepts in philosophy regarding Self and Other/Mind and Body relations through going to the field to witness people’s problems, stay there with them, and listen to their voices. From the perspective of the act of “listening to others” possessing clinical wisdom, it is possible to position this as a contemporary version of Socratic dialogue. However, regarding contemporary wisdom in confronting problems, the concept of stories and narratives plays a valuable and essential role, and this makes it conclusively different from the dialogue of Socrates’ times.

Interest in narrative originally emerged in relation to treatment of various addictions, such as alcohol dependency and eating disorders; it began with focus on the power of communities created through shared narrative to help in healing, resilience, and rehabilitation. This then led to the viewpoint of constructionism regarding “discourse” and reality in humanities and the social sciences, guiding the way to “clinical narrative theory” to aid the constructionism theory for social awareness (Noguchi 2003).

My focus on clinical philosophy and narrative theory has led me to move from feminism and gender studies contexts to exploring the possibilities of “feminism as a philosophy,” with the subjects of trauma from women’s experiences and narratives/stories right in the foreground of this interest. Below, I refer to debates at an international conference where I realized how narratives can take the form of a community and the profound significance of that, and consider the meaning of the narrative in terms of “feminism as a philosophy,” or “philosophy of the feminine.”

The nature of community in narrative: Towards a public voice

At a three-day international conference on the theme “Women Paving the Way to a Public World,” four questions were posed: Why East Asia, Why women, Why philosophy, and Why a public world? A total of roughly 20 presenters and discussants participated, with researchers from the US joining those from five East-Asian countries and areas, with representation from Japan, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Korea.¹

Was this conference setting itself not a “Narrative Community”? This is the impression I received, as I sensed that the consideration of this very question was no doubt strongly related to central theme of the conference: Women Paving the Way to a Public World. However, so much language was used there that was seemingly inappropriate for discussing the public sphere. Let me introduce some of this language: The feminine perspective; Levinas’ theory of the Other; The shared Body; The feminist perspective at the boundary between internal and external; Globalization as a sign that we are continuing to lose ourselves internally; The intersectionality of multiple axes in woman’s Bodies; Physical language whereby animation is possible; Taking back the Body from the patriarchy and the Emperor system; The mother’s Body, conception and prayer; Language and narratives with life; Creating Bodily (living) language, Creating a language of love; Women’s language; The Power of women’s stories to drift; Relations that nurture generations and social motherhood; The feminine sense; and The significance of social critique with a feminine perspective. The main axis for discussion at the conference followed a theme that, as soon as this type of language is used in the context of feminism, the remarks are immediately rejected as essentialist.

At this conference, language flew everywhere that had without doubt, through self-control, been kept off-limits under feminism, which takes the perspective of the social and cultural constructivism of gender. This atmosphere became a trigger for me to unleash language that had previously lain stagnant. As it was our intent there to lead the way towards the new concept and image of discussing the “public,” this was also an opportunity to recognize again the significance of community of stories and narratives under shared space and consciousness. These very debates may certainly have demonstrated “the public sphere as a space for dialog” (H Arendt).

Of course, the two positions of East-Asian Confucian tradition and feminism are ideologically opposed so it is not strange that they would repel each other even before dialogue. It is not easy to find a way to bring the public/private debate in Confucian tradition and feminism onto the same path. It cannot be done without alchemy. And yet a sense of danger brought on by urgent problems today has managed to create a forum where both sides can face each other, despite their differences. This is because both share an ideological approach based on the cultural and historical contexts of East Asia and, based on this geographical nature, leading the way towards a new public world opposing globalization. We are reminded of this in these words: “Frankly, under the principle of democracy, one’s voice cannot be taken away by anyone.” “Public space is a place for the politics of discourse between public and private and not merely to discuss public themes. As to what a public theme is, this is not decided upon preceding communication” (Saito 2000).

This experience helped me catch a glimpse of how the public can be a community in the space linking voice and narrative. It also reconfirmed for me the significance of the space for women created by the new women’s liberation movement in the second wave of feminism, and that the practice of consciousness raising there served to push for another kind of voice in the public space, whose discourse is male-centered – the voice of women, as narratives in relation to a meaning and methodology of practice of *écriture féminine* as described below.

Solidarity among East-Asian women and “fragmentation of suffering” in the past

The second wave of feminism after the women’s liberation has been advanced both theoretically and through that movement based on the two notions of gender and patriarchy. The notion of gender in particular has advanced feminism, expanding and creating theory, while becoming more refined as an analytic concept. In contrast, under the notion of patriarchy, the various elements of sexual control – cultural, social, psychological, biological etc. – are tossed in, and the notion is somehow thought of within a black box framework.

The concept of gender has indeed greatly advanced feminism’s post-structuralist gender theory, and at the 2008 conference Ann Garry (California State University) presented a paper on the significance of intersectionality. As a woman from French-speaking Africa living in California, Garry spoke about how gender is not the only factor oppressing women, and that there are a variety of oppressions that intersect with gender – race, ethnicity, language, culture. Participants at the conference were very interested in the model she presented, which made valuable arguments regarding identity and the intersecting oppressions against women in contemporary society, and in the globalizing world, in particular (see note No. 10 of Sakiko Kitagawa’s paper). However, while taking on Garry’s concept of multiple intersectionalities as a strong suggestion for building identity theory, in terms of the main conference theme of “Women Paving the Way to a Public World” through dialogue between tradition and feminism, and as noted above regarding narratives in the women’s liberation movement, the notion of patriarchy is perhaps a better and more effective mediating concept for the two than the notion of gender.

In discussing patriarchy, Confucian tradition is always cited as a common cultural influence in East Asia, and what is directly sought within this thinking is language and images of the public world that oppose the modern public/private dualism and globalization of today. From the Asian perspective, there is no doubt that debate on Confucianism and feminism will lead to the angle of care work. It is undeniable that this tendency was to some extent demonstrated at conference discussions. In response to language and issues raised by those on the side of feminism as a philosophy, those engaged in research of Confucian traditions brought in various discourses such as Confucian and Taoist thinking to twist and support their arguments. Yet what we are looking into now is not how to link the recreation of tradition to the public world by debating patriarchal values and the future of care work. Rather, the point is to listen to the narratives of people today about how they feel as they struggle in various ways and to create new concepts by developing the ideas we gauge from such narratives.

This is precisely why the notion mediating Confucianism and feminism is being questioned. How has the patriarchy in East-Asian regions and societies today been influenced by Confucian tradition to become the cause of and background to oppression and discrimination? A serious and critical look at the realities of East-Asian patriarchy is needed. It is crucial to take the view to understand how the patriarchy transforms or undergoes metamorphosis in the process of modernization and globalization, or in other words, to have perspective as a conceptual tool to examine the patriarchy in order to interpret the oppression that we have physically internalized. Further, the truth is that even if women in East-Asian societies share the same background of patriarchal culture, it is not so simple to say that a women’s solidarity exists: There is a fragmentation resulting from the history of the “comfort women” incident. There are rifts among “Japanese women” due to the voices of “comfort women.” It is thus difficult to pave the way towards a public world with this fragmentation of suffering among women in East Asia: The historical past and this fragmentation cannot be ignored (Kitagawa 2008).

What would the public nature be like if Asia led the way, rather than the public nature under the Western model being held as universal? Asian values cannot be said to be of substance. If we consider Asia as “The Way” in confronting various cultural and historical contexts and traditions, the traditions that bind us already hold us to certain conditions so that we must look into reinterpreting them in other ways.

“Japan as The Way” – an extremely minor standpoint

As we explore moving from “Women’s Space,” a very minor aspect in philosophy, towards “Woman in the First Person pregnant with Other,” in reflecting upon philosophy issues in Japan that are under question, the first aspect to critique is the dichotomy that holds the idea of “Human=Man” as universal, making “Woman” particular, or the composition of Western Universalism vs. Japanese Particularism, which holds the idea of “The World=The West” as universal, making Japan particular. Universalism and particularism do not oppose but reinforce each other, and it is difficult to understand oppression against women in Japanese society without considering how these two ideas intertwine (Kano 1997). How is this mutually reinforcing relationship changing in the globalizing world? To understand reality, we must explore the layers of memory of women living in societies with hidden violence or in the intimate sphere where violence can be found that have become traumatic, and ask the significance of the narrative community as a place to share and listen. We must also consider the possibility of creating a public space where others have an equal opportunity to share their voices. Criticizing Japanese society today as societies with hidden violence or for an intimate sphere where violence can be found first requires some explanation (Kanai 2009). I would like to discuss something that happened in Japanese society in June 2008.

The incident was one of indiscriminate stabbings by a 25-year-old youth (“K”) in Akihabara, the biggest electronics district in Tokyo and a youth mecca. One Sunday, K charged a truck into the pedestrian mall and used a dagger to randomly stab passers-by. He killed and wounded 17 people. K had lost his temp job due to the financial crisis and up until that incident had been unleashing his fury online through his mobile phone; no one responded to his messages. Ignored not just in the real world but online, too, he directed his wrath and despair towards no one in particular – “anyone would do,” he said. This case stands out also because of both positive and negative feelings for the accused and the volume of opposition it aroused. Many people particularly empathized with K, and the incident exposed the situation of youth in Japanese society today and the profound dangers in their mindset, as well as the complete loneliness and alienation felt by youth in contemporary society.

What happened to K was the result of neoliberal policies in a society where employment has been greatly transformed to transition into a “flexible labor market.” This could have happened to any of the youth who were becoming the “working poor.” Full-time, regular employees recruited straight out of school were being shifted into irregular jobs that had them working temporarily in different places. They were then losing these jobs, too. Without work, income, or home, and unable to seek help from their families, youth were turning to the public welfare system as their last ray of hope, only to have that door firmly closed on them, too: They were told that welfare policies are not for people in their first half of life. It was going through all this that brought on the despair that gave K the courage to lash out.

The function of the Japanese welfare system, which considers the family a hidden asset for welfare services, is rapidly deteriorating as a safety net for people’s livelihoods in the public/private domains. If we deem people who suffer the cruelest form of treatment in contemporary society “refugees,” then Japanese society is most certainly a society that creates refugees. The creation of refugees can refer to many things, and is not limited to the definition of refugees as people who

have nowhere to go because of civil war and military aggression. It can include those forced into labor mobility due to the collapse of the subsistence economy and, further, those who have lost their livelihoods due to the “flexible labor market.” That is to say, it is taken to include the reality for the masses of people whose livelihoods have turned from secure to threatened in a society where the socio-economic gap is widening under globalization and neoliberalism (Osawa 2008). K is precisely one of these people whose security was dislodged.

Thus, although the Akihabara incident was an individual case, it is one that reflects modern society as a whole. In post-war Japan, the same can be said of the incidents involving the Red Army² and Aum Shinrikyo.³ Though individual cases that retained specific peculiarities, these events possessed the quality of compressing and representing society at the time (Osawa 2008). This is why, as people present at the time, we must study of meaning of the shadows being cast by these incidents and try to clarify what this outline of society today is trying to tell us. We are being pushed to listen for something from the voices emerging from such incidents. This is precisely the reality that clinical philosophy must turn its attentions to.

In juxtaposing the interests of “feminism as a philosophy” and “philosophy of the feminine,” we cannot ignore the danger signs in the deep shadows cast over the situation of women, which cannot be separated from the Akihabara incident. I am worried that as we overvalue the Akihabara incident by interpreting it to try to identify its significance and implications, we are missing these danger signs for women. As the legal system has developed, women’s freedoms and options have also increased, but the flipside to this superficially positive aspect is that when life becomes terribly scandalous for a young woman, she can be rendered a refugee through rejection by her family, and many such women are wounded by introverted violence and close themselves off. Many of their problems manifest themselves in dangerous mental indications. For women who praise the freedom in consumer society, or who appear to have realized their ambitions as career women, the fluctuating independence they feel internally threatens their sense of Self and causes them to want to escape from work or retreat from reproduction, and this is manifested through eating disorders and wrist-slitting.

Philosophy of the feminine as a methodological perspective: The narrative/trauma paradigm

How do we interpret the signs exhibited by young women? Keeping in mind the politics of human security revolving around the issue of the creation of refugees in the intimate sphere, we see the emergence of problems such as distortions on the modern family, which should be understood from the viewpoint of the women who become refugees leaving the family, and the educated family in post-war Japanese families (Shunsuke Serizawa) and delegation of oppression in care relations. There is also the mother–daughter issue brought on by the lack of independence felt by the mother’s generation, which then causes struggles in life that threaten the daughter’s generation. Against the background of oppression against women in Japan is the reality of matriarchy and families that become control dramas in care relations, and how there is multi-layered damage inflicted and suffered – of oppression and being oppressed. These relations are difficult to identify, causing them to continue for generations in a structure of invisible violence.

Matriarchy and the structure of oppression against women are difficult to identify because maternalism is strong in Japanese society. In the disfunctioning of educated families in post-war Japan, it was difficult for women victims of the patriarchy through domestic violence (DV) to escape from being perpetrators of child and elder abuse. Further, regarding Japan’s “Adult Children,” rather than being the usual result of violence because of alcoholism or dysfunctional

families due to “co-dependency,” we see the difficulties of life for children and their feeling of inadequacy due to familial relations, where they are expected to be good children and meet parental expectations of workaholic fathers and mothers overzealous about their education. It is precisely this issue of “Adult Children” who are expected to be “good children in sound families” that has brought about family dysfunction as the dark side of Japanese gender roles. Delegated oppression in the family setting, where the husband perpetrates domestic violence on his oppressed wife, who then becomes the perpetrator of abuse against children or the elderly – this keeps violence deeply hidden and creates generational links of continued violence.

In the historical background of this violence that can be observed in the intimate sphere, there can be seen a matriarchy that once supported the Emperor system in the pre-war militaristic regime of Japan. There is a deep influence from “Motherness” that casts a shadow over the core of Japanese culture and the Japanese mentality. Further, we cannot ignore the issues described below, which have been pointed out as distortions of Japanese society’s reflections on defeat in the Second World War. Many men who returned from the cruel experiences of the battlefield did not have time for their scars to heal, and were forced to seal those painful experiences and suffering away and keep a stiff expression about them to become corporate warriors in post-war Japanese society (Noda 2004). These hidden, violent emotions from defeat have accumulated deep in the undercurrents of Japanese society and are thought to be one cause for men becoming alcohol-dependent or perpetrating domestic violence. In this context, creating an intimate sphere without violence is a serious issue for Japanese society. However, the damages incurred in the intimate sphere through violence are difficult to recognize to a certain extent as being caused by physical violence because they are scars caused through living in relationships with motherly passion and healing. It is very difficult to deal sensitively with accumulated violence in the undercurrents of Japanese society’s culture.

Returning to women’s liberation

So in what situation and through what kind of relationship can “care of Self” and the Narrative Approach be realized? I would like to link this question with looking at the meaning of “Self domain” or “Individual domain,” another concept that emerges as relevant here. That is to say, in considering the issue of violence in the intimate sphere or creating the intimate sphere without violence, rather than using the conceptual framework of a public-intimate dichotomy, I want to suggest bringing in the concept of Self or Individual domain to reconsider a triad of human relations: Public sphere, Intimate sphere, and Individual domain. For the self-recovery of women subject to violence trapped in the intimate sphere, a place where they are controlled, the issues of the length of time they must endure loneliness felt in the individual domain and the existence of a time and place for narrational relations – where they can tell their stories and be listened to – emerge. Through a space for women to tell their stories and the relationships that result, the moment that memories were sealed away and became traumatic are recalled, and at this moment, this space where the “Me” rises up and the nature of relations come into question (Kanai 2009: n. XII).

Regarding care of Self, the themes of “trauma and memory” and “trauma and gender” bear great importance in considering the critical point where narratives extend to the dark corners of the memory. In considering the issue of women as perpetrators in the intimate sphere, it is necessary to introduce the paradigm of the “Trauma Approach” in addition to the “Narrative Approach.” I would like to look at the tireless work of Naoko Miyaji, a psychiatrist who has written books from a medical anthropological perspective, including *Circle-like islands: Geopolitics of Trauma* (Miyaji 2007), and *Medical Anthropology of Trauma* (Miyaji 2005).

From war to child abuse, trauma-causing events never cease. These things that happen and cannot be explained through words are nevertheless put into language. Yet the discrepancy between the trauma that words cannot explain and the words that have been used to describe them shakes up both speaker and listener. Using circle-like islands as a model, Miyaji observes how people talking about their trauma end up in the public spaces where they share their stories and how they are treated. What is the position of the person who experiences trauma, and his or her supporters, spokespersons, family and the bereaved, experts, researchers and spectators? What is their relationship to others? Miyaji systematically presents the positionality of everyone involved in the trauma and this dynamism. Because of the complex intertwining of people's positionality through the act of listening, it is too optimistic to think that the sharing of women's experiences will automatically lead to women's solidarity.

There is no doubt that the notions of "narrative" and "trauma" elucidate another profound aspect of problems that women suffer in life, in addition to the oppression and control that have been identified through feminism using the notions of gender and patriarchy. By inserting «わたし» (Me) above the word "Woman" to aid in its reading, and by writing «からだ» (Body) in Hiragana instead of Kanji script, the women's liberation movement has given voice to the perspective of «女性(わたし)のからだ» (Woman's (My) Body) – of great significance in terms of calling for a narrative relationship.

A lack of language: What first person for a pregnant woman?

Here, as we examine methodological perspective to interpret the oppression that we have physically internalized, the notions of Subject and Self that have been the premise of Truth in philosophy and feminism to date, and, further, the notion of self-determination, face the problem of being "left blank."

In a paper entitled "Childbearing" («産むこと») Kazue Morisaki⁴ one of the sources of Japan's women's liberation movement in the 1970s, used her personal experience of childbirth to share that the word "わたし", "Me", that she had used until then was no longer enough to describe everything about her:

Until then, my complete Self was always "Me"; Even if I was sick or upset, I was still "Me." I thought this was my personality, but when I became pregnant, my body began to speak animatedly, as if something not under my control was waving a conductor's baton.

(Morisaki 1994)

Emotionally, on the other hand, Morisaki was trying to understand the pain she had suffered since girlhood of being born and raised in a colony:

There were many words I wanted to use to describe myself without splitting anything up, including the word "Me," but there were socially accepted ideas in the words I had used until then, and I no longer fitted in.

(Morisaki 1994)

The element of human biology encompassed in the concept and intellectual terminology of the word "Me" felt far removed from my pregnant Self; it was my first time to feel the loneliness of women. This is not a loneliness that lasts 100 or 200 years, and it will probably continue even after I am gone. It is an loneliness felt within language. (Ibid.)

In discussing her experience of pregnancy, Morisaki speaks of the loneliness of women – when pregnant women are "absent" in the first person. She explains that "in the act of nurturing life,

many things are ‘left blank.’” This clearly shows the author’s awareness of the modern Self’s lack of insight regarding becoming a “source of life.”

Noticing the lack of language to describe the First Person for a pregnant woman, Morisaki deepened her contemplation of “Me” when pregnant with the Other. Morisaki’s observations for modern times on the “Me” who has internalized the act of giving birth and the lack of insight into becoming the “source of life” are strongly related to the issues I am trying to raise about violence in the intimate sphere or about creating the intimate sphere without violence. And with such strong awareness, I end this paper by again expressing the importance of going back to the origins of the women’s liberation.

There is a need to become aware of the absence of thought regarding the concept of “life,” which goes against the modern notions of Self vs. Other, the First Person, Self and Subject. The word “life” can cause uneasiness of inviting maternalism and totalitarianism, and its use has been avoided in the past, but perhaps there is a need to reflect more deeply on this point.⁵

Further, we should not stop at using the notions of gender and patriarchy, acquired through the second wave of feminism, as a way to speak of oppression against women, but include the concepts of narrative and trauma and link this to specialized knowledge such as psychiatry, psychoanalysis, and medical anthropology.

It is to become aware of “Myself” through experiencing pain, care of Self – the subject of Self that has Gender and Body of Man/Woman (Me). The Reflection of Man/Woman in the First Person as “Me” offers a critical study of self-imposed gender norms and body rules.

Trauma that women experience and the *écriture féminine*

Let’s recall the meaning of *écriture féminine* (women’s writing), practiced among France’s difference feminists such as Luce Irigaray, Hélène Cixous, and Julia Kristeva. According to Cixous and Clément (1975), women hardly write anything about women, and only women themselves can write about women’s infinite and mobile complexity and heterogeneous sexual feelings. They challenged the sexual differences of women and the particularity of the femininity, as well as androgynism – taboo topics in feminism, and used the word “mother” to be able to discuss the condition of women. They claim that all women possess something motherly, and add that for women themselves and for others, they are, in some sense, mothers. Of course, what Cixous and Clément refer to as “mother” is different from institutionalized motherhood in modern times. Instead, while sharply charging the complicity in crime of logocentrism and phallogocentrism to “bury” and “erase” women in modern motherhood on the one hand, the two authors lay out a new way for women to thrive with the Other without suppressing pleasures and by enjoying the differences of the Other. This was the aim of their practice of *écriture*, and it bears similarity with the consciousness behind Mitsu Tanaka’s tireless efforts during Japan’s women’s liberation movement in the 1970s to put women’s liberation into words by writing “Me” in Hiragana (わたし), expressing liberation through the script’s unique form (Tanaka 1975; Kanai 2008).⁶

This is also linked to what Shoshana Felman (1993) argues: “a woman writing thinks back through her mothers.” She suggests that we can access stories we have otherwise been unable to hear or record “through the *bond of reading*, that is through the *story of the Other* (the story read by other women, the story of other women, the story of women told by others).”

We must face the world with our language and concepts, and, from there, the traumatized voices in Myself/Woman (Me)/Mother. Perhaps this will lead, through narratives, to the weaving in of words that reach the dark corners of memory, creating the road for women to pave the way towards their imagined community. Lacking insight on becoming a “source of life,” the modern Self

contemplates the “Me” when pregnant with the Other and the “source of life,” then advocates a “philosophy of the feminine,” and attempts to link feminist clinical philosophy to how we view the theory of life: I have a feeling that there will be new horizons for a philosophy that surmount the concept of Subject in “modern” times. Regarding the opposition of globalization, as we overcome the “fragmentation of suffering” that divides East-Asian women, leading the way towards an “imagined community” through “women’s solidarity,” ensuring sensitivity against violence at the micro level will become an even bigger issue.

Conclusion

Therefore, philosophy of the feminine expands to aid narrative theory as clinical wisdom in terms of incorporating the perspective of Body and Life. This philosophy also advocates aspects of “feminism clinical philosophy” by referencing narrative community and clinical wisdom. It is unavoidable for feminism and philosophy in Japan to question feminine beings from dual meanings of Self as a “Woman/Mother” because of the tight control of the motherhood ideology of Japanese society. Confronting the motherhood that regulates the core of Japanese culture and the Japanese mentality requires a fundamental critique of the practice of patriarchy in the intimate sphere and the post-war Japanese family based on the patriarchal nature of the Emperor system of the military regime of pre-war Japan.

Considering the past culture of the motherly Emperor system, or when motherly compassion and maidenly purity were utilized as a driving force to advance war and aggression, we cannot ignore that the flexible structure of the violence with the motherly beings as its background has a link from the past to the present of Japanese society. This includes the Emperor system and the military regime, crimes symbolized by the Akihabara incident, and the violence observed in the intimate sphere. From a perspective linking violence and motherly beings, we must be able to find the axis of value that counters the globalizing world. I would like to propose, based on the ideas of gender and philosophy of the feminine, a transformation from feminism as a politics of gender category to feminism as a philosophy. There will arise an approach not possessed by homogenous order but to create a new concept of “feminine” to develop “feminism as a philosophy.” In this process, the theme of women (Me) in the first person who internalize the Other becomes an important topic raised by Japanese feminism in the world of philosophy.

Notes

1. Six of the papers presented at the international conference held in Kobe in March 2008 were published in *Kyoto Forum for Public Philosophy* (2008); see Kanai (2008a).
2. The Japanese Red Army was a far-left militia active in the late 1960s and early 1970s.
3. Aum Shinrikyo was a Japanese cult. They carried out the sarin gas attack in the Tokyo metro in 1995.
4. Kazue Morisaki is a woman thinker and writer who was born in Manchuria in 1927 and has spoken out extensively about her colonial experience and the marginality of ideas based on their location – she was based in a former coal mining town in Fukuoka, Kyushu, far away from the urban centers of Japan. *Morisaki Kazue Collection* (Fujiwara Shoten (2008–)) is currently being published from her vast amount of writings.
5. A woman’s sense of pregnancy and her Body is located in a constantly fluctuating border of the Self (Body). The perspective of a Body containing the Other for a woman clearly overlaps with Adrienne Rich’s statement that, “The child that I carry for nine months can be defined *neither* as me or as not-me” (Rich 1976: 64).
6. Masahiro Morioka, a proponent of for Life Studies in Japanese academism, looks at Mitsu Tanaka’s statements and ideas to look for the origins of a Theory of Life, and argues that it is suggesting that Japanese feminism should develop into a pro-life feminism (Morioka 1996).

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