

A Solipsistic and Affirmation-Based Approach to Meaning in Life

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Abstract

In this paper, I make two arguments: 1) There is a solipsistic layer in meaning in life, which I call the “heart of meaning in life” (HML). The bearer of the heart of meaning in life is the solipsistic being. The heart of meaning in life cannot be compared with anything else whatsoever. 2) The heart of meaning in life can be dynamically incorporated into the affirmation of having been born into this world, which I call “birth affirmation.” There can be two interpretations of birth affirmation, the anti-anti-natalistic interpretation and the possible world interpretation. Birth affirmation can be an alternative to anti-natalism, which is destined to be frustrated in this universe.

1. Introduction

When you read the sentence “Mandela’s life is more meaningful than your life,” what do you think the singular word “your” specifically points to? You may say that the word indicates the reader of the sentence. Who, then, is that reader? Is it possible to actually name that reader? I would say that it is impossible to name the reader because in that sentence the singular word “you” points to “the solipsistic being,” the being that does not have a proper name. I argue that this solipsistic being is the true and genuine bearer of meaning in life.

In this paper, I am going to make two arguments:

- 1) There is a solipsistic layer in the meaning in life, which I call the “heart of meaning in life” (HML). The heart of meaning in life cannot be compared with anything else whatsoever.
- 2) The heart of meaning in life can be dynamically incorporated into the affirmation of having been born into this world, which I call “birth affirmation.”

This paper is a revised and extended version of my paper “Is Meaning in Life Comparable?: From the Viewpoint of ‘The Heart of Meaning in Life,’” which

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was published in the *Journal of Philosophy of Life* in 2015. You can see some overlapping content between my 2015 paper and this 2019 paper, although the contexts in which they appear are slightly different.

It was Viktor Frankl who implicitly introduced the ideas of the solipsistic being and birth affirmation to the discussion of meaning of life. I will first explain his idea of the solipsistic being.

2. Frankl and the Solipsistic Being

Frankl writes in his book *Man's Search for Meaning* as follows.

What was really needed was a fundamental change in our attitude toward life. We had to learn ourselves and, furthermore, we had to teach the despairing men, that *it did not really matter what we expected from life, but rather what life expected from us*. We needed to stop asking about the meaning of life, and instead to think of ourselves as those who were being questioned by life – daily and hourly. Our answer must consist, not in talk and meditation, but in right action and in right conduct. Life ultimately means taking the responsibility to find the right answer to its problems and to fulfil the tasks which it constantly sets for each individual.¹

We can see in this text the core message of Frankl's approach to the question of meaning of life. He stresses that we have to stop asking for "the meaning of life in general," and instead realize that we are being questioned by life, daily and hourly, about "the meaning of life of ourselves who are actually living here and now."² Questions about the meaning of life are asked of each individual, by life.

It is "each individual" who has the responsibility to answer those life questions. Frankl gives an important description of the characteristics of "each individual" as follows.

When a man finds that it is his destiny to suffer, he will have to accept his suffering as his task; his single and unique task. He will have to

¹ Frankl (2011), p.62. Italics in the English edition.

² In the German edition of this book, Frankl calls this turn "Art kopernikanische Wende" (the way of Copernican turn). This term is omitted in the English edition.

acknowledge the fact that even in suffering he is unique and alone in the universe.³ (Underline by Morioka)

The above sentences of the English edition are not a strict translation of the German text. Let us try a word-to-word translation of the underlined part, particularly, the meanings of the two words, “unique” and “alone.”

With this destiny full of suffering, so to speak, he stands in the whole universe only once and in an incomparable manner. (German: *er mit diesem leidvollen Schicksal sozusagen im ganzen Kosmos einmalig und einzigartig dasteht.*⁴)

Frankl stresses that the individual who has the responsibility for answering the life question is the one who stands “only once” and “in an incomparable manner” in the whole universe. I interpret Frankl’s words as follows: whatever suffering this individual may experience her life occurs only once in this universe and can never be repeated in any other way in the future, and the manner in which this individual exists in this universe is unique and can never be compared with anything whatsoever.⁵ For Frankl, it is such an individual, who stands only once and in an incomparable manner in this universe, who is the bearer of meaning in life. Who, then, is this bearer?

My interpretation is that Frankl comes very close to a kind of solipsism in the context of meaning in life.⁶ Here I am using the word “solipsism” in a positive way. Solipsism is normally considered to be the idea that there is only one person in the universe who has real inner-consciousness, that is, myself. Many people believe that this kind of solipsism is wrong because in that case all people other than myself must lack their own inner-consciousness, and this is completely absurd. I would like to call this type of solipsism, “the normal solipsism.”

There is another type of solipsism, however, which can shed a special light on the fundamental uniqueness of the first person, myself, and emphasize that

³ Frankl (2011), p.63.

⁴ Frankl (2011), pp.118-119.

⁵ Frankl writes as follows. “No man and no destiny can be compared with any other man or any destiny. No situation repeats itself, and each situation calls for a different response.” Frankl (2011), pp.62-63.

⁶ Frankl does not use the word “solipsism.”

the person who has this uniqueness exists absolutely alone, in complete solitude, in the whole universe. The number of this person is only one, and no other person exists in such a unique way. The key concept of this solipsism is aloneness, solitude, or oneness, not the existence of inner-consciousness or self-consciousness. Let us call this type of solipsism, “existential solipsism.”⁷

Existential solipsism teaches us that although there are many people in the universe, there is only one person, or being, that exists in a very special way which can never be shared by any other persons. I would like to call this being, “the solipsistic being.” Readers might think that every person in our society can be, or actually is, this solipsistic being, and thus that there are many solipsistic beings here and there. I am the solipsistic being, you are the solipsistic being, and she is the solipsistic being. Nevertheless, this reasoning is wrong. If there are plural solipsistic beings, they cannot be the solipsistic being because the number of the solipsistic being ought to be one, not many. Then, who is considered the solipsistic being in the context of existential solipsism?

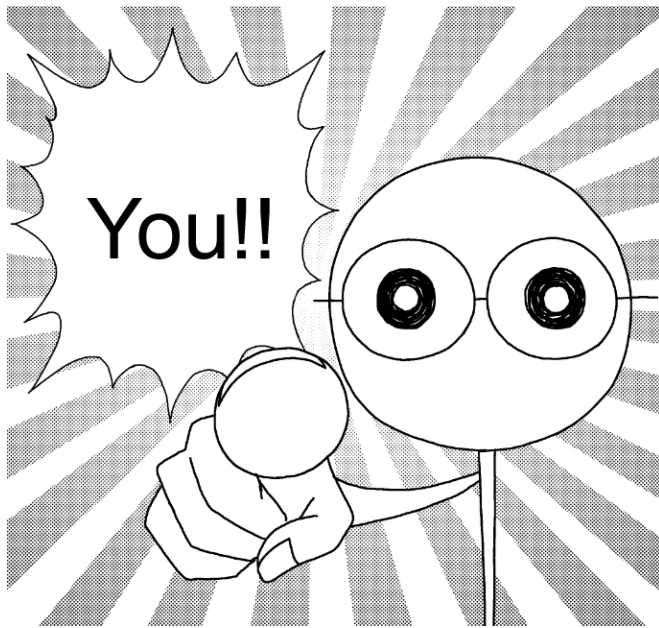
Readers might also think that this is a question of indexicals. Yes, the question has a strong connection with indexicals, but we cannot reduce the central point of the solipsistic being merely to indexical-related problems. For example, the indexical “I” can be defined as the pronoun which we use when the subject talks about the subject herself recursively. However, this means that any person can point to oneself and say “I,” and as a result, there can be many “I”s in our society. This clearly shows that the indexical “I” is not the same as the solipsistic being because while the former can equally be applied to plural persons, the latter can never be applied to plural persons. I would like to stress again that the number of the solipsistic being can only be one.

Readers might then ask me to explain who this solipsistic person actually is by using the proper name of a person. This is the crucial point. Interestingly, we cannot name who the solipsistic person actually is by using the proper name of a person. The author of this paper cannot name the solipsistic being by saying “Masahiro Morioka is the solipsistic being.” In the same way, the football player Lionel Messi cannot name the solipsistic being by saying “Lionel Messi is the solipsistic being.” Then, who is the solipsistic being?

One way of answering this question is to say that the person who is reading

⁷ The words “existential solipsism” are a translation of the Japanese term “独在論 dokuzai ron,” which can be literally translated as the “solo-existence theory.” I think that the latter would be a more appropriate translation, but for the time being, in this paper, I use the former.

this sentence just now is the solipsistic being, and in this way, we can directly point to the solipsistic being, and the place where this solipsistic being exists. The other way of answering this question is to use the second person pronoun “you” and say “Hey, reader, YOU are the solipsistic person!” However, using such written sentences may contain ambiguity in conveying the true meaning of the solipsistic being. In my Japanese book *Manga Introduction to Philosophy* (2013), I use a manga character and directly point to the solipsistic being.⁸



The being at which the finger of this manga character is now pointing is the solipsistic being. This shows that the solipsistic being can be directly pointed at by a combination of the direction of a fictional finger and the second person pronoun “you.” This is the most clear-cut and simple way of pointing to the solipsistic being.

The problem of the solipsistic being has been discussed among Japanese philosophers for more than 30 years, since the publication of the Japanese book *The Metaphysics of “I”* (1986) by Hitoshi Nagai. While Nagai seeks to interpret the problem of solipsity as that of haecceity and actuality, Morioka argues that since the solipsistic being can be directly pointed to in the above ways, the crucial point is the function of the second person pronoun in our language. Motoyoshi Irifuji argues that the whole picture should be seen from the

⁸ Morioka (2013b), p.165.

perspective of the dynamism of the “relative actuality” and the “absolute actuality.”⁹

In the following discussion I use the term “the solipsistic being,” but where the probability of misunderstanding is considered to be very low I sometimes use “I” instead of “the solipsistic being” and make the sentence more readable.

Let us go back to Frankl’s argument. I believe that what Frankl had in mind when he talked about the one who stands “only once” and “in an incomparable manner” in the whole universe was the solipsistic being I have discussed in the above paragraphs. The bearer of meaning in life is not the indexical “I” in a general sense. The bearer of meaning in life is the solipsistic being, which can be directly pointed to by a combination of the second person pronoun and the experience of being pointed to by a finger.¹⁰

In my 2015 paper, I called the meaning in life that is attained by the solipsistic being the “heart of meaning in life” (HML). The heart of meaning in life cannot be compared to anything, because since there is only one solipsistic being in the universe, there should be no heart of meaning in life that can be ascribed to any person other than the solipsistic being. Comparison is impossible at the level of the heart of meaning in life. This is the most important feature of HML.

When Frankl writes that “it is impossible to define the meaning of life in a general way.... ‘Life’ does not mean something vague, but something very real and concrete ... No man and no destiny can be compared with any other man or any other destiny,”¹¹ he implicitly talks about the heart of meaning in life held by the solipsistic being, which I have discussed extensively in this section.

3. Two Kinds of Impossibility in the Comparison of Meaning in Life

Thaddeus Metz argues that the theories of meaning in/of life can be divided

⁹ The discussion of this topic is now under way mainly in Japanese. You can read a rough sketch of Nagai’s argument in Nagai (2007-2010) and (2011-2014). The current discussion can be found in Irifuji and Morioka (2019) and subsequent books in the same series to be published in 2020 and 2021. I am now writing a paper on this topic in English. If you read Japanese please read the related Japanese papers and books that we have written.

¹⁰ A similar perspective can be found in the philosophy of *Upanishad*, especially, in the famous phrase *Tat Tvam Asi* (You art that). We can also recall Saul Kripke’s “baptism” in his discussion of proper names in *Naming and Necessity* (Kripke 1972). I will discuss these topics in the future English papers.

¹¹ Frankl (2011), p.62.

into three categories: 1) super naturalism, 2) objectivism, and 3) subjectivism.¹² At first sight, existential solipsism looks very similar to subjectivism, but if we take a closer look at the difference between existential solipsism and subjectivism, it becomes clear that they are completely different from each other. We propose existential solipsism as the fourth category of meaning in/of life.

- * Super naturalism (1)
- * Naturalism
 - * Objectivism (2)
 - * Subjectivism (3)
 - * Existential solipsism (4)

Super naturalism and objectivism argue that we can say that Person A's life is more meaningful than Person B's life. In these two categories, the meaning of one's life can be compared with the meanings of others' lives. On the other hand, subjectivism and existential solipsism argue that we cannot say that Person A's life is more meaningful than Person B's life. In subjectivism and existential solipsism, the meaning of one's life cannot be compared with the meanings of others' lives, but interestingly, the reason they cannot be compared is completely different.

Subjectivism thinks that the meaning of one's life can only be determined by that particular person herself, and other people outside her cannot determine the meaning of her life, thus the comparison between the meaning of one's life and the meanings of other lives should be impossible. The meaning of Person A's life can only be determined by Person A, the meaning of Person B's life can only be determined by Person B, and so on.

Existential solipsism does not think so, however. Existential solipsism argues that the heart of meaning in life, which is the only meaningful concept of meaning in life for existential solipsism, can only be determined by the solipsistic being itself. We have already discussed who this solipsistic being is. The number of the solipsistic being is only one. Therefore, from the perspective of existential solipsism, the only thing that can be meaningfully discussed in the context of meaning in life is the heart of meaning in life of the solipsistic being, and anything other than that cannot be meaningfully discussed. The heart of

¹² Metz (2013).

meaning in the life of Person A cannot be meaningfully discussed, and the heart of meaning in the life of Person B cannot be meaningfully discussed. Only the heart of meaning in life of the solipsistic being can be meaningfully discussed. This is why the comparison between two or more people at the level of HML is logically impossible.

Imagine Hitler's life. Super naturalism and objectivism argue that we can talk about the meaning of Hitler's life objectively, and can compare it with, say, the meaning of Mandela's life. Subjectivism does not think so. According to subjectivism, we can talk about the meaning of Hitler's life, and for example, we may even say that Hitler's life might have been meaningful because he believed that he successfully flourished in his life in his own way until his last day. However, it is Hitler himself who can determine whether or not his life was actually meaningful. We cannot determine the meaningfulness of Hitler's life objectively from the outside.

Existential solipsism does not think so. According to existential solipsism, the concept of "the heart of meaning in life of Hitler" does not make any sense because the solipsistic being, which is the bearer of HML, cannot be pointed to by the name of a proper person, such as Hitler. The heart of meaning in life of Hitler does not make sense from the beginning, hence it cannot be compared with anything at all. There is no such thing as someone else's HML. HML is always the solipsistic being's HML.¹³

We have so far discussed who the bearer of meaning in life is, and have discovered that the heart of meaning in life can only be held by the solipsistic being. In other words, we can say that there is a layer of existential solipsism in the realm of meaning in life, and this layer is distinguished from other layers, such as the subjectivist layer and the objectivist layer, and it should be shed a special light on in the discussion of meaning in/of life.

Before going on to the next section, I would like to stress that the above discussion has involved the "bearer" of meaning in life, not the "content" of meaning in life. When thinking about the content of meaning in life, we should take the importance of human relationships into account and leave the negative solipsistic bias that the word solipsism may lure us into.

¹³ You may wonder, "Wasn't Hitler a solipsistic being when he was alive?" I would answer this question negatively because the solipsistic being cannot be pointed to using the proper name of a person.

4. Meaning in Life and “Birth Affirmation”

Let us move on to a discussion of the content of the heart of meaning in life. Here I would like to convert the *meaning* question to the question of *affirmation*, and propose regarding the question of meaning in life as a question of the possibility of “birth affirmation.”

Frankl’s book, again, gives us a clue about how to think deeply about this topic. The original German title of *Man’s Search for Meaning* is “...trotzdem Ja zum Leben sagen,” which can be translated as “*Nevertheless Say(ing) Yes to One’s Life.*” This phrase eloquently illustrates Frankl’s understanding of the meaning of the meaning of life. According to Frankl, we are being questioned by life, daily and hourly, about the meaning of our own life, we have a responsibility to answer that question, and “saying yes to one’s life” can be the most simple and fundamental answer to that question. Here we can see Frankl’s idea that the meaning of the meaning of life can be understood as the affirmation of one’s life, that is, saying yes to one’s life. In this idea we can also hear the resonance of Nietzsche’s concept, the affirmation of life in the form of eternal recurrence. Encouraged by Frankl, I would like to further develop his life-affirmation philosophy into a new way of interpreting the meaning of the meaning of life.

I would like to call this kind of approach, an “affirmation-based approach to the meaning in life.” I have long developed my own affirmation-based approach, the theory of birth affirmation, which is one of the affirmation-based approaches to the meaning in life, extensively in Japanese papers. I provide a summary of the main argument of the theory of birth affirmation in the following paragraphs.¹⁴

From my perspective, what gives the solipsistic being the heart of meaning in life is “the affirmation of the whole life” of the solipsistic being. What, then, does the affirmation of the whole life mean? It does not mean that the solipsistic being can affirm *every life event* it has experienced. Instead, it means that the solipsistic being can affirm what it has experienced up until the present *as a whole* even if there have been particular events that cannot be affirmed at all. This is my interpretation of the affirmation of the whole life.

Looking back on our lives, we find a number of life events to which we

¹⁴ I will write papers on birth affirmation in more detail in English in the near future.

cannot say yes, but this does not necessarily mean that our lives cannot be affirmed *as a whole*. Affirming a life *as a whole* means to affirm a life that contains, as its parts, many life events that cannot be affirmed. Let us take a specific example. The other day, one of my friends sent me an email saying that his most beloved friend had killed herself. He fell into despair and could not find a way to escape from this predicament. I did not know how to cope with this difficult situation either, and so I wrote to him to say that I really would like him to survive this difficult period. I wrote, “Of course, this painful life event cannot be affirmed at all, but if you can survive this painful period, it becomes logically possible in the future that you can look back on your life *as a whole* and come to think of it as something that can be affirmed from the bottom of your heart, although this particular life event itself will remain one that can never be affirmed by you.” This way of thinking is an example of separating particular life events from one’s life as a whole. I do not think that this kind of separation is always possible, especially in the case of harsh experiences. I am not such an optimist and I do not know how to achieve this separation effectively. My point is to show that this separation is *logically* possible, and the affirmation of life as a whole is *logically* possible, whatever predicament we may experience in our lives. I believe that in many cases a life that is affirmed as a whole contains some life events that cannot be affirmed as its parts.¹⁵ To help people realize this logical structure is the role of philosophy, and to discover a concrete way to actually make this separation is the role of psychology. This is a place where philosophy and psychology can cooperate.

The role of philosophy in the theory of birth affirmation is: 1) to show that birth affirmation is logically possible in all cases, 2) to give a detailed analysis of the concept of birth affirmation, 3) to make clear the similarities and differences with other related concepts such as self-affirmation and life-affirmation, and 4) to make clear the social and cultural aspects of birth affirmation.

Let us think about the concept of “the whole life” again. Usually, the whole life means the whole period of time from the beginning of life (birth) to the end of life (death). This means that the affirmation of the whole life is possible only at the final end of one’s life, that is, at the moment of one’s death. Generally speaking, this is not a strange idea. Many people easily understand a sentence

¹⁵ This point needs further detailed scrutiny. I have discussed it in my Japanese papers.

such as “When she faced death, she looked back over her whole life and affirmed it from the bottom of her heart” however, the idea that in order to affirm the whole life we have to wait a long time for the time of death sounds very strange to me.¹⁶

My understanding of the concept of the whole life is completely different from the one above. I do not think that the whole life is the objective period of time that is determined by its beginning and its end. Roughly speaking, the whole life is the life that comes up to my mind when I try to look back at all my life events from here and now into the past, from the inside. Speaking more precisely, the whole life is a subjective picture that is constructed by the elements which come up in the solipsistic being’s mind when the solipsistic being tries to look back at all the past experiences of its actual life.

Since the whole life is a subjective picture, every time the solipsistic being looks back on its past experiences, its whole life appears differently in its eyes. The contents of the whole life which was looked back on one month ago and that which was looked back on yesterday are not the same, even in the overlapping period, that is, the period before one month.

The important thing is that when the solipsistic being affirms its life, what the solipsistic being affirms is this subjective whole life, as discussed above. This further implies that affirming the whole life in this sense is considered equal to *affirming the birth of the solipsistic being* into the world. I call this the “birth affirmation.” Birth affirmation is the judgement, made by the solipsistic being, that “I am glad that I have been born.” Please note that this is not “I am glad that *you* have been born” which parents sometimes say to their child. Birth affirmation means that “I am glad that *I* have been born.”

The theory of birth affirmation is not that which claims that every life has already been affirmed or that every life should be affirmed. It is the theory which claims that the life of the solipsistic being can be affirmed as a whole every time when it looks back on its life, until the last minute of its end.

Then, what is “affirmation”? What does it mean to affirm one’s life? My answer to these questions is as follows.¹⁷

Birth affirmation means either of the two following propositions.

¹⁶ There are many discussions on the whole life and the part life problem in the philosophy of meaning in life. See Metz (2013), pp.37-58.

¹⁷ I have discussed this topic extensively in my Japanese papers.

- 1) Never to think, at the bottom of my heart, that it would have been better not to have been born. (*Anti-anti-natalistic interpretation*)
- 2) Even if there were a possible world in which my ideal was realized or my grave sufferings were resolved, never to think that, at the bottom of my heart, that it would have been better to have been born to that possible world. (*Possible world interpretation*)

The first proposition is the complete negation of anti-natalism, which has been advocated since ancient times and recently fervently supported by David Benatar. I call this proposition the “anti-anti-natalistic interpretation” of birth affirmation. (I discuss anti-natalism in the next section.) The second proposition can be interpreted as Morioka’s version of Nietzsche’s *amor fati*. Nietzsche talks about the concept of *amor fati* in *Ecce Homo* as follows. “My formula for greatness in a human being is *amor fati*: that one wants nothing to be different, not forward, not backward, not in all eternity.”¹⁸ Nietzsche is the first advocate of the second proposition of birth affirmation. I call this proposition the “possible world interpretation” of birth affirmation. There is a close connection between these two propositions, and I have much to say about their characteristics, but there is not enough space for this discussion. I have to move on to the next topic here.

As I said before, according to the theory of birth affirmation, the whole life is a subjective picture. This means that birth affirmation is also a subjective affirmation made by the solipsistic being.¹⁹ This shows that the theory of birth affirmation may be a variation of narrative approaches to meaning in/of life. This further shows that the theory of birth affirmation shares a certain risk with narrative approaches in general, that is to say, the risk of making self-righteous affirmative stories and giving the solipsistic being a narcissistic interpretation of an affirmed life. Of course, it is very hard to determine which story is narcissistic and which is not, however, if a story is narcissistic, that story cannot have the power to enrich the human relationship between the solipsistic being and its significant others. A birth affirmation made by the solipsistic being should thus be placed under a never ending process of inner examination until the last day of its life. (I think that this is what Socrates had in mind when he

¹⁸ Nietzsche (1967, 2000), p.714. Original German is “Meine Formel für die Größe am Menschen ist *amor fati*: dass man Nichts anders haben will, vorwärts nicht, rückwärts nicht, in alle Ewigkeit nicht.”

¹⁹ I am still wondering which words we should use, “subjective affirmation” or “solipsistic affirmation.”

used the words “examined life.”)

5. Anti-Natalism and Birth Affirmation

The theory of birth affirmation seems to be in direct opposition to anti-natalism. (I sometimes call anti-natalism *birth negation*.) There have been many anti-natalist theories in human history, for example those by Sophokles in ancient Greece and Arthur Schopenhauer in the 19th century Germany, and the latest version of anti-natalism is David Benatar’s theory of “better never to have been.” He argues that coming into existence is always a harm, and therefore, the birth of sentient beings should have been avoided. According to his theory, any life that contains at least a very small drop of pain is logically worse than not having been born, and the badness of this life can never be compensated at all, no matter how much pleasure may be poured into life before and after the time of that tiny pain.

On the one hand, I do not think his argument is logically correct. Firstly, his premise that “the presence of pain is bad” is wrong even if that pain does not lead to future pleasure. For me, the presence of some bearable pain itself is not bad at all, and I do not think that this is a fundamentally flawed way of thinking. If this premise is wrong, every following argument by Benatar should be regarded as wrong, including his conclusion, “coming into existence is always a harm.” Secondly, his argument about counterfactual conditionals has a grave problem when he tries to compare the situation in which a sentient being has been born and the situation in which such thing has never occurred. He compares what cannot be compared. (I promise that I will discuss the latter problem in detail in my future paper.)

On the other hand, I really appreciate his book *Better Never to Have Been* because it succeeded in letting the eyes of analytic philosophers turn to the meaning of having been born, and to philosophical issues concerning the meaning of life in general.

Although I have advocated the theory of birth affirmation, it is also true that sometimes, and even now, I am deeply trapped in the thought of birth negation, that it is better never to have been. The reason I have advocated birth affirmation is that birth negation is one of the strongest *basso continuo* of my life and I really yearn to overcome it. Sometimes I think that the world in which Morioka had never been born would have been a better world, considering the pain and

suffering I have caused to my beloved ones.

At the same time, I cannot help thinking that if I had not been born at all, the happiness and enjoyment that my beloved ones have experienced with me would not have existed at all in this world. Isn't it insulting and immoral to *wish* such a thing on my beloved ones, who have shared the happiness and sorrow of life with me (even if it is a wish that cannot come true)?

However fervently I might wish, it is totally impossible to go back to the time of my birth and erase it from this world. Logically speaking, the wish of anti-natalists cannot be fulfilled. It is destined to be frustrated. Hence, the only thing that remains for the solipsistic being is to continue living its life toward the future, and to seek a way to attain the birth affirmation of the whole life. A birth affirmation might not take place, but it might take place, and the latter is not logically impossible. This is why surviving is strongly encouraged even when the solipsistic being groans with heartbreaking pain and suffering.

Hearing the words "birth affirmation of the solipsistic being," you may think that it is attainable only through the solipsistic being's struggle, without any support from surrounding people, but in many cases this is wrong. Support from surrounding people is very important for birth affirmation. Birth affirmation also contains, more or less, the affirmative attitudes of beloved ones toward their own lives, and those of other unknown people toward themselves. The affirmative attitudes of other people toward their lives has a positive influence on the birth affirmation of the solipsistic being, because the way that the solipsistic being looks at its own life is closely connected with how other people look at their lives. This is the place where the theory of birth affirmation meets ethics.

In the above paragraph, I used the words "the affirmative attitudes of beloved ones toward their own lives." This is because the words "birth affirmation" can only be applied, strictly speaking, to the solipsistic being. We should not use "birth affirmation" in the case of other people. At first, this way of thinking sounds very strange, but this is the logical conclusion of the theory of birth affirmation and existential solipsism.

When a person says, "I have had a birth affirmation!" how then should I interpret her words? It is clear that the person in question is not the solipsistic being, hence, her words "I have had a birth affirmation!" are wrong. Her words are not senseless, however. If I interpret her words as "I have finally got an affirmative attitude toward my whole life! I have come to be able to say yes to

my whole life!” then her words make sense without any ambiguity.

Before closing this paper, let me make a final comment on birth affirmation and the value of life. The solipsistic being may not be able to attain a birth affirmation in any instances of its entire life, however, even such a case does not mean that the whole life of the solipsistic being is of lower value than other people’s affirmed lives. The value of the life of the solipsistic being cannot be compared, in essence, to the value of any other person’s life, and it cannot be compared with any hypothetical, counterfactual lives of the solipsistic being itself because the solipsistic being has no hypothetical, counterfactual variants in this universe.

In this paper, I have illustrated the essence of a new approach, “the solipsistic and affirmation-based approach to meaning in life.” I am going to broaden this approach to make a systematic philosophical framework called “the philosophy of birth affirmation.”

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