On the Ontological Status of the Past: Ōmori Shōzō and Paul Ricœur

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Abstract: *The aim of this paper is to examine the theory of the past by Ōmori Shōzō (大森荘蔵, 1921‑1997) through examining the meaning of "all is vanity (色即是空)" in Time and Being (1994) in order to consider the relationship between the past and historiography (the narrative of the past). In particular, this paper attempts to consistently interpret the theory of the past in Ōmori's philosophy and his pragmatic realism(実用的実在論) by reinterpreting the argument about "all is vanity" which Ōmori advocated in his later years.*

This paper is structured as follows. The first section of this paper examines the feature of Ōmori's philosophy in the later period. In this section, the characteristics of monism of "Tachiaraware (立ち現われ)" in Ōmori's philosophy are clarified. The second section presents the fundamental problem in the monism of Tachiaraware. In this section, it becomes clear that he makes a seemingly incongruous claim that the past is described negatively in terms of "all is vanity", while describing the present positively in terms of pragmatic realism. The third section reinterprets the argument about "all is vanity" in Ōmori's philosophy by confirming that he regards "kūbaku (空漠)" and infinite as the matrix of meaningful world. In this section, it is shown that he developed the argument about "all is vanity" as an argument compatible with his pragmatic realism. The fourth section highlights the features of the theory of the past in Ōmori's philosophy through examining the argument of the past in Paul Ricœur's work, Time and Narrative (1983–85) and Memory, History, Forgetting (2000). In the last section, the ontological status of the past in Ōmori's philosophy is clarified by comparing Ricœur's theory of the past.

Introduction

Ōmori Shōzō is a representative philosopher of postwar Japan. He first studied phenomenology at the University of Tokyo. Later, however, he studied analytic philosophy in the United States and actively imported the analytic philosophy into Japan. He taught philosophy to many of his students at the University of Tokyo, who

would lead the later philosophical society of Japan. His disciples include Iida Takashi (飯田隆, 1948-), Noya Shigeki (野矢茂樹, 1954-), Noe Keiichi (野家啓一, 1949-) and Nakajima Yoshimichi (中島義道, 1946-), who are still active on the front lines. In other countries, for example, Pierre Bonneels[1] and Michel Dalissier[2] have published some papers on Ōmori's philosophy and analyzed its features from their point of view. Thanks to their work, Ōmori's philosophy can be discussed in English and French.

In this paper, I would like to discuss a question concerning the concept of "the past (過去)" in Ōmori's philosophy, which has not been sufficiently argued in the past studies. Understanding Ōmori's concept of "the past" is an issue that cannot be avoided in order to understand Ōmori's philosophy because, in the monism of "Tachiaraware", which is a characteristic of Ōmori's philosophy, a paradox arises that "the past" appears *now* to us in the mode of "recall (想起)". Furthermore, to the nature of "the past", Ōmori gave a complicated characteristic of "all is vanity". What kind of philosophical stance did he try to establish by bringing up his worldview of the past with "all is vanity"? A few studies of Ōmori's philosophy have mentioned this point. It is surprising that even in "round-table discussion" where four Ōmori's disciples gathered, "all is vanity" was never argued.[3] Therefore, this paper aims to clarify the ontological status of "the past" in the philosophy of Ōmori Shōzō by examining the meaning of "all is vanity" in *Time and Being*. This paper also attempts to clarify the characteristics of Ōmori's theory of the past by comparing them with those of Paul Ricœur (1913–2005).

1. The Feature of Ōmori's Philosophy in the Latter Period

We begin our discussion by pointing out two major features of later Ōmori's philosophy (1. Overcoming mind/matter dualism and 2. Proposal of the monism of "Tachiaraware"). Let us examine these discussions.

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[1] See Pierre Bonneels, L'empirisme tremblant du langage chez Ōmori Shōzō, in *European Journal of Japanese Philosophy*, no. 3, 2018, pp. 193‑214.

[2] See Michel Dalissier, Le bon sens est-il la chose du monde la mieux partagée? Sens commun et vie ordinaire chez Ōmori Shōzō, in *European Journal of Japanese Philosophy*, no. 3, 2018, pp. 215‑243.

[3] The round-table discussion can be read at the end of *Ōmori Shōzō Selection* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2011). There are four members, Iida, Tanji, Noe, and Noya.

We encounter various things in our daily lives. For example, you can take a walk and look at a house or trees in the park. But are the houses and trees thus "the object" itself? Immanuel Kant (1724‑1804) would argue that the object is a "phenomenon", not the "thing-in-itself". In other words, it is an epistemological argument that the things we recognize are only phenomena (or representations) in consciousness, and they are not the objects as they are. If we adopt this worldview, we will first recognize the representation and use it as a medium for imagining what might be beyond it (thing-in-itself). Ōmori puts up opposition to this dualistic theory of representation and object by the monism of "Tachiaraware".[4] How, then, did Ōmori shift his argument from the dualism of representation and object to a monistic understanding of the world? Let us examine that point.

First, Ōmori abolished the distinction between genuine objects and representations as the copies of genuine objects. For Ōmori, all things which we can perceive by our senses are equal and they are risings (Tachiaraware) of the object. For example, gorgeous buildings, beautiful trees, and insects flocking to flowers are all examples of rising. These things possess a solid reality for human senses and life (TB, 167). In other words, we live in a world that should be called realism of rising. Rising, of course, has several aspects. For example, when you see the Kamo River (賀茂川) flowing through Kyoto, the Kamo River appears in the form of "perception (知覚)", and when you recall the sight of the Kamo River, the Kamo River appears in the form of "recall (想起)". Ōmori's philosophy is unique in that it explored various aspects of rising and developed a monistic view of the world.[5]

Here, we summarize the characteristics of the monism of rising. The important point of the monism of rising is to deny a dualism of "object" and

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[4] According to Pierre Bonneels, the concept of "Tachiaraware (立ち現われ)" contains variable meanings such as "to appear" or "rising". Dalissier translates this concept into *l'apparaître* (Michel Dalissier, Le bon sens est-il la chose du monde la mieux partagée? Sens commun et vie ordinaire chez Ōmori Shōzō, in *European Journal of Japanese Philosophy*, no. 3, 2018, p. 224). This concept means the dynamism of appearance of being ("*se dresse dans l'apparence* (立ち現われる)") (p. 225). In this paper, I adopt the term "rising" as the translation of "Tachiaraware".

[5] Many people have criticized "the monism of Tachiaraware" in Ōmori's philosophy. For example, Nakamura Hideyoshi criticized Ōmori's philosophy as follows. "Ōmori's philosophy is George Berkeley's philosophy without God. And it does not seem that the fundamental issue is different from Berkeley's philosophy". (Noe Keiichi, *A Labyrinth of Philosophy: Critique and Response to Ōmori Philosophy*, Tokyo: Sangyō Tosho, 1984, p. 6.) However, this affinity with Berkeley in the Ōmori's philosophy is, rather, designed by himself. In fact, referring to Berkeley's expression "To be is to be perceived", Ōmori says, "To be in the past is to be recalled." (TE, 129).

"representation" in the Kantian sense and to reduce everything in this world to the classification of a mode of rising. Through thinking that an object directly appears before us without the intermediation of representation, Ōmori establishes his monistic philosophy. In the monism of rising, it is unreasonable to delineate a clear border between an external object and an internal representation.

However, in this monism, the following problems would be proposed. Is it possible to claim that all things which appear to us are equal at the ontological level? For example, in Ōmori's discussion, the mode of rising includes not only aspects of perception but also of imagination and "fancy (虚想)".[6] Does that mean that all the dreams and visions which appear to us in the mode of imagination and fancy also exist equally? Ōmori's answer is "Yes". But, in the monism of rising, how should we consider the problem of being and authenticity of rising? Will this theory abolish any distinction between dream and reality? Such objections could be posed. Let us look at Ōmori's answer to this point.

According to Ōmori, authenticity is determined practically in everyday and social life. Then, what guarantees that rising is authentic? It depends on the needs of human life.[7] Here, he emphasizes the practical superiority, not the epistemological superiority. In other words, for Ōmori, the authenticity of rising is conventionally determined in terms of whether it can support our actual lives. "We do not believe things from the viewpoint of authenticity. A thing we believe at the risk of our life is an authentic thing".[8] Thus, for Ōmori, the network of rising results from the core of our life.

From this viewpoint, Ōmori's philosophy was given the character of pragmatism. In fact, Ōmori referred to his position as "a coherence theory heavily contaminated by pragmatism"[9] in his theory of *Kotodama* (言霊). Ōmori named his position "pragmatic realism (実用的実在論)" in his later main book *Time and Being* (TB, 189–194). Therefore, it can be concluded that such pragmatism was one of the decisive characters of the monism of rising.

However, the monism of rising has two fundamental problems because of its monistic nature. That is the problem of "the past" and "the other".

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[6] About the concept of "fancy", see Ōmori Shōzō, Beyond Hume's "Fancy, in *Revue Internationale De Philosophie 28*, no. 107/108 (1/2), 1974, pp. 99–115.

[7] Ōmori Shōzō, the Theory of *Kotodama* (ことだま論), in Iida Takashi, Tanji Nobuharu, Noe Keiichi and Noya Shigeki (Eds), *Ōmori Shōzō Selection*, Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2011, p. 289.

[8] Ibid., p. 290. (My translation, the same hereinafter)

[9] Ibid., p. 294.

2. The Fundamental Problem in the Monism of Rising

In the monism of rising, rising of all phenomena is described in terms of first-person ego experiences; however, as Noya and Nakajima have already stated, under these principles, we cannot explain "the past" and "the other" very well.[10] When and where does the "the past" appear to us? And, how can we compose "the other" in the experience of rising? Both are fundamental issues, but this paper addresses the former in accordance with its purpose.

We begin our discussion by examining the contradiction that arise when discussing the dimension of "the past" in the monism of rising. For Ōmori, the mode of rising that creates "the present" is perception. In the mode of perception, the present Kamo River in Kyoto and the present Nihonbashi (日本橋) in Tokyo appear to us. In contrast, the mode of rising that creates "the past" is recall. "The past" appears to us in the mode of recall. For example, through the experience of recall, the Kamo River, which was seen three days ago, appears to us. But the experience of recall is conducted now. Then, in the monism of rising, the Kamo River that was seen three days ago *now* appears to us. In other words, approving Ōmori's argument means that the "the past" *now* appears and exists; however, "the past" is a concept that means that an event no longer exists (that is, the pastness of the past). The explanation that the past now appears to us, therefore, seems to contain a serious contradiction for us.

Moreover, what is the object that we recall? Usually, it would be reminiscent of objects or events that have passed away. Then, the recalled past is drawn from the real past (実際の過去); however, this explanation of the past is dualistic and inconsistent with the monism of rising. In this way, the problem of the past becomes a big enigma in the monism of rising. How does Ōmori answer these questions?

To answer the problem of the past, Ōmori does not modify the monism of rising but rather strengthen its system. Surprisingly, he positively agrees that the past will appear to us *now and here* through the mode of rising.[11] This judgment is inevitable if Ōmori's philosophy has a monistic nature. For him, the only difference

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[10] Noya Shigeki, *Ōmori Shōzō: An Example of Philosophy*, Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2007, p. 178; Nakajima Yoshimichi, *A living past: the theory of time of Ōmori Shōzō and its critical reading*, Tokyo: Kawade shobō, 2014, p. 174.
[11] Ōmori Shōzō, the Theory of Kotodama, in Iida Takashi, Tanji Nobuharu, Noe Keiichi and Noya Shigeki (Eds), *Ōmori Shōzō Selection*, Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2011, p. 248.

exists in the mode of rising. Depending on the type of rising, such as perception or recall, a phenomenon is constructed as the present or the past. Further, he insists that such recalls are verbal. According to Ōmori, we produce the past linguistically through recall. Of course, there is no dualistic distinction here between the real past and the linguistically produced past. In the monism of rising, the linguistically produced past is nothing but the past. That is why he reformulated the definition of "the past" as follows.

> I just mean that the past is existent, not independently from a conscience of recall, but in a linguistic meaning of a recalled proposition. (TE, 114-115)

This argument in *Time and Ego* (1992) was further advanced in *Time and Being* two years later.

> Then, when I recall something; besides when I recall something with a conviction of the reality, is it a kind of delusion that corresponds to no reality? That's right. We experience it as a recall what we call a dream in that case. In other words, as long as we do not obtain the meaning of the real past, all recalls are dreams. . . because there is no reality that corresponds to them. (TB, 200)

In this quotation, he calls the object of recall "delusion" or the kind of "dream". The reason is that "there is no reality that corresponds to them". For him, "A recall is not a perceptual reconstruction or reproduction" (TE, 45). And at this very point, he gives the past the essence of "all is vanity".[12] Moreover, Ōmori went as far as to say;

> Connecting the past to "all is vanity" instills "all is vanity" in pragmatic realism. (TB, 202)

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[12] Ōmori himself did not give a clear explanation about the term "all is vanity" (TB, 12); however, it should be pointed out that Ōmori's philosophical and daily intuition might have been strengthened by Buddhist thought that completely denies the essence of things. At the Buddhist viewpoint, see Izutsu Toshihiko, *Consciousness and Essence: in search of the spiritual East*, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1991, pp. 19‑24.

> Pragmatic realism, including the realism of the past, is, of course, consistently the realism of "all is vanity". (色即是空の実在論) (TB, 204)

By introducing the element of "all is vanity" into his monism (TB, 185, 202–204), he reduced even his pragmatic realism to realism of "all is vanity"; however, should Ōmori's philosophy be understood as the philosophy which finally reached realism of "all is vanity" through the development of the theory of the past? We must consider that point.

Again, let us reconfirm the characteristics of Ōmori's philosophy. It does not admit the rising in recall or perception to be understood as a transcendental object independent of consciousness (TE, 51–52, 104, 108–111). Recall and perception were just the kinds of rising. Thus, based on this view, we can find at least the following commonalities in the rising of perception and recall.

1. In the mode of perception, the present appears internally in our consciousness; however, it is often replaced by the transcendental existence of the present.

2. In the mode of recall, the past appears internally in our consciousness; however, it is often replaced by the transcendental existence of the past.

A clear structural similarity can be found between the two propositions; however, we have just confirmed that Ōmori claims that the recalled past is like a dream. The reason for this is that there is no being corresponding to the past. If this is the case, the perceived present should be reduced to the sort of dream because there is no corresponding to the present (cf. TE, 110). At the same time, however, this position clearly contradicts the pragmatic realism that characterizes the later Ōmori's philosophy. This is because judging that even a perceived object is a "dream" is clearly against our daily beliefs and undermines the foundations of our daily lives (cf. TB, 189–194). Ōmori's assertion about the past seems at first sight to betray his own position that he naively accepted "there are mountains, rivers and plants".

This consideration indicates that there are difficulties in comprehensively interpreting the monism of rising. In other words, Ōmori makes a seemingly incongruous claim that while describing the present positively in terms of pragmatic realism (TB, 133–134, 166–169), the past is described negatively in terms of "all is vanity" (TE, 131–132; TB, 200–202).[13] However, for Ōmori, the present and the

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[13] Despite that Sato regards the argument about "all is vanity" as the claim that abolishes all

past must have had the same ontological status in the respective modes of rising. How can we interpret this contradiction in the monism of rising?

3. "All is Vanity" as the Matrix of Meaningful World

It is true that Ōmori stated in his article "Realism of All is Vanity (色即是空の実在論)" (October 1993) that "the past" means "a sort of delusion that do not correspond to any reality" and that "all recalls are dreams" (TB, 200); however, in fact, at the stage of "The Past and Dream as Linguistic Product (言語的制作としての過去と夢)" (August 1991), the production of the past should have been more carefully positioned. On this point, let us confirm Ōmori's next words.

> Then, is the past literally just a dream like all recalls are the recalls of dreams? Of course not. Recalls are not founded but regulated and bound, because there is the past to believe in and dreams are sparsely embedded in it. (TE, 117)

It is true that Ōmori's explanations for recall and the past are not straightforward; however, in the theory of linguistic production, he redefined the past as follows. "The past" means "history shared by society", in other words, "a socially collaborated linguistic product" (TE, 119). In this sense, he understood "the past" as "narrative of the past".

Here, he pointed out "works by historians" and "disputes in court" (TE, 111) as examples of the narrative of the past. In that sense, the past is not created in a totally arbitrary way. Noya skillfully expressed the theory of the past in Ōmori's philosophy in the following way. "Social language practice gives measuring to the past. And the narrative of the past that are institutionally accepted as true are understood as the real world of the past".[14] So, what is the relationship between these social language practices and "all is vanity"? If Ōmori had understood "all is vanity" in a completely negative way, there would have been no discussion about the disciplined creation of the past. Perhaps we need to focus on the ambiguity in the

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naïve realism as "delusion", he omits this interpretative difficulty. See Sato Masae, *Live in a Naive Way: The Philosophy of Ōmori Shōzō and the Path of Human Being*, Kanagawa: Seibunsha, 2009, pp.144‑146, 244.

[14] Noya Shigeki, *Ōmori Shōzō: An Example of Philosophy*, Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2007, p. 196.

term "all is vanity". Therefore, we try to deal with the concept of "kūbaku (空漠)" as a clue to examine the ambiguity of "all is vanity".

In "Semantics of Cubism (キュビズムの意味論)" (May 1992) Ōmori talks about the concept of "kūbaku", which is an infinite space generated from the sound in hearing (TB, 120). The point of the argument here is that the auditory experience does not have a clear boundary between subject and object (TB, 118). First, in the case of visual and tactile experiences, there is a clear boundary in contact with the object (TB, 117–118). Ōmori asserts that this boundary creates a side of an object and a side of the subject. For example, when I touch a tree, there is a distinction between the tree being touched by my hand (a side of an object) and my hand touching the tree (a side of the subject). In contrast, auditory experiences do not have this boundary, making the distinction between self and object ambiguous (TB, 118). Pointing out the nature of this "frailty of sound", he states that the sound is "transience (無常)" (ibid.). He insists that the meaning of "space" is generated from the experience of such sounds of "transience". In other words, for Ōmori, "kūbaku" and "kū (空)" is not just nihility. Let us look at Ōmori's words.

> This space, generated from soundscapes, is the foundation and the framework of our concept of "space", say, kūbaku (infinite expansion). This kūbaku is not a vacuum, but a fertile matrix into which we draw infinitely variable figures. (TB, 120)

For him, kūbaku is the infinite basis of space for objects of all nature (森羅万象). According to Ōmori, in order to perceive such an infinite space, it is necessary to hear rather than see. The object in sight is always a three-dimensional finite object, but there is no boundary between any object in the sound itself. When we close our eyes and listen to the sound, we can feel the endless wave of sound. And "when the infinite space generated from the hearing is eventually overlapped with a visual or tactile scene, it becomes a space of things in which objects derived from visual or tactile sense are located" (TB, 119). Ōmori's philosophical intuition is that there are two dimensions in the world. One is a world filled with three-dimensional objects, and we can perceive it through sight and touch. And the other is an empty space without boundaries of anything, and we can perceive it through hearing (TB, 118). In other words, we always live in this duality of the world. Therefore, the world we live in is both rich and empty. The two facts are not contradictory but compatible. To put it more simply, given the fabric of infinite space, we can weave finite

meaning onto it.[15] For Ōmori, the emptiness of being, in other words, the theory of the existence of "all is vanity" is not a negative situation, but rather a positive interpretation of the world.

We put meaning in a meaningless world. "All is vanity" is not the last word in Ōmori's philosophy, but rather the philosophical starting point where we can begin to explore the world of human meaning. Now, by discussing it so far, we have obtained a powerful clue to consider the relationship between pragmatic realism and realism of "all is vanity". First, pragmatic realism is a position to express aspects of the world of human meaning. According to Ōmori, human beings created practical meanings and values in the empty world to support their own lives. And the realism of "all is vanity" is the position to express the world before such human meaning was inserted. Here, let us recall the discussion in Ōmori's paper "Taste and Feeling (風情と感情)" (July 1990). There, he combined the impression of music with the infinite space (TB, 246). In other words, he argues that people are trapped by powerful emotions when they encounter the infinity of the world.[16] For him, infinity is nothing but a positive source of the world. In this sense, the realism of "all is vanity" in Ōmori's philosophy is compatible with pragmatic realism. Nor does it claim that "all is nothing". The realism of "all is vanity" is a theory that discusses a possibility of us creating a meaningful world in infinite space. In this sense, it is shown that, in the monism of rising, the realism of "all is vanity" is linked with pragmatic realism. Thus, the interpretation by Nakajima, who interprets the theory of the past in Ōmori's philosophy as a mere ideology, should be rejected.[17]

In this respect, we can comprehensively interpret three points of Ōmori's philosophy: poesis of the past, social language practice, and the realism of "all is vanity". For him, "all is vanity" is not a negative aspect of the absence of the world, but a fertile matrix to which we can project infinite meaning. And by being

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[15] Of course, linguistic thinking activities will be required to create meaningful objects in infinite space. For example, Ōmori discusses this point in his article "The Past and Dream as Linguistic Product (言語的制作としての過去と夢)" (August 1991) and "The Meaning of Being (存在の意味)" (October 1992).

[16] At this point, see Sato Masae, *Live in a Naive Way: The Philosophy of Ōmori Shōzō and the Path of Human Being*, Kanagawa: Seibunsha, 2009, pp.126–127.

[17] Nakajima Yoshimichi, *A living past: the theory of time of Ōmori Shōzō and its critical reading*, Tokyo: Kawade shobō, 2014, pp. 206–207, 221. Similarly, Sato views Ōmori's argument of "all is vanity" as negative; however, as we have discussed in this paper, Ōmori's argument of "all is vanity" develops as an insight into the ontological basis on which humans create meaning. In other words, Ōmori' s argument does not recommend "withdrawal from social life" (p. 244). See Sato, pp. 244-245.

supported by the infinite matrix and the meaning, we can do social language practice. In other words, we can create meaning for being in the world and recognize an object as an "object" (TB, 132–134). To create new meaning is to invent the possibilities of a new world. And the world we live in is a temporal horizon that includes the past and the future. As Ōmori says, the present we live in is the historical present, and it has a depth in time. "Being is already time, and time is already in being" (TB, 20). The time a man lives in is the historical time made by them in order to build a stable view of the world. In this very sense, pragmatic realism and the realism of "all is vanity" are combined. This is because "time is what we create individually for the needs of our lives" (TB, 31). For Ōmori, time is the totality of human history, and it is the stage of daily life where the past and the future can be included. And in this historical time, three aspects of time appear to us: the past, the present, and the future. Thus, according to Ōmori, "time does not flow".

In this sense, we can interpret realism of "all is vanity" as a position that forms a complementary relationship with pragmatic realism in the monism of rising.

4. Poiesis and Mimesis of the Past

In our previous discussions, we have examined the theory of the past in the monism of rising by reinterpreting Ōmori's discussion of "all is vanity". As a result, it became clear that Ōmori was developing the ontology of the past, which was based on the positive infinite. For him, the discussion of poiesis of the past is identical to the idea of human poetic creativity. Therefore, he regarded the act of describing the past as "poetry" (TE, 115).

Here, in order to clarify the characteristics of Ōmori's theory of the past, I try to compare Paul Ricœur's theory of the past with his position. There are three noteworthy similarities between Ōmori and Ricœur. First, both are influenced by Aristotle's concept of poiesis (cf. TE, 115; TN1, 66). Second, both are influenced by Husserl's phenomenological analysis concerning perception and time (cf. TB, 130; TN3, 23–44). The third point is that both sides have developed the argument of the narrative of the past (cf. TE, 53–56; TN1, 155–174). Despite these similarities, the theories of both are moving in opposite directions. To state it in advance, while Ōmori develops the monistic argument of poiesis (production) of the past, Ricœur develops the dualistic argument of mimesis (imitation) of the past. Let us start by examining Ricœur's theory of the past.

In his later year's work *Memory, History, and Forgetting* (2000), Ricœur begins his discussion by criticizing Plato's theory of memory. Plato argues about knowledge and truth without distinguishing memory from imagination in his *Theaetetus* and *Sophist*. But according to Ricœur, memory and imagination must be clearly distinguished, as Aristotle's analysis shows, by the presence of traces. Memory is clearly separated from the general function of the imagination by the feature of aiming at the anteriority of the "mark" (MHF, 12). Furthermore, he characterizes a recall of the past as a pair of "evocation" and "search" (MHF, 26). A recall is the experience of remembering the past. And this experience leads us to the quest to seek the absent past that has already passed. In fact, we ask what has happened in the past. It is an "effort to recall" (MHF, 28), in other words, "laborious recollection" (Ibid.).[18] Recollections of the past acquired in this way, of course, need to be preserved publicly in the form of narratives, not merely images. The vague knowledge sketched by the traces must now be described as the narrative of the past. So how does the narrative of the past (historiography) relate to the past?

To examine this point, we look at Ricœur's *Time and Narrative* (1983–85). There, Ricœur discusses the dialectic of historiography. That is, dialectic between *the same* and *the other* (TN3, 144–156). The former is the position to regard historiography and the past as the same ontologically. It is understood that historian's thought is psychologically identical to the person's thought of the past, and this leads to the oblivion of the otherness in history (TN3, 147). In contrast, the latter views historiography and the past as being different ontologically. It is argued that there will remain a critical gap between historiography and the past that cannot be bridged, thus unilaterally emphasizing the otherness in history. To overcome this dichotomy, Ricœur proposes the third path, *the analogous* (TN3, 151–156), which is created by combining the same and the other positions.[19] In other words, historians describe the past events *as* they were.

Ricœur's theory of the past is clearly dualistic. Historians try to recall the past, which has already been lost, in the indirect way of historiography. Moreover, Ricœur's criticism of Plato is also true of Ōmori. In the monism of rising, depending on the type of rising, everything appears to us. In fact, he makes little distinction between what is absent and what is past.

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[18] In this point, see Jean Greisch, *Paul Ricœur. L'itinérance du sens*, Grenoble: éd. J. Million, coll « Krisis », 2001, pp. 288–292.

[19] See Johann Michel, *Paul Ricœur. Une philosophie de l'agir humain* (Passages), Paris: Cerf, 2006, pp. 192–199.

> If imagination is, in a broad sense, to appear things and events which are not presently perceived, to think perceptually(知覚的に思う) is nothing but imagination.[20]

As is clear from this quote, the expression "things and events which are not presently perceived" includes not only the Eiffel Tower a year ago (the object of memory) but also Pegasus (the object of imagination) that has not the anteriority of the past. These characteristics clearly imply the fact that Ōmori holds the analogous position as Plato, who does not explicitly separate imagination from memory. What is important to Ōmori is not the dualistic position that the narrative of the past imitates the past (mimesis) but the monistic position that the narrative of the past produces the past (poiesis). Here we can see the ontological difference between the two theories of the past.

Furthermore, from another perspective, we can highlight the difference between the two theories of the past. It is a difference in ethical dimensions. On the one hand, for Ricœur, historiography is the act of recovering the figure of the dead who have become victims of history (cf. TN3, 100, 118). It is the practice of ethical responsibility not to repeat similar events, while opposing the oblivion of past victims and fearful events. In this sense, Ricœur's theory of the past presents the ethics of a community that aims at the future and the past (TN3, 216, 227). On the other hand, for Ōmori, historiography is the process of constant creation of the past that enriches the meaning of the world. It is true that these tasks are constrained by the coherence of material evidence and testimony from others (TB, 201); however, the important point here is whether the past connects with the present or not. In other words, it is the connection between the past and the present that is the criterion for the selection of the past. Therefore, Ōmori's theory of the past shows the ethics of a community emphasizes the present (cf. TE, 48–49). The question is not which of the two is correct. What is important here is that Ōmori's view of the world gives us a possible model for thinking about the enigma of the past.

Conclusion

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[20] Ōmori Shōzō, For the approval of fancy (虚想の公認を求めて), in Iida Takashi, Tanji Nobuharu, Noe Keiichi and Noya Shigeki (Eds), *Ōmori Shōzō Selection*, Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2011, p. 334.

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We have discussed the characteristics of Ōmori's theory of the past by reinterpreting his argument about "all is vanity". For Ōmori, the ontological status of the past is the result of linguistic production of the world that makes everyday life possible, and it is always created and changed by human poetic imagination. This feature of Ōmori's theory of the past is a necessary result of his attempt to consistently develop the ontological argument of poiesis of the past within the framework of the monism of rising. This discussion became possible through a consistent interpretation of his theory of "all is vanity", which had not been scrutinized before. We also compared Ōmori's theory of the past with Ricœur. As a result, this paper approaches not only Ōmori's theory of the past but also the general problem of the ontological status of the past. In this sense, this paper would have contributed not just to the research for Ōmori's philosophy but   to the problem of the ontological status of the past.

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