

## “Will” and “*Isbi*”: Explanation of Action in Cross-Cultural Perspectives<sup>1</sup>

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It can be regarded as a fact of English usage that the noun “will” does not have a plural form when used in reference to the decision-making faculty of an individual. Rogers Albritton puts it: “One does not have *wills*.” However, the great majority of those who speak Japanese as their mother tongue think a person’s *isbi* (one’s will) can be multiplied—one can have plural *isbi* (wills). Where a person’s *isbi* (will) is multiplied, a difficulty appears: how does one bridge the gap between valuing and doing? According to Yamazaki Masakazu, every time a person performs an action, there is a hidden, invisible scenario buried in the circumstances around him or her. The action in the scene is a collaborative product of an agent and circumstances. It is not the inner *isbi* (will) but the total situation in and out of the agent that gives rise to the action.

An individual’s will is singular by definition in the Western line of thought. If the singular will, the faculty of decision making, should be established, there appears another difficulty: how can we explain the annoying weakness of the will? This problem is essentially the same as the one encountered when we try to explain the procedure of coming to a final decision through the consideration of so many desires and beliefs; that is, how does one bridge the potential gap between valuing and doing? When giving up the folk-psychology of the singularity of the will, or the folk-metaphysics of the individual, we may clearly see that a person may have diverse rational desires and that some circumstantial element determines which of the desires is to be brought into reality. In my opinion, experimental philosophers are required to focus on such circumstantial conditions of humanity.

### 1. The problem: “will” and “*isbi*”

In this paper, I will talk about the concepts of “will” and its corresponding Japanese word, “*isbi*”. I am going to make a comparison between two types of folk-psychology of human agency. “Will” and “*isbi*” have something common in their meaning. Both refer to the faculty of decision making. The power of the will (the will power) drives a person to do something. *Isbi* can be taken to do the same. However, what I am going to point out is not the similarity of their meanings but the difference.

“Will”, as a noun, can be translated into several Japanese words; for example, “*isbi*” is one of them. “*Ito*” is another. Maybe, “*negai*” is preferred in some cases. In most of the English-Japanese dictionaries, “*isbi*” comes up as the first word that stands for “will (as a noun)” in

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1 I read this paper and gave a poster session of it at the International Conference: How and Why Economists and Philosophers Do Experiments: Dialogue between Experimental Economics and Experimental Philosophy, which took place at Kyoto Sangyo University, Japan, on 27–28 March, 2010.

Japanese. “*Ito*” is many dictionary editors’ first choice for translating “intention” into Japanese, and “*negai*” is an equivalent for “wish”. I feel there is something common in the meanings of these English words; “will”, “intention”, and “wish”. It seems to me that the common ingredient is a desire to turn an idea in one’s mind into reality in the actual world. So, you may have the will to work hard, an intention to do your best, and wish to be a great scholar. All of these are, very roughly speaking, different types of desires.

There is, however, an interesting difference between them. You may have wishes, intentions, but no one can have wills. It sounds odd if you say: “I have several wills”, or “they ignored my wills.” However, you can say “my intentions”, “your intentions”, etc.; for example, “I frequently form my intentions in the light of my expectations about your intentions and actions, including expectations about how my intentions will influence yours. (Bratman 1999, 124)” This is a complicated situation of human agency but there is nothing grammatically wrong with the philosophical locutions of “my intentions” and “your intentions”. Similarly, it is not unusual for us to have wishes, even when they are inconsistent; you may have both a wish to have a piece of cake and another to eat it. “Wish” and “intention” have a common plural but “will” does not, when you use them to express your desire to do something.

When speaking in Japanese, people do not need to be careful regarding the difference between the singular and plural forms of a noun. This is because almost all of the common Japanese nouns take the same form for singular and plural usage. For example, you may make use of “*ito*” as standing for both an intention and intentions. “*Negai*” means both a wish as well as wishes. The Japanese language does not have definite and indefinite articles either, so “*ito*” may mean an intention, the intention, intentions and the intentions. You can discern the singular-plural difference among usages, if any, from the context. All in all, you do not worry about the singular and plural form of a noun when speaking Japanese. “*Ishi*” means, then, both a will and wills. Those who speak English as their first language may feel that it might convey the wrong meaning. If “*ishi*” is the Japanese counterpart of “will”, then it must be able to mean the concept of the will, the one and only decision making faculty of a person and this cannot be plural. However, notwithstanding the English usage of “will”, “*ishi*” does mean both a will as well as the wills of an individual. It is something of which an exact counterpart word may not be found in English. This is the problem I will address in my talk.

How can a person’s *ishi* (will) be plural? If the decision made by *ishi* (the will) is made plural, how can the multiple possibilities of behavior result in the singular action of the person? At a given space-time point, a person can make only one bodily movement, which should presuppose a singular decision of making the very movement. Then plurality of *ishi* (will) calls for some explanation. The problem that I am going to tackle is to make clear the scheme of action explanation which is observed in the Japanese-speaking world. It is somehow different from what is observed in the English-speaking world. I want to make their differences explicit in terms of the incongruity between “will” and “*ishi*”. Before getting into the difference of the explanatory schemes, I have to demonstrate the incongruity itself. First, I will give you evidence of the fact that “will” does not have a plural form when used as referring to the decision making faculty. Second, I will establish by my own survey the fact that the Japanese people take it for granted that a person has multiple “*ishi* (wills)” at one and the same time.

## 2. The singularity of the will

It is a simple, grammatical fact that “will” does not have a plural form as a name for the decision making faculty of a person. Unfortunately, none of my English teachers have ever taught it to me. Japanese people who have learned English as a second language cannot be aware of it, simply because it is beyond their grammatical expectations. People who speak English as their mother tongue take it so much for granted that they seldom speak about it. They know it and never intend to conceal it. But do not talk about it either. It is kept in unintended secrecy.

It was in the fall semester at Princeton University in 1992 when I took notice of this secret for the first time. I was there as a visiting scholar. I attended Professor Harry Frankfurt’s seminar on moral philosophy. I had to read one or two papers for every session. One day I came across a strange assertion in one of the reading assignments. It said: “one doesn’t have wills”. This sentence appeared in a paper written by Rogers Albritton, as the Presidential Address delivered before the Fifty-ninth Annual Pacific Division Meeting of the American Philosophical Association in San Francisco, California, March 22, 1985. Briefly, it was an official, scholarly speech. It can be regarded as one of the reliable resources from which I can take the evidence for the usages of philosophical English. Its title was ‘Freedom of Will and Freedom of Action’. Here I quote the relevant part of the text.

“An annoying ambiguity of the noun “will” must be dealt with, however summarily. Consider: “She went to work with a will” (what will? well, a will to please, or to succeed, or the like); or, “He has a fierce will to live”; or the cartoon in the *New Yorker* of a televised message card reading “Please stand by. We have temporarily lost the will to continue.” In these contexts “will” is a noun like “wish,” though for some reason it has no such common plural as in “They ignored my wishes.” (One doesn’t have wills. I can’t think why not.) (Albritton 1985 [Watson (ed.) 2003], 418)”

I could grasp the meaning of all of the exemplar sentences. Actually, it took just a little while for me to realize the connotations of the example of the *New Yorker* cartoon. I understood its meaning when I imagined a TV screen which suggested that they were really tired of continuing the stupid show. Sure, that’s funny. I did not understand, however, that “they ignored my wishes” is a piece of correct English though “they ignored my wills” was not. Moreover, I wondered why one could not have wills. I was thinking in Japanese, then (and now, of course). I was not convinced that I could not have multiple “*isbi* (wills)”. Then, at Prof. Harry Frankfurt’s next seminar, I asked him why one did not have wills. I said to him that my linguistic intuition told me the contrary. Harry seemed to be somehow perplexed. So, I went on to tell him that I did not feel the sentence, “They ignored my wills” sounded odd. I added a somewhat similar instance in which I had showed my paper to my English tutor for correction. She pointed out a few grammatical errors in my paper. One of them was the sentence: “I make up my will.” I wrote it instead of “I make up my mind” in order to emphasize the firmness of the resolution. She said to me that “‘To make up one’s will’ doesn’t make sense. It isn’t correct English.” (I cannot recollect now what she said about the reason why it did not make sense.)

Harry listened to me and said: “Your friend is right”, and he realized the point of my question. He still seemed to be a little perplexed but, somehow, became interested this time. In a short while he gave me an explanation. As far as I remember now, his explanation went something like this:

“This is not a philosophical explanation but something else, maybe a psychological or anthropological one. In English, a king might say: “Hang him! It’s my will.” “Will” can be used in such a sentence as this but it does not seem to me [sc. Harry] a common usage. In general, the will is understood as a faculty, the faculty of decision making, not as the decision made by it. An individual was born with the faculty. It is this faculty that continually makes decision in every moment of one’s life in this world. A will as the decision made at a given moment can be regarded as a temporal cross section of the lifelong process of making judgments.”

This is not an exact report of what Harry said—I can tell you only its points as many of the finer details have escaped me. But at least some details remain in my memory. I am sure that he said that his explanation was not a philosophical one strictly. He used the example of a king’s order: “Hang him! It’s my will.” It was very impressive. I am also certain that he pointed out that the will is a faculty. This is the most important point. Another professor was there at the seminar, Professor Roger Woolhouse, York University, England. He was then a visiting professor, giving lectures at Princeton. Roger and Harry talked about the problem. The latter part of the above remark came out of their discussion; that is, an individual can be defined, in a sense, as one and the same will. No one in the seminar was opposed to this argument; so, I took it as one of the habits at the heart of the English-speaking world. Besides, I could easily make sense of the sentence: “one does not have wills”. I cannot have several wills because I cannot have multiple lives. It’s simple and evident.

I was, then, vaguely aware of the fact that there should be a difference in meaning between the English term “will” and its Japanese counterpart “*ishi*”. I might have, however, an idiosyncratic understanding. Perhaps my reasoning was misdirected when I felt I could have multiple “*ishi* (wills)”. I should not universalize it too hastily. I hoped to make clear whether or not my intuition about the usage of “*ishi*” could be something common to all the people of the Japanese-speaking world. After I returned to Japan, I designed and administered a questionnaire.

I am going to talk about this questionnaire. However, before moving on to it, I would like to add two examples in French and Portuguese. When I returned to Japan, I met several international students in my classes. One of them came from France. She was studying Japanese philosophy, then. I asked her about the French word, “*volonté*”, and, specifically, whether one has multiple *volontés* or not. She replied that one has basically only one *volonté* in that context. In another class I had an international student who came from Brazil. She was a Japanese-Brazilian studying linguistics. She was very fluent and I was able to talk to her in Japanese. First, I asked her what word she would choose when she translated the Japanese word, “*ishi*”, into Portuguese. She answered: “*força de vontade*’ is the word”. Next, I asked her whether or not it was possible for a person to have multiple “*força de vontade*”. She replied

that it wasn't possible. Thinking for a short while, she added in Japanese: “But I think it's possible (「でも私はできると思う Demo watashiwa dekiruto omou」).” When she thought about the usage of Portuguese, she clearly saw that a person could have only one ‘força de vontade’. Nevertheless, it seemed to me, when talking in Japanese, she felt that there could be multiple *isbi* (wills) in a person at the same moment. Since then, I have thought that, generally speaking, when using the modern European languages an individual can have only one will, or its counterpart in each language. This is just a guess and I need more evidence to be certain of this. Now, I am going to explain the questionnaire that I produced to establish my point, the multiplicity of *isbi* (wills).

### 3. The multiplicity of *isbi* (wills): the report of a philosophical questionnaire

I made a simple questionnaire which contains four questions. The first was a yes/no question as follows: *Do you think Japan is a modern society, or not?* The second was an alternative choice question: *Which tradition do you think Japan belongs to, the Eastern or the Western?* The alternatives were; (1) *Japan, if anything, belongs to the Eastern tradition;* (2) *Japan, if anything, belongs to the Western tradition.* The third was another alternative choice question as follows: *Think about the word “individualism”. Which of the two evaluations below, (1) or (2), do you think best fits your feel of the word? Choose one of them. (1) Individualism is something good. (2) Individualism is something bad.* The fourth was one more alternative choice question as follows: *Think about the word “isbi”. Which of the two assertions below, (1) or (2), do you think fits to your feel of the word? Choose one of them. (1) A person may have multiple isbi at a single instance in time. (2) A person can have only one isbi at a single instance in time.*

I administered this questionnaire seven times over a span of twelve years. All the subjects of this series of surveys were the students of my undergraduate courses. The subjects amounted to 552 students in total. The results of each question are given below.

The first: Yes, Japan is a modern society. 89% (489/552)  
No, Japan is not a modern society. 11% (63/552)

The second: (1) Japan, if anything, belongs to the Eastern tradition. 74% (357/481)<sup>2</sup>  
(2) Japan, if anything, belongs to the Western tradition. 26% (124/481)

The third: (1) Individualism is something good. 65% (359/552)  
(2) Individualism is something bad. 35% (193/552)

The fourth: (1) A person can have multiple *isbi* (wills) at a single instance in time.  
86% (476/551)<sup>3</sup>

2 Not 552 but 481 were the total samples with regard to the second question since it was replaced by another question in the second survey. The latter question was to ask subjects to make a Japanese sentence which contains the word “Ai (love).” I found no interesting responses to this so I reinstated the former question in the later surveys.

3 One respondent of the seventh survey did not choose either of the two alternatives and wrote on the question answer sheet that it depended upon the definition of the term “*isbi*”. So, the total samples were 551.

- (2) A person can have only one *ishi* (wills) at a single instance in time. 14% (75/551)

Before going a discussion about the results, I will give you some details of my surveys. As mentioned above, I administered the questionnaire seven times. The first survey was carried out on April 10th, 1996. The second, on October 1st, 1997; the third, on April 21st, 1998; the fourth, October 7th, 1998; the fifth, April 12th, 2007; the sixth, April 17th, 2009; the seventh, October 22nd, 2009.

All the subjects of this series of surveys were from one of two Universities, Nagoya University and Nanzan University. Both are good Universities in Japan and the students there have a good command of Japanese. I instated at least a one year interval between each survey at each University. No student participated in more than one survey.

As indicated in the dates of surveys, I carried them out during the first sessions of my classes. In Japan, Spring/Summer semester begins in April, and the Fall/Winter semester begins in October. At the beginning of each of the first sessions, I told the students that I would administer a questionnaire with purely research objectives (that is, it would have nothing to do with the grade for the class) and delivered the response sheets. At the top of the sheet I put four notices so that I did not have to offer additional instructions after handing them out. The notices were the following: (1) *This questionnaire has nothing to do with your grade for the class.* (2) *Please fill out the sheet without pondering over the question too deeply.* (3) *None of the questions have a correct answer.* (4) *You are requested to choose either of the alternatives; please don't leave any questions unanswered.* Next, I waited quietly for the sheets to be filled out. In ten minutes or so, I collected them and then gave the students a briefing regarding the questionnaire.

The subjects totaled to 552 young adults. They consisted of 380 students in the eighteen- and nineteen-year-old range, 166 from twenty- to twenty four-year-old range, and only 6 were over twenty five years old. I had only three or four international students whose first language was not Japanese. I recorded the sex ratio of the subjects on the earlier four occasions. Sixty percent of them were female and forty percent were male. As far as I can recollect now, the sex ratio of the total subjects was not quite different from this; namely, the ratio of female students was only slightly higher than the ratio of male students.

## 4. Discussion

### 4.1 About the first three questions

Of the four questions listed above, my discussion will mainly focus on the fourth one, the question about the multiplicity of “*ishi* (wills)”. However, I am going to give you a brief account of the other three, focusing on their objectives and the significance of the results.

The first question is linked to the second. The first was about the socio-historical identification of the present Japanese society. The second was about the historical identity of Japan. As indicated above, 89% of the subjects thought that Japan was a modern society, and 74% thought that Japan belonged to the Eastern tradition. Simple arithmetic tells us that at least 63% of the subjects thought that Japan was modern but traditionally Eastern. This result

may not appear very interesting. I was sure before the first survey that the majority would consider Japan to be a modern but Eastern society.

The objective of these two questions was not to probe what my students should think about the present Japan and its historical identity. Without any such research I felt that I was able to guess their opinion and the results supported my previous feelings. Then, what was the objective? I had in my mind an educational intent. It was to let my students realize that they themselves had a conceptually awkward situation in their own mind. The word “modern” is opposed to *both* “medieval” or “ancient” *and* “traditional”. Its meaning has at least two layers. One of them simply refers to the temporal order of historical periods. The other refers to the life styles and social formations peculiar to the modern age. In the former sense, “modern” is to be compared to “medieval” or “ancient”. In the latter sense, it is to be contrasted with “traditional.” Usually and importantly, the life styles and social formations peculiar to the Eastern societies are often taken to be not *modern* but *traditional*. Roughly speaking, the *Eastern* thing means a *traditional* thing, not a modern thing. Then, the majority of my surveys should have incited some feelings of awkwardness in the students regarding their own answers. Their responses were made up of the conjunction of “modern” and “Eastern” in spite of the fact that these two would not easily make up a seamless whole. But they did not seem to feel it.

After I collected the sheets, I gave my students a question; “what do you think is the antonym of ‘modern?’” I had a few answers, all of which were concerned the temporal order, for example, “medieval”, “ancient”, “post-modern” and the like. I did not have any answer that contrasted “modern” and “traditional”.

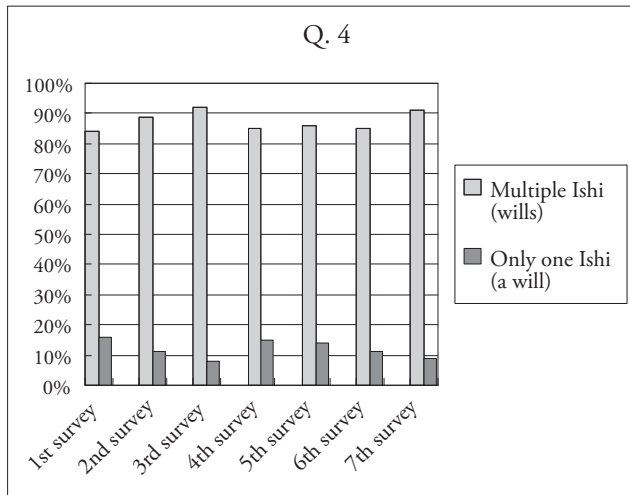
My students did not seem to be aware of the fact that “modern” means “*not traditional*” and “*not Eastern*”. It seemed to me that they felt a bit of uneasiness, or rather anger, when I told them that the Eastern thing could not mean “the modern”. They knew somewhat of the fact that Japan had been one of the Eastern, traditional societies and had modernized herself since the late nineteenth century. It is a plain fact in history. In the process of modernization, Japan has thrown away many traditional things, such as the agricultural economy, the hierarchical social formation, the feudalistic laws and legal institutes, the systems of knowledge and education in the Chinese paradigm, and many other customs and institutions. They *did* know of this process to some extent but they were not likely to conceive it as something that contained conflicts and clashes. They might take it as if it were a seamless whole without any opposition in it. They might have said to me: “Today’s Japan is one of the modern societies and also belongs to more or less the Eastern tradition. And, so what? What’s wrong with that?” I remarked to them that what was wrong was their negligence of the conceptual clashes that might lie beneath the calm surfaces of everyday life in Japan. I made use of such a remark for an introduction to my classes in Western philosophy or ethics.

Next, the third question was to ask the respondents to give a spontaneous estimation of the word, “individualism”. I just wanted to know how they felt about it because individualism was one of the anathemas in the early modern Japan together with socialism, communism, and liberalism. 65 percent of them [my students] felt that individualism was something good. It can be safely said that the antagonistic discourses to it, some of which are seen even in the

contemporary Japan, do not have much influence on the younger generations of today.

#### 4.2 About the fourth question

The responses to the fourth question revealed that 86 percent of my subjects thought that a person could have multiple “*ishi* (wills)” at a single instance in time. As to the distribution of the responses of each survey, see below.



These results were not surprising for me simply because I had the same opinion, as I described above. It seems reasonable to say that the great majority of those who speak Japanese as their mother tongue think a person’s *ishi* (one’s will) can be multiplied. However, we need to take notice of the fact that a non-negligible minority, 14 percent, of the Japanese speaking people take it to be the case that a person could have only one *ishi* (the will) at one and the same time. I do not think they had a wrong idea. As I have mentioned above, almost all of the common Japanese nouns take the same form for singular and plural usage. It depends on the context whether *ishi* is singular or plural. The minority of my subjects imagined a context in which *ishi* must be singular. We have to conclude, therefore, that *ishi* (the will of a person) is quite often plural but at times singular. I am confident as a native speaker of Japanese that the meaning of “*ishi*” covers the semantic dimension from various rational (not fanciful) desires to a firm resolution. Judging from the distribution of the responses, “*ishi*” means rational desires more often than a firm resolution.

Another question inevitably comes up here. What psychological apparatus makes a resolution out of various desires? In English, this is easy to answer. It is *the will* that makes decisions. In Japanese we cannot say simply that it is *ishi* because it signifies a large mental dimension from rational desires to a resolution. I have a lot of rational desires but I cannot but select only one of them when making an action. What makes this selection or decision? The Japanese language has no word other than “*ishi*” that is appropriate for referring to the faculty of decision making. So, we may say that it is *ishi in the sense of a firm resolution* that makes



decisions. But then we have to answer a further question, namely, what divides the *ishi* as a firm resolution from those *ishi* as various rational desires. This is essentially the same question as the previous one. What is the psychological apparatus that produces a firm resolution?

As far as I know, there is no commonly agreed answer to this question in Japanese philosophical literature. Most of the Japanese philosophers feel no urgent need for being clear about the difference between plural *ishi* (rational desires) and a singular *ishi* (a resolution) in giving an explanation of an action. Based on my personal experience, I do not believe that they know the English grammatical fact that one does not have wills. This is unfamiliar to them because they need not be clear about whether they take *ishi* (will) as singular or plural when speaking in Japanese. They can make an unconscious transfer between singular and plural usages of *ishi* (will) in an action explanation. For example, I can utter a sentence in Japanese like this: “I had various *ishi* (wills) and at last I did it on account of my *ishi* (will). 「いろいろ意志はありましたが、結局こうしたのは私の意志です。」” The former occurrence of “*ishi*” is supposedly plural and the latter apparently singular. Something that produces the singular *ishi* must have come in between the former and the latter. What is it?

Yamazaki Masakazu, Japanese philosopher, dramatist, and literary critic, offers us a very interesting description of *ishi* (the will) in Japanese folk-psychology. He says:

It may be the task for the human free will (*jiyu ishi*) to aspire to do something and to think it ought to be done. It is obvious enough, however, that having a will (*ishi*) in this sense is quite a different thing from bringing it into practice. We have been longing to do something for many years and one day, all of a sudden, we find ourselves being motivated to bring it into practice, or rather we are introduced into its practice. No one can choose when to have this happy moment of conversion from idleness to activity. The phrase, “we are introduced into its practice” implies, ironically, that it is in virtue of something other than ourselves that we come to have an active posture of doing things willfully. (Yamazaki 1988, 96–7)<sup>4</sup>

Yamazaki here tells us clearly that your *ishi* (will) does not drive you to do the thing which you think ought to be done. He thinks that there is a gap between valuing and doing and that *ishi* (will) cannot bridge this gap. In this sense, human *ishi* (will) is weak by definition. You need something that links your valuing to your doing. He says that it is the rhythm of the universe. He puts it this way:

We are motivated by the rhythm [sc. the rhythms of the physical, social and psychological world] to make actions before we have a will (*ishi*) to act. Prior to being a self or an individual soul, we live a life as a unit of the rhythm. Indeed, the self is an individual in so far as a unit of the rhythm is indivisible. The self is nothing more than the unit.

4 「あることをやりたいと思い、あるいは、やらなければと考へるのが人間の自由意志だとすれば、あまりにも自明なのは、それと、現実「やる気になる」こととはまったく別次元の問題だ、といふことであらう。われわれは多年にわたってあることをやりたいと考へながら、じっさいには、ある日、突然にやる気になってそれを実行に移すのであり、この幸福な一瞬については、人間はその到来を選びとることも意図することもできない。日本語の「やる気になる」という表現が巧みに示すやうに、われわれは行動の能動的で主体的な姿勢のなかへ、皮肉にも、何ものかによって受動的につれこまれるのである。(山崎正和, 1988, 96–97)」

We remind ourselves of this fact every time when we play an act [sc. do something]. (Yamazaki 1988, 273)<sup>5</sup>

This may sound like a mystic's words. Yamazaki appears here as if he would say that a sort of cosmic rhythm drives us to act. He is not a mystic, however. He speaks here as dramatist and talks about human agency in comparison to a play. He says to the effect that every time a person makes an action, there is a hidden, invisible scenario buried in the circumstances around him or her. It incessantly gives the agent various silent prompts regarding how to make a proper action in the scene. It will sound less mystical when we interpret the hidden scenario as a set of recommendations coming from laws of nature, social institutes, and psychological constitutions, though it may still be rather obscure. The action in the scene is meant to be a collaborative product of an agent and circumstances. It is determined not only by the agent's internal power but also by the external powers in the environment. It is not the inner *isbi* (will) but the total situation inner and outer that gives rise to the action. The device that makes the decision to act is the totality of the psychological and sociological factors in and out of the agent. It is not such a simple, independent item as the will of an individual. This is what Yamazaki means to say.

I would like to look at the metaphysics of the will in Western philosophy from the view point of Yamazaki's account of human agency. We will find that Yamazaki's view will offer another way to deal with the difficulties of the will in the Western thought.

As far as I know, in the main stream of Western philosophy, it is the agent's rational will that takes into account all of the prompts from the environment and makes the decision to act. To bridge the gap between valuing and doing is the main task of the rational, free will and nothing else. Valuing *is* doing in so far as the will be in its service. Does there exist such a thing as rational, free will? This is a big problem. Kant puts it: "The problem, properly viewed, is solely this: whether we must admit a power of spontaneously beginning a series of successive things or states (Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A448/B476)." Kant answers: "Yes, we must." A great deal of work has been done in order to answer in the Kantian line of thought. They say that a human being can make a new start of a series of things and states in the world and this is meant to be the essential faculty of the rational, free will. The information from the circumstances is valued rationally and freely; and then the will makes a rational decision to act. The action would not be there if the will does not work.

If there is a gap between valuing and doing, or decision and action, it gives rise to the problem of weakness of the will. In principle there must not be a gap. But in practice there may be. The will is strong enough by its definition to conduct the action so that there need be some explanation where it does not demonstrate the expected strength. The Western philosophy has been haunted by this problem at least since the days of Aristotle. However, this is a problem

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5 「われわれは意志を持つまへに、まづこのリズムによって行動へと動機づけられるのであり、ひとつの自我、ひとつの個人的な精神であるまへに、まずこのリズムの一単位として生きてゐる。といふより、われわれの自我は、リズムの単位が分割不可能〔インデヴァイダブル (ママ)〕であるかぎりにおいて「個人〔インディヴィデュアル〕」なのであり、けっしてそれ以上の存在ではないといふことを、われわれは演技するたびに思い出すのである。(山崎, 1988, 273)」

*only if* it is the will that connects valuing and doing. The troubled problem may be in itself the evidence that the theory of rational, free will might go against the nature of things.

We have some philosophers today in the Western line of thought who are opposed to the doctrine of the will. One of them is Wittgenstein. He puts it: “‘Willing’ is not the name of any behaviour; and so not the name of any voluntary action either. And my use of a wrong expression came from our wanting to think of willing as an immediate non-causal bringing about (Wittgenstein 1953, §613).” And Gilbert Ryle says: “I hope to refute the doctrine that there exists a Faculty, immaterial Organ, or Ministry, corresponding to the theory’s description [i.e. the Trinitarian theory of mind] of the ‘Will’ (Ryle 1949, 63).” At least, then, we can say that there are pros and cons for the notion of will in the Western philosophy now.

Take for another example, Donald Davidson. We can observe in Davidson’s works both pro and con for the notion of will. In his ‘Actions, Reasons, and Causes’ published in 1963, he views human action as causally explicable. He endeavors to make out a case for explaining it in terms of an agent’s desires and beliefs without any recourse to intentions. He says that the word “intention” “is syncategorematic and cannot be taken to refer to any entity, state, disposition or event (Davidson 1980 [1963], 8).” To be syncategorematic means that it does not make sense to use “intention” without being in conjunction with some other term that refers to a real existence. To put it simply, intention as such does not exist in the world. In 1963 Davidson refuses the notion of intention or will.

Fifteen years later, Davidson changes his mind. In his ‘Intending’ published in 1978, he admits that he cannot make a satisfactory explanation of human agency without appealing to the notion of intention or will. Details of this change are too complicated to give its account even briefly here but it is certain that his problem is to find the crucial factor that makes the final decision for a particular action out of many other possibilities of action based on an agent’s various desires and beliefs. He cannot help seeking the factor *inside of* the agent. He finds it to be a kind of judgment and calls it an *all-out judgment*. It is “a judgment that such an action is desirable not only for one or another reason but in the light of all my reasons (Davidson 1980 [1978], 101).” He adds to it; “a judgment like this is not a mere wish. It is an intention. (ibid.)” He admits, therefore, he cannot give a plausible explanation of human agency “without having to use the concept of intention or will (Davidson 1980 [1978], 102).” By and large, Davidson starts his causal explanation of action solely in terms of desires and beliefs without recourse to intentions but, after all, he cannot but rediscover the indispensability of the traditional concept of intention or will.

In our terminology, we can say that the problem that Davidson undertakes to solve is essentially the same as that of how to bridge the gap between valuing and doing. An all-out judgment recommends to us that a thing is desirable to do in light of all the reasons available to us. His causal analysis does not extend itself to the external factors of the agent’s decision making. He takes it for granted that an action should be causally explained solely in terms of the agent’s inner, consciously evaluated reasons. Ultimately, he ends up admitting that the concept of will is indispensable to his theory of action. However, he would not need the concept of will if he could accept the view that an action is a collaborative product of inner and outer factors of an agent. He could say, then, that an agent has so many desires and beliefs

that she may not decide what to do by herself but that she will be introduced by some external cause into the practice of what she might want to consider as reasonable to do.

## 5. Conclusion

I will now give a summary of my talk.

(1) It can be regarded as a simple, grammatical fact in English usage that “will” does not have a plural form in reference to the decision making faculty of a person. One does not have *wills*.

(2) The great majority of those who speak Japanese as their mother tongue think a person’s *isbi* (one’s will) can be multiplied—one can have plural *isbi* (wills). However, a non-negligible minority of the Japanese speaking people take it to be the case that a person can have only one *isbi* (the will) at a given instance. The meaning of “*isbi*” covers the semantic dimension from various rational (not fanciful) desires to a firm resolution. Judging from the distribution of the responses to my questionnaire, “*isbi*” means rational desires more often than a firm resolution.

(3) Where a person’s *isbi* (will) is quite often multiplied, a difficulty appears: how does one bridge the gap between valuing and doing? According to Yamazaki Masakazu, every time a person performs an action, there is a hidden, invisible scenario buried in the circumstances around him or her. This scenario can be reasonably interpreted as a set of recommendations arising from laws of nature, social institutes, and psychological constitutions. The action in the scene is a collaborative product of an agent and circumstances. It is not the inner *isbi* (will) but the total situation in and out of the agent that gives rise to the action.

(4) A person’s will is singular by definition in the Western line of thought. This, however, presents a difficulty: how does one establish the existence of the rational, free will? Even if it is established, there appears another problem: how do we explain the annoying weakness of the will? This problem is essentially the same as the one encountered when we try to explain the procedure of coming to a final decision through the consideration of so many rational desires and beliefs; that is, how does one bridge the potential gap between valuing and doing? Donald Davidson, one of those distinctive philosophers who is somewhat hostile towards the traditional concepts of intention and will, cannot but accept it on the condition that the causal explanation of human agency should be given solely in terms of the agent’s inner, consciously evaluated reasons.

(5) When giving up the folk-psychology of the singularity of the will, or the folk-metaphysics of the individual, we may clearly see that a person may have diverse rational desires and that some circumstantial element determines which of the desires is to be brought into reality. This element may be a physical state of affairs and/or a socio-cultural tradition. In my opinion, experimental philosophers are required to focus on such circumstantial conditions of humanity.

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