

Research Note

An Alternative Perspective —when sociologists face oriental societies—

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Telle est ma conviction: le cadre conceptuel qui est encore le nôtre n'est pas seulement insuffisant ou rudimentaire, il est souvent trompeur, mensonger.

Louis Dumont, *Essais sur l'individualisme*, 1983, p. 17.

Introduction

In this paper I would like to critique some of the approaches adopted by Occidental scholars who have analyzed 'Oriental' societies. I will focus on the underlying assumptions and presuppositions which underlie these approaches. More concretely, I would like to suggest theoretical modifications and particular conceptual devices which appear to be more appropriate in describing and explaining Asian societies in a comparative perspective. In the course of this discussion, I will explain some structural features of the 'exceptional' system of mobilization in Japan, which I believe helps to explain contemporary Japanese society.

Let me first clearly indicate the limits of this paper. Here, I have no intention of examining all of the models hitherto proposed by Western scholars to analyze 'Oriental' societies, Wittfogel's *Oriental Despotism* and Max Weber's interpretation in his comparative study of religions are, for example, ignored. Neither is this a detailed study of some specific models of this sort such as Robert Bellah's *Tokugawa Religions*. Nor will I consider the influence of colonial powers whose policy of 'divide and rule' contributed to the delay of the modernization process in Asian societies through their attempts to subjugate Asians to colonial exploitation. There are, instead, three objectives to this paper: 1) to reconstruct the ideal type model of Western modernization which lies at the basis of Western social scientists' reasoning and approaches; 2) to point out

some 'fallacies' and the lack of appropriateness when this model is applied to Japanese (or Asian) society; and 3) to suggest a still rudimentary but alternative new perspective.

Modernization

Modernization in Western circles refers to a total process of transition from traditional and pre-modern to modern society which frequently has been described in terms of the dichotomous characteristics which best contrast these two types of social forms. It is, in a schematic way, depicted as follows:

	<i>Pre-modern</i>	<i>Modern</i>
Economy	Agriculture	Industry
Living-space	Rural	Urban
Social Role Allocation	Ascription	Performance
Basic Value	Particularism	Universalism
Ideology	Religious	Secular
Social Structure	Segmental	Differentiated

At the same time, the characteristics of modern society are always, although often implicitly, accompanied by the following changes:

- a) individualization: the rise of 'individuals' as a result of the disorganization of the feudal status system.
- b) value-pluralization: the appearance of plural values as guiding principles of the actions of these emancipated individuals as the result of disorganization of a sacred religious authority.
- c) mass-participation: for both 'technical' and 'ideological' reasons, more people participate in such social activities as work, leisure, education, politics and so on, thus leading to a more 'democratic' social setting.

The underlying assumptions are:
a) these structural (as well as ideological) changes

occur in tandem so that a society changes totally;

b) the principal driving force of these changes is 'rationalization,' including the rational calculation of the net balance between 'cost and benefit' and 'means and ends';

c) modern society is 'progressive' because it changes itself to enhance its adaptive capacity due to the incessant innovation of technology; it is 'abundant' because it continues to increase productivity which enables people to indulge in limitless consumption; and it is 'democratic' because more 'informed' people participate in various social activities (hitherto monopolized by the privileged and the powerful) so that they can share a bigger piece of the 'enlarged' pie;

d) these changes are originating from inside of a society and are spontaneous in nature. Among these social changes 'which move a society from 'premodern' to 'modern'), the question of 'politics' (who is the principal agent of change) may be the most controversial as it seems difficult to attain a consensus on what 'political modernization' actually means. This may be due to what is termed the 'cultural uncertainty' of the super-structure. From the point of view of comparative political sociology, however, it is evident that the role of the state (la fonction etatique) is critical in the case of 'late-comer' modernization.

Particular attention must be paid to the role of 'state-power' responding to some kind of national crisis (external as well as internal), and to the nature of the ideology (nationalism) mobilized. If, under such conditions, the role of the state is not adequate to cope with the crisis, it is highly likely that the society would not modernize. Although perhaps not impossible, it is difficult to describe and explain such complicated, global social changes only by means of a simple model (although the scientific endeavor has always sought the simplest formulation to explain 'events'). Therefore, keeping in mind the case of Japanese modernization, we identify two important tasks for us here: 1) causal analysis; and 2) process-analysis. The former is to clarify a group of causes or positive factors which lead to social changes, while the latter is to analyze the competitive and / or cooperative (conflictual and/or harmonious) relations between the different dimensions of the modernization process.

1) Causal analysis

Since the characteristics identified as 'modern' originally appeared in human history in Western Europe, we try to find the 'causes' of this social change, among other things, in the historical realities of West-European modernization. Again, in utilizing an ideal type approach, we can list the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, and the Reformation as preceding and/or concomitant events of modernization. Assuming that social change is the result of an aggregation of actions, conducted by (1) actors and guided by (2) ideologies (in the widest sense of the word), we can analyze modernization by means of clarifying these two items. As is well known, Weber's answer was (1) Protestants and (2) Protestant ethics. Because of the psychological strain caused by Calvinism's idea of predestination, many believers were motivated towards this-worldly economic activities. Almost compulsively, they undertook their secular activities to prove they were the elect. Here, we can observe a thoroughgoing *rationalism* based on 'Wertrationalität' and a perfect *individualism* derived from the idea of individual responsibility, alone, squarely facing the Will of God. At the same time, it reveals a strong '*this-worldliness*' because the Protestant movement ultimately aimed at the religious reconstruction of 'this world.'

2) Process-analysis

The main bearers of this Protestant ideology were merchants and intellectuals. Although their activities (based on the above-mentioned 'values') in various social spheres such as economy, politics and science were not the direct force that established modern European society, they had a great transformative capacity. They served to change society from 'pre-modern' to 'modern,' by destroying the traditional social order of Western Europe. Here, we can find a harmonious relationship among different dimensions of the modernization process. In other words, all the characteristics of modern society (which we listed on the right side of the dichotomous chart) were not only mutually compatible but also mutually reinforcing. Thus, Weber found a radical, thoroughgoing 'Wirtschaftsethik' in puritanical religiosity, which he could not find in any other christian sects and world religions.

It is, then, a logical deduction from this analysis that none except this aspect of Protestantism enjoyed such a strong influence of the 'rationalization' of the world and that there must have existed a direct causal relationship between Protestantism and modern capitalism (modern society). Thus, rationality, much more than a mere 'economic ethic,' became the pivotal power of transformation of the 'whole society.' Of course, Western-European modernization as a historical reality is not fully exhaustible by the Weberian interpretation. There had to have been some kind of a 'favorable' combination of positive factors and conditions, which could be too complex to be analyzed by a simple model. Among other things, a great ideological movement (often called the Renaissance and the Enlightenment) contributed enormously to the formation of the new image of 'Man', though created by God, free to betray his Creator. It was this ideology that placed 'Man', free and rational in his intrinsic nature ('Humanismus'), at the center of the universe. The newly rising commercial and industrial 'bourgeoisie' incarnated these new 'values' within the new social institutions.

Theoretical Questions

Theoretically, we cannot trace back the 'causes' of modernization endlessly. This kind of effort, like peeling a round onion, may turn out to be in vain. Here, therefore, we only look for some 'positive factors' in the preceding social structure (or pre-modern society) which may have contributed to the formation of societies containing most or all of the characteristics of modernity. It is on this level that we can make some comparisons of the modernization process in different regions of the world (between, for example, Western Europe and Japan). Weber made this comparison by focusing on the emergence of very specific 'economic ethics' on the basis of his analysis of a comparative sociology of religion. But what Weber thought to be essential in the process of modernization (*Rationalisierung*) had already penetrated into nearly all of the spheres of social life in Western Europe, forging a new image of Man, Society, and Nature.

Accepting this general model of modernization, the following two assertions may help to explain

the comparability of Japanese modernization with that observed in Western Europe. The first position is to hypothesize that there existed the same factors or conditions in Japan and in Western Europe in the period preceding the appearance of modern society. According to this argument, we deal with such factors as feudalism (Reischauer 1973, Tome 1, 132) (which helped form the sense of individual responsibility and obligation based on contractual social relationship, for example); nationalism (which provided energy and a direction for the 'development' of society); and colonialism. Since Japan had no Christianity, there is no way for the Weberian theses to apply. The second position is to hypothesize that, although not identical, there existed in Japan the functional equivalence of the system of ideology and social institutions which existed in Western Europe. According to this argument, we need to find these ideologies and institutions in pre-modern Japan that played, functionally, the same roles as their counterparts in Europe. Bellah's discovery of 'Ishida-Shingaku' as the functional equivalence to Protestantism is one example of these attempts (Bellah 1957). But it seems to me that neither of these arguments can fully explain the modernization process of Japan. They can only suggest some possible ways of reasoning in comparative studies of socio-cultural changes in different societies. The limitation of these approaches derives primarily from their underlying presuppositions: one is that modernization is equal to westernization and the other is that there is only one way to attain this goal. The 1950s and 1960s was a period in which the modernization process was especially regarded as unilinear and irreversible; that the late-comers simply had to emulate the Western model to become modernized (westernized). But it did not take long before this optimistic (and universalistic) model was to be discarded.

The reason for the shift was simple when we look at historical reality carefully; it is true that 'economic growth' is an universal aspect of modernization and this requires 'incessant technological innovation,' 'efficient management of organizations,' 'capable and loyal labor forces,' and 'substantial and stable market,' etc. But a variety of factors and conditions, mutually competing and cooperating, make these requirements real. It

should be sufficient to refer to the modernization of many socialist countries. In spite of their weakness and vulnerability, the Soviet Union and East Germany have attained a relatively high level of modernization. In a wider and longer perspective, we come to realize that the application of this ideal type Western modernization model to other parts of the world yields more serious theoretical difficulties, which inevitably force us to reconsider the validity of the approach itself.

General Fallacies

In retrospect, we now recognize some 'fallacies' (or ideological biases) in approaches and models of Western social sciences when they were used to explain non-Western societies. Although 'functionalism,' in social and cultural anthropology, was the first scientific attempt to get rid itself of its own ethnocentric biases, it could not completely free itself from the subtle influence of its mother-culture, simply because these biases were formed by the specific character of historical development in Western European and American society, where modern social sciences were born as a part of this development. The application of the Western model to non-Western societies, without any methodological modification, cannot help but lead to the possibility of misunderstanding and false explanation. In the following section, I attempt to deal with three of these fallacies, which, I believe, deserve special attention.

1) The idea of 'progress' (or unilinear evolution)

There is a strong tendency, in modern Western social thought, which presupposes that human beings (or human society or human knowledge) are continuously evolving. This tendency has been labeled progress, or evolution, or development. It is a doctrine which has been dominant from the French Enlightenment and the 'Scottish Enlightenment' in the eighteenth century to modern American 'Instrumental Activism' (Parsons) and the 'Four Modernizations' in the People's Republic of China (the last case including, of course, an undeniable influence of Western social thought through 'Socialism' and 'Marxism'). There are a variety of formulations including this historical process of 'progress': savagery, barbarism and

civilization (Adam Ferguson); the theological, the metaphysical and the positive (August Comte); to mention a few. The different terminologies employed in classical sociology depicting the passage from 'pre-modern' to 'modern' (Gemeinschaft - Gesellschaft by Tönnies, Status - Contract by Maine, solidarité mécanique-solidarité organique by Durkheim, etc.) are widely known. But the idea itself remains ambiguous as its proponents can only say that 'progress' is congenial to the nature of man, leading to prosperity and freedom. In light of this intellectual background, it is clear that Western modernization is regarded as a form of 'progress,' which should be strongly encouraged and highly valued. The twentieth century, which witnessed two disastrous World Wars, however, began to cast doubt on this optimistic notion and to reveal fears about the future of scientific and technological development. In addition, there appeared a pessimism that recognized no progress in the moral and spiritual sphere in human activities.

2) rationalism (or the monistic model)

For Weber, the process of rationalization corresponds to the passage from pre-modern to modern society in Western Europe. This thread runs through all the spheres of human activities, from bureaucracy to music. Of course, modern social sciences, which are a product of this 'Geist' of the time, are, inherently 'rational,' in the sense that they presuppose that i) man, as subject and as observer, is endowed with (absolutely free) reason, and that ii) this reason enables man to understand unequivocally the order or laws of nature (including man himself), and that iii) "reality" is only to be grasped through reason; denying other human capacities of knowing such as intuition, sympathy, etc. Although recent modifications and elaborations of social science methodology are highly appreciated (for instance, the introduction of such concepts as 'probability,' 'dialectic,' 'feed-back,' to mention a few), the core logic is always rigorously Cartesian which misses, wittingly or unwittingly, the 'non-rational' and the 'super-rational.' Western scholars, equipped with this intellectual arsenal, are likely to believe that societies are formed in a rational way so that rational logic is the only way to analyze their structures and functioning. This is the fallacy that

misleads these scholars in the 'jungle' of Asian societies, trying to find 'culture' squarely opposed to and neatly separated from 'nature,' or the 'individual' who is 'independent, autonomous, and thus essentially non-social' (Louis Dumont 1983, 34–35).

3) individualism

Methodological individualism has been widely employed by Western social scientists, particularly those whose social theory is based on the ideology of 'classical liberalism' because it comfortably fits the analytical method of modern science. Just as physicists tried to find the ultimate matter or unit in the material world (atom), sociologists tried to find the same ultimate component element of society, and the latter thought that they succeeded when they found 'individuals' in Western society. With these components they built a society (modern society). How did they put these elements together? 'Contract' was the answer. Not only small and middle-sized social groups (associations) but nation-states, too, could be formed by this new 'social glue.' Contract, of course, presupposes 'equality' and the 'freedom' of those who come into this relationship since they should be free to enter into and dissolve that relationship without any threat to their free will.

It is important to add here that contract as a social institution is only possible when individuals respect and abide by the rules; fulfilling their obligations and assuming their responsibilities. Thus, the contractual social relationship which is, among other things, an amalgamation of individualism, egalitarianism, and liberalism is taken as the typical social phenomenon of modern society. It was Durkheim, however, we remember, who pointed out the importance of the 'non-contractual aspect of contract,' which provides the underlying foundation of contract itself. With respect to modern Japanese society, people often refer to 'groupism' as one of the characteristics of Japanese social relationships; with a high degree of solidarity observed in Japanese factories or business enterprises involving both management and the rank-and-file. On an institutional level, these factories and enterprises are, like their counterparts in the West, organized on a contractual principle. Still some non-contractual elements work so subtly that

they seem to be enjoying a 'communal' integration. It is as if they were an original or basic 'we-group,' where individual members are always ready to sacrifice their interests, although, in return, their interests are to be protected by the group. In such a society, one cannot expect to find 'modern individuals.'

Considerations

In addition to these three 'fallacies' which have been deeply rooted in the social science approaches of Western theorists of Asian societies, a reevaluation of Western methods and approaches has also revealed other, previously undisclosed shortcomings. Let me mention a few of them:

1) probability (or reconsideration of 'cause and effect')

Above all, the idea of probability refutes the existence of 'absolutely necessary causes' which determine the courses of specific historic events. What happened is only one among many objective possibilities that could have happened. The interplay of human choices with objective factors makes the matter more complicated. Moreover, different causes may lead to the same effect and, conversely, the same cause may lead to different effects, depending on the various conditions involved. The idea of 'unintended consequences of an intended action' is, in my view, a corollary of this reasoning.

2) human choice and external situations

Since social change is not a process of 'natural history,' it is critical to take into consideration man's (often the modernizing elite's) intentions together with his ideology and capacity. It is also crucial to take account of various external factors, including the political, economic, social, and cultural, if only because we cannot find, in the case of 'late-comer' modernization, the ideal Western pattern generated from within the social system and characterized by a unilinear process of development.

3) rejecting the Cartesian categories

Looking at different historical experiences, it is evident that all of the characteristics of pre-modern society do not necessarily disappear along with the development of the modernization process.

Rather, some of the pre-modern social and cultural characteristics remain entrenched in some 'modernized' societies (the question of 'tradition' and 'modernity'). Acknowledging this reality, we need to reject any simple dichotomous model, 'pre-modern' vs. 'modern.' In Japan, for example, some more traditional elements not only survived (often incorporated into the modern framework of development), but also positively contributed in the creation of new, continuously expanding, and relatively particularistic social units, such as school cliques, companies and company unions, which often operated and coalesced in a relatively brief period in which universalistic and achievement-oriented criteria prevailed (Eisenstadt 1973, 29). In addition, there is the problem of establishing a national identity, a difficult task for many new modernizing nations, which was resolved in Japan through the manipulation of the traditional Imperial symbols (which were revived in the Meiji Restoration). These symbols served both as forces for and the content of the new national identity.

Alternative Suggestions

To this point, we have examined the question of 'inappropriateness' in Western approaches to Asian societies. These problems are deeply rooted in ideological aspects of modern Western social sciences. Nevertheless, the question still remains unresolved as to why Japan successfully modernized while other Asian societies failed, particularly those which share many cultural elements with Japan. Here, I would like to suggest some of the alternatives to the Western approach to Asian societies, deliberately avoiding any discussion of what causes are positive or negative in their process of modernization. In other words, I now introduce a new perspective to deal with Asiain social structure and cultural reality. As for the differences existing between Japanese society and other Asian societies (though there are many commonly shared social and cultural elements such as 'strong family ties,' or 'communal solidarity,' or 'primitive type of democracy'), I merely point out, here, several characteristics (authentically Japanese) which, as a set, cannot be found in other Asian societies. These are: i) geographical and social isolation, ii) continuity of the Imperial lineage and authority, iii) racial ho-

mogeneity (no substantial immigration to Japan in the past one thousand years), iv) no significant minority groups, v) one standardized language (and maybe a widely shared 'religious' belief).

There are three points to consider in this alternative perspective:

1) soft-structure (or 'loosely-structured society')

Southeast Asian studies scholars once discussed the question of the high rate of divorce in Malay society; higher than that of the notorious American example. One explanation was as follows: in bilateral social systems like the traditional Malay society, daughters continue to be regarded as full members of the original family despite their marriage to men from different families. They are free to return to their 'family of orientation' whenever they want to do so. Making Malay kinship structure ever more complicated is the fact that, instead of the children's father, it is the mother's brothers who hold power and influence over the socialization of the children. Although they are brought up in the social and cultural surroundings of their father's family and community, they also learn many things from their mother and her brothers, whose values and customs, or even language, are sometimes quite different from their father's. Scholars termed this phenomenon 'loosely-structured.' The 'looseness' of Asian societies or Japanese society is widely observed, not only in this type of social relations, but also in the relation between i) man (individual) and society (or group), and ii) man (culture) and nature. This, in my view, derives from the different cultural and intellectual heritage of Occidental and Oriental society. In the former, under the powerful influence of Christianity, people were forced to be a 'conscious self,' with the result that compulsive efforts were encouraged to make one's 'un-conscious' 'conscious' (see the current development of psychoanalysis in the Western world). In addition, Western intellectual development, since the time of the Greeks, has regarded 'ambiguity and contradiction' as wrong, emphasizing the importance of clear-cut categorization which was the basis of logic, mathematics and science. In Asia, on the contrary, the ideal was for the self-ego to make itself *one* with some other existence beyond it, such as nature, community, or Buddha. In other words, the ultimate goal of ego is,

though rationally never understandable, the negation of ego itself. Here, contrary to the Western ideal, the utmost effort had to be made to transform 'conscious' into 'un-conscious.' A commonplace verification of this, for instance, is that in everyday conversation in the Japanese language, we often omit the subject or we do not indicate clearly who really acts as the verb would suggest. It is the (social) context by which we can recognize the agent of action.

There is a related point. I would like to mention the recent trend in mathematics, where efforts are made to formulate 'ambiguity.' It is no accident that we now see the rising popularity of 'fuzzy theory' in statistics, which, no doubt, attempts to deal with ambiguous aspects of natural and social phenomena.

2) dual-structure (or structural dualism)

The phenomenon of the dual-structure is a popular topic when people talk about the Japanese and their psychology. The fact that the Japanese economy incorporate a dual-structure is often cited as retardation (negative) or the secret of 'success' (positive): the big mother company, on the one hand, and the small 'shitauke' companies, on the other. In Japanese psychology, the double standard of 'tatemae' and 'honne' (an official statement and an un-official one) is again a popular topic. It is widely known and sometimes even an experienced fact, particularly among Western businessmen and government representatives who are dealing with their Japanese counterparts, that when they appeal to a contract or some form of 'universal' principles they are told that Japanese society is guided not so much by cold rules as by warm human feeling responding to each situation as it occurs. Yet, if they, at the next opportunity, appeal to this extra-legal tradition by, for example, urging bureaucratic intervention into a trade problem they are likely to hear that such a thing is impossible in democratic Japan which, they should understand, is governed by laws (Karel van Wolferen, 1989, p. 9).

In light of this reality, I would like to develop this discussion more generally to describe the concrete structural aspects of Japanese society and mentality. As is eloquently suggested by the title of a famous classic on Japanese culture, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* by Ruth Benedict,

the Japanese social structure and mentality are characterized by the existence of seemingly mutually contradictory elements. This sort of contradiction can be easily understood when we introduce the concept of dual-structure which includes the surface (or institutional) and the deeper level (or non-institutional). In connection with this concept, two examples will be shown here, one in the social structure and the other in the mental structure: i) the co-existence of a rigidly hierarchical social structure and egalitarianism; although not in terms of social class *per se* (in modern capitalist society), Japanese society is highly 'hierarchical' where 'seniority' (simply being more aged or staying longer in the same institution) is the predominant criterion used to rank people. Even (modern) university students acknowledge their ranking, juniors or seniors, for example, by adapting their language according to whom they address ! This is not just a nominal distinction, as we can see some of the power or authority or prestige elements accompanying these different ranks. At the same time, however, the Japanese hold a universalistic image of man... all destined to die and to become Buddhas. We are all 'human-beings.' The egalitarian treatment of employees in Japanese firms and factories, which sometimes succeeds even in America and Europe, is based primarily on this philosophy. Parental love, too, does not discriminate one child from the other (Familism or Paternalism). To make this egalitarian philosophy more visible, it is a common practice that all the members of a group, from the top to the bottom, wear uniform, with the same color and the same style. It is not unusual in Japan for top management staff to eat lunch in the same factory cafeteria with the workers. ii) co-existence of 'this-worldly vitalism' and the sense of 'impermanence of things'; on the one hand, the Japanese are Epicurean materialists. Millions of people go to Shinto shrines to ask the 'Eight-Million Gods' to provide them with all imaginable forms of happiness on this earth, ranging from longevity to success in university entrance examinations. More generally speaking, as Michel Foucault once commented in connection with 'sexuality,' in the West the cognitive priority led to the accumulation of knowledge and development of *Science*, while in the East the cathectic priority led to the search of

techniques which gave birth to *Arts*.

The Japanese 'cuisine' in another example which demonstrates the epicurean aspect of the Japanese where they appreciate the subtlest taste that this world can provide, still feeling, at the deepest level of their psyches, an uncertainty or transience of things (including, of course, human life). To probe this assumption, one might compare the Japanese attitudes towards America in connection with 'Hiroshima' and 'Nagasaki' and the tenacious search on the part of the Jews for Nazi 'War criminals.' On the dual-structure of Japanese society and psychology; one interpretation is as follows: Japanese society is never 'homogeneous' with regard to its division in terms of social classes, occupations, regions, age-groups and so on. For example, Confucian ethics and Buddhist philosophy were accepted and practiced only by the 'samurai' class, while people in general enjoyed a more hedonistic way of life. Contemporary Japanese embody this dual heritage in one personality. Some scholars argue that despite the superficial appearance of a this-worldly hedonist, the prototype of the Japanese personality is patterned after the way of living of Ryokan (1758-1831, a Zen monk of the SoTo sect. He was a poet and calligrapher) who abandoned all earthly fortune and fame in order to live the simplest of lives among the ordinary people.

3) The theory of 'Ba'

Parallel with the development of quantum theory in physics, some sociologists began to pay attention to the possibility of construction a sociological theory not based on the solid substance such as individuals, or institutions, but on 'Ba' (or context). This should not be regarded as a naive revival of classical German 'Beziehungslehre', because it is to be established as a new perspective of scientific ontology. A famous Japanese mathematician, Dr. Hironaka, commenting on the latest frontier of mathematical theory, said that the mathematics of the 'moon' is over and that we are in the age of a new mathematics of the 'cloud.' To analyze clouds, one must approach them from the surrounding conditions, instead of dealing with them directly. The concept of 'relativity' has been well consolidated in social sciences during the past few decades. Now is the time to introduce the

concept of 'Ba' into our discipline. According to this logic, the entity as existence is nothing but a crystallization or configuration of a part of 'Ba.' Hamaguchi's Kanjinshugi (by which he characterizes Japanese social relationships) is precisely derived from this sort of logic (Hamaguchi 1982). Sharply opposing the so-called 'methodological individualism' which has been long employed even in the study of Japanese society, he proposed the concept of Kanjin (or something between individuals), intending to replace the concept of Kojin (or the individual). The Kanjin is, in my view, analogous to the concept of 'quantum' in modern physics in the sense that both can be said to 'exist' only as an analytical device. It is not the substance itself but something resulting from the relationships between substances. The basic premise here is that the 'Ba' which is composed of 'substances' may take various forms according to the conditions given. It may give birth to an 'individualistic' social structure or a 'non-individualistic' one. Here, it is important to analyze this interaction between these analytical elements, instead of studying each of these separately. Some contemporary trends in sociological methodology such as Phenomenological Sociology contain a primitive form of the "Ba" theory.

Particularistic-Performance

To conclude, I would like to mention some structural features of the 'Japanese mobilization system,' based on the concepts of 'Bun' and 'Wa' (Nakano 1972, 65-76), which might be regarded as the 'secret' of efficiency and solidarity in Japanese social groups. This system works especially well once a collective goal is unanimously sanctioned by the members of a group in such cases as a nation at war or in business enterprises and manufacturing factories. First, let us look very briefly at the concepts of 'Bun' and 'Wa.' In my first article in 1972, I defined these two concepts (together with two other concepts 'Ie' and 'Haji') as the principles employed by the Japanese in their social (collective, group) life. The former was the principle of role-distribution, role-interpretation and role-performance, and the latter, the principle of collective decision-making and implementation. The characteristics of the 'Bun' role systems is that, though

the system is highly hierarchical (unequal), there exists a strong consciousness of 'one-ness of being' among the members. 'Bun' (roughly corresponding to the concept of 'social role') literally means a 'part' (to divide or to be divided). This meaning is only possible on the basis of the presumed existence of a 'whole' and that there is a 'microcosm' is the 'Bun' into which the utmost energy of individual members of the group could be poured without disorganizing the system as a whole. Here, the 'microcosm' is conceived as a self-completed social space in which the individual can attain perfect self-realization. In other words, whatever one's occupation may be, those who have attained the top in their professional field are to be treated equally as 'virtuoso' in each 'sono michi' (in that field).

On the other hand, the 'Wa' which is instrumentally a mechanism of collective decision-making, is rather an emotional (sentimental) state of group life, the maintenance of which could itself easily become the purpose of the collectivity. This corresponds to the social climate of a group composed of 'weak,' reserved or less aggressive individual members, where the members feel comfortable seeing that they all are 'walking' in the same direction. 'Fuwa-Radio' or 'blind conformism' is frequently pointed out as a shortcoming of this social climate, where one cannot find the true source of responsibility for a specific group decision. But I would suggest that, in such a 'community-like' group such as an 'le-group,' to keep harmonious relationships among its members is important not only from a moral point of view, but is also emotionally desirable. The feeling of 'we-ness' is thus consolidated, for example, as we see, in the case of the traditional social sanction, 'mura-hachibu,' where the group expels those who disturb the 'Wa,' psychologically, socially, and physically.

Based on these two principles, Japanese groups and society have at least the following two structural features, which have contributed and continue to contribute to the formation of the 'particularistic-performance' orientation: one is the specific pattern of recruitment of the 'talented' and the other is the 'all-participation system.' This is a point that deserves consideration. It comes, not from Japanese society but from a French experience: a report of a visit to the *Akai* factory of Honfleur with 196

employees;

The reporter, Elisabeth Schemla writes:

"The work-setting and the comfort of employees are crucial." said Mr. Correa, the director.... His office is separated from the huge factory only by a glass screen. "I see what they are doing and they see what I am doing." The factory runs in an atmosphere full of human sentiment. One employee said, "Everything is carried out through dialogue and discussion. We care not only about work-related problems but also personal ones. Everybody's opinion engineers and managers, cooperate to find solutions." The other employee said, "*Here, we are human beings.* That makes our worksetting something very special!" (Schemla, 1984, 26-28) (translated and with emphasis added by the author)

This provides a clear illustration of what I refer to as the 'Ningen-kyo' system of philosophy, roughly to be translated as the 'sect of the human-being' (Nakano 1986). I cannot provide a detailed explanation of this extremely important feature of Japanese society in this paper beyond this example.

Concluding Remarks

Just as it is inappropriate to use a fine net to catch a whale, it is stupid to use a harpoon for a small fish. There should, then, be a proper correspondence between the subject-matter of analysis and the method. To this point, in this paper, I have indicated some reasons for the 'inappropriateness' of 'Western' approaches to 'Eastern' societies, suggesting some alternative perspectives to deal with Asian social and cultural structures. As far as Japanese society is concerned, it is sometimes argued that one very important point is to understand that Japanese society is based on the principle of 'mother-orientedness' (bosei-genri). Thus, it is most misleading to try to understand this society by applying the analytical or explanatory framework derived from the experiences of Western societies, where the basic principle is 'father-orientedness' (fusei-genri).

The principle of 'bosei' is tolerance and peace

while that of 'fusei' is severity and confrontation. It is not an accident that Christianity has never become popular in Japan where many Japanese believe and practice different kinds of 'religion' without noting the clear distinction among them; for example, Shintoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. According to the Viennese psychiatrist who was an early associate of Sigmund Freud, Alfred Adler (1870-1937), there is an unconscious belief that maleness is superior to femaleness: the conception of man as above and female as below (above and below), that is, femininity is a position of inferiority and masculinity is to be strived for as a goal of superiority. But this belief has been totally alien to the ordinary Japanese (except the samurai class) who were the true heirs of the 'bosei' tradition of Amaterasu-Oumikami, the mythological Sun-Goddess of Japan who founded this nation. The basic problem is, however, whether or not this kind of meta-theoretical orientation can be incorporated into genuine scientific formulation since contemporary science itself was born out of the Cartesian logic of modern Europe. My proposed 'alternative' perspective in this paper is still a preliminary step toward this enormous enterprise.

* This article is a revised version of the paper presented in the Theory Section entitled 'A Trans-Pacific Theory Conference on Modernity and Development' on the occasion of the ASA annual meeting, New York, August 31, 1986.

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