

## **W. Schluchter's Reconstruction of the Weberian Research Program: Weber-Reception in the Context of Contemporary Sociological Theory (2)**

Noriyuki TANAKA

This paper examines how Wolfgang Schluchter, in his later works culminating in *Grundlegungen der Soziologie* (2006/07), tackled the problems unsolved in his early work, *Die Entwicklung des okzidentalen Rationalismus* (1979): how to locate appropriately the Weberian research program among the competing sociological approaches and how to reconstruct the Weberian approach as a research program encompassing both micro- and macro-sociology. It also clarifies how his relationship with the major theoretical frames of reference has changed in the course of the development of his Weber-interpretation.

As for the reconstruction of Weberian theory of societal development, Schluchter, while recognizing a strained coexistence of evolutionary and comparative approaches in Weber, found a model of "stages with alternatives" in Weber's comparative historical sociology, whereas in his earlier writings an emphasis was clearly placed on the evolutionary approach.

In the second half of the 1990s, Schluchter came to present Weberian research program as the one integrating theories of action, order, and culture. Increasingly convinced of the incompatibility between action theory and system theory, he ceased to borrow conceptual schemes from Luhmann, Habermas and the later Parsons, and introduced a "multi-level model" originating from the rational choice theory as a basic framework for the reconstruction of Weberian research program.

From the outset Schluchter does not, as R. Münch claimed, aim at synthesizing different sociological approaches. What he consistently engages himself in is to demonstrate the actual effectivity of Weberian sociology by clarifying its differences from major contemporary sociological theories, which were also used for digging out its potentiality.

## **The Image Studies of the AI Era: The Limitation and the Possibility**

Kichan SONG

Artificial intelligence (“AI”) plays an important role in the video industry such as film production and graphics. Nevertheless, there is growing anxiety that AI will eventually replace human contributions to visual fields. Clearly, AI does work more quickly, accurately, and efficiently than humans. In those respects, humans cannot compete with AI doing the same work. Such concerns raise an important question: If AI is increasingly relied upon to create films, computer graphics, pictures, paintings, and even photographs, can humans still learn, research, and ultimately continue to contribute to the development of the video industry and the study of images? In other words, will AI ultimately force humans completely out of the video industry? This paper aims to answer these questions. Here, I argue here that a human component is still critical to producing good quality video pieces, as there are still aspects that AI may not be able to grasp accurately such as the deep layer of human desire. As such, studies from fields like anthropology can still contribute tremendously to film production and graphics and should be used in conjunction with AI to improve even better quality works.

## Queer Theory and Transgender People: On Sexual Differences

Toshiki TATAI

This article examines the limitation of Queer Theory, which is used in discussing transgender persons. Queer Theory has excellent methodology derived from the work of leading scholar M. Foucault. Foucault calls this methodology “genealogy”. Queer Theory is derived from this genealogy.

Genealogy explains the origins of subjectivity or identity. Specifically, the discourse creates the subject and subjectivity is generated in the process of building the subject. Applying this model to transgender identity, medical discourse was the creative force for such identity.

But, there is a problem with this model. It ignores the transgender “body”: that is, the biological body. This biological body has physiological phenomena. Transgender persons experience the physiological phenomena as everyday difficulties. These factors arise out of the genealogy. If they are ignored, Queer Theory makes it difficult to analyze transgender people’s everyday difficulties.

## **Who Saved Nara Park?: Debate on Closure of Parkland from 1939 through 1951**

Naoki DOUMOTO

The purpose of this paper is to examine the conflict that arose when ownership of the historic cultural property called Nara Park was changed from Nara Prefecture to a shrine and temple company. There was a dispute as to which party should be responsible for preservation of the distinctive ancient scenery. If it were to be managed by Nara Prefecture, it could be maintained as a park. However, if the shrine/temple company managed it, it would become private property, making it impossible for the property to be a freely accessible park.

In order for privately owned land to be opened to the public, its manager must adopt a public position.

Traditionally, acceptance of the concept of public management of such places for the purposes of modernization had become widespread. On the other hand, shrine and temple companies saw public management as unknown knowledge. They focused on their daily religious practices in the process of seeking the return and transfer of land. That was known knowledge.

Today, most people think that the park is not owned by anyone; rather, it is a space that can be used freely. This undercurrent is the concept of public space. However, in the Meiji Era, that logic, together with the concept of space utilization as parks, was introduced from the West (1873). Therefore, it did not exist in pre-modern Japan and it took a long time to gain acceptance in modern society. The parcel of land which gave rise to the park in the first place was one that the Meiji New Government confiscated from the shrine and temple company (1871). However, the Religious Organization Act of 1939 and the Japanese Constitution of 1947 introduced the proposition that these lands would be returned to the original owners. The shrine and temple companies are not obliged to open returned shrines to the public. Nevertheless, the modern Nara Park is open to tourists.

There has been discussion about repositioning the public nature of such spaces in order to open up private land for public benefit.

## The Reception of Max Weber's Asia Study in War-time Japan From Japanese Orientalism to Dual Structure

JI Chenjia

This research focuses on the reception of Max Weber's Asia study in Japan during the 15-year war time period (1931-1945). In contrast to banning of his work in Nazi Germany, Weber's study first flourished in Japan during that period. It would appear that social scientists' interest in Weber's study of Asian Societies in *Confucianism and Taoism*, etc. was directly related to the empire's domination in the region. This meant not only bringing an understanding of colonial society into the existing knowledge structure, but also providing evidence for the legitimacy of the Japanese rule.

Such a conclusion has especially been drawn in the so-called 'Japanese orientalism' approach advocated by political scientists such as Kang Sang-jung, etc. Inspired by Edward Said's pioneering research, Kang examined social scientists' Asia Studies (東洋学) during the war years and showed how they were structured into the Japanese Empire's war-time policies. Social science research of the period displayed similarities with parallel studies in Europe, which included analytical bifurcation of Japan and Asia, the unilateral construction of imagery depicting Asian societies as backward, and also the conspiratorial relationship between the knowledge and the colonial authority.

Nevertheless, Japanese orientalism has neglected the unique knowledge geopolitical circumstances of war-time Japan. Following Takeuchi Yoshimi's conception of 'dual structure', this research applies an alternative yet local perspective to War-time Asia understanding in social science. Two different types of understanding - the Ansai, Naito type and the Shima type - could be found in response to Weber's work during that period. Although the former type fits the Japanese orientalism understanding, Shima's criticism of Weber was based on the emphasis on Asia's initiative. Thus, the research illustrates that, rather than the single hermeneutics provided by Japanese orientalism, the knowledge situation, or at least the research on Weber during the war years, appeared more as ambivalence between 'modernity' and 'Asia'.