REFLECTIONS ON JAPAN

(AS AT 10.4.92; WRITTEN IN EARLY 1992)

SECTION ONE: SOME FIRST REFLECTIONS

(written or re-written in January-March 1992)

The origins of English individualism and the Germanic mode

Montesquieu long ago put forward a theory to explain the problem of why England was so different. He pointed out that the peculiar political and landholding system which was expounded by Locke and which Montesquieu had outlined in 'The Spirit of the Laws' had come from ancient Germanic custom, as described by Tacitus in 98 AD. Montesquieu wrote that "In perusing the admirable treatise of Tacitus **On the Manners of the Germans** we find it is from that nation the English have borrowed their idea of political government. This beautiful system was first invented in the woods". (i, 61 ??). He goes further than this, however, in pointing out that the individualistic property system, the absence of a Domestic Mode of Production, was also to be traced to the early Germanic system. He argued that the situation as described by Tacitus was one of absolute individual property; there was no 'group' that owned the land, and hence no idea that the family and the resources were inextricably linked. In his description of the Salic law he stresses that it "had not in view a preference of one sex to the other, much less had it regard to the perpetuity of a family, a name, or the transmission of land. These things did not enter into the heads of the Germans..." (i, 283).

There are, of course, a number of strong objections which could be brought against such a large leap in time. Firstly, did not the Teutons also conquer much of France and elsewhere in Europe, and yet one is arguing that there is something special about England. The best answer to this is one given, for example, by the historian Freeman in various essays (e.g. 4th Essays, 52,233; 1st Essay, 167) and also by F.W.Maitland. This is that the impact of the conquests in the two areas was very different. On the Continent, the Teutonic influence was absorbed by the strong preceding Roman structure, and hence much of their distinctiveness was lost. This is evidenced in the loss of their language and, later, in the resurgence of Roman law. Hence, although Bloch and others have pointed out that there were deep differences between the northern area of German customary law, and the southern area of written Roman law, even the north was far less extreme than England, where very little of the preceding Roman culture and society was left.

A second objection concerns Germany. It could be argued that since the Teutonic peoples were centred on Germany, we might expect that country to be an extreme case of these patterns, rather

than England. Again, there has been a good deal written on this subject. For instance, Freeman again devoted some attention to the various facts which "made England in the days of its earliest independence, a more purely Teutonic country than even Germany itself..." (1st Essays, 51). He was thus able to conclude that "Thus we grew up an insular people...a Teutonic people, in some things more purely Teutonic than our own kinsfolk of the mainland..." (4th Essays, 234).

A third argument concerns the supposed continuity of the Germanic influence. Even if we concede that the Anglo-Saxon people colonized Britain in a much deeper way than much of the Continent, was not this early influence overlain by later events, and particularly by the second major conquest by the Normans in 1066? Furthermore, were there not vast changes from 1066 onwards which transformed entirely the earlier Anglo-Saxon influence.

It would not be too difficult to deal with this objection, for it is possible to show that both the English and the Normans did not see a great rupture as occurring in 1066. It appears that much of what the Normans codified was present in Anglo-Saxon England. For example Maitland wrote that "Dark as is the early history of the manor, we can see that before the Conquest England is covered by what in all substantial points are manors..." (Constitutional History, 57). The Normans were very similar people to those they fought; hence, for instance, the difficulty of distinguishing one group from another in the Bayeux tapestry (Maitland, Constit. Hist., 154). Like the Vikings before them, they came from the same Teutonic social background, having conquered an area of northern France on the way.

Thus one might compromise with Maitland and say that, on the ground, there was little change; before the Norman Conquest "the facts of feudalism seem to be there - what is wanting is a theory which shall express those facts. That came to us from Normandy." (Maitland, Constitutional, 151). The Normans were very adaptable, and merely gave the Anglo-Saxon (which they officially confirmed), a systematic and strengthened nature, hence perhaps helping to prevent that fragmentation into "dissolution of the State" feudalism that occurred in France. As Maitland (Constit. Hist., 122) put it, the Normans were "a race whose distinguishing characteristic seems to have been a wonderful power of adapting itself to circumstances, of absorbing into its own life the best and strongest institutions of whatever race it conquered..."

As for the period from after the Norman Conquest, it is not difficult to see the continuity from that date onwards. While some modern historians argue that "the affairs of the eleventh to thirteenth centuries were the affairs of a remote period with a social structure all its own.." (Pocock, Anc. Constitn., 210), it is much more satisfactory to take the vision of Stubbs and Maitland as to their continuity. Maitland, for instance, argued that all the major institutions of 1800 were traceable back to the reign of Edward I (Constit. Hist, 20). Stubbs went even further,
his views being summarized by Burrow (Liberal Descent, p.).
"Stubbs, on taking up his Oxford chair in 1866, announced his first lecture course as 'Constitutional History from Tacitus to Henry II...In the nineteenth century Tacitus' descriptions were to provide a programme of historical research....That English laws were largely German or 'Gothic' in origin

became established
doctrine..."

If we accept the Stubbs and Maitland view, then, the constitutional and legal system of England is derived from the peculiarities of the German system. We know that the same is true of the language and kinship system. We also know that much of the economic structure was underpinned by particular Germanic features - the mortgage, annuity bond, specific features of corporations etc. , which led Weber to see that modern capitalism was based on Germanic customary law devices.

This is not to dispute the influence of non-Germanic influences, revived Romanism, Christianity etc. It was the blend which was so powerful. But it does seem that, if we use the recipe measure, three parts Romanism and one part Germanic, or even equal parts, tended to veer towards the usual course of human history - absolutism, the interlocked agrarian structure etc. On the other hand, three part Germanic to one part Roman, as in England, created over the long term the balance of institutions and the freedom of manoeuvre which we now approve of when we talk of modern society, democracy, freedom, individual rights etc. The miracle, therefore, is how the continuity of Anglo-Saxon structures were maintained over such a long period with so much outside pressure - a similar miracle to the growth and development of a separate system on another island off another major Continent, namely Japan.

The peculiar Germanic association or corporation

Part of the solution to the puzzle of the peculiarities of both Japan and England lies in the curious relationship between the individual and the group. In both, an original solution was taken to this problem. Very simply, in England there were not real 'groups' based on birth, but there was an ability to form into long-lasting associations of a peculiar kind not envisaged in Roman law etc. This gave rise later to companies, colleges, guilds etc. In Japan, there were 'groups' which were even stronger than the English 'associations', but they were not exclusively recruited, as in most civilizations, on the basis of status or birth. They were what I have called (stressing the contradiction) 'artificial groups'. Let us look at this a little more deeply in relation to England.

Marx came close to catching the central point. In his speculations on the 'German Mode', which he saw as the social correlate of the feudal system, Marx wrote that the Germans formed 'associations' not 'corporations' as in 'Ancient Society' (Grundrisse, 144), for instance there were no wide corporate kin groups (Pre-Capitalism, 78). He realized more generally that there was something peculiar about the Germanic system which helped to dissolve the feudal stage, or allow it to evolve into capitalism. But, as Hobsbawm comments, "what precisely makes the rural structure of feudalism thus soluble, apart from the characteristics of the "Germanic system" which is its substratum, we are not told..." (Pre-Capitalist, 47).

Thus Marx did realize the essential fact that the system upon which capitalism is built is different in that there are no wide groups or communities, as opposed to all other social systems (Ancient,

Asian, Slavic etc). The same point was accepted by Weber. They were unable to take this one crucial stage further, however, because of certain assumptions current at the time.

Following Morgan (check), Marx believed that the Germanic system was merely a broken-down agnatic system. In other words, there had been corporate kin groups, which had dissolved. In this respect he parallelled Maine, though Maine made the change even earlier since agnatic had evolved in uterine before becoming cognatic. This belief, which it is really impossible to prove one way or the other, would not have mattered, except that it may have helped to have confirmed a second view, namely that the Germanic system, in its origins, was based on the household or domestic group.

In a number of passages (e.g. Pre-Capitalist, 79), Marx describes the Germanic system as if it was similar to other modern peasantries, based on a household/family which was the basic unit of production, consumption and ownership. Although the group was not as wide as the whole tribe, or a lineage, nevertheless, the ultimate unit of the society was not the individual (as in capitalist society), but the domestic group. Independent households (p.79) were the basic unit, the individual households which co-operate in production (p.44). Weber, again, followed Marx in this view and thus accepted that while feudalism was a move away from corporate groups, it had in effect only reduced the size from the large lineage to the domestic group. (see my Individualism, p.39, for an account of both their views on this).

Marx and Weber may have been misled because they were looking at early Germanic social structure through the screen of nineteenth Germanic social structure - which had gravitated towards a domestic mode of production. Many German scholars would find it difficult to believe that the nineteenth century might be more domestic-group based than the sixth.

Yet some suggestion that this might have been so can be found if, instead of looking backwards from nineteenth century Europe, we look at an account of an early Germanic society, namely Anglo-Saxon England. If we do so, we find that there is little or no evidence of a domestic group based society. As Maitland put it (English Law, ii, 251), "Now as regards the Anglo-Saxons we can find no proof of the theory that among them there prevailed anything that ought to be called 'family ownership'". Or again, he wrote "in the present state of our knowledge we should be rash were we to accept 'family ownership', or in other words a strong form of 'birth-right' as an institution which once prevailed among the English in England." He continues by saying that he doubts that English documents will ever prove such family ownership to have been the case.

It thus looks as if the peculiarities of the Anglo-Saxon system in England included the fact that the kinship system, economic system and social structure were not based on some kind of group larger than the individual. The peculiarities which Levi-Strauss noticed about the Germanic kinship system of Europe (Elementary, 472ff) were thus conveyed through to the eighteenth century without a great break. This was recognized at that time. For instance, Blackstone wrote that the system of inheritance in the eighteenth century was "very similar to which was the law of inheritance among

the ancient Germans, our progenitors...' (Commentaries, ii,225).

If this is true, it is of fundamental importance to our argument. The absence of any corporate unit above the individual makes it possible to achieve and maintain that separation of spheres as between kinship, religion, politics and economics which is the central feature of modern capitalism. An individual is the sole uniter of these. The welding or melding process which occurs when there are proper corporate groups based on birth, which unite the spheres, does not happen. The English escaped this by having no corporate domestic groups. The Japanese achieved this by making the corporate domestic group an 'artificial' community, that is to say it could be expanded and contracted, moulded by will, by the process of adoption.

The Japanese solution, however, reminds us of the central problem facing the English one. It is all very well not having any groups based on birth. But very soon the complexities of running a society cannot be met by a whole lot of autonomous individuals. They must pool their efforts, join together for economic, social and other tasks. If they are not to do this on the basis of birth, or by Japanese fiction of birth, how are they to form effective groupings that are not groups? Here we can turn to the speculations of another nineteenth century German, which may give us a clue.

The work of Huebner, cited by Krader (Law, 297), made a start on the task of showing that there was a radical difference between the Germanic and Roman concept of the association. "It showed that the German law had developed in the 'Korperschaft' its own peculiar conception of a collective person ('Gesamtperson') distinct from the physical members. This collective person of German law is not, like the Roman **corporatio** ('Korporation'), a fictitious person; nor can it be understood through the principles of appointed funds for special purposes ('Zweck vermogen'), or by making the beneficiaries ('Destinataren') collectively the subjects of the common rights - nor did these theories even fit the Roman law itself."

Another attempt to describe this peculiarity (by Krader ?, or quoted there, Law, 286), is as follows:

"..all possible rights in the association property appeared as
apportioned between the group and the individuals, and this in such manner that the right of disposing thereof inhered essentially in the whole body, but the rights of usufruct therein inhered in the individuals. This view reflected the peculiarity of the German concept of ownership. A corporate collective personality behind which the / plurality of associates is in no way hidden, found its counterpart in the law of things in a corporate collective property."

Thus, when this has been explored a little more deeply, we may see how two contradictory aims were achieved - the need to stress the separateness of spheres, and the need to unite in effort. Or as Maine elegantly put it when he concluded that the two central features of the landholding system of the Teutonic peoples were "the spirit of individuality and the spirit of association..." (Maine, Communities, 82).

Somewhere here lies the key to the puzzle which Gellner realized lay at the heart of modern society. How is it that one can combine extreme individualism with strong associations, strong enough to underpin the complexities of modern life? Without joining together in economic and social goals, very little can be achieved. But how can such joint efforts be strong enough if no unit larger than the individual exists? Or, in the words of Gellner (Gellner, Civil, 500), "how do such associations and institutions, which in the past would have been too fragile to carry such a heavy burden, acquire that remarkable robustness which enables them to do what is necessary? This is the big question." Gellner's answer, that it is civic spirit and economic growth is not, of course, satisfactory, since it merely re-defining the problem - why the civil spirit, and how does the economic growth come about?

The direct connection between the presence of peculiarly strong, non-kin based, associations, is made by Landes, for instance, in relation to the nature of the firm in the industrial revolution. "Similarly, the structure of the firm was more open and rational in Britain than in the continental countries. Everywhere, the fundamental business unit was the individual proprietorship or the family partnership but where, in a country like France, the family firm was almost always closed to outsiders, British entrepreneurs were far more willing to enter into associations..." (Landes, Prometheus, 72)

This relates to a similar sort of problem faced in developing societies, which have not been used to some alternative to 'group' based social structures. The idea of powerful, non-communal yet enduring 'associations', in which members will pool their efforts in the belief that their bread will be returned to them, is a difficult one to envisage. Especially difficult to envisage is how this would work at the highest level, that of the State. The obligations of citizenship and the generalized commitment of citizens to civil society, which is essential if individualism is to work, is a foreign idea in most parts of the world. One example might be cited, namely that in Nepal.

Individual and group in Nepal; the absence of civil society.

In my review of Bista's book on modern Nepal, I wrote as following:

Another important side-effect of Bahunism (Brahminism) is on the relations between individual and group. Bista argues that under the pressure of western models, "traditional group orientation" is being replaced by "individualism". But it is not that individualism which De Tocqueville perceived in America, namely "a mature and calm feeling, which disposed each member of the community to sever himself from his family and his friends...", but rather the earlier form, which De Tocqueville calls "egotism", namely "a passionate and exaggerated love of self, which leads a man to connect everything with his own person, and to prefer himself to everything in the world." "Nepali individualism operates largely at the more primitive egotistic stage."

This egotism is the worst solution to the problem of individual-group relations. It leads to a mild version of the Hobbesian war of all against all, where there is no sense of public duty or service.

"Very few people take high positions responsibly, as a duty to society at large". Although there is a residual sense of the local community and the family, "by contrast, the public, the state, the nation, are all abstract concepts" which mean little to most people. One effect of this is visible in the corruption and laziness of those in positions of responsibility, whose main goal is to promote their private and sectional interests. Another is in the field of development.

Bista points out that despite the rhetoric of "grass-roots development", "back to the village", "community participation", the vast majority of "development"£ projects are undertaken with little involvement or consultation with local communities. Bridges, roads, dams, health posts are built often with serious disadvantages to particular communities. They are perceived by local inhabitants as "the whimsies of the foreign project directors". When the bridge, road, dam, has been built and the facility has been left as "public" property, supposedly to be maintained by "the public", "people lack any sense of either pride or of possession, as they would towards things they build through their own efforts."

Bista argues that "locally initiated projects, when funded by the central authorities, have the greatest chance of success." This is certainly true. But the absence of a sense of the "public good", which is a very unusual and abstract idea which it took many centuries to develop in the west, is even deeper than this. The idea of 'citizenship', of doing a job for the good of an association larger than the family, is little developed throughout Nepal.

Thus in the villages, each development initiative fails as the individuals employed to carry it out take their salary to be an entitlement to do the minimum amount of work. The tree nursery is allowed to fade away; the young trees are not watched by the paid watchers and are eaten by animals; the water bailiffs fail to inspect the water pipe and it leaks badly; the health workers at the local health post sell off the best medicine privately and refuse to visit sick villagers without large payments; the schoolmaster appropriate school funds and absent themselves frequently. These are widespread activities.

Of course, there are honourable exceptions, but the pressures of insecurity and family need are usually much stronger than some abstract idea of generalized good. The acts of religious merit, the making of resting places, of temples, of paths, are quite frequent. But the idea of merit, the nearest equivalent to the Protestant idea of 'calling', does not seem to be applied to the new tasks generated by development. It is almost as if the payment of a salary automatically deadens any sense of public responsibility. It is a social equivalent to the well-known finding that, contrary to classical economic laws, the more people are paid for their labour in pre-capitalist economies, the less they work.

Much of Nepal thus seems to be in a position where primordial loyalties, to family, neighbours, oneself, are very much stronger than impersonal ones; people see no benefit in putting their efforts into doing things well for the general good. Anthropologists have investigated "amoral familism" quite extensively, a morality where people only apply ethical rules within their own family. One might well apply the concept here. But in the Nepalese context, and especially in the ethnic

communities of the mountains, the community of moral and responsible behaviour is wider than the nuclear family of the Mediterranean and South American examples where the concept of "amoral familism" was developed. All villagers are bound together through marriage, kinship, friendship, work associations and patron-client ties and hence will work together in what is perceived as their mutual self-interest. But this only applies to traditional activities where mutual support is essential.

It is an entirely different matter with something which an individual, paid by the State, is expected to do for some larger abstract entity such as "the community", "the country", "the nation". In calculating the best course of action, the individual state servant finds that the advantages of leisure or private reward far outweigh any feeling that he has a duty to help such abstract entities, or that he should do so because he is paid for his services.

The idea of "paying back" something to a society, which lies behind a vast amount of vaguely altruistic voluntary behaviour in western societies, of the **noblesse d'oblige** variety, such as justices of the peace, jury service, voluntary associations and institutes to do good works, is absent. For instance, only a tiny proportion of the large amount of money brought back to Nepal by returning British Gurkhas, millionaires by local standards, is ever spent on public works in the villages where they were brought up and their families. life. If one hundredth of this money had been productively invested in the villages, they would have been transformed. But such ideas are not at all familiar. They would probably be considered luxuries, only suitable to societies which had escaped from the knife-edged insecurities of subsistence living.

Bista would probably argue that the instances of lack of public spirit instanced above are the result of the spread of Brahmin values into the villages. Everyone has become aware of the corruption, laziness and inefficiency that pervades most of the salariat. There is widespread cynicism and a lack of any models for hard-working and public-spirited activities. Each individual feels disinclined to make marginal sacrifices for his short-term good for the long-term general good when he thinks no-one else is doing so. Everyone believes that all others are 'one the make'. Even if an individual shows some deviant altruism, his family and friends would soon put great pressures on him to desist.

This idea of the spread of egotistic values is partly true. But it is a little over-simple. The features described are very widespread in agricultural peasantries which almost everywhere have little idea of the public good. But Bista is right that if the elite had by some extraordinary accident shown a very different and more "rational-bureaucratic-Protestant" character, then the response at the village level as the new institutions were developed would have been very different. One can see this from the enormous difference between the behaviour of Gurungs when in the British army, self-disciplined, hard-working, altruistic, co-operative, and when they are working in government employment in Nepal where they are often listless, unmotivated and as prone to pursue their self-interest as the most acquisitive Brahmin or Chhetri. There is nothing intrinsic about the differences, but Bista is right that the tendencies of Brahmin-Chhetri culture and the Mongoloid cultures of Nepal is very different, and the balance is swinging towards the former.

First glimpses of the new capitalist system

The first characterizations of the new 'modern' and capitalist system were by those who were on its fringes - particularly France and Scotland. Hence we have the work of the Scottish (particularly A.Smith) and French philosophers (esp. Montesquieu, De Tocqueville, Taine). In the nineteenth century it was the turn of the Germans to note the singularity - particularly Marx, Weber and later Simmel and Veblen. After that, it became more or less invisible as it spread all over Europe, North America and then, later all over the world.

Analogies for an anatomy of capitalism (thoughts, April 1986)

One could first try to show the outward features of a capitalist society, the material, physical, emotional world which it inhabits - houses, parks, affluence and poverty, love, desire etc. This is the skin, the facial features. Then one could describe the blood; that is money, literacy, legal process. The sinews are the organizing concepts which hold it together, individualism, the separation of spheres, ideas of equality etc. The bones are property, power etc. Thus one would have a portrait of Europe and specifically England in the centuries of colonial expansion and have a better idea of the strange creature, the colossus that now sits astride the world with its promises and threats, and which has recently (1991) destroyed its major rival, communism. By using this analogy, one can have an idea if something that is constantly changing on the surface, while the bones and sinews are of long duration. Another metaphor could be geological (or linguistic), with their ideas of deep and surface structure. Thus one might have as the 'deep' structures, Law, Mind, Economics, Religion, which in turn generated the 'surface' features noted by travellers.

This distinction between the outer form and the inner structure is beautifully elaborated, for instance, by De Tocqueville, when he wrote: "Shutting your eyes to the old names and forms, you will find from the seventeenth century....Seventeenth-century England was already a quite modern nation, which has merely preserved in its heart, and as it were embalmed, some relics of the Middle Ages." (Ancien, 21)>

Two theories of divergence of England

If we accept Voltaire and others that by the eighteenth century England was a totally different country from most of Europe, we are left with four alternatives to explain this.
a. All of Europe was much the same until, say, the fifteenth century, when England began to differentiate itself and grew away faster and faster (with Holland etc.). This 'take off' model is the accepted sociological one since Marx and Weber.

b. All of Europe was much the same until say the twelfth century, and then, while England stayed

much the same (i.e. feudal, non-absolutist, non peasant, non Roman law etc.), much of Europe changed towards absolutism, Romanism, peasantry etc. So England became increasingly 'isolated' and different.

c. England and Europe had always been different - from the earliest times.

d. Combining a and b, one might suggest (most plausibly), that indeed there was a great deal of similarity in Europe until, say the tenth century. Then the paths began to diverge. But the divergence was curious. While much of Europe lurched to the 'right', i.e. towards conservatism (with peasants digging their toes in, Kings gaining absolute power, the Church absorbing everything, the glue of Roman law spreading over everything etc. - an absolutist and totalitarian world or 'closed' society), in England, the basic features of the previous world which had prevailed over much of northern Europe were preserved. Not only were they preserved, but they were emphasized. But in this emphasis, certain features were modified. The central power given by the Normans and Angevins stopped the dissolving effects of 'feudalism'. The common law and administrative structure grew more powerful. This framework then allowed the development of the economy and polity and religion as separated institutions - which began to give England a distinctive flavour. With the blessing of long peace and a homeostatic demographic regime, it managed to increase wealth year by year, so that its material features changed dramatically. The tendency towards the modern feature of the separation of spheres increased - until the various liberties which struck eighteenth century French writers were present.

This idea of the way in which an initial feudalism dissolved into two entirely different social structures is beautifully caught by De Tocqueville when he wrote: "Wherever the feudal system established itself on the continent of Europe it ended in caste; in England alone it returned to aristocracy." (Ancien, 88). What had happened was that from an initial base which was not dissimilar - a conquering Anglo-Saxon world - there gradually emerged two different worlds. In such a scenario, England is for various reasons at the extreme (and its offshoot - New England even more so). , the Dutch in particular are very close, while Scandinavia and parts of northern France and Germany are not so dissimilar.

This fourth possible trajectory is also very likely to be the one that fits for Japan. It may well be that mainland China and Japan were not so very dissimilar in the first century A.D. (though here it may be that only parts of the mainland had a similar kinship system to the mysterious people who conquered Japan). In the sixth century to the eighth, a great deal of Chinese culture and religion and bureaucratic methods were introduced into Japan. It might not have looked, on the surface, so very different from China. The situation was not so dissimilar, say, as between Normandy, the Netherlands and northern Germany and England in the twelfth century. In each case we have an island that appears not too different from its continent. But just as in Europe, China continued in its gravitation away from a much earlier balanced feudalism, towards the rigidity of a Confucian absolutism. Japan, by a similar miracle to England, retained earlier social forms and built on them. Above all, it maintained that opposition or separation of spheres which gave space for the economy

to develop, free of destruction by an over-mighty Church, State or family system. Thus, by the sixteenth century, England and Japan, having both suppressed the monasteries and expanded their trade and both being unified under a powerful, but not too powerful ruler, looked set to follow the same path. Then Japan closed itself and for two and a half centuries under the Tokugawa pursued a course which increased its wealth, but did not lead it into industrialization - a miracle achieved only by England.

Comparing civilizations

At the widest level, one could with J.Goody (and others before him), make a broad comparison between Eurasia on the one hand and Africa (or other civilizations) on the other. Within Eurasia, however, one would then need to make further distinctions. At the western end, the differences between different parts of Europe were crucial. At the eastern end, likewise, India, China and Japan cannot be lumped together.

For instance, to take just the one index of the degree of individuality or communality of property ownership, in Europe there were individual property rights, ending up with individualism etc. With most of Asia (but not Japan), the group was more important than the individual and was the property-owning body. The individual only had limited access.

Early recognition of a curious similarity of England and Japan

In notes made in April 1977, a few months before starting to write 'Individualism' I wrote: "What links are there between the marital and sexual pattern and industrialization? Although the nuclear family, or even the Hunter Gatherer social structure in itself is not sufficient and necessary as a cause of industrialization, is it just a **coincidence** that England (the extreme form) industrialized first, or that Japan (feudal/ ego-centric) afterwards?

The myth of English peasantry; early thoughts.

About a month before starting 'Individualism', I wrote: "The 'myth' of English peasantry. Generally and widely assumed by historians (and anthropologists) that England before the industrial revolution was a 'peasant' society, for example like France, China, India etc. It was generally assumed by Maine, Tonnies and more recently by historians. Thus the 'great transition' was from Peasant to Modern (by way of the Industrial Revolution). But it is much more plausible (following Marx) to argue that England was **always** different (though see section above - modifying this, AM) and had **never** been a peasantry, thus never having had a Domestic Mode of Production etc. If this is correct, the situation moved as follows: Hunter Gatherer - Germanic - Feudal - Decomposed feudal/ Proto-Modern - Industrial.

The structural or dialectical method.

This is the basic approach necessary for the study of the 'contradictions of capitalism'. This is because the secret of capitalism is firstly that it is not the parts (for instance the economy etc.) that are critical, but the relations of the parts, in other words the famed relations of relations. Secondly, the tension ("productive tension" - Riesman), which this creates is, as Marx noted, the engine of history, it lies behind the restless attempt to overcome the contradictions etc.

Similar features lie behind Japan and England.

At first sight, the very large differences between the English and Japanese cases might make one feel that it is impossible to see much in common. But there does seem to be a deeper generative structure which has linked the two cases. That growing feeling that there is a link (probably lying in the similarity of the relationship of the parts, though the parts themselves are very different - i.e. the splitting apart of spheres), is very similar to the feeling which prompted Hofstader to link Godel, Escher and Bach - on the surface very different, yet all united by a deeper unity. As Hofstader (Godel, p.28) writes: "But finally I realized that to me, Godel and Escher and Bach were only shadows cast in different directions by some central solid essence. I tried to reconstruct the central object, and came up with this book." That is exactly what one is trying to do in comparing Japan and England - trying to reconstruct the central object, which may roughly be termed capitalism/modernity. In such an exercise, as Hofstader realized, the more shadows one has the better. With only one shadow , i.e. by only studying England, one is left with a very vague impression of the central substance. With two, at opposite ends of the earth, it becomes much easier to specify what the object is. Unfortunately, there are no other cases, though perhaps the nearest is Holland.

The growth of modernity and the splitting of the atom.

The growth of modernity is very similar to the splitting of the atom. When spheres are split apart and held apart, it creates a productive tension that is immensely creative. The longer that this can be held 'open', the more energy is generated. But there is also an increasing cost - psychological, social etc. Hence there is a tendency to 'close' the contradictions again and for the domination of one sphere - usually religion and/or politics to occur. The history of the twentieth century is full of such movements - communism, national socialism etc. But what must not be lost sight of is the splitting of the atom. It is, on a much larger scale, that division of labour which Smith and later Durkheim thought was the essence of modern societies. But it is not just labour that is divided - it is also thought, emotion, society, politics from religion etc. etc.

Rationality and rationalism and the separation of spheres.

One needs to distinguish various forms of rationality. There is Weber's formal rationality - the link between means and ends being appropriate - and his substantive rationality, the content of thought itself. Another way of looking at the problem is to see the degree to which things are separated or distinguished from each other, are blurred or confused. For example, religion and kinship often 'contaminate' each other, economic and social ends get mixed together. A great deal of what we call 'irrational' is a reflection of such overlap. Hence, Weber's central thesis, which is concerned with the increasing rationalization of the world is exactly along the same lines as those in which I am arguing in relation to the separation of spheres and the developing tensions of an 'open' predicament.

The need for unifying elements to combat extreme individualism.

In a highly individualized system, it is necessary to have special forms of relationship that bind the 'sovereign individuals' of capitalism. These characteristically include such things as friendship (equal relationship of free partners), marriage ('married friends'), special interest groups. This last opens up a myriad of associations, of special 'societies', based on choice and not birth, and allowing people to form links without losing their individuality. This trick of combining association with separateness, as in an Oxbridge college of fellows, a business company, a guild or cricket team, is of fundamental importance in capitalist cultures. It is important to analyse further the ways in which it is done, which seem to have been uniquely developed in Anglo-Saxon cultures with their impoverished kinship systems. The Japanese, also, have thousands of associations, for they are faced with the same problem - though they tend to make their associations (e.g. business) more 'total' and encompassing.

Peasant and capitalist morality.

It should surely the be the case than since the economy and social structure of these two social formations are so different, so should their moral systems be. Since their moral systems are clearly ways of ordering the relationships between people and between spheres of activity, and must vary with the ways in which the social, economic, political and religious spheres are linked, the morality will also vary hugely. I have discussed this at some length in the paper on morality, where, for instance, I began to address the differences between a world where individuals good is perceived to be limited and threatened by the success of others, to an expanding capitalist world where individuals can 'expand' without being a threat to the group.

Meyer Fortes on the Germanic peculiarities of English kinship

In January 1978, just after completing 'Individualism', I talked to Meyer Fortes who said out of the blue that he had long been convinced that the key to Europe was the fact that there were two kinship systems. One was Germanic/cognatic, and the other Roman/ agnatic. Looking at Tacitus

onwards, northern France and England had a different system and had such a different system for many centuries. He was unsure as to where the Greeks fitting in here, but thought that they were probably from the north and hence fitted into the Germanic pattern. He agreed that a vulgar reading of Marx and Weber had long been a stumbling block for historians and anthropologists. He said that whenever he raised this possibility, he was 'shouted down' (presumably by Leach and Goody?) as going against the facts etc. He said there was evidence in the ambivalence of the early German law books.

In December of the same year I looked through Pollock and Maitland, and found evidence for his view, and also important material on the Fortesian distinction between the kinship and political domain. As soon as the individual was separated off in the political domain he became a 'free' person, even though still servile in the family domain. The legal system recognized the individual as the significant actor, not the lineage. The best description of the absence of lineages or corporate descent groups is in M.Bloch's Feudal Society.

Fortes contrasted the Romans, who lived like the Tallensi with boundary gods, agnatic lineages etc., as compared to the Germans, who lived in villages and, like the Singhalese, had cognation, the equality of the individual etc. He believed that the solution was ultimately political, and lay in centralized kingship.

Why, then, did France and Germany end up differently from England? The Romans left little impact on Britain, whereas they did on the Continent. They never conquered Scandinavia, and hence when the north was re-conquered from Scandinavia (Vikings, Normans), this re-informed the alternative, Germanic, system. Germany itself was an area of conflict between the two systems.

The invention of the revolutionary break; early thoughts.
(15.7.1978)

It would be worth tracing the roots of the modernization/Marxist view. According to Maitland, the invention of an entirely different 'feudal' period is due to Spelman, then Wright (a lawyer), then Blackstone. He does not appear to consider that it was then revived at a broader level, perhaps with the destruction of an apparently similar 'feudal' or 'ancien regime' society (the two elided) in France at the French Revolution. One then got the back-lash of the later Romantic Movement (Michelet & co.). This was given a boos by the development of anthropology as a counterpart to Darwinian evolutionary though, especially in the work of Morgan, which in turn influenced Marx, Engels, Durkheim and Weber.

Thus a great deal of the framework of the great period in anthropology and sociology was explicitly evolutionary, seeing the movement of societies through certain pre-ordained states, from original communal/tribal stage, through feudalism and the DMP to capitalism, modern society. The idea that all West European societies followed the same stages was accepted. The warning of

Maitland that 'feudalism' in England was "radically different" from that in France and Continental countries (a warning that was re-enforced by Marc Bloch, who came to the same conclusion), was largely ignored. In historical circles, the Whig history of Macaulay and later Trevelyan combined with this. The Middle Ages throughout Europe were lumped together and all seen as just another 'backward' and 'traditional' society, from which Europe had escaped.

Gradually the binary oppositions of Tonnies (Community to Association), of Durkheim (Mechanical to Organic solidarity), of Maine (Status to Contract) and their modified versions in Marx and Weber became accepted, first implicitly and then more openly in the work of Tawney, the Marxist historians etc. The growing model of pre-feudal, feudal, post-feudal might not be entirely satisfactory, but it seemed, as Pocock said, to be all we had.

Filmer, Locke and English individualism.

When Hobbes and Locke described a political and economic and social system which is widely recognized as 'modern', that is to say, it is based not on kinship but on the autonomy of the individual, they do not sound as if they believed they were inventing something new. Locke based his arguments very largely on Richard Hooker, who had written a century earlier. It was those who tried to advocate a much more apparently 'traditional' system, with the individual subordinate to parental power, strict patriarchalism and the strong analogies between politics and the family, namely Filmer, who seems to have felt uneasy about the English precedents. Indeed Filmer largely based his case on continental law, and particularly on the works of Bodin. Likewise, those who had the deepest grasp of the history of law did not discern a basic transformation as having occurred with the supposed transformation from 'feudalism'. Edward Coke, Justice Hales (and Francis Bacon?) all failed to note such a transformation. Again, it was only those who later looked abroad to continental law, the men like Spelman, who had a sense that the world they inhabited in the seventeenth century was very different - or, at least, as we now see, different from the continent in the past.

L.H.Morgan on the Germanic kinship system.

Morgan seems to have believed that all societies went through a series of evolutionary stages, which would now be described as uterine, agnatic, cognatic or 'kinless' (Ancient Society, 66-7). 'Ancient Society', or what we would now tend to call tribal societies (?) "rested upon an organization of person, and was governed through the relations of persons to a gens and tribe" (p.223). The conjugal family of husband and wife as an isolated unit was absent. "Nothing whatever was based upon the family in any of its forms" (Ancient, 233/223). The Germanic kinship system, for example, he believed was agnatic, and had extended, composite, households. Interpreting Caesar's description of this system, influential when translated to England through the Anglo-Saxons, Morgan comments: "it must be supposed that he found among them groups of persons, larger than a family,

united on the basis of kin, to whom, as individuals, and even the family, both of whom were merged to the group thus united for cultivation and subsistence." He continues that is "probable...that several related families were united in households and practised communism in living..." Thus he seems to envisage a great change into the 'modern' family.

There is a marked inconsistency in his views, however, for elsewhere he says that the Aryan system has remained for nearly three thousand years without radical change (Ancient, 411; see also p.62). The inconsistency may have something to do with a conflict between a strong evolutionary tendency and an accuracy in observing facts which do not fit with the supposed evolution. His views, so influential through Marx and Engels as well as in their own right, deserve further attention, and particularly in his other massive work, 'Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity'.

Engels on the Germanic kinship system.

Drawing on Marx's notes and sketches, Engels completed the work which Marx was unable to write in his 'The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State'. It is a framework drawn from Morgan. Marx and Engels accepted the general sequence of stages, uterine to agnatic to cognatic (p.24). Furthermore, he accepted the picture of the early Germans as based on agnatic lineages and extended households which Morgan had given. Engels wrote that among the early Germans 'the economic unit according to Huessler (institutions of German law) is not originally the single family, but the "collective household" comprising several generations or single families..." He described how within these Germanic peoples there was a transition from matriarchal to patriarchal to cognatic descent (pp. 163-5), remarking that "It is an indisputable fact that the Germans were organized in gentes up to the time of the great migrations...." It is worth noting here, however, that he seems to admit that during the 'great migrations', by which he presumably means the conquest of the Roman Empire, the agnatic system gave way to the cognatic. If this can be read into what he wrote, then there is an implicit recognition that from at least the fourth or fifth century we have a cognatic kinship system in Europe.

The change in the marital system took longer. He tells us that "Before the middle ages we cannot speak of individual sexlove...All through antiquity marriages were arranged for the participants by the parents, and the former quietly submitted. (92) Even in medieval society, he argued, "In the overwhelming majority of ages the marriage contract thus remained to the end of the middle ages what it had been from the outset: a matter that was not decided by the parties most interested..." It was only with the introduction of capitalism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that marriage partners could be chosen, like other things on the market, 'freely': "the creation of these 'free' and 'equal' persons was precisely one of the main functions of capitalistic production' (p.96)

Marx's concept of the individual.

(notes made originally in March 1976 and subsequently revised in 1991)

The importance of establishing the exact nature of the 'natural' or ideal-type individual was evident to Marx: "the first premise of all human history is, of course, the existence of living human individuals. The first fact to be established, therefore, is the physical condition of these individuals..."(Writings, p.69). Despite the diametrically opposed view taken by Dumont (see second half of 'From Mandeville to Marx), it would appear that Marx did not base his position on the idea of original individualism. His basic premise is that human individuals are not, in their essence or 'natural' (i.e. pre-capitalist) state self-contained and isolated 'individuals', set loose like billiard balls. This is the state we see them in when we encounter them in capitalist society, he argues, but an analysis of history shows that they were originally (and should be, hence the tension) **social** beings: "the essence of man is not an abstraction inherent in any particular individual. The real nature of man is the totality of social relations". (Writings, p.83) As McLelland (Marx, 36) notes, he speaks of the original human being as "total" or "all-sided".

Marx returns again and again to the theme that individuals are not separate and autonomous, and hence that a society is not merely a collection of separate individuals (or separate families, as in the famous metaphor of the sack of potatoes). "Society is not merely an aggregate of individuals; it is the sum of the relations in which these individuals stand to one another" (Writings, 110), or again "It is above all necessary to avoid postulating 'society' once more as an abstraction confronting the individual. The individual is a social being." (Writings, p.91).

What then did Marx really mean by a 'social being'? He appears to mean two things. Firstly, the ideal type human being before capitalism, what we may term 'natural man', is more than his mere physical body; he is one with his physical environment. There is no real discontinuity between each natural man and the world around him. Each natural man is inexplicable bound up with the physical world: "life involves before everything else eating and drinking, a habitation, clothing, and many other things. The first historical act is, therefore, the production of material life itself" (Writings, 75). Individuals are not naked beings; they **are** what they produce and what they do; their labour, inventiveness etc. are all part of them. "As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, with what they produce and how they produce it..." (Writings, p.69)

One of the most obvious instances of this is the tie with the earth, or the natural man's laboratory' as Marx calls it: "the earth is the great laboratory, the arsenal which provides both the means and the materials of labour, and also the location, the basis of the community." (Pre-Capitalist, 69) Man is tied to it as a child still attached by an umbilical cord to its mother, another of Marx's similes. Natural man thus partakes of the natural world, is, in Wordsworth's sense, "one" with rocks and trees and winds.

The other major meaning of "social being" is that natural man is partly composed of all his or her social relationships; he is not a self-contained individual but a point or node in a network of social

relations which spread out from himself. He would have agreed with Donne; "no man is an island", all are parts of a continent. For example, he contrasts men and animals and reduces the difference to the fact that "the animal has not 'relations' with anything, has no relations at all. For the animal, its relation to others does not exist as a relation" (since it is not conscious of it). (Writings, p.86). Or again, he praised Fuerbach as follows: "the great achievement of Fuerbach is...to have founded genuine materialism and positive science by making the social relationship of man to man the basic principle of his theory" (Writings, p.85). Natural man, Marx believed, was blended in with other men; individual identities were only a recent phenomenon, a product of a particular (bourgeois-capitalist) mode of production: "Man only becomes an individual by means of the historical process. He appears originally as a generic being, a tribal being, a herd animal." (Pre-Capitalist, - see pp.36, 96).

In the earlier modes of production (or socio-economic formations) the individual is therefore still one with his physical environment and with his fellow men: "among hunting peoples, or in the agriculture of Indian communities...there is common ownership of the means of production...the individual has not yet severed the navel-string which attached him to the tribe or community" (Writings, 130) The essence of man is "the sum of productive forces, capital, and social forms of intercourse" (Writings, 71). The separation off of this natural relationship is the result of the historical process; the complete stripping away of all ties, either to the natural world or to other human beings is the final achievement of the capitalist form of production. The way in which labour is regarded in modern economic systems, Marx argued, "presupposes the separation of labour from its original intertwinement with its objective conditions" (Grundrisse, p.515), such conditions being the land, sea etc. In modern bourgeois society the individual does not retain the part of himself which his labour creates, the use value; he only produces so that he may exchange, "the individual has an existence only as a producer of exchange value, hence...the whole negation of his 'natural' existence is already implied..." (Grundrisse, 248). He is not conceived of as **merely** an individual worker, an exchanger of his labour, a view of him which Marx rejects as merely an impoverished vision created by the capitalist ideology. (Writings, pp.176,9).

The reasons for the rise of the 'naked individual' are complex, and a few thoughts are contained in another section (q.v. Marx on the Germanic mode of production.)

Tonnies on the ideal of the individual.

(Notes made by AM in 1976, revised 1991; based on Tonnies 'Community and Association).

Tonnies appears to have been considerably influenced by three writers of interest. He edited several of the works of Thomas Hobbes and several times quotes him as giving an accurate picture of the change over from the integrated Gemeinschaft society to the 'war of all against all' which is representative of Gesellschaft. He was also influenced by Sir Henry Maine, both on the nature of western and eastern communities, and also on the change from status to contract. Finally he had read

Marx's **Capital** from which he quoted many of the ideas. In fact, as the introduction by Loomis admits, few of Tonnies individual ideas were original. But he crystallized in a way that has seldom been done fore or since the various shifts which were thought to have occurred in the transition from rural, small-scale, kinship-based societies, to the individualistic, industrial, urban and hostile world of post-industrial society.

Like Marx, Tonnies accepts a particular model of 'natural man' with which to contrast modern capitalist society, though we have to deduce this model from other statements since it is never explicitly discussed. 'Natural man' has deep, many-stranded relationships with other men and is, incidentally, located both in the past and in each one of us, though encouraged or crushed by the particular society we live in. In modern society, for instance, "the original or natural relations of human beings to each other must be excluded" (p.88), since only single transactions between autonomous individuals can be allowed. "Natural man" is a "whole" being, as opposed to the fragmented 'persons', each one being a facet or particular playing of a role, which conceal man in modern societies.

One might thus speak of 'natural man' as being a full **individual**, a complete and integrated and organically created being. In modern societies, however, there are 'persons', who are fictions. "The concept of the person is a figment, a product of scientific thought. It is intended to express the unity of the origin of such formations, i.e. the disposition of a complex of force, power, means. This unity is only a creation of thought, based on a multitude of single possible acts, whatever the unity of these may be. Therefore its purely imaginary existence is dependent upon the existence of these single acts, outside and above it...(p.203)...Every individual is the natural representative of his own person. The concept of the person cannot be derived from any other empirical egos than the individual human beings...Consequently, there are real and natural persons in so far as there exist human beings who conceive themselves as such, accept and play this 'role', each one assuming the 'character' of a person like a mask held before his face." (Community, pp.202-3). This distinction between the "natural" individual and the legal and theoretical sum of roles and statuses which may be called a 'person' is both a vital one and one which is, of course, now familiar in sociology and anthropology. (cf. Nadel eg.).

This difference between the 'individual' or natural man, and the 'person' or artificial man is parallelled by another important distinction Tonnies makes between 'natural' and 'rational' will and also lies behind his whole distinction between Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft. "I call all kinds of association in which natural will predominates Gemeinschaft, all those which are formed and fundamentally conditioned by rational will Gesellschaft". (p.17) Again, however, it is not easy to grasps exactly what he means. He states that "natural will is the psychological equivalent of the human body, or the principle of the unity of life, supposing that life is conceived under that form of reality to which thinking itself belongs.. Rational will is a product of thinking itself and consequently possess reality only with reference to its author, the thinking individual" (p.119).

The difference seems to lie in the different relation between 'will', which we might paraphrase by

drive or instinct, and 'thought'. "I distinguish between the will which includes the thinking and the thinking which encompasses the will" (p.119). In the former case, will comes first, and action is spontaneous; in the latter case, the though comes first and the action is a product of it. "Specific natural will is inborn in the human being...Every individual natural will arrives at its complete and mature existence in the same way as the organism which it represents, by gradual growth...natural will has to be understood as inborn and inherited" (p.121). From it flows actions, which are not irrational but are also not self-conscious. On the other hand "Rational will is prior to the activity to which it refers and maintains its separate identity. It has only an imaginary existence, which activity is its realization. " (p.120) As with all of Tonnies' concepts, the distinctions are on a continuum; each person has aspects of each type of will within him and each society educates/ encourages different amounts of each type.

One of the reasons why Tonnies never really gets to grips with the problem of the quality of the individual seems to be that he is ultimately much more interested in an individual as a sum of human, inter-personal, relationships. He sees the smallest 'social entity' not as the individual, but as a social relationship (p.20). "The social relationship is the most general and simplest social entity or form. It also has the deepest foundation" (p.18). (see section on Inter-personal relationships)

Maine on the concept of the individual.

Unlike Marx, Maine did not set out to make a revolutionary critique of Late Victorian society. It is for this and other reasons, that he felt no need to oppose a strong idea of the original 'natural' man against that of contemporary individuals living in the sprawling cities around him. It may also be that, coming in a late and individualistic culture, he took much of the latent individualism to be found in Hobbes, Locke and Smith for granted.

Yet it may be inferred that from his comparative reading, he was aware that there had been a vast change - which lies behind the movement from kinship-based, group, 'status' societies, and state-based, individual, contract based societies. He appears to believe that there was a gradual growth of human beings out of some amorphous state into that of modern individualism which took the form of a gradual emergence of increasingly complex sets of rights and duties which grows visible through history. He argues that the conception of individual legal rights (as opposed to the right of the groups over the individual) are absent in most ancient and primitive societies (Early, 365), but that gradually the individual separates himself out and comes to have rights which can resist the demands of the group. For example, he believed that the "greatest change which has come over the people of India (is)...the growth on all sides of the sense of individual legal right" (Communities, p.73). But, like Tonnies, Maine is not interested in individuals in themselves, but rather in person to person relationships, and person to resource relationships (resources).

Marx on the original, primitive, communal mode of production.

Marx defines property as "a relation of he working (producing) subject...to the conditions of his production (e.g. animals, land and so on). Thus, for instance, in bourgeois society the worker exists purely subjectively, without object, and hence is 'propertyless'. (Pre-Capitalist, 95,96).

He believed that the absence of private ownership was the original state, out of which all later systems grew. This was to be found behind all later forms. "A ridiculous prejudice has recently obtained currency that common property in its primitive form is specifically a Slavonic, or even exclusively Russian form. It is the primitive form that we can show to have existed among Romans, Teutons and Celts, and even to this day we find numerous examples, ruins though they be, in India..." (Writings, p.124).

We may wonder exactly what he means by 'common property' here. There are various descriptions. For example, describing the Scottish clans, he wrote in 1853 that "To the clan, to the family, belonged the district where it had established itself, exactly as, in Russia, the land occupied by a community of peasants belongs, to the individual peasants, but to the community. Thus the district was the common property of the family. There could be no more question, under this system, of private property, in the modern sense of the word, than there could be of comparing the social existence of the members of the clan to that of individuals living in the midst of modern society." (Writings, p.131) Here Marx seems to be very similar to saying what anthropologists later described as corporate descent groups which, a corporation, owned the resources, with individuals having rights in it through family membership, but the land etc. being inalienable.

Marx is not so naive as to believe that everyone shares everything, but he does argue that no individual can stake an unique and permanent claim to a particular resource, buy and sell it, pass it on to private heirs and so on. This is what he means by "common ownership of the means of production" (Writings, 130). This original system is one which may occur, he argues, in Hunter Gatherer, pastoral, and agricultural societies. He sometimes terms it the 'tribal' system. Thus he writes that "The first form of property is tribal property. It corresponds to an undeveloped stage of production in which a people lives by hunting and fishing, by cattle breeding, or, at the highest stage, by agriculture. In the latter case, a large are of uncultivated land is presupposed. The division of labour is, at this sage, still very elementary, and is no more than an extension of the natural division of labour occurring within the family..." (Writings, 126; same as Pre-Capitalist, 122-3). Resources and kinship ties, in other words, are blended together in this system, hence the term 'tribal'. There is no separation whatsoever of the economic from the social.

Marx does not seem to go much further into this communal form in the simplest form, merely referring occasionally to land being 'held in common' with pastoral peoples, for example "the communal property of the Slavs" (Grundrisse, 107). There is very little else in this earliest form.

Marx on the Oriental, Asian and Asiatic systems.

This form of property shares the characteristic of having no 'private property' ad hence no 'contradictions' or class conflicts built into the system. "Private property, as the antithesis to social, collective, property, exists only where the means of labour and external conditions of labour belong to private individuals." (Writings, 148) and this is not the case in either tribal or Asian systems. Thus Hobsbawm speaks of "direct communal property, as in the oriental...system" (Pre-Capitalist, 37).

It appears that Marx makes no clear distinction here between the Asian system, based on self-contained communities, and the 'Ancient' systems of Greece and early Rome, based on cities. He equates them in their over-all absence of private property, for example, as follows. "The second form (of property, AM) is the communal and State property of antiquity, which results especially from the union of several tribes into a city, either by agreement or by conquest, and which is still accompanied by slavery. Alongside communal property, personal and later also real, private property is already beginning to develop, but as an abnormal form subordinate to communal property. It is only as a community that the citizens hold power over their labouring slaves, and on this account alone, therefore, they are bound to the form of communal property". (Writings, 126-7).

In the tribal system an individual has access to rights in the corporate property of the king group through descent; in the Asian system, by virtue of being a member of a community; in the Ancient system, by being a member of a State, in other words a citizen. Thus in all cases the kinship group or community or State 'owns' the property, while the individual has temporary and particular rights in it. This "Second form (of property) has, like the first, given rise to substantial variations, local, historical etc....The community is here also the first precondition.." (Pre-Capitalist, 71). Marx recognizes, however, that although the property may be ultimately communal, individuals may assert individual possessive rights. "To be a member of the community remains the precondition for the appropriation of land, but in his capacity as member of the community the individual is a private proprietor. His relation to his private property is both a relation to the land and to his existence as a member of the community...we have here the precondition for property in land...i.e. for the relation of the working subject to the natural conditions of his labour as belonging to him. But this 'belonging' is mediated through his existence as a member of the state, through the existence of the state - hence through a precondition which is regarded as divine etc..." (Pre-Capitalist, 73) Even if there is private property in practice, in theory property is still communal.

Tonnies on the forms of property.

Tonnies appears to have taken over most of Marx's views on property without much re-thinking. He makes no further distinctions between types of ownership or types of property, and seems t assume a fairly simple evolution from communal property to individual ownership. In the original **Gemeinschaft** society, by which he presumably means tribal peoples in the past, there was an absence of individual, freehold, ownership. He assumes that "Life of the Gemeinschaft is mutual possession and enjoyment and also possession of an enjoyment of common goods" (p.57), that "the

possession of all goods is also primarily vested in the whole and its centre, in so far as it is conceived as the whole". (p.60). In other words, the village, estate, tribe or whatever the unit of organization, 'owns' the resources, which are used by individuals. Thus he states that "the Gemeinschaft retains ultimate equity in his work, even when the use of it is granted to him exclusively, as a natural right resulting from his authorship..." (p.208).

There is an absence of individual ownership in the traditional village community: "The village community, even where it encompasses also the feudal lord, is in its necessary relation to the land like one individual household. The common land is the object of its activity...But even the allotted fields and pastures belong to the individual family only for the period of cultivation.. Also during the individual usage the villager is "limited in many respects by the superior common right..." (p.68). This communal ownership and co-residence is of the essence of **Gemeinschaft**, just as it was the essence of 'Community' for Marx.

In Tonnies' case it is mixed in with and symbolized by his concept of 'neighbourhood'. "A common relation to the soil tends to associate people who may be kinsfolk or believe themselves to be such. Neighbourhood, the fact that they live together, is the basis of their union" (p.26). One of the three pillars of **Gemeinschaft**, he says, is a common relation "established through collective ownership of land" (p.48), which he later elaborates as follows: "Neighbourhood describes the general character of living together in the rural village. The proximity of dwellings, the communal fields, even the mere contiguity of holdings necessitate many contacts of human beings...They also necessitate co-operation in labour, order, and management..." (p.49).

In contrast, in the **Gesellschaft**, property has been divided up between private owning individuals. "The theory of the Gesellschaft deals with the artificial construction of an aggregate of human beings.. everybody is by himself and isolated...all goods are conceived to be separate, as are also their owners. What somebody has and enjoys, he has and enjoys to the exclusion of all others..." (pp.74-5)

Thus the major transition, as with Marx, is that between communal and private ownership of resources. Again, as with Marx, he regards the modern proletariat as propertyless: "free workers...become denied of property...they become mere possessors of working power..." (p.96)

Marx on the meaning of 'community' in the primitive mode.

The principle of recruitment into this first and most real 'community' is kinship. "The first prerequisite of this earliest form of landed property appears as a human community, such as emerges from spontaneous evolution: the family, the family expanded into a tribe, or the tribe created by the inter-marriage of families or combination of tribes...The spontaneously evolved tribal community, or, if you will, the herd - the common ties of blood, language, custom, etc...Only in so far as the individual is a member - in the literal and figurative sense - of such a community, does he regard

himself as an owner or possessor." (Pre-Capitalist, pp.68-69).

We see that the bonds of such a community include language, custom, blood (kinship), but the essence is probably even deeper - communal ownership. Each individual in such a situation derives his being from the community, "the others re his co-owners, who are so many incarnations of the common property". (Pre-Capitalist, 67). In Marx's view, individual and community are totally blended, hence the references to the herd etc. The identity of interests is not enough to make a real community (Writings, 196); it is in the nature of the relation between an individual and his environment, i.e. in the nature of property relations that the reality of community lies. In this form, as in the next stage, there is 'real community'(Pre-Capitalist, 97), as opposed to the artificial communities of the third and fourth stages (i.e. feudal and post feudal). We may remember that in this original, tribal, situation, "the land occupied by a community of peasants belongs, not to the individual peasants, but to the community. Thus the district was the common property of the family." (Writings, 131). Thus 'community' is synonymous with ownership in common, based on kinship ties. The bounds of the community are the bounds of kin ties, language and ritual (customs) add extra bonds.

Marx on the 'community' in the Asian and Ancient modes.

Here too, in Marx's view, there is true 'community', the major difference being, however, that there are also numerous separate 'communities' (e.g. Indian villages), which are bound together into one larger whole or 'community'. The major difference between Asian and Ancient is that the former is based on rural villages, the latter on city states. Marx devotes most attention to the Asiatic mode (India), so we may look in a little more detail at that.

There is one central passage which provides a central key to understanding Marx's image of the Indian village community and is hence worth quoting at length. The passage occurs in Capital, volume one.

"Those small and extreme ancient Indian communities, some of which have continued down to this day, are based on common ownership of the land, on the association of agriculture and handicrafts, and on an unalterable division of labour, which serves, whenever a new community is started, as a plan and scheme ready cut and dried. Occupying areas of from a hundred up to several thousand acres, each forms a self-sufficient productive entity. The greater part of the products is destined for direct use by the community itself, and does not take the form of commodities (i.e. for exchange, AM)..The constitution of these communities varies in different parts of India. In those of the simplest form, the land is tilled in common, and the produce divided among the members. At the sometime, spinning and weaving are carried on in each family as subsidiary industries...If the population increases, a new community is founded, on the pattern of the old one, on unoccupied land...The simplicity of the organization for production in these self-sufficing communities that constantly reproduce themselves in the same form, and if destroyed by chance, spring up again on

the same spot and with the same name - this simplicity supplies the key to the secret of the **unchangeableness** of Asiatic **societies**..." (Writings, 123)

A good deal of value has been left out here in the omitted passages, but the essential characteristics of a system in which resources are communally available and owned, and where there is little production for exchange, are well revealed. People are still tied in through the natural environment, the land. There is a "combination of manufacture and agriculture within the small community which thus becomes entirely self-sustaining and contains within itself all conditions of production and surplus production." (Pre-Capitalist, 70). It can be seen that such communities share many characteristics with the 'tribal' situation.

Yet there is a major difference, in that there is a growing distance between individual and 'community'." The community is here also the first precondition, but unlike our first case, it is not here the substance of which the individuals are mere accidents or of which they form mere spontaneously natural parts". (Pre-Capitalist, 71).Though Marx may be talking more of 'Ancient' than 'Asian' systems in this comment, there are signs of a change. But whatever the differences, Tribal, Asian and Ancient are all alike in that ownership is, in the last resort, communal. There can thus be no classes, no inherent 'contradictions' in the system. Thus, for Marx, classlessness, community, and communalism of property all have overlapping meaning. This becomes particularly evident when we turn to the next major form, the Germanic or feudal system, which represents the crucial break away from true community.

Marx on the absence of community in the capitalist mode

If there are no real 'communities' in the feudal and Germanic stage, it is not surprising that Marx should find none at all in capitalist society. He notes the absence of community in both the countryside and towns. Even small-holding peasants form no community. "The small-holding peasants form a vast mass, the members of which live in similar conditions but without entering into manifold relations with one another. Their mode of production isolates them from one another...In so far as there is merely a local interconnection among these small-holding peasants, and the identity of their interests begets no community, no national bond, and no political organization among them, they do not form a class."(Writings, p.196).

Each peasant family is a separate 'potato' in the sack; there is no higher entity, as there was in the Asian 'communities' to subsume them. Basically, therefore, the social structure of western Europe and India is fundamentally different; only out of one could capitalism emerge. Furthermore, there is even less chance of there being a 'community' in the urban setting. "Being independent of each other, the labourers are isolated persons, who enter into relations with the capitalist, but not with one another." (Writings, 120). Each person is separate and distinct.

In conclusion, therefore, Marx would argue that some form of real communities do exist in tribal

societies, in the traditional agrarian civilizations of India (and China?), but that feudal, and pre-feudal Germanic societies (including Japan?) and capitalist ones do not have real communities.

Tonnies on the nature of inter-personal relations.

Tonnies argued that "the social relationship is the most general and simplest social entity or form" (p.18). He seems to have had in mind that each such social relationship was a transaction, or flow of information, in which one human being was the sender, the other the receiver. He states this as follows, adding in the observation that the messages may be either positive or negative. "Human wills stand in manifold relations to one another. Every such relationship is a mutual action, inasmuch as one party is active or gives while the other party is passive or receives. These actions are of such a nature that they tend either towards preservation or towards destruction of the other will or life; that is, they are either positive or negative." (p.37)

Tonnies decides to concentrate on only the positive relationships, those of "mutual affirmation" (p.37). These he divides by their origins, their qualities and their consequences, into two main types, those which lead to **Gemeinschaft** and those which lead to **Gesellschaft**. "The relationship itself, and also the resulting association, is conceived of either as real and organic life - that is the essential characteristic of **Gemeinschaft** (community) - or as imaginary and mechanical structure - this is the concept of **Gesellschaft** (society)." (p.37)

The best example of the former type of relationship is the set of relations within the nuclear family. "If a natural relationship exists, as for example between my brother and me...I have the feeling that we are intimate, that we affirm each other's existence, that ties exist between us, that we know each other and to a certain extent are sympathetic towards each other, trusting and wishing each other well..." (p.19). Such relationships are based on instinct, involve trust and reciprocity, last over time, carry sentiment, are often altruistic etc.

The polar oppositive, Tonnies argues, are those of which the "prototype is barter or exchange, including the more highly developed form of exchange, the sale and purchase of things or services, which are the same as things and therefore thought of as capable of being exchanged for things or for other services".

This contrasts in every respect with the former types of relationship. The bonds are conscious, rational, intellectual rather than instinctive and 'natural'. "All actions which is of an intellectual nature and consequently oriented by reason is of this type because comparison and thinking are necessary to it and furnish a basis for it." (p.20) While **Gemeinschaft** relationships are lasing and endure beyond the particular transaction, **Gesellschaft** ones are immediately ended and balanced. "Social relationships which result from such barter or exchange are primarily momentary in that they involve a momentary common volition". (p.20)

In the former type, there is delayed gratification and even pleasure in giving pleasure. In the latter case, "What I do for you, I do only as a means to effect your simultaneous, previous, or later service for me. Actually and really I want and desire only this. To get something from you is my end; my service is the means thereto, which I naturally contribute unwillingly". (p.21). The former is a set of mutual ties, the latter is a war of all against all.

"In the conception of **Gesellschaft** the original or natural relations of human beings to each other must be excluded. The possibility of a relation in the **Gesellschaft** assumes no more than a multitude of mere persons who are capable of delivering something and consequently of promising something...In **Gesellschaft** every person strives for that which is to his own advantage...Before and outside of convention and also before and outside of each special contract, the relation of all to all may therefore be conceived as potential hostility or latent war. Against this condition all agreements of the will stand out as so many treaties and peace pacts...The loss of one is the profit of the other ....This constitutes general competition...Competition has been described by any pessimists as an illustration of the war of all against all, which a famous thinker has conceived as the natural state of mankind." (pp.88-9)

We thus see the "ideal type" contrast of two forms of social relationship, that epitomized by close family ties, based on instinct, lasting, seeking the other's good, ad the other epitomized by the market, based on calculation, momentary, seeking one's own good at the other's expense. In the latter case, there is "person against person, merchant against merchant, competitors and contracting parties". (p.161)

There is a close parallel between these ideas of Tonnies and those of Maine, particularly in the discussion of the basis and binding nature of relationships. In the **Gemeinschaft** situation the two individuals based their relationships primarily on their respective statuses, as members of the same family or village or fellowship; one was father, the other son. Relationship flowed from their respective statuses. Furthermore, it was guaranteed and enforced by such status. The norms implicit in a status would ensure that the relationship would follow the right course. A father would behave towards a son in a certain way, and even a lord would behave towards a serf in a feudal way by virtue of their respective status. Exchanges between them did not need to be based on any new, artificial, constructed contract.

In the **Gesellschaft** society, which Tonnies believed had developed with modern capitalism, industrialism ad the market economy out of the earlier feudal situation, momentary exchanges replaced the long-lasting status relationships, and persons faced each other as free and competing individuals, mutually at war.

I this situation it was necessary to guarantee and to base relationships upon some new form, an artificial, rational, and enforceable agreement, or contract, or treaty, between the contending parties. In the **Gesellschaft** situation, the possibility of a relationship "assumes no more than a multitude of mere persons who are capable of delivering something and consequently of promising

something...Every person strives for that which is to his own advantage," so that "all agreements of the will stand out as so many treaties and peace acts" (p.88). These agreements we may call contracts: "the concord of will at each exchange...we call a contract. The contract is the resultant of two divergent individual wills, intersecting in one point. The contract lasts until the exchange has been completed, and it wills and demands the execution of the two acts of which it consists, each of which acts may be subdivided into a number of partial acts..."

Such contracts, based on limited exchanges, were absent both in practice and as ideas in the feudal system, argues Tonnies (pp.67-8), but emerged with the **Gesellschaft** society. (Here he diverges from Maine and Marx, who saw feudalism as contractual). The contrast between these two basic types of relationship is frequently made. "Possession is related to family law, whereas wealth (i.e. individual ownership, A.M.) belongs in the category of the law of contracts. Thus family law is only a manifestation of the natural right of the **Gemeinschaft** to its members, i.e. of its freedom. The law of contracts is the adequate expression of a relationship characteristic of the **Gesellschaft** per se." (p.208) And Tonnies quotes a long passage from Maine's **Ancient Law** to illustrate "the distinction which has recently been treated as the opposing poles in legal forms: status and contract" ending with the famous passage that "we may say that the movement of the progressive societies has hitherto been a movement from Status to Contract". (p.212).

Stubbs on the Germanic origins of England.

In the **Constitutional History**, Stubbs again and again stressed that the basic linguistic, constitutional and hence legal structure of England had been laid down very early. This is expressed in two major views. One is that the foundations of English society are almost purely Germanic; the second is that all these foundations had been laid down by the thirteenth century and that from then on there was only surface change. On the first point, he writes that "The English...are a people of German descent in the main constituents of blood, character, and language, but most especially, in connection with our subject, in the possession of the elements of primitive German civilization and the common germs of German institutions. This descent is not a matter of inference. It is a recorded fact of history..." (pp.1,2).

Or again, concerning the Germanic element, as one among others, he writes: "The very diversity of the elements serves to illustrate the strength and vitality of that one which for thirteen hundred years has maintained its position either unrivalled or in victorious supremacy. If its history is not the perfectly pure development of Germanic principles, it is the nearest existing approach to such a development..."

In relation to law, he writes, "Her (i.e. England's) common law is, to a far greater extent than is commonly recognized, based on usages anterior to the influx of feudality, that is, on the strictly primitive custom; and what she has that is feudal may be traced through its Frank state of development to the common Germanic sources. The result of this comparison (i.e. with France,

Spain, Germany etc) is to suggest the probability that the polity developed by the German races on British soil is the purest product of their primitive instinct...Language, law, custom and religion preserve their original conformation ad colouring. The German element is the paternal element in our system, natural, and political..." (p.11)

It was a consequence of this belief that language, law, custom and religion were basically Germanic (and hence social structure), that he was convinced that the basic sub-structure of modern England should have been laid out very early. Stubbs believed it to have been so by the end of the thirteenth century. (for rest of this, see in 'Revolutions' essay).

Marc Bloch and the transformation to modernity.
(originally written in Jan. 1979)

The other great modern historian is March Bloch. His immense erudition and width of vision have made him very influential. Yet his work is a mixed blessing for those trying to untangle the past history of England. The difficultly seems to be that the very weight of his opinion has helped to promote a general view of the development of west European societies which sometimes distorts the English past. Although he himself was usually cautious and aware of differences, his sweeping survey, particularly in **Feudal Society**, can too easily be held to apply equally to all of Europe. There are, in fact, two different interpretations which could be drawn from his work, and it seems likely that modern historians have tended to select one rather than the other.

One interpretation lends support to the double idea that all the western European nations went through roughly the same stages, with England perhaps a little precocious, but basically similar. The underlying thesis is that once there were group based on kinship ties. These broke down but then consolidated during the period of 'feudalism' into a new type of organization, not based on kinship. Then out of this emerged he conjugal family. We are told that "Early societies were made up of groups rather than individuals. A man on his own counted for very little. " (French, 150). The community and the kinship group were central.

At the risk of quoting too much, it is worth seeing how Bloch envisaged the change. The village fields in Europe "were the creation of a large group, perhaps - though is only conjecture - a tribe or clan; the **manses** must have been the portions assigned - whether from the beginning or only at a later date is impossible to say - to smaller sub-groups, communities within the community. The organism which had the manse as its shell was very probably a family group, smaller than the clan in that it was restricted to members whose descent from a common ancestor was a matter of only a few generations, yet still patriarchal enough to include married couples from several collateral branches. The English 'hide'...is probably descended from an old Germanic word meaning family...the term **manse** signifies an agrarian holding worked by a small family group, probably a family...This progressive disintegration of the primitive agrarian unit, under whatever name, was to some extent a European phenomenon. But in England and Germany the process was far more gradual than in the open countryside of France...." (Rural, pp.158-161).

This leads Bloch on to speculate as to how this change occurred over the whole of Europe, including England. The story he tells is the widely believed one of the gradual "narrowing down" of the family over time. "We know all too little of the history of medieval family. However, it is possible to discern a slow evolution, starting in the early Middle Ages. The kindred, that is to say the group related by blood, was still a powerful factor. But its boundaries were becoming blurred...Prosecution of a vendetta was still expected by public opinion, but there were no precise laws detailing joint responsibility in criminal matters, whether active or passive. There was still plenty of life in the habit of preserving the family holding intact, to be worked in common by fathers and sons, brothers, or even cousins; but it was nothing more than a habit, since individual ownership was fully recognized by law and custom and the only established right enjoyed by the kindred was the privilege of pre-emotion when a holding came on the market. This loss of definition at the edges and the sapping of its legal force hastened the disintegration of the kindred as a group." (Rural, 162).

This, argues Bloch, led to a change in the structure of the household. "Where communal life had once been broadly based on the vast patriarchal family, there was now an increasing tendency to concentrate on the conjugal family, a narrower community formed from the descendants of a married couple still living. It is hardly surprising that the fixed territorial framework of the old patriarchal community should have disappeared at the same time. " (ibid, 162-3).

Clearly Bloch was thinking of some kind of extended family system, with fixed corporate groups, presumably based on some kind of unilineal (agnatic?) descent. He seems to have believed that this was present over all of Europe and continued until at least the twelfth century. This is rather curious, since he must either not have read, understood, or agreed with Maitland's long passages on Anglo-Saxon kinship and the absence of family groups in a world of cognatic kinship. He even says that the wider kinship groups died out sooner in France, where, "In contrast with England, where a system of taxation based on the hide was in force until well into the twelfth century..." (p.163). These changes, in which the family shrank in importance and size, were not confined to the 'feudal' areas, for in Norway too there was "the dispersal of the primitive patriarchal community..." (p.164). Presumably by 'patriarchal', Bloch meant patrilineal.

What, i fact, Bloch though he saw throughout Europe was the change from some kind of clan organization, through a middling stage of a smaller joint family of married brothers living together, to the modern conjugal family of husband, wife and young children. This movement, if it occurred, would have immense consequences, for it would mean that the family could no longer act as the basis for wider political structures.

He then proceeded to show how, though France had moved from stage one to stage two earlier than England, certain regions lingered on in the extended family stage right up to the nineteenth century. He comments no further on England, but would presumably have believed that while it moved more slowly from stage one to two, it passed more quickly on to stage three.

By the thirteenth century, speaking of Europe as a whole, Bloch wrote that "We have seen that the familial community had nearly everywhere made the transition from **manse** to simple household" (p.164). But this "simple household" was not what we mean by the modern conjugal family, it was an association which was "also known as **frereches**, meaning an association of brothers. The children continued to live with their parents even after marriage and on their parents' death frequently remained together, sharing 'hearth and home', working and possessing the land in common...Several generations lived together under the same roof...This habit of living i common was so widespread that it became the as is of **mainmorte**, one of the fundamental institutions of French serfdom...Yet although so firmly established, these small collectives contained no element of coercion or immutability." (p.165).

After the 'clan' period, Bloch is envisaging a period of what anthropologists would call joint or stem families. This middling stage then began to fade away at different rates in different parts of France. "In time the habit of communal living also disappeared, slowly, as is the way with habits, and at dates which differed widely according to the region." For example, "Around Paris the practice appears to have virtually died out before the sixteenth century", while "In Berry, Maine and Limousine and in a whole sector of Poitou it was still very much alive on the eve of the Revolution." (p.165) Although Bloch does remark that England, with its legal system of primogeniture was different (p.167), but it would be easy to infer that he thought that England would have gone through the same stages.

The other major outline of the supposed evolution of kinship systems is given in Bloch's **Feudal Society**. At the time of the Germanic invasions "it seems certain that groups of this nature (i.e. "vast **gentes** or clans) had still existed among the Germans." It would appear from this that Bloch believed that agnatic kin groups, based on unilineal descent through the male line existed among the peoples who conquered the disintegrating Roman Empire. But this principle and these groups rapidly disappeared, for very early on in the feudal period "kinship had acquired or retained a distinctly dual character" (i, 137). This dual or cognatic descent led to a central weakness in the kinship system in relation to political and economic affairs, for there was no bounded group based on blood ties through only one line. "The group was too unstable to serve as the basis of the whole social structure". (i,138). As occurs with ego-centred cognatic descent (see Gluckman) any individual will find that he or she is related to both sides if 'feuds' break out.

Nevertheless, Bloch still tries to portray a middle stage of kinship, both cognatic and hence more fluid, but still based on some kind of joint or stem organization. When alienating land, for instance, it was "considered only prudent...to ask the consent of as many collaterals as possible". (i, 139). (Notice here the word 'prudent' - a far cry from the proper **restraint lignager** which one would find in real descent groups in India or China - Alan). Furthermore, in the country districts, the "communities", "long continued to gather together many individuals under one roof - we hear of as many as fifty in eleventh-century Bavaria and sixty-six in fifteenth-century Normandy." (i,139)

A gradual change towards the isolated nuclear family of modern times started, Bloch believed,

"from the thirteenth century onwards", a "sort of contraction was in process. The vast kindreds of not so long before were slowly being replaced by groups more like our small families of today". (i,139) Bloch thought that the change from one system "varied greatly from place to place".

As to the cause of " a change which was pregnant with important consequences", Bloch tentatively suggested the growing power of those alternative institutions which were to replace kinship, politics and economics. He singled out the activities of governmental authorities which limited the sphere of the lawful blood-feud. And he suggested that "the development of trade conduced to the limitation of family impediments to the sale of property" (p.140). Why this should have happened in Europe, but not in other large agrarian civilizations is not entirely clear, though it may have been linked to the idea of the massive disruption caused by the collapse of the Roman Empire. This is suggested by his brief reflections on England. He thought that there was a "premature decay" in England of "the old framework of the kindred", which he suggested was the result of the "rude shock to which England was subjected - Scandinavian inroads and settlement, Norman conquest" (i, 140). Unfortunately he does not specify an exact date. All we know was that in England, as well as elsewhere, "the large kinship groups of earlier ages began to disintegrate in this way". (i, 140)

The argument is complex, however, for there is not a "steady progress towards emancipation of the individual". (i,141). To a certain extent, the feudal period saw a resurgence of kinship ties. "The period which saw the expansion of the relations of personal protection and subordination characteristic of the social conditions we call feudalism was also marked by a real tightening of the ties of kinship. Because the ties were troubled and the public authority weak, the individual gained a more lively awareness of his links with the local groups, whatever they were, to which he could look for help." (i, 142) Thus Bloch is arguing that within feudalism, which he defines elsewhere as a period of the "dissolution of the State", both feudal ties and kinship ties grew in power. (This, of course, is not true of the centralized kind of feudalism in England, AM).

His argument then is that when feudalism began to turn into what others have termed 'bastard feudalism', both feudal ties and kinship ties were weakened. "The centuries which later witnessed the progressive metamorphosis of authentic feudalism also experienced - with the crumbling of the large kinship groups - the early symptoms of the slow decay of family solidarities." (i, 142). Bloch does not make an exception f England here, so we must presume that be believed that with the decline of "feudalism" in that country too, wider kinship ties would fall apart.

Thus we have the following argument. As the Germanic peoples invaded they lost their agnatic kin group and became cognatic. As feudalism of the "dissolved state" kind spread, there was a temporary and partial strengthening of kin ties. During this middle phase there were kinship groups - but relatively small ones based on parents and married children living together - joint or stem families. As feudalism changed into the various forms that succeeded it, so the middle phase gave way to the nuclear family. It is an appealing story, and may well have some elements of truth. But it is also shot through with difficulties.

There is no evidence presented that the early Germanic peoples really were agnatic. They may have for long been cognatic, before invading the Roman Empire. It is too easily assumed that the powerful kingdoms of England went through the same stages as the splintered and anarchic regions of France. An alternative scheme to the above, at least in relation to England, would be that the people who arrived (Anglo-Saxons) had no trace of agnatic descent. They brought an almost purely cognatic system. The flexibility of this system never solidified into any kind of kinship groupings - the speculations about the 'hide' and 'manses' as kinship based are probably completely wrong. There is no evidence, except possibly among a few very rich families, of any kind of joint or stem family from the earliest records. Thus there was no middle phase to dissolve at the supposed end of feudalism into something else.

What we do get out of Bloch's attempt, however, is the vital insight that it is in the relations between kinship and politics (feudalism) that the secret of European and specifically English peculiarity lies.

The other strand of Bloch's thought was concerned with the differences between England and the Continent. (cf. also his last book, not translated into England, on the French and English manors). It is not surprising that his remarks on this subject have not been fully appreciated since Bloch himself is ambivalent on the subject. One conclusion one can draw from his work is that nearly of Europe went through the same 'stages', that is to say pre-feudal, feudal, post-feudal. There were a few blank spaced on the map of feudalism, the Scandinavian peninsula, Frizia, Ireland (ii,445), but England is not one of them. Like most of central Europe, England passed through a 'feudal' phase.

What exactly, then, was such feudalism? Bloch's most concise definition is as follows. " A subject peasantry; widespread use of the service tenement (i.e. the fief) instead of a salary, which was out of the question; the supremacy of a class of specialized warriors; ties of obedience and protection which bind man to man and, within the warrior class, assume the distinctive form called vassalage; fragmentation of authority - leading inevitably to discord; and, in the midst of all this, the survival of other forms of association, family and State, of which the latter, during the second feudal age, was to acquire renewed strength - such then seem to be the fundamental features of European feudalism." (ii,446).

Although Bloch was aware that such a feudalism was not unique to Europe, for "Japan went through this phase" (ii,447), on the surface he seems to lump much of Europe together, including England. Yet there are signs that he also saw a profound difference between England and France, and it is worth exploring whether this was merely a difference in degree or in kind.

Although he appears only to have quoted Maitland directly once (on the absence of **noblesse** in England, Land,107, 123n), Bloch had absorbed some of the lessons of Maitland. He seems to have been aware that English "feudalism" was very different from that on the Continent from at least the twelfth century. These differences are discussed in various places. We have seen that he talked of the "premature decay of the kindred" in England and that this may have been related to a peculiarity

of England, the frankpledge system which was, he thought, pre-Norman and gave added security and hence undermined the political need for wider kin links. (Feudalism, i,271). Both of these features were related to a wider feature, the unusual strength of the central power in England.

One reason, Bloch argued, for the "really profound contrast with France" in the lord's relations with his serfs was that "in this remarkably centralized country" the royal authority could re-capture runaway serfs (i,271). This was because under the influence of the Normans and Angevins, "The judicial powers of the crown had developed to an extraordinary degree". (ii, 272). In England there was the "creation of a completely original legal system", so that "English feudalism has something of the value of an object-lesson in social organization". (ii,274)

From the words "completely original legal system", we might have concluded that Bloch was aware of an unusual and special phenomenon emerging on this island. Yet he draws back from saying that it was absolutely different, for he was too aware that there were parallels with the Continent. Thus he writes that "despite its distinctive features, the course of development in England presented some obvious analogies with that in the Frankish state..." (ii, 370). Bloch seems to be arguing that for about a century after the Norman Conquest England and parts of the Continent went along the same "path", but towards the end of the twelfth century, in relation to the powers of the seigneur or lord, for example, "It is here that the two paths noticeably diverge. In England from the twelfth century onwards royal justice made itself felt with exceptional force", for "In France the evolution of royal justice lagged a good century behind that of England and followed a totally different course." (French, 126, 128).

It as in the same period, namely the second half of the twelfth century, that another structural difference became visible, namely the peculiar position of the English villein. Bloch points out "How often has English villeinage been treated as the equivalent of the French **servage** in the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries...But this is a superficial analogy...Villeinage is in fact a specifically English institution." This was a result of "the very special political circumstances in which it was born", namely that "As early as the second half of the 12th century...the kings of England succeeded in getting the authority of their courts of justice recognized over the whole country." (Land, 58-9). The differences grew wider and wider so that "The French serf of the 14th century and the English serf or villein of the same period belonged to two totally dissimilar classes". (Land, 61-2)

The peculiarity of England was not limited to the lowest class in the society, for, as Stubbs, Freeman, Maitland and others had noted, there was a curious absence of a property nobility at the top as well. When discussing the central feature of Continental feudalism, that is "nobility as a legal class", Bloch found it necessary to write a second on "the exceptional case of England".

SECTION TWO: THOUGHTS RE. JAPAN, INDIVIDUALISM ETC.

(Notes made in April, 1992, while on way to Nepal)

Individualism and groupism.

This is going to be my thee in most of what I write later in the summer. It will be approached from various angles. Firstly, there is the review of Dumont, which will look at his characterization of the problem - i.e. the difference between a holistic/hierarchical and an individualistic/ egalitarian society - basically a problem of French philosophy from at least De Tocqueville onwards. In what ways is D's work a progress on Tocqueville/ Taine in specifying the question? He has changed the terms of the problem, in that the contrast is no longer France as opposed to America/England, but rather Europe and America as opposed to 'Asia' (esp. India). Among the questions one might ask are:
a. is the opposition roughly correct?
b. is India alone- or a type of Asiatic society?
c. is the link of hierarchy and holism accidental or necessary?
d. is this a binary position or is there a third, combined or intermediary situation possible, which is neither individualistic nor holistic, neither egalitarian nor hierarchical in the caste sense? It would seem that Japan suggests exactly this other option. Thus, the first thing is to dispute Dumont's binary model as over-simple both in being binary and in assuming that the constitution of society (individualism versus holism) and the arrangement of society (hierarchy versus equality) are necessarily linked. In fact, another way of putting Nepal is seeing it as unlinking the two - being half-way individual and half-way vertical. What, we may wonder, is the difference between vertical (as Nakane puts it) and hierarchical (as India) ? Nakane must speculate on this.

The fascinating thing is the ambivalence of Japan, which is both individualistic and group based. This is caught in the two characters which are joined in the Japanese word for "human"; this word has the Chinese character for person and the character for 'related to', i.e. person in relation to another. Thus the individual is a separate entity, having some meaning in themselves, unlike India. But they are not complete in themselves, but take part of the meaning, in relational structuralism, from the feature of relationship to another. This catches the paradox.

Probably there is a similar way of capturing the paradox of equality with inequality. Individuals are not, by virtue of class or caste (i.e. birth) superior. Yet the whole system is based on a set of dyadic vertical ties, inequalities of one to one, as embodies in male-female, younger-older, lord-master, boss-employee, father-son etc. and all this is reflected in the language.

Note also that there is a second set of problems in Dumont's work concerned with the origins and causes of individualism.

Incorporating work into the book on Japan.

It should not be too difficult to use the fourth bits I have to write in the summer (R-B lecture, Japan review, Dumont review, Achievement paper) into the writings which will finally emerge as a book on the origins and nature of capitalism.

The piece for Achievement conference could discuss the framework to make a comparison possible. This is related to the curious similarities of England and Japan - often notices - and the to apparently independent miracles. The difficulty is that the central and outward shape of the two is so very different. Nothing seems more distant than our picture of cherry blossom, artistic Japan and Protestant England. How can one deal with this contradiction?

One strategy is to employ a three-fold (or even four-fold) strategy - a middle term. As long as a two-way comparison is made, one is constantly reminded of the differences, contrasts, as black is from white. But if one introduces a model with the third term of red - then one can see that black and white are united in not being like red. Thus one needs a model of China/India, as well as Japan and Europe (and perhaps a model of 'tribal societies').

A second strategy is to shift the focus from a menu approach, i.e. a list of the constituent parts or ingredients of capitalism, to the recipe, i.e. how the parts are mixed together, the timing, quantity etc. and above all the relationship of the parts. This could be linked to the shift which Chambers made on the basis of Babbage's calculating machine from an idea of a static, original, set of laws, which set the world in motion (i.e. God wound up the clock) and the much more flexible idea of progression, programmed change etc. - where the laws changed over time. This is much more creative and flexible and developmental. It begins to have the central idea that what is needed is not only the ingredients or predisposing characteristics, but also a set of wider pressures or rules, which act in peculiar ways.

Since the word 'miracles' has often been used of both the Japanese and European experience, it would not be entirely out of place to look at the famous controversy over the nature of 'miracles', i.e. David Hume and his followers and Robert Chambers. Chambers found a solution to the problem of binary thinking - either there are miracles or no miracles - by saying both yes and not, i.e there were 'miracles', but not inexplicable ones, once we have an idea of God the Great Programmer.

A third strategy is not to concentrate too much on one feature - which soon prove to be elusive. It is the general shape, in particular the configuration of the relationships, which is important. If there is a binary division, which places Japan and England on one side and the rest on the other, it is the contrast of balanced or separated world witch not determining infrastructure on the one hand (as Japan or England) as opposed to embedded or glued together worlds, dominate by an infrastructure on the other. The latter situation is much more common.

Dumont and hierarchical man.

Having decided that he had, indeed, picked up the thread of an old, but interesting argument in French philosophy (which De T, Durkheim and others had explored before and which had, after all, been the basis of the battle of the French Revolution), what is D's solution and how satisfactory is it?

In 'Homo Hierarchicus' the problem is set out and no answer given, except to shift the problem, by suggesting that the oddness is not India, but Europe. This partly true, though it would be worth looking further at the Indian solution, since the reasons for that solution are themselves valuable in trying to understand the European (and Japanese) oddness.

But when turning to the question of origins and causes of this peculiarity in Europe, as in 'From Mandeville to Marx' and 'Essays on Individualism', the attempted answer is hardly convincing, despite some suggestive remarks on the strangeness of Locke and Mandeville, the influence of Marx and the contribution of Christianity. This failure is due to a number of factors. Some are theoretical (as in the above binary comparison, mis-specification of the problem etc.), and some are historical, in other words starting at a point in time and then assuming all is new, leaving out other dimensions (context of politics, economics etc. etc. Basically, Dumont is very hampered by not being a historian, both factually and methodologically, which tends to negate his advantage as a comparative thinker - that he can ask very interesting questions.

Dumont is ill-equipped to study the problem historically for various reasons. Firstly, his knowledge of English history, the key example, is non-existent. Hence he is forced to rely on the C.B.Macpherson type stereotype. So he leaps back to very early Christianity and medieval Christianity. Clearly the answer cannot lie in Christianity per se, since France in De Tocqueville's time was hierarchical and Christian. It is a brand of Christianity, plus many other things, in a particular configuration.

Secondly, Dumont needs to consider a long-term evolution of society, over one thousand years, and he does not have the depth of historical knowledge to even being to approach this.

But deeper than this his historical method is very weak, based on a very intellectualist, history of ideas, approach, with no causes, no before and after, nothing really historical. He is just tracing a theme or thread through time. Hence 'From Mandeville...' mis-dates the political transformation, making it too later, while 'Essays on Individualism' makes it too earl and inevitable. In fact the two ends need to be linked through the intervening years and some causal statements made.

Dumont has, however, posed part of the problem well and sensed the importance of individualism (cf. Andre Beteille on this as well).

One question is whether we pose the problem in terms of innate individualism, market mentality etc - as with Adam Smith, and then look at what blocks this - or the reverse, i.e. innate embededness, confusion of spheres and when what allows their separation. The two strategies will lead to very different results. It looks as if one needs both. T say individualism is innate flies in the

fact of experience, with many counter-examples. But if embededness is innate, one is left with the problem of the escape, unless one invokes some Chambers-Darwin like argument concerning a mechanism of inevitable diversification, competition and elaboration. Or perhaps more like Herbert Spencer's movement from simplicity to complexity. Is this, as in C19 thought, a natural tendency, or, as seems more likely, a chance and miraculous development which could not be anticipated, was quite unlikely, but in the right conditions (as can be seen in two examples) happened twice on two islands.

Continuing the Darwinian analogy, these two islands are a sort of social Galapagos, where strong market forces were able to develop on the bars of long separation, varied and different from their mainlands. The islands were close enough to profit from the mainland in terms of culture, trade and wealth etc., but not so close to see these tendencies squashed by the 'normal' mainland mode of hierarchy and group etc.

Another way of looking at the methodological problem is to think of reading the history both syntagmatically and paradigmatically. Syntagmatically is the series of consecutive events and their effects over time - or of ideas (as Dumont) bouncing off each other. Doing this, one has certain obvious similarities in the narrative of Japan and England - conquest, reformation, industrial revolution etc. But the secret does not lie here, but in the harmony, paradigmatical relations of the elements to each other, i.e. the relations of religion, economics, kinship and politics. The inter-relations of these takes a certain form, or conjunction, to produce a certain cultural chord which is greater than the parts.

Just as colours take on a different meaning in their context (red is different when next to blue or orange, and notes likewise, depending on their companions in the harmony), so institutions alter their meaning. For instance 'Christianity' takes on a different meaning in relationship to democracy or dictatorship. Hence it is essential to study all the aspects of society together and not separately (and another example would be clothing). One is used to this idea in art, but less so in studying cultures.

Thus one needs to study the story in both dimensions - temporally, as a story or syntagmatically, and structurally or paradigmatically, in the relation of things at a point in time, as a cross-section.

The separation of spheres: masterly inactivity.

The concept of "masterly inactivity" in politics is part of a much wider and necessary feature of a society which is trying to keep spaces between spheres. Although a space, absence or negative feature looks neutral or insignificant, the dog that did not bark is often the most significant feature. Thus the laws between the buildings make the colleges, the frames make the picture, the no-mans land is significant.

We could argue from this that it is the land, neutral and non-assertive Anglican church which

keeps out the over-demanding religion which is essential; the "night-watchman state" keeps out political absolutism; the fragmented and weak kinship system keeps out the clinging claims of the family - and all of this allows space for that other sphere, the economy, to develop. (Though, of course, there is, currently, a danger that the economy itself will become too powerful and eat up the rest).

The "eternal vigilance" necessary for freedom and democracy is based on the need to police the borders and not to allow them to be infiltrated so that 'liberty' is destroyed. It is significant in this context that liberty usually is taken in the negative (Mill or Berlin) sense, ie. autonomy or freedom from invasion by other spheres.

How then did this set of absences or restraints come about? Is it basically because of the weakness of the institutions - e.g. the bilateral family system, the introverted religion, the constitutional political system. Is it because each sphere concedes some of its sovereignty; the Church under the Crown, the Crown under the Law the family under the State etc? It does not seem, exactly, to be weakness - but a sort of balance, as in the centralized but devolved politics, the powerful but diffused religion. The way in which all these institutions and spheres fit together can well be analysed through the institutional structure and also through the definition and adjudication of clashes in the law. The way in which all the different laws fit together - common, ecclesiastical (canon), equity, manorial etc., is a masterpiece of keeping united, yet keeping apart.

This entangled, balanced, oppositional, system is that complex wood which De Tocqueville found puzzling - balances, checks, countervailing powers, contractions, tensions, positions, paradoxes, compromises etc.

The arbiter of much of this is "common sense", that black box which can skip over logical inconsistencies etc. to go for an agreed fudge. Where common sense does not work, there is confrontation and stand-off. This may help to explain the strangely oppositional, conflictual, confrontational nature of English law. In most societies law is present to assert the overlaps, the dominance of unifying principles or a single institution. In the English adversarial system, however, the aim s to set in opposition, to keep boundaries clear by explicitly making things right and wrong. This peculiar system of law is very different from both the inquisitorial system of absolutism and the compromise systems characteristic of Japan or tribal societies.

The power of the English and American system lies in its ability to prize apart, to create some kind of fission, which allows gaps for the system to breathe or ignite. Usually the pressure is to create fusion, which is socially desirable, but economically disastrous, which fission is the reverse, a form of puritanism.

Puritanism is a graphic example of all this; by definition it is a purifying, a separating, an attack on the mingling of spheres, a disassociation not only of sensibility, but of thought, emotion ad of all the institutions. It attacked and attacks all conclusions of spheres, all magic, all miracles, all

misplaced sentiment etc.. It is the draining away, the simplification, the separation. In this is not unlike Zen in Japan, a similar purification.

For examples of real overlapping, lack of differentiation, one can do no better than look at the clinging culture of Hinduism, probably the extreme agrarian example of society dominated by the twin powers of kinship and religion, welded together into caste. In such a situation, all independence of thought or action is suspect. The group is more important than the individual, and the calculative activity and planning which is the basis of capitalism as we know it is impossible.

The power of institutions such a family or religion is usually like that of a Black Hole, sucking in neighbouring institutions. How is it therefore that each institution in England and Japan withstood this, how did politics not get embraced by kinship and vice versa? This is one of the secrets of both Japan and England. Is there any form of repulsion of institutions, jealousy of their liberties, which prevents them being absorbed?

SECTION THREE FURTHER REFLECTIONS

(NOTES MADE IN NEPAL - May 1992.)

Functional separation and operational efficiency

Why is it that functional separation, costing so much in terms of human warmth and meaning, comes to be adopted at all? One major reason seems to be that it is clearly so much more efficient in general. Ends can be more precisely defined, the rifle rather than the shotgun approach. And the means to these ends can be systematically elaborated, adjusted and followed. Testing can take place and improvements can be made because the link between means and ends is much more obvious (with the elimination of 'magic') and the usual distracting impediments to modifying or adjusting practice - the distractions of kinship, power, religion and so on, do not apply. (One of the reasons for the inefficiency of many bureaucracies, e.g. that in Nepal, is that it confuses power and kinship with its supposed neutral status).

Thus one can pursue scientific goals by the experimental method, eliminating magic, and in the same way one can pursue economic goals with a sort of scientific method. If the means do not produce the desired results, one adjusts the means. After a while, for many, the means tend to become the ends; an obsessive concern with making money, earning salvation or the exercise of power become ends in themselves. Perhaps, in reverse, in undifferentiated societies the ends become means - the pursuit of beauty, truth, comfort, merit and so on become all important and less and less thought is given to the ways of achieving these efficiently and more and more effort into the ends themselves (as in religious contemplation).

Diversity and differentiation

This is somewhat akin to biological theories (for example those of Spencer or Darwin) concerning the relations between biological diversity and increasing efficiency. The simplest species were, like amoeba, undifferentiated, but species gradually became more and more differentiated, ending with hominids with their complex differentiation. But beyond the biological level there is further differentiation and specialization.

There are two types of situation where such differentiation is repressed, and they are intrinsically very different. One is those societies where no, or very little, differentiation has ever taken place; the other is where the previous differentiation is repressed by the growing dominance of one sphere or institution. We can elaborate on this.

In the situation in the archetypical society studied by anthropologists, everything merges into everything else. One can say that in the absence of institutional differentiation, the determining institution is normally thought to be 'kinship'. But it dominates merely because it provides a thread running through all the others, linking them and providing a unifying institution of a kind with its

organizing principles. It is like a dye, which spreads through everything; there is no separation all. In fact, things are largely undifferentiated, there is scarcely any division of labour in any sphere, in the economy, cognition, child-rearing or whatever. And hence there is little individualism or individualization.

The process whereby this state gave way to the highly differentiated world we see, for instance, by the time of medieval England or Japan, is of crucial importance. Both, by then, had passed the Rubicon into a new world of differentiation and alienation. Technology - of power and other as well as what we normally mean by that word - had a large part to play, as did the technologies of communication such as money and writing. All these technologies allowed things to be classified, separated, re-combined in new forms. The painfully accumulated advances could be recorded and stored over time, and so cumulate advance could occur, something that cannot occur without these powerful technologies.

The suppression of differentiation

The other situation appears superficially to be quite similar but is, in fact, utterly different. It is when a society has already progressed a long way towards differentiation and institutional separations, having literacy, money, priesthood, warriors and so on, in other words a full division of labour and a relatively advanced technology, as in sixteenth century Europe or tenth century China or sixteenth century India. But having separated out their institutions, these societies get caught in some version of the 'high-equilibrium' trap. This is much more than the technological and economic trap as it is described for China by Elvin. It is a trap caused by the almost universal tendency to a skewing in social status caused by the struggle for power which favours one group, priesthood (Brahmins) or warriors/nobility, or a combination of the two. They batten on an increasingly impoverished peasantry in order to extract surplus and develop rigid caste-like structures. (This is what, to a considerable extent, one can see is happening in Nepal, with the funds of foreign aid going to a parasitic Brahmin/Chetri group.)

This process, which has an incremental and viciously spiraling tendency, usually tends to push societies to the extremes of 'left' or 'right', its modern manifestations being communism and fascism. Both have very nearly succeeded in suppressing the oddly deviant open/differentiated and balanced system which grew up in Japan (for a while) and in north-western Europe and America. Only recently have these 'totalitarian' systems broken up.

The tendency towards increasing separation of spheres

In a sense, while the tendency of kinship is to bind together, through spreading the binding powers of relatedness to all spheres and hence to join people and institutions, the tendency of the economy is to divide, since the basic principle of economics is the extraction of surpluses and profits through oppositions, through competition, through the forcing down of prices, through a constant war of man with nature, and of man against man, through labour and through cunning.

While kinship preaches closeness and union, economy preaches distance and competition or, at the best, co-operation of autonomous individuals, rather than the fussing or union of separate personalities. Hence the modern world is based on principles of increasing separation and competition, while tribal societies are based on principles of striving for ever closer union and the suppression of differentiation and distance, though too close a fusion (incest) has its dangers as well.

Individualism and differentiation

What part do theories of individualism have in all this? There is a paradox here. At one level, as increasing differentiation occurs, the individual, who is the sole locus of all activities, increasingly established as the sole unit out of which society is constituted. Individualization and separate personalities emerge. Individual action is less and less constrained, it seems, by the action of specific others. On the other hand, in a paradoxical way, the individual is more at the mercy of the institutional forces over which he has no control - parties for which he does not vote, share prices over which he has no control and so on. He is less a master of his fate than he was. Likewise, in the simpler situation with little division of labour, an individual both had no meaning in himself and simultaneously encompassed in his skills and knowledge almost all of a society's repertory of talent and wisdom. Now it is the reverse. An individual's meaning no longer depends at all, or scarcely at all, on his particular social relations, but almost entirely on his institutional position in various fields. He thus seems to be autonomous. He is the only point at which institutions intersect, which invests the individual with apparent 'freedom' in balancing the demands of all the separate spheres. Yet, at the same time, with increasing specialization and expansion of knowledge, any given individual can only be the repository of a tiny fraction of the repertory of skills and knowledge of a society. He is a citizen, he is a doctor, but what else does he know?

Thus, if we ask whether individuals are more or less independent in modern societies than people in simple societies, the answer is by no means simple. In terms of apparent and conscious action, they are far more independent, apparently taking charge of their own destinies. But in terms of structural position, they are in many ways more dependent on others, or at least on institutions. How long would an individual survive in a western society if the electricity was turned off, the banks closed, the flow of consumer goods was halted? Each cog in the machine is more specialized and finely balanced, but as the machine becomes more complex, each cog depends more and more on others. All this was well explored by Durkheim.

Why did Japan and England escape domination by one sphere?

We need to consider how it was that in the two paradigmatic cases, North West Europe and Japan, the 'normal' situation was not allowed to occur. They emerged from undifferentiation, but did not veer into fascism, communism or what Perry Anderson considered inevitable, the Absolutist State. What are the critical factors in instituting this development and in preserving it?

Two approaches to this problem might be termed the internal and external. One could consider

each of the institutions or spheres which usually push a society towards domination and then analyse why such institutions managed to grab defeat from the jaws of victory. For example, as the Church grew in power, why did it not press its advantage? Two types of answer could be given to such a question. One might lie in the very nature of the institution itself. For instance, bilateral kinship systems are by their nature not fitted to provide a political or ritual basis to societies, for they always encourage individuation and fragmentation. Likewise monotheistic and ascetic religions such as Christianity and certain brands of Buddhism tend to renounce the world and hence leave it open to rational manipulation. A sort of dualism is inherent in such religions and a renunciation of all-inclusive moral rules. The anti-familistic bias of Christianity set it up in opposition to the family, as Goody showed, and its anti-political origins set it up as a critic and scourge of the State.

Why the modesty of the state?

It is difficult to know why the State was reluctant to advance into the usual absolutism. One can see that in periods of conquest, there has to be a great deal of devolution of power, otherwise a chief could not hold his followers together. They live on promises of future rewards, including a good deal of autonomy and sovereignty. With an open frontier they have strong bargaining power as opposed to the centre. What then usually happens is that with the closing of frontiers and the solidification into nations, this dispersed and personalized ;'feudal' structure of personal loyalties tends to solidify into an increasingly powerful and monopolistic state. This is what emerged from the crucible of feudalism in France, in India, and in China. The tendency is for increasing prosperity to be channelled to the centre. Success breeds success and soon a small group has eliminated all competition and can move to practical dictatorship. The dispersed centres of power are drained and eliminated with the unification of the State. This is the theme of Anderson's work, and he was right to assume that it was normal.

What is so curious is that this is precisely what did not happen in Japan and England. Geographical explanations have their part. The relative poverty, the islands status, with is consequent absence of a need to give up liberties to the centre in return for protection, the differentiated economy and the mountainous terrain all helped. Somehow, while avoiding the excesses of Bloch's fragmentation by preserving a very strong loyalty to the centre, as seen in the centralization of the Emperor system or the hold of the English crown, they also managed to avoid the excesses of the Absolutist State. The balance of powers was established and maintained. The polity kept its distance from the religious hierarchy and limited, or was forced to limit, its predation on the growing economy.

Thus there are three levels at which one analyse this unusual development. There is the internal constitution of each of the parts, family, religion, economy, polity, those features which make it strong in defence but weak in attacking or incorporating other spheres. Then there is the boundary maintaining role of a legal system which is supposed to operate precisely independently and without favouritism or particularity, between these different spheres, holding them both together and part. Then there is the structural level of the relation of the parts to each other and the relation of

relations, the unique combination which makes up each society.

The secret; the relation of relations

It is here that the secret probably lies, because while the constituent parts may be very different as between North West Europe and Japan, the relations of relations have a common feature, namely a balance and absence of single-sphere hegemony, no one part dominating the rest. This it is which sets these two civilizations off as different from all other large-scale civilizations in their prime. Usually this balance is a symptom of chaos or break-down, as in long periods in India, China or Dark Age Europe. But in these two cases what was normally a vice became a virtue. What was aberrant became the norm.

Productive tension between spheres

Another way of putting the difference lies in developing the concept of productive tension, which is discussed by Riesman and is not unrelated to the Marxian dialectic. Normally, we could argue, social structures are thought to be held together by the mutual attraction of the parts, functionally fitting with each other. This is true of simple societies and Absolutist states. It is assumed by functionalist and structural-functionalist analyses. Yet in open and confrontational societies, it would seem that one holds people and institutions together is their mutual oppositions and tension, in the manner of the famous feud and lineage theories of Evans-Pritchard. It is out of the oppositions of family and state, of religion and family, of economy and state, that the dynamism, instability, insecurity, inventiveness, restlessness which we associate with capitalism is engendered. Too cosy a fit of these spheres allows no space for the 'oxygen' of the economy to develop. The gaps between the institutions and the never-ending alternative allegiances push people into endless compromise, unstable alliances, temporary solutions, creativity and inventiveness. What then are the psychological and social costs of this endless confrontation and 'warfare' of all against all, and how far are the costs the same in Japan and England?

The contrasted Japanese and English solution to separation

At the heart of this problem is that while England and Japan have both managed to keep the spheres apart, they have done so in very different ways. England has basically solved the problem through individualism, that is to say through the confrontation of individuals, held together only by impersonal forces such as money, law and the rights of citizenship. This is not the path taken by the Japanese, who can by no stretch of the word be called individualists. Nevertheless the Japanese are equally and conspicuously different against from the communalists of a place like Thak (Nepal). Perhaps the difference could be pictured as follows:

see diagram, NB.1, p.70

England can be represented as firm small ping-pong balls joined by loose dotted lines. Thus there are strong individuals, with weak personal links to particular other individuals. But bounding them is a strong line which is a strong State, Economy etc. Hence there is much individual 'liberty' and autonomy in relation to all others, a balanced and generalized exchange. But there is also a solidity about the foundations and the boundaries. It is a flat world, like a billiard table, a level playing field of equal individuals (as Maitland visualized it), who are contained but free.

England can be represented as a series of fairly weak points with strong lines between them in a network. There are very strong dyadic ties in a pyramid or hierarchical shape, with upper and lower, but with much less generalized involvement. There are limited reciprocities, but these reciprocities are more personalized and there are many quasi-groups and quasi-corporations.

Different from both of these is what one might call the 'tribal' community solution, represented by a firm outer boundary with undifferentiated individuals within it. There are strong and widespread relations to all those within a limited group and few and weak relations outside this group.

Freedom and insecurity in the individualist solution

The greatest 'freedom', as felt by individuals, is found in the English individualist solution, where independent 'equals' face each other on a relatively level playing field. They can manoeuvre and appear, and feel themselves to be, in control of their own fate, constrained not by the views and actions of others, but rather by their own inner conscience. In this situation they can react 'rationally' to economic, religious and political pressures, following what seems objectively to be the best course in each case, without too much pressure from specific individuals.

Just as Marx saw this 'freedom' to be a necessary foundation for successful capitalist production, it is also necessary for the social and cultural context within which capitalism flourishes; democracy, bureaucracy, independent scientific exploration and so on. Yet the cost of this lack of warmth and depth in human relations is very considerable. There is much superficial friendship and temporary partnership in pursuit of specific ends, but not permanent and enduring and generalized relationship, except, perhaps in love. Likewise there is no assurance or certainty since the outcome of efforts, while mediated through people, is ultimately determined by complex and abstract processes over which one has little control, and the parameters are constantly changing.

There is a double uncertainty, for not only is the came constantly changing, as it is in most societies and certainly those which in Levi-Strauss' terms are 'hot', but, unusually, in restless capitalist societies the rules (affected by the technology) are also constantly changing, as are the strategies available to people. Furthermore, it is not clear what the ends or aims are; the different goals seem to be very finely balanced and tend to have the property of 'fool's gold' (turning to dross when attained). Should one pursue wealth, virtue, wisdom, power, prestige and reputation, beauty, happiness or what? The goals are constantly changing and the choices are agonizing and self-defeating.

In the majority of societies the ends or aims are self-evident; they are survival for oneself and one's children and relief from pain. Furthermore, the means are well known. It is the struggle to fit the means to the ends that absorbs people. Thus life and individual actions has plenty of meaning and **accidie** is unlikely to be of great importance. The main difficulty lies in the inadequacy of the means to help reach the ends. In the West it also feels that the means are inadequate, but largely because the ends are constantly shifting. The shots are powerful, but the goal posts are constantly receding.

In the tribal situation the goal posts are stable and enduring, it is the shots that are weakened by what an outsider would analyse as capital scarcity, technological inadequacy, little non-human power and so on. Frustration ensues in both situation, but of a different kind. In one case success is a delusion for in capitalism, it brings only transitory pleasure, turning to ashes in the mouth. In the tribal situation, success is only partial and incomplete, but at least permanent.

Differences in the attitude to nature

The differences between social structures is well mirrored in their different attitudes to 'nature'. The very concept of 'nature' as separate from 'culture' is, of course, a cultural construct. It is likely that most societies have not made this distinction. The 'natural' or 'physical' world is full of human-like presences, and this is often described as an animistic cosmology. The physical world is as 'cultural; as is the human world. Part of the effect of the triumph of monotheistic literate religions is to drain this swamp of pagan beliefs and leave a dead, cold, manipulable landscape only vestigially infused with last lingering touches of a Wordsworthian God. "Thou has conquered Oh Pale Galilean, and the World has grown grey at thy breath" as Swinburne was to put it.

The second aspect is that in the majority of societies, most of the supposedly human or what we would call the 'cultural' world is largely 'natural'. Humans are little shielded from the rhythms and pressures of nature: the seasons, the weather, night and day, animals and so on press in on them with only the most slender of technological screens to shut them off. Humans can never be under the illusion that they live in an artificial world which has somehow cut the umbilical cord with nature. The triumph of advanced technologies is to create a stronger and stronger barrier against nature until the seasons, times, natural species are either eliminated or, as in parks and gardens, domesticated. The Japanese with their Bonsai and Zen gardens have taken this to its extreme, making 'nature' into an almost totally man-made construction.

Why the love of 'nature'?

It is an irony that just as the separation of nature and culture occurs, there should for the first time be an appreciation of nature in its own right. Yet why is there an adoration, a feeling of deep solace and spiritual refreshment, centred on nature in certain cultures, particularly and strangely England and Japan?

Of course this is a very large question and one would have to discriminate, not only as between England and Japan, but between periods. For instance, in England, at least later, there was a much greater appreciation of 'wildness and wetness' as G.M.Hopkins would put it, though this may also be found in Japanese haiku and paintings with their depiction of forlorn scenes of mountain mists and geese flying through autumn skies. In terms of period, there are very considerable differences between the Renaissance appreciation of cultivated nature, the groves and fields of friendly nature, and the Romantic love of untouched nature, though even this is more complex, for instance Wordsworth's 'Tintern Abbey' is nature subdued by man.

So what made all this not merely a poetic device but clearly something that brought spiritual and sensual pleasure, now mainly found in the brief release of tourism and the rambling holiday industry?

Nature as escape from pressure

One set of theories might be called 'escapist'. Just as people escape into fantasy in literature, or into music, so they escape the many burdens of everyday life, the constant tensions, frustrations and compromises of dealing with other people, of "a long day at the office", by escaping into a world which seems to be pure, uncontaminated, undivided and so on. This is the theme of those great escape poems of the English language, ' Ode to a Nightingale', the 'Scholar Gypsy', the 'Lake Isle of Innisfree'.

It is, of course, easy to trivialize or oversimplify this as a dying cry against the crowding industrial civilization of the nineteenth century. That it is not so can be seen in the same attempts to escape which can be found in earlier literature, in the Tempest, in Spenser, in Marvell's exquisite 'The Garden', and could, no doubt, be traced in art and wider literature. It thus seems a deeper thread in western literature and certainly in Japan we can find it in 'The Genji', the 'Pillow Book of Sei Sonagon' and so on from at least the ninth century. It thus looks like a structural feature, only exacerbated by rapid technological change and increasingly crowded conditions.

The love of nature as caused by the contradictions of capitalism

So what caused this structural condition? It seems to be related to some central feature of the capitalistic social structure in much the same way as I have argued in relation to love. Firstly, the beauty of nature is attractive; its form, colour, patterns, satisfies in the same way as the texture of music satisfies. It does for the eye what music does for the ear. It provides repose and unity. Yet, we are still left with the question as to why natural objects should do this, and why select water falls, plum blossom, flying geese at sunset or whatever? Also, why did natural phenomena seem to speak of deeper and more mystical forces? For it is this mystical and ecstatic side of the response to nature which is so significant about the love of nature in both Japan and England. It has a mystical dimension: the surface beauties open magic casements on fairy lands forlorn. Why?

The answer must partly lie in the unsatisfactory and prosaic nature of ordinary life. If we start with the bald assertion that to a large extent both countries were 'nations of shop-keepers', in other words very widely suffused with a market mentality in which much of life is a struggle to manipulate people and things in order to produce small profits, to re-invest these to produce further small profits, then we can see a world where much of life is ultimately unsatisfying. A constantly pre-occupation with making money may be, if Dr Johnson and Keynes are to be believed, fairly harmless, but they are also not very spiritually satisfying. Man cannot live by the clang of the cash till or whirr of the credit card alone. It is, furthermore, not merely those directly engaged in such activities who find much of life meaningless and ultimately spiritually empty. Even those on the peripheries, for instance in the professions, find their activities are artificial and unsatisfying and are largely driven by practical (ultimately monetary) considerations.

To find a world where money does not enter in, the world of flowers and clouds and mountains, which obeys other laws and cannot be bought and sold is a great relief and release. Furthermore it is world where the lone individual can "commune" with, or speak to nature directly without the endless frustrations and misunderstandings which hamper all human conversation. There is no need to wheedle, persuade, cajole, bully, plead, lie, deceive, be protective or cunning. In other words there is no strain. One seems to be directly communicating with something, with exists independently of oneself and just is. There is no need or possibility of bending it to one's will. Indeed mind and will, which are at the heart of Tonnies depiction of 'Society', are absent. Nature cannot be the subject of reason and intellect, but is experienced through sense and emotion.

The starved emotions of capitalism

Thus nature appeals to parts of the human personality which are systematically starved in the peculiar capitalistic situation. As Blake or D.H.Lawrence noted, the inhibited puritanical civilization of capitalism imposes great self-discipline on people; they have to be self-inhibited, wary, self-controlled, controlling their emotion and bodily functions, as Foucault has recently illuminated (and Elias tried to show in 'The Civilizing Process'). These characteristics, famously summed up in the 'stiff upper lip' syndrome, are strongly developed in England and even more so in Japan. The outer mask of polite etiquette and the suppression of emotion must be maintained. One cannot afford to show, or even to feel, extreme and deep emotion. This emotional crippling, a kind of foot-binding of the sentiments, so beautifully illustrated, for example, in Samuel Butler's Autobiography or Mark Patterson's Autobiography (or J.S.Mill), is bound to lead to a reaction - if not a break-down in several of these cases.

There is only one place where it is possible to expressed and more deeply to feel these otherwise denied emotions: "for me the smallest flower that grows brings thoughts too deep for tears" (Wordsworth). The tears of joy or sadness that cannot be shed for the constantly manipulative and fractured relationships of everyday life can be shed in the safety of human-nature relations. A wild mountain scene, or a plum tree in blossom, can move one deeply and there is not danger that it will

betray one's trust, laugh at one. It is permanent, or eat least recurring, if transient, like the bloom of roses, hence both effervescent, yet trustable and predictable.

What moves the Japanese and English to ecstasy in nature?

This predictability and solidity is very important. What seem to be features of what drive the Japanese or English to ecstasy are an intersection of two things. The event itself, usually a moment of revelation, daffodils in the wind, a nightingale in a wood, "kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame", must be unique and momentary. If it continues for too long, the shock, surprise and perfection are gone. A note of music too long sustained is boring: its first impact in relation to what came before or after may be immense. The same is true visually.

Yet there must also be some hope, and preferably certainly, that there will be a repetition, durability. Just as the ephemeral nature of the experience gives it especial poignancy, symbolized in blossom and flowers or flying birds, so it can be confidently indulged in for the experience is part of a rhythm or pattern which should re-occur.

This is very different from human relations which are so volatile and unpredictable. Any letting down of the defences and allowing of involvement is likely to be betrayed. Most people's experience is one of disillusionment and betrayal: the loss of parental love as one grows up, of siblings, of loved ones, of cherished beliefs and certainties. "Ah what dusty gets our soul when hot for certainties in this our life" (Meredith).

The mystery and magic of nature

What then of the mystical element in nature. One can see that the experience of natural beauty may provide a shock of sensual pleasure. Yet why should it suggest 'Intimations of Immortality'? This is perhaps partly explained by the previous discussion of the permanence that nature provides. An individual who gazes into stars or mountains suddenly has a sense of awe, of being in touch with something that rolls through time and makes all the puny works of man insignificant. He is in touch with the infinite, and hence with the numinous and the other, which some have called God. This is, it seems, what Koestler was constantly seeking for, the invisible wiring, the arrow in the blue.

The attraction of nature is all the greater since the man-made world he normally inhabits has been systematically stripped of all 'magic'. Such a purging of magic is necessary for rational, predictable activity to occur. The world must be subjected more and more to human and comprehensible laws. But this has a cost. The mystery is gone, we suffer from Weber's "Disenchantment of the World", live in the shadow of his "Iron Cage", with its echoes of the "shades of the prison house" that close in on the growing boy in Wordsworth's 'Intimations'. We seem to understand all and hence there is no corner left for imagination or suspense. Or, at least, even if we do not understand all, we know, after Bacon and Newton, that all can be understood, is subject to purely natural laws. Hence there is no need for miracles or magic. As Pope put it, "God said, Let Newton be, and all was light". The

mysteries of night were banished. There were sill mysteries, but they were of another kind, the mysteries of science, the pursuit of natural laws by experiment.

While this brought great material advance and increases in means-end rationality, it led to the increasing de-valuing of the heart and emotions. No longer was it, "I feel therefore I am", but rather, "I think, therefore I am". The dissociation of sensibility, or Cartesian dualism increasingly left the senses marooned and unsatisfied.

The love of beauty and the leisure class

Of course, this malaise is both best expressed and perhaps most deeply felt by the small educated elite of philosophers, poets and other writers. The yearning may not be quite as deep among ploughman or swineherds. But it over simple to believe that it is not felt and expressed in other ways by the mass of the population once one moves into the early phases of a commercial civilization, and is very widespread now. Many seek the solace of nature in their gardens, holidays, fishing along canal banks. Indeed, with reference to the last of these, it explains the passion for canal fishing, solitary communing with nature, given a plausible alibi by fishing for a useless and inedible species which one throws back into the water.

The development of the finer appreciation of nature appreciation, as in Victorian travel or poetry or Japanese literature is, of course, very much the product of a wealthy civilization with a high literature. Peasants are unlikely, for many reasons, to recite haiku about the beauties of frogs croaking. The problem of ennui and considerable leisure are partly dealt with by the pursuit of intangible pleasures, especially beauty. The passion for parks, gardens, the search for sensuous natural experiences are luxuries which require much spare time and often considerable training. Many of the natural beauties are artificially produced and cost money. Beautiful buildings, using natural materials to good effect, and so on are other ways of using surpluses to buy pleasure, a mixture of aesthetic pleasure and the snobberies catalogued by Veblen.

The love of roughness and incompleteness

What is perhaps peculiar about the English and Japanese, when we compare them to French or Chinese or Indian, is their appreciation of roughness, of the only partially wrought, of nature before it has been fully transformed by art. Hence, for example, the paradox that infinite efforts are made by potters in Japan to make cups for the tea ceremony that look rough and half made, or the art of making a landscape seem 'natural'. This is that exquisite use of art, of artifice to create the illusion of nature, of lying to tell a deeper truth (Eisenstein) as in film, of gilding the lily, or rather not gilding it, but of touching it up with paint so that it looks even more like a lily, a Platonic vision of the perfect lily.

What is good and evil; different scales of moral values

I do not yet know enough about Japan to know upon what scales activities are placed, but one might roughly contrast the following possible scales (see diag. p.78, NB1). In the 'tribal' situation, at the very serious end are 'personal' offences against persons, for instance witchcraft, incest, attacks on parents; at the less serious end are offences to do with things - theft, destruction of things. In the 'modern' situation, this is reversed. This makes sense. IN a world where everything is mediated through people, as Gluckman describes it for tribal societies, it is interpersonal relations which are the pre-occupation of morality, incest, witchcraft, lack of love. It is here that evil lurks. There is real evil here because a necessary pre-requisite for evil is the perversion of human good, in other words, will and intention. Yet when we move to the 'modern' situation, crimes that are very bad, basically tinkering with the abstract forces by which society is now ruled (paper, money, 'property' etc.) are serious, but can hardly be considered 'Evil', since they are transparently only the results of a heightened capitalist virtue, i.e. greed, and they do not subvert the whole moral order.

If this broad polar contrast is correct, with England at one extreme and tribal societies at the other, then one would predict that Japan would come towards the end of England, thought not so extreme. Offences against things would be more important than offences against people. Or perhaps it would be more balanced, for dyadic relations are still very important in Japan, far more so than in Europe, and the disturbance of these relations can perhaps approximate to real Evil. Yet the situation shown in 'Sei Sonagon' and the 'Genji' (which would make a good study from this angle) shows no hint of real Evil. It looks as if it is an extraordinary world dominated by good and bad taste, aesthetics, etiquette. There absolutely no sense of 'Evil', indeed the religious ethics of Japan appear to have little pre-occupation with Evil.

The need for four-way comparisons between societies.

(This is a digression and needs to be placed elsewhere). The simple, normal contrast or dichotomies of developed/undeveloped are very inadequate and are cross-cut by much more important ones which bridge the cap. To compare England and the 'Orient' (or India) is a start, but dangerous as it means that real differences are ironed out. A three-way comparison of England, a model of 'Ancien Regime' societies and Japan is very illuminating as it shows how structurally there are several possible alternatives to the 'Ancien Regime' structure. Whether incorporated formally or not, a four-way comparison which also includes "tribal" societies, for example Gurungs, is also essential for without it the full range of possibilities, for example the effects of literacy, markets, the State and so on, cannot be measured at all.

The context within which moral rules apply

I already know enough in relation to Japan to make it seem interestingly different in relation to the context of moral rules. Here the continuum is roughly from one extreme where moral rules are totally dependent on social relationships, in other words 'particularistic', to the other extreme where moral rules are totally independent of social relationships, universalistic. Starting at the particularistic end, the sequence reads across tribal, average peasant, Japan, England.

Japan has a reputation for being ethically very relativistic and context or person dependent, as Nakane put it "having no principles". But in fact this is all a matter of comparison. While it is true that the strangely dyadic nature of the social relations means that what is right and wrong depends very heavily on the social relations of the partners, whether lord: man, husband: wife or whatever, and hence in comparison to individualistic and universalistic peoples such as the North Americans or English its seems very particularistic, it does not seem so if we look to the other pole of particularism. When, for instance, we compare the Japanese to Banfield's Amoral Familism and so on, the ethic seems very curiously universalistic, and indeed it could not have operated in the very efficient and integrated market way for centuries if it had not been possible to assume such universalism.

Combination of particularism and universalism in Japan

This curious paradox is perhaps explained by saying that while morality is totally relative to the type of relationship, and hence one talk of particularism, the types of relationship are duplicated as a pattern widely through the society. Thus the lord: man relationship encompasses many relationship, for example that of boss and factory worker, older brother and younger brother and so on. Thus it is possible for a particularistic morality to hold together a mobile and far from face to face society. Once a Japanese has established what class or order the relationship he is entering into (with his name card as the easiest guide), then he can act appropriately, according to moral rules which are both specific to that kind of relationship and also of a general kind.

General and particular moral rules in the West and Japan.

In contrast, English and American moral rules try to be as general as possible, taking as little account as possible of age, sex, class and so on. People are created merely as 'citizens' or as role players. Thus the morality, like the law, takes little account of statues, and is all to do with contract, and ultimately of the basic social contract of co-citizenship. In this sense it is universalistic and there are principles which apply to all relationships. Nothing is privileged and outside the normal morality. This contrasts to the situation in most societies where moral rules depend on group statues and birth statues, peasant-lord, father-son and so on. In Japan they depend partly on birth statuses, but unusually to a large extent they depend on individually negotiated, contractual and dyadic ties, for instance those of lord-servant, master-apprentice, adopted son to adopted father.

The impersonal morality of the West

Thus Japan has taken a huge stride away from the totally contextual, status-dependent, morality we find in all tribal societies and most peasant societies. Yet while morality was largely based on contract, it was still largely personalized. Here Japan has not followed the West. The next stride, taken by WASP cultures, was to transfer the particular contractual relationship into a general one: all 'men' are equal and should be treated equally. How this occurred is still a mystery. Certainly the

ethic of Christianity is somewhat universalistic, as we can see in Jesus admonitions to give, turn the other cheek and so on. Again, it seems that after the disruptions of the Conquest, instead of solidifying into very strong and discrete groups, of a quasi caste-like nature, on this island (and Japan) the tradition of contract was not squashed but expanded to cover the whole of a relatively small and bounded society. All 'English' were cone's cousins. One morality bound all of them, just as one language, one law, one coinage and one political system and market system bound them all. Rapid mobility and communication through symbols (money/literacy) prevented boundaries of conflicting moral universes emerging.

This half happened in Japan, but possibly the somewhat more mountainous terrain and greater amount of military upheaval made the general morality somewhat less ubiquitous and more thinly spread. Yet there was a common moral economy, which notoriously did not apply to others or outsider who were literally "beyond the pale", and hence less than human.

Good and evil as relative or absolute

We may also consider morality by asking to what degree Good and Evil are considered to be absolute, or are thought of as relative. Here there is another paradox. In one sense, the model simpler society usually has a very strong notion of absolute Good and Evil, but any particular action can be placed under one heading only after inspection of its social context. An action is Good or Evil depending on who does it to whom. Thus the concepts are strong, but actions are fluid. In the 'modern' case it is the reverse. Actions are largely classified as absolutely good or evil in theory; but once one inspects the motives, consequences, causes etc, the distinction between Good and Evil vanishes and everything turns out to be in the grey hinterland between them. Much of Shakespeare is concerned with the analysis of how difficult it is to decide whether actions are good or bad, as is Milton.

It would appear that while Christianity applied quite a simple code of good and evil, by the thirteenth century the insidious effects of money, literacy and a generally open and mobile society had posed the endless problems of relativity: " a truth told with bad intent beats all the lies you can invent" and so on.

Absence of absolute Good and Evil in Japan

The Japanese case is fascinating because, as far as I can now see, it has no absolute concepts of God and Evil, and its moral absolutes are perhaps even weaker than those in England. For instance the 'Pillow Book' and the 'Genji' conspicuously lack any ideas of guilt (though lots of anxiety) and contain no concept of absolute Evil. The world they portray is an almost e-moral world, guided by sentiment or aesthetics and not by moral rules. This fits in with the notorious difficulties missionaries had in Japan where there was no concept of Evil and hence none of sin or guilt, hence little attraction to the redemptive message of Christianity.

The dimensions along which Japanese behaviour seems to run are firstly good social relations, that is politeness and etiquette, and secondly aesthetics and form, "good is beauty, beauty good" to paraphrase Keats. The whole ethical world of Christianity, wrought with doubt and inconsistency as it was, is light ways away from the Buddhist-Confucian-Shinto world of medieval Japan.

How status is achieved or ascribed in the West and Japan

Another interesting area for investigation is the contrasts in the ways status is achieved or ascribed in different societies. According to the Weber-Parsons scheme, the contrast is between western societies where status is largely achieved, and hence very fluid since it can be easily lost and gained through effort, and the rest where status is ascribed. In these contrasting societies, kinship, gender, caste and so on are all ways of determining status at birth. As a rough first approximation this is sufficient, though in practice there is usually a more complex mixture of the two principles. For instance, in the West, birth determines the important status given by gender, in the Rest, there are many societies, for example many tribal societies such as those of the Nagas or Highland New Guinea, where personal valour and cunning can build up status. Yet even if we assume that the contrast is roughly right, there soon comes the complication of Japan.

On the one hand, in Japan, a certain amount is given by birth; gender, birth order, family status are all important. Yet, unusually for a non-western society, there also seems a great deal to strive for; there are many stories of upward (and downward) mobility arising through the personal actions of enterprising individuals and indeed the war torn politics of Japan's history is a catalogue of self-made leaders who triumphed for a while. I have no doubt that a study of businesses, whether in medieval Kyoto, eighteenth century Osaka, or twentieth century Tokyo would show many success stories on the model of Morita of Sony. Many younger sons had no inherent status and had to make their own way. If, perhaps, not as achievement-oriented as England, it was much more so than seventeenth century France or Italy. Japan was part of the 'open' situation which caused people to strive for an uncertain perch in the tree of life.

Reasons for restlessness and creativity of Japan and England

All this may be significantly correlated with the notorious restlessness and creativity of the two nations. What are the roots of this creativity and inventiveness? Here we might in a preliminary way distinguish encouraging factors and inhibiting factors. We should also consider the preservation of inventions. As we saw with rabies medicine in Thak; if the medicine can be so easily lost, there is likely to be endless re-invention of the wheel, with little possibility of people having the time to put the wheel to any good use or to build on an invention.

it

Curiosity and creativity and the pressures against it

So we may start with the pressures or incentives to creativity. One universal one is curiosity. A

desire to constantly try out new experiments seems a very adaptive device in animals and hence selected for. It is related to a sense of play and games, homo ludens, and the solving of puzzles. Like the drive to food, sex and so on, this might be taken as a universal drive. Yet the degree to which it is emphasized and encouraged varies very considerably.

Firstly, many serious creative acts require considerable effort, self-sacrifice, the forgoing of small present advantages, the taking of risk and so on. These are unlikely to occur in situations where people live so close to the brink of disaster that they cannot afford to take risks or to forgo the meagre present for a better future. Nor are they likely to occur when the results of such efforts are so thinly spread that there is no incentive for the inventors to pursue them. For instance an individual will not put a lot of effort into increasing a foodstuff which has to be shared with a large group, what one might call the problem of patents. Thirdly, creative acts are not likely to be frequent when the results of inventions de-stabilize or threaten vested interests in a society, vested interests who are in a powerful position and reap their reward from a continuance of the status quo.

Inventions and creativity as a threat to the status quo

To a certain extent every improvement or invention can be seen as a marginal loss to all others who are thus displaced, or may be. Perhaps one should differentiate those inventions which act in a zero-sum game situation and those which do not threaten others. A better hunting technique or weapon may benefit a whole group, though this would thereby disadvantage others groups which have an incentive to crush it, but often an improvement will be a threat to others within the group. (cf. the rather nice obsession of Godel that Leibniz had discovered the secret of the universe, but that this had been suppressed; the Galileo complex). Thus there are usually few advantages and many disadvantages in undertaking creative experiments. Even if something is discovered in a pre-literate society, the 'invention' must often have been lost or kept secret as a mystery. Specialized knowledge is of vital importance, but it is easily snuffed out. The idea of experimenting and then spreading the resulting knowledge is rather strange.

The need to remain the same, or permanent inventiveness

Another part of the answer lies in distinguishing between two types of society. In one, which is more or less stable and unchanging, safety and good sense lies in repeating the methods with which one was brought up. In societies of constant change, as are those with modern technologies, one must constantly create and experiment just to stand still in relation to others. These have instituted creativity of a sort.

The factors which encourage creativity in the West and Japan

In between the two extremes of constant change and extreme stability come the curious and important societies where there is both safety in the old ways, but also a desire to try new ones and

find out new things. This firstly needs the marginal, floating individuals who are usually the creative ones, the Benjamin Franklin, Robert Chamber, Charles Babbage and so on, not stuck in some enduring group, forced to make their own way, to live on their wits, to invent or perish. Here one can consider a few of the structural features which encouraged achievement and of the individual features which led to certain individuals being interesting in achieving and successful at it.

The two civilizations which exhibit these features most markedly are western Europe (Holland in the sixteenth to seventeenth century, Italy in the fifteenth to sixteenth, England and Scotland in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Germany in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries) and later America, and Japan in the twentieth century. Both civilizations are ones where the social structure is fluid and competition and mobility rampant. They are societies where competition of individuals leads to success and where private property, both in tangible things and in 'intellectual property' is quite far advanced. There is a certain security provided by the congealed capital of earlier successes, there is widespread literacy and exchange of ideas, there is no freezing into water-tight castes.

The marginal status of achievers

In this situation, it is often people on the margins who are most successful. They are often people who are structurally marginal, 'nonconformists' by both definition and name, such as the Quakers, Jews, Masons, Lutherans in Catholic countries, Catholics in Lutheran countries, Huguenots and so on. Such people were outside the current prestige system of rewards and sanctions and could afford to experiment. Thus, much of the best work was done on the edges of the main institutions such as the Church, the Universities, the formal power structure. The people like Arkwright, Chambers, Franklin, Stevenson, Babbage, tended to come from that marginal, hard-working, Protestant, God-fearing middle class background where literacy and poverty best interacted. Neither too weak and poor, nor born with a silver spoon in their mouths, they struggled upwards with their hard-work and inventiveness.

What is needed to make a creative break-through

Another structural feature is one which one might call very roughly blockage. What ends to happen is that a number of technologies and discoveries converge and make possible, but not inevitable, another major break-through. It then takes insight to locate the blockage, ingenuity and skill to provide a theoretical solution, hard work, luck and organizational skill to bring it to the market, entrepreneurial and communicative skills to persuade people of its efficacy. It is seldom possible for one person to combine all these abilities; usually two or three people are needed to provide all of them. Usually the laurels go to the individual who combines the insight, ingenuity and hard work. Quite a few people have one or other of these characteristics. It is less usual to find them combined. Yet it is only when they are combined, when the right question is asked, the correct answer is given and operational zed, that might deeds are done.

The personal character of great achievers

So what can one say about the properties of these heroic achievers, Babbage, Franklin, Hooke, Chambers? Apart from the general background already sketched out, they often tend to be self-made men, inheriting only the basis of their necessary capital and skills from their parents. Early used to making their way, these Robinson Crusoe like figures use their ingenuity to overcome obstacles. They also have a restless curiosity. The solving of problems is their delight, as one can see in all of these individuals, for they go on from one ingenious solution to another.

The discoverers tend to be people who combine theoretical skills, literary or mathematical ability, with a practical bend, an ability with their hands, an interest in techniques, in how things work, in the external and practical world. They tend to have a general philanthropic desire to better others (while also bettering themselves). They tend to have considerable self-confidence, to believe in themselves, which we can see is an essential pre-requisite when venturing into unknown worlds where courage is needed and others will make mock.

It would be nice to believe that such people also have a sense of proportion, of humour and of humility. But this has to be established. They must certainly be ambitious in the best sense. They tend to be optimistic and trusting, if not innocent. They usually have a wide interest, approaching Renaissance ideals, for it is through wide experience and knowledge that they bring together things which have not previously been connected. They are often not formally trained, but amateurs. This is a double advantage. Firstly they are able to question the accepted wisdom without jeopardizing their careers; secondly they often do not even know what the accepted wisdom is and hence approach the problem afresh. Many a discovery has been blocked by a widespread error which has become enshrined as truth and hence is no longer tested. These people do not know that a door is locked until they have pushed at it, and often find that it was not locked after all.

Another feature is their peer and family pressure. Most people can only stand a certain amount of nagging and criticism, especially if they are venturing on very difficult work and with considerable self-sacrifice and risk. The lonely individual, or the individual supported by a loving spouse, friends, family or mutual support club is best able to venture thus.

Of course intelligence, methodical hard work and so on are needed. In the end, however, the intelligence, per se, may be no more than average. It is a combination of the right time (a real problem to be solved), a certain social environment, and an individual with the rights mixture of skills, that is important.

The conjunction of discoveries and the creative moment

Another general feature seems to be a situation where, like a lava flow down a mountain-side, social structure and technology is moving fast and irregularly. Knowledge and discoveries are made and have unpredictable effects, bounding off each other in unexpected ways. In this uneven advance,

suddenly parallel but separate developments converge: the achiever or inventor is like a cable joining them and creating an explosion of power.

Some major impediments to achievement

So what are the major impediments to achievement? They have to a considerable extent been alluded to. The major one is the vested interests of others, either the small group within which an individual has his moral life and which will discourage any kind of deviation from custom as threatening, or the wider society which is usually constructed in a way which by its division of labour makes systematic creativity very difficult. As stated above, one of the ingredients of successful innovation seems to be an ability to bridge the gap between theoretical, abstract, knowledge (literacy/mathematics) and practical ability with real things, work with one's hands and senses. A second pre-requisite is that a person should have a wide knowledge, across disciplinary or other boundaries.

The normal division between theoretical and practical

Now a central feature of most major civilizations has been an increasing division between the theoretical and practical, with a subsequent devaluing of the latter. Thus there almost always emerges a small band of 'literati', Confucian mandarins, Brahmins, Oxbridge dons, who scorn manual and practical work and give themselves up to increasingly specialized and esoteric knowledge. The working orders of medieval Christianity provided a partial exception to this, combining the intellectual with the practical and helping in much innovation. Thus this impulse faded out. Thus those who were trained to think analytically were divorced from the practical problems and vice versa. Usually this reaches an extreme level. Likewise, even within the literati the disciplines became increasingly narrow and specialized, width was sacrificed to depth and formal training in abstract formal knowledge, grammar, rhetoric, repetition. Substance was sacrificed to form. The problem and its solution mattered less than the rigour of the methods used to solve it. More and more effort went into the means, less and less into thinking whether the questions were interesting or worth asking.

Two exceptional social structures and creativity

The social structure corresponded to this division, almost always falling into some variant of the following opposition, Rulers (Literati/Priests, Warriors): Ruled (Merchants and Peasants). The thinkers and the doers were thereby divided. This is what we find in India and China and quite strongly in Ancien Regime Europe.

Yet there were two notable exceptions, West Europe (especially Holland and England and, earlier, Italy) and Japan. What is notable about these civilizations is that the social structure was much more fluid. As Arthur Young, for example, noted on his Tour in France, an English aristocrat could easily be involved in the minutiae of farming, which was both undesirable and impossible for

a French aristocrat. Likewise many English 'gentry' were amateur 'scientists' and so on. The 'literati' were not divorced from the practical. 'Trade' and 'Agriculture' were not looked down upon; business and farming and wealth and knowledge were intermixed. This was a very notable feature of England and Scotland, hence they were derisively known as a "nation of shopkeepers", and in one dimension it was even more exaggerated in Japan.

Craft activity and the combination of theory and practice

This mixture of the theoretical and practical in Japan is best shown in relation to arts and crafts. Crafts are a very good index, since the making of beautiful objects, whether scripts, paintings, pottery, buildings, or whatever lies precisely at the intersection between the intellectual and the practical. Insight, intelligence and imagination, all 'intellectual' properties, need to be combined with more 'emotional' abilities, a sense of form, rhythm and so on. Then this is again combined with practical abilities, skill and knowledge of the properties of the physical world which is being moulded. To build a cathedral or create a beautiful painting or pot necessitates just that mix which is the essence of creativity, practical skill and theoretical knowledge.

It is thus fascinating that the Japanese should so elevate craft activities. Whereas in India and Nepal a craftsman, whether in gold, iron, cloth or leather, is considered the lowest of the low - an outcaste, in Japan such people have a very high status indeed (except leather workers), perhaps even being elevated into Living Treasures. The situation in seventeenth century England or Holland veered towards the Japanese end, without being as extreme as that. The Goldsmiths, Leather workers and so on had their 'honourable' guilds. An 'ingenious' mechanic was highly regarded and well paid. This practical, tinkering, skill was continued through the centuries, though it has begun to falter recently. If combined with genuine practical puzzles to solve, the craft skills and ability and intelligence combines to make the wonders of nineteenth century British engineering or twentieth century Japanese high technology.

Differing concepts of beauty and form

This craft orientation is related to another topic which it would be interesting to compare between our four model societies, concepts of beauty and form. The argument I would like to be able to develop concerns various features of the ideal of beauty. Firstly, there are the areas where beauty is thought to be potentially constructible, or to be found. Here one might distinguish at the extreme Japan, where almost everything has beauty potential, writing, gardens, houses, social relationships, constructed simple objects (pots and pans). In this situation there is, to a westerner, an incredible emphasis on the senses of smell, sight (colour and form) and so on. At the other extreme, are those societies where beauty is confined to 'high' culture and not applicable to the humble things made by man. If we look at these two extremes, it would appear that the Dutch and British of the early modern period lay somewhat in the middle. Though fairly Philistine in respect to the very highest arts, the crude British and Dutch had an interest in making beautiful objects of a simple kind, furniture, clocks, pottery, boats, books and so on. Attractive to the eye and well designed, they were

also commercially successful, as are Japanese craft goods now.

What is considered to be beautiful; incompleteness of art

A second area concerns what is considered beautiful. Here one might roughly distinguish between open, energetic, evolving art, and closed, still, finished, art. Very simple, for instance, the former might be likened to Gothic art, fierce, striving, sometimes tangled, inventive, open and unbalanced. The latter might be likened to classical or Baroque art, heavy, finished, closed, balanced.

It has long been noted that English, German and Dutch art is of the Gothic type, but that this Germanic art was gradually suppressed in much of Europe by a revived classical and then Baroque art, heavy, State inspired, formal, measured. This basic contrast, the one form suggestive, mystical, alluding, incomplete, exciting by disorder and playfulness ("a sweet disorder in the dress..."), half patterned and half wild as in an English garden with its "sweet disordered English rose", the other balanced and heavier and, to English taste, rather gross and uninspiring, is curiously similar to the distinction made between Japanese art, which is also allusive, unfinished, mystical, light and insubstantial, and Chinese (and Indian?) art which tends to be bold, heavy, balanced, symmetrical.

The ideal of beauty and the political system

One art style befits a de-centralized political structure with a good deal of local and individual initiative and stylistic improvisation. The other befits a centralized absolutism with formal rules, where art is the result of central patronage. In one case there is inventiveness and loose principles and more room for personal initiative; in the other, it is painting by numbers, according to rules.

Beautiful objects and the success of the economy

It is not difficult to see how such a creative artistic system, when harnessed to growing technology, should produce good consumer goods, as opposed to the heavy and ugly art and goods produced by absolutisms, whether of the Right or the Left.

How beauty is communicated; form and meaning

A third dimension concerns the relation between the external form and the inner meaning, how beauty is communicated. This might the linked to the linguistic sing, that is the relation between signifier and signified. In what might be called 'classical' art, the relationship is close and explicit, as it is in a photograph. The thing is what it seems, little is left to the imagination or the senses. In the Gothic, the relationship is more abstract and arbitrary and hence leaves more room for the play of thought and imagination. Allusive arts, for example poetry, flourish in such a situation, hence the wealth of Japanese haiku and English sonnets, as do novels (hence the two earliest novel-writing civilizations, the Japanese and the English), while the large-scale plastic arts (architecture, sculpture) are less encouraged.

Furthermore, in the Gothic style, the art itself is much more a matter of alluding to things. A few rocks and gravel suggest a garden or sea, a few brief touches of grey and black, a swan flying through lone mountains, a yellow glow in a haze of grey, a train in a mist. This is what the English and Japanese love (cf. poem on miniature painting). If it is true that in general the more the signifier and signified can be held apart, the more powerful the communicative system (as can be seen by comparing the power of alphabetic scripts as opposed to pictograms), this allusive art is a richer and more flexible meanings of communicating beauty. It is capable of releasing the power of the human imagination, which fills in and magnifies the spaces left by the art form. As Prof. Nakamura first explained to me when comparing King's College Fellows garden to a Japanese garden, the Japanese partly do this by miniaturization. The tiny is expanded by the magnifying power of the mind, as in bonsai. Simple acts, like the taking of tea, are expanded by the mind and imbued with a deeper meaning.

The aesthetics of capitalism

Thus it should be possible to incorporate into a history of capitalism a section on the aesthetics of capitalism, perhaps following some of the leads of Weber who tried to link types of music to types of social and political structure.

Truth, fact and positivistic knowledge

One might start in a discussion of this by noting the widespread conviction that the people of North Western Europe, the English, Dutch, Scots etc, are and were unusually positivistic. They believe in a real world of external things, existing irrespective of their perceptual schemata. The tree is there whether we look at it or not (Berkeley). This world of brute facts obeys certain laws and hence is accessible to understanding (Science) and manipulation (Technology).

Most civilizations, on the contrary, would hold some variant of the Hindu belief that the material world is an illusion (maya) a construct of our minds. This view came to dominate both Indian and Chinese philosophy and, to a certain extent it can be found in French (Cartesian?) and German (Hegelian) philosophy with its idealist and Platonic tradition. If the world is an illusion, and if the rules which govern it are fluctuating, the pursuit of knowledge (Science) is not to be made through observation of the external world of 'facts' and the subjecting of these external things to tests (Baconian experiments), but rather through introspection, mediation and so on as in the Confucian, Buddhist and Hindu mode. This, alone, will lead to Enlightenment. The result, notoriously, is that the individual may change himself and look at things differently, but the gross physical world is hardly changed at all. This is hardly the recipe for material progress.

Concepts of truth and their social determinants

Related to this is the matter of truth. If 'fact' is conceived of as subjective, flowing from the

individual's consciousness, likewise truth is subjective. Just as there are no absolute facts, all is a shifting mirage, so there are not absolute truths (except God). Truth is relative.

In the extreme case, documented by anthropologists, truth is relative to the social relationship. Things can be both true and untrue at the same time. The borderline between fact and fiction is vague and there is no clear answer to Pilate's rhetorical question "What is truth?". This absolute relativism is probably limited to societies which have certain properties. Firstly, social relationships are stronger than relations between man and nature. Secondly, there is no externalization or inscribing of knowledge in the form of writing, money and so on, so that everything can be manipulated by human will and seems relative to human desire. Just as Evans-Pritchard showed that social time and political distance were relative and manipulable, so is knowledge, of which truth and fact are part. If a pries says that there are spirits in cucumbers, there are. It is not what you know, it is who you know, or rather who told you it. The same is true once the monopoly of power is in the hands of a totalitarian polity, as Orwell demonstrated in '1984'.

If this is roughly right, then we would expect the situation to begin to change when two things happen. Firstly, when personal social relations begin to decline in relative importance as large-scale institutions take over, for instance property is made into a 'thing' (fetish according to Marx), 'truth' and the external world begins to have a real substance. Secondly when the external abstract world of symbolic relations instituted in other forms of communication, money, writing and so on, are well established.

In this middling state, truth and fact are still fluid and their fluidity is maintained by priesthoods or learned groups which have a vested interest in keeping a monopoly of "truth". Yet it is a little more difficult to believe that everything is relative. Social truth and existential truth are closer together, if not completely joined. IN this situation certain groups have a monopoly of truth, which is still fairly inscrutable. Humans are still trying to see through a glass darkly, "Nature and nature's laws lay hid in night...".

The belief in the existence of absolute truth

Then one has a third situation, where one can believe in "Truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth". "Truth" is, like time, turned into a single standard or rule by which all things are measured. It occurs independently of individual actions or thoughts. This establishment of an independent measure of the value of knowledge is as significant as revolution as the establishing of that better known measure of the value of labour, the establishment of linear time. In each case the invention owes something to technology, clocks are the instruments of time, writing, and especially printing, are the instruments of truth. In oral cultures truth is always fluid, depending on human memory and transitory power relations. Once inscribed, the arbitrary symbols of language embed truth so that it appears to be objectified.

Social changes lying behind the discovery of absolute truth

Yet in each case, with the discovery of independent value and independent truth, something more than just a technological breakthrough is needed. In each case an economic, social and political change is probably also necessary. If activities are circular, so will time be in the classically Durkheimian way. Likewise, as we can see with the manipulation of 'truth' and the cynicism about its sheer existence in absolutist societies, it could be argued that an 'open' and free environment, with widespread access, to information, a questioning attitude, are all pre-requisites for the establishment of absolute truth. There is, of course, a supreme irony here. Those States which would most obviously love to promote the idea of an absolute truths, to fit with the other absolutisms, generate in opposition a deep cynicism about truth. Those open societies which encourage everyone to question and argue and dispute, encourage a strange faith that there is something out there to argue about - an absolute goal of some kind, even if we have not yet attained it.

The necessity for a belief in truth for scientific success

Whatever the reasons for the emergence of a belief in independent and objective "truth", one can see how fundamental such a belief must be for the development of science and truth. As the discussion of post-modernist relativists shows, it may be philosophically likely that objectivity is impossible and we may know as anthropologists or philosophers that reality and even science is socially constructed. Yet what is philosophically right is not always fruitful. Just as Godel showed that mathematics cannot be proved to be true, and hence may be untrue, yet mathematicians have managed to achieve a great deal as a result of their faith and belief in mathematics as ultimately true, so it is important for people to believe that there is an ultimate truth. If there is no such belief, then people know they are chasing shadows, that there is no absolute measure, no laws, no way of discriminating between good and bad - just a kind of endless hall of mirrors and deconstruction. If one enters such a hall of mirrors, 'science' is a haphazard, mysterious affair and knowledge is best approached by religious means.

Yet once Bacon and others became convinced that there were 'truths' of an absolute kind out there to be apprehended, and these could be accumulated, then science of an incremental kind is possible. This did not occur in India and China and may be part of the explanation of the failure to develop a modern science and technology there. Things were indeed invented - many of them well before they were invented in the West. But the method of invention, which in turn was based on the belief in invention, was not discovered.

The idea of absolute truth and the reasonable man

An idea of objective truth is somehow related to the concept of the reasonable man, the idea that a number of independent observers look at the same external phenomena will see the same 'facts', come to the same conclusion. Such a belief is rather unusual. Normally societies are so deeply riven by social and political differences that the same set of 'facts' will be interpreted very differently by different observers, each highly constrained by their social position. An objective idea of truth, like a common currency, requires a rather egalitarian, open, market in ideas and a good deal of mutual

respect. It requires a certain minimal community of interests and power. Truth is, therefore, an excellent index of 'modernization' and it will be fascinating to compare attitudes to its existence in Japan and England. A first guess is that Japan, with its ambivalent language, which is at the other extreme to the biblical injunction to "Let your yea be yea, your nay be nay", is historically intermediary between total relativism and total positivistic objectivity.

Professionalism, etiquette and the suppression of feeling

Have just read Ishiguro's novel 'The Remains of the Day'. This is a loving picture of two or three features of English society which can be very well depicted by a Japanese because they have strong resonances in Japan. They are as follows: the master-servant loyalty overwhelming all other personal feelings; professionalism and a strict division of spheres and duties centering on the concept of 'dignity'; the suppression of personal emotion in favour of public duty; the importance of etiquette and order; undeserving loyalty leading to dangerous, fascist and undemocratic consequences (with its message for Japan). It is worth looking at these a little more closely as central features which seem to link Japan and England.

The servant-master relationship and loyalty

The novel is much concerned with the unswerving loyalty central to the employer-servant relationship (in this case the servant is a head butler). Ishiguro rightly senses that this is at its most extreme in English culture in the relation of maser and servant in a country house (or butler/porter in an Oxbridge College). A combination of respect, pride, devotion and deference is beautifully captured. Since the lord-master, hierarchical, relation is the central core of Japan in the past and present, the novel is exploring an area of great interest in both cultures. This is an historical problem in twentieth century England and a cultural problem in twentieth century Japan, namely how to combine a traditional hierarchical social structure with all its deference, security, **noblesse d'oblige** and so on, with the modern democratic ideas stemming from America.

The essence of the bond is a personal, chosen (gesellschaft) contract of a man to his lord, whereby, in return for patronage, the man provides unswerving loyalty, but also renders himself almost a mat to be trodden on. There is much exploration of the questions of the degree to which self-effacement can go before the butler becomes just a machine.

Honour, service and subservience in the lord-master tie

There is also a good deal of exploration in the novel of why the butler or inferior should be prepared to suppress so much of himself for his lord. The, perhaps Japanese, answer seems to be something which is crudely caught in the idea of reflected glory. By his service, the servant partakes in a little of honour of the master. His master's triumphs become his own. This glow of participation, something akin to the feeling of regimental honour, this fusing of personalities, depends a good deal on the structure of the relationship itself and the respective roles of the people concerned. Yet there

is also much discussion of the extent to which such loyalty is unconditional, and how much it depends on the lord being engaged in worthwhile humanitarian or political activities. Ishiguro notes the change from almost automatic loyalty to a greater emphasis on 'noble cause' loyalty.

The cost; professionalism and the suppression of emotion

This loyalty is obtained at a very considerably psychological cost. The essence of this is the separation of the personal feelings, indeed the personality, of the servant, from his actual behaviour. Just as a nurse has to separate her feelings from her job, so does a butler. The analogy is drawing with acting, and indeed, with the Japanese love of masks, one can almost see the impassive butler acting as a mask. Yet the acting is deeper than normal acting because the mask becomes the face, as we can see that it can never be put off. Even in his private thoughts, we can see the butler has become his mask, with no independent personality. In relation to his two potentially deepest relations, to his father in death and Miss Kenton in love, he is unable to respond for he has become a stiff, formal, mask.

The butler's failure to unbend, respond, let the mask slip, is the result of long, professional, self-discipline which means that not only can be suppress feeling, but it has been entirely repressed, so that it is not felt or recognized at all. Only in one sentence in the whole book, very near the end, does it gush out when he suddenly realizes what he has missed in not realizing that he loved Miss Kenton and "my heart was breaking". Then it disappears again under self-policed surface of his mask.

This abnegations of the selfish, individual, personality in a wider cause to satisfy the lord probably has many resonances for a Japanese in relation to the Bushido mentality. Ishiguro has explored one end of it, the butler's feelings, but no doubt the same treatment could be made at the other end, for we are given hints that the Lord is just as constrained, just as repressed.

Reserve, understatement, repression of emotion

Thus we have in this novel a superb portrait of that central feature of reserve, of the "stiff upper lip" ideal, of under-statement, of calm and non-emotional responses which many have noted to be a central feature of both Japanese culture (to an extreme) and English culture. Many of the most telling examples in the book reflect on this, the episode of a tiger found under the dinner table, quickly disposed of by a legendary butler as "a slight problem", the impassive response to the drunken behaviour of the rude youths in a car, the impassive response of the butler to his father's illness and death.

The quality of dignity and professionalism in service

All these stories are told to explore the quality of 'dignity' which is the supposed essence of being

a great butler. This dignity is another word for professionalism, in other words that separation or sublimation of personal whims, of the body, soul, emotion, mind, so that it becomes subsumed in the pursuit of one objects, whether medicine, truth, music, or, in this case, serving, anticipating and supporting every need of the lord. This must be done with complete devotion, with no interference from such things as exhaustion, principles, individual ideas, emotions, preferences. Like a good soldier, whether of the State or of Christ (e.g. the Jesuits), all these weaknesses have been pruned away by constant discipline so that all thought and all emotion are intensely concentrated on one object and one object alone, in this case serving the Lord.

There is some discussion in the novel of how this kind of professional serving, which might be described as servility, but which the actors define as far from servile, indeed as noble and full of dignity, is only possible in England. The argument seems to be that Continentals are too temperamental, unable to suppress their personalities enough, unable to undertake the Jesuitical, monastic, discipline of serving not Christ, but Lord Darlington, with all their hearts and minds. Although it is not discussed, it might be argued that, as Fanny Trollope beautifully noted, American find it too demeaning to be such servants. Only in England was there the right combination, which allowed a person to be both humble and deferential, but also proud, dignified and far from servile.

Yet this strange English capacity is also present in Japan, though Ishiguro, as a Japanese, never mentions this. For Japan is the other great civilization in which there is a nobility in serving, as well as being served. It is the other great 'servant' civilization, where not only in the actual servant relationship, but in many other relationships of father-son, husband-wife, samurai-man, Emperor-subject, commander-soldier, master-apprentice, guru-neophyte, there is built in a measure of structural inequality, a premise of inequality, a superior/inferior, super-ordinate/subordinate relation, and yet, somehow, miraculously, both are noble. This is not truly servile it is not slavery, it is not even in the Continental sense to which Dr Johnson strongly objected, patron-clientish. Although the relation is absolute and would appear to be very lop-sided, it somehow preserves the autonomy and independence and essential "manliness" of both sides.

It is this resolution of the contradiction of how to both serve, trust, obey, honour and reverence while at the same time not become a slave, a chattel, a plaything, and how, in reverse, ho to be a lord to such a person without turning them into a slave, which is at the heart of the puzzle of hierarchy with equality, which is a central tension in both Japanese and English society.

The difficulty of combining service with honour

There is no particular problems in the other usual extreme positions adopted by other civilizations. In slavery, caste and situations where there is a premise of inequality, there is no problem, no dissonance as Beteille would put it (q.v). Nor is there a problem in the opposite extreme, where structural equality is assumed, as in America. If people are naturally inferior, one can treat them unthinkingly as such and they know how to act. If all men are born equal, equal relations are all there is.

What is so difficult, as, for example, young people find when they join an Oxbridge College and are treated as "young gentlemen", called "Sir", waited on and so on, all relics of the older deferential world, is how to combine servant-lord inequality with supposed equality. It is basically the problem of how to treat one's secretary, gardener, cook, a problem which is even reflected in the polite deference that is being programmed into certain computer systems.

The problem of inherent equality and constituted inequality

In England and Japan there was the paradox that there were no inalienable differences based on birth. All are born free and were basically equal human beings. Yet, through age, gender, life chances, people were constantly placed in positions of superiority or inferiority. This is usually a transitory and fragmentary relationship, and can usually be dealt with by way of money. Yet, what if it becomes a long-term and enduring relationship, as in lord-servant?

An example of this problem occurs in Oxbridge colleges and department when dealing with one's colleagues, who are both 'fellows', that is equals, but also, temporarily, need to be asked, encouraged, but never blatantly ordered, in the politest possible way to do things. How is one to maintain 'discipline' without offending sensibility?

The problem is that the relationships one is dealing with are ultimately contractual. They are not based on inherent inequalities grounded on birth or nature, but result from the continuing will of individuals that an arrangement should continue in a certain way. At any point this contract can be cancelled if one part is dissatisfied. It is thus, essentially, constantly being inspected, implicitly re-negotiated and accepted. It is fragile, yet stronger for the fact that it has to be constantly willed and desired.

The difficulty of combining spontaneity with inequality

Another theme of Ishiguro's book is the problem of 'banter'. The butler is constantly worried that he is unable to banter, as his American master appears to wish. As the butler recognizes, bantering has two features which seem to go against the very principles of all he holds central to being a butler. The first is that it has to be quick and spontaneous; yet the whole of the butler's craft lies in methodical, pre-planned and organized activity. Every little detail is worked out, every possibility thought through. This is all a preparation for the time when the metaphorical tiger appears under the dining table and the training and general **sang froid** and skills of the butler in dealing with the unplanned is his highest triumph. Disorder is quietly reduced to order. The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, based on the ultimate butler, Ford Prefect, with his central advice 'Don't Panic', is a modern equivalent, as is Doctor Who.

Yet bantering is based on the principle of invention, creativity, disorder even. As the butler laments, there is little time to work out a reply; it is a rapid game, a creative skill where the skill lies in rapidly and verbally out-maneuvering one's opponent. The unexpected is consistently met and

improved on. Despite the butler's attempts to reduce all this to a set of rules that can be learnt, the butler realizes that it requires skills that cannot be learnt as if one was learning a language. Bantering is the opposite of the reserved, impersonal, calm tone which is the very epitome of the good butler.

The difficulty of combining warmth with inequality

In a second way the notion of bantering contravenes the butler's code, for it establishes warmth, equality, and real communication between the participants. Instead of communicating indirectly, through the silences, through the things that are not said, the things that are not done, in the negative ways in which much of the rather stiff communication takes place in Japan and England, one is communicating directly, through over-stressing things, through risking things, through saying the unspeakable, through saying true things in jest, through exposing something hidden in either oneself or one's guest, by deliberately saying the opposite of what one means, by deliberately telling a half-truth, through exaggeration. It is all very unseemly, frivolous and dangerous. One has not time, as the butler nervously points out, to work out the consequences of one's words. They may constantly mis-fire and cause great damage.

This lack of predictability, the danger of metaphorically leaping and spilling the soup in the master's lap, is a great obstacle, which Ishiguro's butler does not know how to overcome. All the rigorous denial of spontaneity, all the suppression of invention, all the years of self-abnegation have to be overcome.

Yet, as the butler observes, people seem to crave 'bantering'. Why is this? Because it draws them closer. It turns 'strangers' into friends in a few minutes, as the butler observes with wonder towards the end of his tour. Yet the butler is unable to do this, either with strangers or, particularly, with his American employer. The problem with the employer is particularly treat since bantering combines two of the central ingredients which must be systematically excluded from a lord-servant relations these are warmth and an assertion of equality.

Bantering and warmth and affection

It is obvious that bantering involves the going out of oneself to explore the other's foibles. One is mildly teasing them, showing an interest in them, mentally tickling them. This is an affectionate, warming, stroking gesture. As such, it is at the opposite poll to the reserved, non-involved, suppressed behaviour which seems to be the essence of the self-effacing butler.

Bantering and inequality

Secondly, bantering could be considered as serious 'cheek', because the essence of banter is an assertion not merely of equality but superiority. One is trying to play a verbal game in which one out-wits one's opponent, half shaming them, making them the but of one's humour. It is a game between equals, and ending with someone, unpredictably, as superior.

Now in this respect it represents the essence of all games, which, as Levi-Strauss remarked, create an unequal conclusion out of what was initially equal. What the butler has based his whole life on, however, is the reverse, namely ritual, which, again following Levi-Strauss, starts with structural inequalities, a premise of inequality, and then, through the performance of the ritual (or, in the case of the butler, of ceremonial), creates (an illusion of) equality. Through the perfect performance of his butler's art, through engaging in the stately minuet of serving, the butler can feel at the end that in his way, in a complementary way, his skill is as valid, and extreme as his employer's. So there is no threatening assertion of initial equality as persons, but equality is gained through the process of the actions, through the communion of repetitive, highly artificial, actions. This is safe, predictable and compatible with an initially hierarchical relationship, made temporarily balanced by the joint participation in ritual, or rather ceremonial.

Thus for the butler to enter into bantering with his employer is asserting an equality which is as threatening as the other form of subversive activity which the butler debates and then rejects, namely a competition with his employer and his friends in terms of knowledge.

The world of the butler and of the tea ceremony

The sphere of the Butler is severely demarcated. It is based on a very rigid mental division of labour. The butler has his skills, secret knowledge, magical tricks, all of which are designed to make the very complex and difficult business of running a large house look effortless. His craft is one of the many which reduces the immensely complex world down to its essence or abstraction, cutting away all distractions.

In this way, the butler's world almost looks like the Japanese tea ceremony. Indeed the formal dinner which he presides over has the same soothing, relaxing, effect (and political functions) as the tea house.

Indeed, Ishiguro's novel could be said to be looking at the precise English equivalent of the Japanese tea house, the secluded, secret, beautiful, ceremonial setting in which people can meet 'informally' and decide, apparently without strain, great matters of state without confrontation. Even the admiring of the silver and the pleasure it gives has a curious resemblance to the admiring of the flowers and tea service which takes place as a central part of the Japanese tea ceremony. Both are, for a moment, "the still point of the turning world". In this reading, the butler is the tea master. He presides over the occasion, calming, arranging things on the basis of his hereditary craft, setting the scene, so that the participants can relax and commune at a really deep level.

Of course there is a difference in that in the Japanese case the role of tea master and host are usually elided. With the increased complexity of an English country house with its houseful of guests, a week-end to fill up, it is not possible be both lord and butler. But in Japan, lord and butler fuse into the perfect tea master, the gracious host, artistic director, craftsman of space and time.

Specialization and the need for innocence of butlers

Now these special skills require infinite competence in a very restricted zone. Like the master of Mann's glass bead game, every aspect of the minutiae must be known. This is very specialized, though also quite general as the butler is the impresario co-ordinating all the staff. Yet outside this area, there is innocence. In a sense, the butler is a specialist in the same way as a judge. Just as judicial 'innocence' has to be maintained, it must be thought that the judge, at least when on duty, has no views or even knowledge of politics, no religious ideals, no economic knowledge, is utterly "unworldly", thus a butler must also be unworldly.

Hence the discussion of whether a professional such as the butler should have views on, or even knowledge of, such matters as international politics. The butler refuses, when asked, to betray any knowledge of such matters, probably deliberately concealing his opinion. This is partly a recognition of the hierarchical division of labour. Lords and politicians are 'professionals' who know about these matters and should be left to get on with them, while butlers should "stick to their last", in other words not stray out of the realm of their competence to compete where their masters have been training for so many years.

How to influence a superior without destroying hierarchy

Wodehouse's 'Jeeves' plays a great deal on this contradiction for, of course, Jeeves is much more knowing and is in the position, familiar to other formally weak individuals such as children and wives, of being thought of as inferior, ignorant, stupid and so on, and yet constantly knowing better than their husband, parents, masters. How to get their opinions adopted without threatening the conceit of their superiors and hence undermining the relationship? Much of Wodehouse's craft lies in showing the subtle ways in which Jeeves manipulates Bertie Wooster, without subverting the relationship.

The butler in 'Remains of the Day' no doubt acts in something of the same way, like a sheep dog which through its watching stillness, creeping forward, gently driving an almost unknowing sheep/master in the right direction. This is a problem with all 'inferiors', whether batmen and lower officers, craftsmen to patrons, students to teachers, secretaries to bosses. But we hear little of this problem in this novel, perhaps because the division of labour is so absolute that the butler has little overlap with his employer, a far more distant figure than Bertie Wooster.

The need for dignity in an hierarchical relationship

Much of the discussion in the book is concerned with the word "dignity". Part of this is perhaps a defensive realization of the danger of the indignity of the relationship for, ultimately one is a servant. The butler's will is not his own, he is an intellectual and emotional eunuch, his independent spirit is (self) castrated. This could potentially be very demeaning. To constantly assert, and come to believe and be seen by others as dignified, is very important.

Dignity and poise and the avoidance of embarrassment

Dignity also seems to describe the central feature of poise. When giving the quintessential example of dignity, the tiger-shooting episode, the essence seems to be that the butler did not panic. The butler is like a fly-wheel which maintains the equilibrium of the organization. When the unexpected occurs, when that destroyer of all trust and communication in Japan and England, social embarrassment, is likely to occur, he intervenes. He is an etiquette doctor. Through his skill in avoiding solecisms, in making sure that no one's **amour proper** is damaged, no-one gets irritated through feeling slighted or ignored, in making sure that everyone feels wanted, comfortable (physically and socially), he complements the host, whose function is through charm, in other words a touch more warmth and wit, to spice the butler's dignity, to make people feel at ease.

Reserve, shyness and the creation of social ease

This creating of an easy atmosphere is a particularly difficult task in the two venues which Ishiguro is explicitly (and implicitly) exploring, namely England and Japan. If one is dealing with the kind of products of Japanese samurai education or British public schools, one is faced with those somewhat stilted, shy, reserved people who find it difficult to communication, like my father grand-father, uncles and so on. They are used to acing, wearing masks, leaving important things unsaid, interpreting silences, quelling all emotion. They find it difficult to inter-act with others, to unfreeze some of their reserve, to be 'natural'.

The ceremonials which take place in the tea house or at formal hall, whether in Darlington Hall or King's College, with all the accoutrement of a country week-end, are precisely designed to overcome the barriers which keep the English silent in public places and inhibit them from curiosity about strangers.

The usual situation is that even mutual acquaintances or friends enter the arena warily, defences high, minds either blank or pre-occupied with some outside problem. The atmosphere is often 'sticky'. Then the magic begins. A combination of verbal stroking - "How lovely to see you", "Have you met so and so, he's been so looking forward to meeting you", of drink and food placating the senses, of space, light and colour well ordered, builds up increasing confidence and camaraderie. The pace warms up. People start taking little risks, intimacies occur. By the end of the evening or week-end, new and perhaps lasting contracts or friendships are formed and minimally people leave feeling relaxed and benign. They feel that for a moment the separateness and loneliness has been overcome through a real and honest exploration of other people's personalities.

Reserve and etiquette in Japan and England

This unbending or unfreezing, which is notoriously performed in much of Japan after the formality of the office in the local saki bar, is very necessary and very difficult in both cultures. It is partly difficult because both cultures are so highly insistent on etiquette. The butler could be seen to

be the impresario of etiquette. Like the host, his reputation depends on being almost subconsciously aware of all the rules of etiquette. Without these thousands of rules, where guests should sit, what to eat with what, how a room should be arranged, how people should be addressed, how large tips should be, how to thank one's host and so on, the whole elaborate dance of social life would collapse. A great deal of the communication burden is carried in this non-verbal dimension, through deeds and actions rather than words, in both Japan and England.

Yet this etiquette is almost invisible. None of the wild hand-waving and body language of the despised Continentals or gross Chinese is performed. Rather, by the inflection of a word, the slightest difference in the depth of a bow, an allusion or refraining from an allusion, a slightly raised eye-brow, one conveys a wealth of meaning. 'U' and 'non-U' are the essence of etiquette, what can and should be done and said. Mistakes in etiquette immediately deaden all communication. One vulgar, socially embarrassing remark or action and the relationship can be permanently cauterized.

The danger of becoming involved; reserve and warmth

In such a situation there are many risks and hence Japanese and English tread like the proverbial hot tine roof cats. There are many traps. In such an atmosphere of wariness, people will not show that honesty, that ability to take risks, which is necessary for deep communication. Etiquette will establish the first basis of Trust, showing people that they are alike, 'One of Us'. Yet there is still the question of why one should make the effort to communicate, take that further risk.

Here there is a second level, the force created by various 'warming' devices, which help the person relax and unbend, which do so through a stimulus to the human senses, by sound, sight, smell, touch and so on, for instance through good food, wine, music, colours. These enchant, enthuse, energize people so that real flights of imagination and communication can take place, whether over the after-dinner port in King's College or in a saki bar in Tokyo. It is not just the alcohol that looses the tongue and for a while allows people to forget the very rules of etiquette which kept them apart. The very etiquette rules themselves change. What was unpermitted talk in one setting, among colleagues formally at the work place in Japan or with mixed company at the dinner, is now permissible or even encouraged when the men 'retire' to their port and cigars, or the workers join their mates at the bar.

Everything shifts into an intermediary world which lies between the dangerous world of the utterly public and the jealously guarded world of the utterly private. One is in a middle zone, combining the best of both. Intimacy with strangers, confidence with the unknown, real communication at a deep level. Even if one cannot remember everything that occurs in such moments of relaxed communication, things will have been said in the unguarded moment which may be worth a thousand dry and formal and yet essentially neutral messages sent in the more formal settings of life. For one is speaking from the heart, and not from the mind.

Why is there so much reserve in England and Japan?

How is one to explain this central feature of reserve, which is connected to the English and Japanese pleasure in understatement, the English (and Japanese?) passion for irony, self-mocking and so on? One of the things behind all this is an attempt at neutrality, a refusal to be taken off too enthusiastically in any direction. Control, moderation, the compromise between opposites, the abandonment of principle with the need for pragmatism, all these are essential English (and Japanese?) characteristics which need explanation.

Reserve and the tension of separated spheres

It might be possible to link them to the theme of the increasing 'rationalization' (Weberian) of life through the greater and greater artificial division of spheres. The English (and Japanese) were attempting to maintain a precarious balance between the demands of practical necessity (economics), political power, ethical principles (religion) and biological and psychological drives (kinship). To yield absolutely to any one of these was a sort of anti-rational fanaticism which was considered disastrous. Consequently a person was constantly rejecting these demands, not allowing family emotion to sweep him away, not adhering to the demands of the church, not kow-towing to political demands, not allowing the market to invade his every thought and deed. This constant negation requires great tact, forethought and skill. In order not to offend it is mainly achieved through negative signals, by silences, absences, emptiness, "the stills and deeps of ordinary life" (Maitland). One does not say no to such demands, which would be offence, one just does not say yes.

The Japanese partly overcome this problem by using the same word for yes and no and leaving the receiver of the message to use his or her tact to discern what it meant. The English have another device (where cited?), using the phrase "yes...but...". Thus a puzzled diplomat said he only began to be able to deal with the English when he realized that "yes...but" meant a polite no, while apparently saying yes.

Incoherence, indecision and lack of conviction

As Yeats memorably put it, "The best lack all conviction", they are filled with indecision. Thus in a sense a great deal of the impassivity, calmness and reserve seems to represent a sort of central, dead-locked, indecision. It is like the freeze of a trapeze artist. As soon as he starts to tip in one direction (showing family feeling, religious enthusiasm and so on), this is 'bad form' and a negative feed-back mechanism is automatically invoked which counters this. The result is often almost incoherence. This is encouraged by the educational system with its emphasis on counter-suggestibility. Good undergraduates are above all given the critical apparatus to beak down arguments, both those of others and their own. Everything becomes grey or brown in the attempt to avoid the extremes of black and white or bright primary colours.

The absence of all extremes and inhibition

Such avoidance of extremes is evident in all spheres of life; muted colours, low-key music, restrained dress, non-rhetorical conversational speech. Such greyness, epitomized by Major as the grey man with no conversation, gives the chance of maintain a balance; on the one hand, on the other and so on. The final perfection is minimalization of everything; the effortless, almost languid, non-involved, ironical, calm, detached, balanced approach of the consummate diplomat or dilettante.

The absence of extremes, detachment and life as a game

The lack of involvement, the irony the distancing or positioning of the self away from the threats of the external world is very central to the culture of both Japan and England. It is again shown in one aspect of 'Remains of the Day' in the comments on the British and French attitude to German reparations. For the British, once the war was over, the game was over. Winners and losers could become good friends. It had all been good sport, something to pretend to get excited about but in the end just acting, like everything else. Like any good professional, one did not muddle up the external actions or statements with one's personal, cool, assessment. One switched on and off. War was a game, politics was a game, making money was a game, even religion was a bit of a game.

In other words, while partaking in it, one was also detached, watching oneself, and hence able to suffer set-backs, criticisms, loss in the game, without feeling a deep internal sense of loss. All this is a very good protection and helps one from committing that very serious breach of etiquette, taking things (and oneself) too seriously.

On the other hand, as depicted in 'The Remains of the Day, the French really did hate the Germans and after the First World War was over were set on vengeance. Their whole morale or being had been threatened, and nearly broken. They needed to restore it with enemy blood. It was a matter of pride and national honour.

Pride, honour and machismo in Japan and England

This question of pride is another important theme to consider in relation to the contrast of the British and Japanese on the one hand and the Continental and Ancien Regime countries on the other. In the majority of societies, and Spain or Italy would fit in here as well as Turkey or parts of Latin America or India, male pride (machismo) is a central organizing principle of the society. Life is a constant battle to beat off implicit and explicit threats to one's **amour propre**. Often one has to act in a bombastic, assertive, strutting and, to the English or Japanese, offensively aggressive and cocky manner in order to assert one's manhood. The English often look at this, more or less correctly, as a sign of insecurity. People are constantly behaving like cockerels on a midden heap because they fear the challenge of a larger cockerel.

Now all of this is very far from the bushido tradition of Japan or that of the English gentleman. In both cases, a man's power and influence are hooded, concealed like Gandalf's magic behind a self-effacing hood. The ideal is modesty, quiet dignity, a man of few words, a hint which will impress far more than swaggering and boasting, as is shown by the differing behaviour of the really great and the pretentious samurai in 'The Seven Samurai'. Bullying, shouting, large moustaches and large gestures are not the English style. The quintessence is the man who when asked whether he plays cricket, mutters something about how he can knock a bit of leather about with luck, and turns out to have been a Test match play, or the man who at dinner admits that he "knows something about chemistry" and turns out later to be a Nobel laureate in that subject.
Status achieved through crushing others

Status achieved through crushing others

The essence of maintain superiority in the archetypal macho society is through treading on others. The more one can push down others, whether by bating up one's wife and children, being rude to one's inferiors, conspicuously wasting people's time (chakari) or any other device, the more one is elevated. Status is built on the sweat, tears, ignominy and pain of others. The leader of the herd is the stage who has bloodied and subdued the maximum number of potential rivals. It is all a game of conkers. This would, indeed, appear to be an almost necessary principle. How else could any animals establish their superiority but by making others inferior through force and cunning. It may be brutal, gross, humiliating, but it seems to be the law of the jungle (see Borges, Short Stories).

Japan and England and the turning of the other cheek

Yet, miraculously, at least two civilizations have developed which have reversed this tendency. It can partly be seen in their religions: instead of the fiercely aggressive cults of the warring Hindu Gods, or the wrath of the Old Testament Jehovah, or the martial thrust of Islam, we have a pale defenceless young man who never raised a hand to defend himself, who admonished his followers to love, not hate, who advised them to turn the other cheek, to be meek, to submit, to bend. Such a pacific and non-aggressive doctrine could, of course, be perverted into the militaristic creeds of the Crusaders or Conquistadors. Yet there was a strain of abnegation and understatement in Christianity which found its full fruits in the northern sects and especially the Quakers.

The same strain could be found in the main Japanese religions, Confucianism and Buddhism. Buddhism again, in its Thai or Cambodian versions could be as militaristic and aggressive as certain brands of Catholicism. But in its more Tibetan version it preaches self-abnegation, humility, the renunciation of violence, the purging away of pride, humility, calmness, self-restraint. Not a little of Japanese self-control and understatement must stem from this.

The cult of the 'gentleman' in England and Japan

What we have in both England and Japan is that there is a cultural ideal of the 'perfect gentleman'. It is worth noting here the significance of the 'gentle' in the composite word. He is not a 'violentman' or 'bullyman' as he might be in the caquismo (cockerel) cultures influenced by Spain. He is 'gentle'. What then, we may wonder, were the central precepts of being a gentleman in England, or its curiously similar parallel in Japan, the cult of bushido, and how was that very curious development whereby power is achieved and maintained and respect earnt without bullying or violence.

The exercise of power without violence

The way in which power is exerted without the overt use of aggression or physical force would make a fascinating study. It is partly through the manipulation of symbols, dress, gardens, house architecture, "the ritual of the Justices study" (Thompson) and other forms of what Bourdieu calls "symbolic capital" and no doubt others would describe a symbolic violence or the "hidden injuries of class". The stately home or gentry house and its accoutrements (or Oxbridge College) produces awe, both by its grandeur and aloofness and also by its signs of obvious, if discretely veiled, wealth.

It is partly through controlling all major avenues of advancement that the gentry ruled; through the network of justices they provided law and licensing, their sons were in all the professions, they ran the country in parliament. It was also achieved through ritual, the close association with the Church of England which, through patronage, they also controlled. It was also achieved through language, the understated, yet authoritative upper class language (cf. D.H.Lawrence poem on).

The sum of all this was that with a minimum show of physical force and without overt threat, in the main people did what they were told: a suggestion was enough. The gentry made offers which was wise not to refuse, not because one would end up dead or literally bruised, but because one would end up morally, socially or economically at the edge of 'society'. This is the world which Jane Austen so exquisitely analyses.

How did the samurai achieve the same effect? It would seem that they were a sort of half-way house, standing between the English extreme, and the 'caquismo' extreme. With their swords and arrogance, they were much nearer to the swashbuckling, machismo end than an English gentleman. Yet I suspect that just as in their favourite martial arts, ju-do, the aim was to use the minimum physical force to defeat one's opponent (using the weight and strength of the opponent and one's own skill), so the art of bushido was much closer to the concept of gentleman than one finds in any other ruling class ideology in the world. It was based, I suspect, on ruling through awe, through respect for one's character, dignity, a gentle yet firm approach, rather than straight physical aggression.

The absence of machismo in Japanese culture

There appears to be little machismo in the great literature, in the Genji, Pillow Book and so on, all of which is singularly devoid of duels, challenges to honour, threatening and aggressive behaviour. The Genji shines through his symbolic superiority, his drawing, music, perfumes, wit, clothes, poetry and so on, not because he is a 'beaux' in the Italian or Spanish Don Juan tradition. Nor, as far as I know, is the assertion of superiority through violence a theme of the noh or kabuki plays. The idea of the danger of being thought weak and effeminate if one is restrained as a man is not a central worry in England or Japan as it is in an 'honour and shame' culture.

The absence of the gladiator tradition in Japan and England

The archetype of the proving of manhood and machismo is through animal fighting, as in the gladiatorial contest and its modern equivalent the bull fight. There is no equivalent in mainstream English and Japanese cultures to the bull fight. The fox hunt is not a test of personal bravery; the fox and the hunter never contest as equals. It is a test of endurance, skill, wealth and connections, etiquette.

Understatement and minimalization in Japan and England

The use of understatement and minimalization seems to be a central feature which is common to both Japan and England. It contrasts with traditions which, to English eyes, devalue the currency by over-statement. For example, the American academic reference is known to go "over the top" in order to achieve its end. The British reference or praise in general is understated and the reader, knowing the codes, tops it up according. "Not bad", "Not at all bad", " A good chap", "A bit of a mess", "Quite a tough ride", all these and many others are interpreted as understatements, to be expanded in the mind of the receiver. This is far more economical: the verbal currency is kept clean, with minimal signals finely graded. The same is true of formal art, which famously in Japan is simple and under-stated, whether in furniture, architecture, haiku or painting. Just a hint or suggestion is made, which the receiver elaborates into the full message. In effect this restricted and much more allusive, abstract, unfilled in code is more powerful than the more exaggerated and literal codes that are usually employed.

Zen, Quakerism and the power of minimalism

An extreme example of this lies in those two distinctive movements in England and Japan, namely Quakerism and Zen. Both eschew all show, whether in language (no extremes, no swearing) or dress (no ostentation, no extreme colours) or gestures and postures. The aim is simplicity, directness, economy. Things are paved down to their essentials, to their bare bones.

Minimalization and rationalization

All this minimalization, functional efficiency and so on no doubt fits with other aspects of the

rationalization process. Communication about one thing does not clogged with emotional 'noise; emotion and elaborate rhetoric is banned. Minimal force is deployed. The elegance of the solution, whether in mathematics, poetry or conversation or religion is measured by the parsimony. Simplicity is no sin. There is no need to "show off".

Honesty and the double-edged remark

All this again is tied to he need for honesty rather than duplicity. If communication changes are assumed to be basically dependable and open, there is less need for duplicity, concealment, camouflage through over-statement, whether visual, oral or whatever. There is, however, one sort of duplicity that is an English speciality, rather similar to the "yes...but". It is another negative comment concealed within the apparently positive, the many variants of "damning with faint praise", the leaving of things unsaid, the absences. This is an art form in itself, for example perfected in the writing of references, where one is forced through courtesy to say something, yet cannot be enthusiastic.

Positive and negative communication; sound and silence

This leads one to consider two rather different forms of communication which one might call positive or negative. In the majority of societies most of the information conveyed by symbols, whether words, dress, architecture or whatever code, is conveyed by direct statements. Iconic representations are made which convey the meanings in words, gestures, dress and so on. The important things are what are said; there is a welter of 'information' and he who shouts symbolically loudest is heard. It is the world of the soukh or social bazaar; a jumble of positive messages.

The stark contrast is the world where most 'information' is conveyed by absences, by the quiet empty lawns of a Cambridge College, by the emptiness of a Quaker meeting house or Shinto temple, by the emptiness of a tea ceremony, by the emptiness of a good haiku or Japanese silk screen, by the emptiness at the centre of many Japanese paintings. The striving is to convey as much as possible indirectly, "between the lines". What is not said, the gaps in the conversation, the unfinished phrase, are what is important. This mode distinguishes Japan and England on the one hand and China and India on the other, which to the former people seems to have an overloaded, loud, brash, too direct form of communication.

Negative communication, absences and the need for closeness

Such negative communication, of course, requires a greater closeness than positive communication. The greater the distance between sender and receiver, the more the need for explicitness and directness. Different castes or kin groups or classes will not know the grammar of a shred language and hence they will not pick up the resonances or even notice the implied, the unstated, the understated. Only, as in a good marriage, when the two or more people who are

communicating share an enormous amount, a consensus on many basic values and appreciation of most of the rules of the grammar of communication, can the much more economical negative communication take place.

For negative communication is a form of short-hand; the assumed, stated, accepted world is taken for granted and does not need to be elaborated. Only deviations, absences need to be noted. In such a situation the empty passages become most important, and even when something positive is being called up, it is done, as with short-hand, by the merest allusion.

Yet, as with all symbol systems, this only works if both sender and receiver share the symbolic grammar. A splash of grey on a blue background may send a trained Japanese into paroxysms of pleasure as he recognizes and quickly fills in a flock of flying winter geese. To the average westerner, it is probably a mystery or perhaps a mistake. As with satire and irony, which can only work if the recipient recognizes the inverted allusion which re-doubles the effect by saying the opposite of what is meant, all this is wasted on people who do not closely share the code. Perhaps why this is why writers are advised to avoid irony when writing for an American audience.

The impossibility of allusion in divided cultures

Now in most cultures, while a small intimate group can communicate in this minimal way, husbands and wives, neighbours working together, an orchestra, a football team, an army platoon, most people are too distant to make this possible. Society is not homogeneous enough. The gaps between people, because of differences of education, language, status and so on, are so large that messages have to be explicit and formal, dramatic. Thus Mickey Mouse or Rambo has a world currency because the violence or humour is easy to understand across the barriers of language and culture. America, where cultures have not properly melted, faces a similar problem in this respect to India or China.

How then was it that Japan and England, almost alone, developed this minimalist, negative, understated form of communication which is, for instance, so beautifully shown in the work of Jane Austen or Trollope? It would seem that it reflects, among other things, two major features of the cultures in question. One is the sharing of much of a common framework of assumptions, culture and society.

Negative communication in homogeneous cultures

In both cases an island people with an integrated economy, one language, one law, one set of cultural markers, one political system and a shared identity, could explore those smaller differences with which they ordered their lives. They could at times pretend to stress the differences, whether in the rudeness of parliament, of a football match or other games, the satire of Private Eye or Spitting Image. But they could do all this because, in fact, the fundamentals were secure that there was little basic disagreement on the deepest values. Or they could communicate subtly through

omission, through silence, through irony, through minimal allusion.

The sharing is linked, or is perhaps another way of saying that there were not discrete groups, whether held apart by caste, geography or whatever. People merged into each other and there was much homogeneity, whether in their sense of humour, sense of pleasure or sense of proportion. This is very unusual. That a Chinese mandarin, Brahmin or Spanish lord could have anything in common with the ordinary illiterate peasant, or even with small shop-keepers would seem absurd. But in England "a cat may look at a king", the jokes of one group amused the other. There was really only a relatively small gap, indeed really no fully established 'Great' and 'Little' traditions. How two civilizations emerged (of which the Dutch are also a part) which had so much internally in common, is an historical question, obviously related to their island location and the cut-off nature of the societies that were created on these islands, a sort of social Galapagos.

Negative, understated communication and freedom

Another function of negative communication is that while it is more economical for the sender, it is also preferable for the receiver. All communication is an exercise of power and the more blatant and explicit the message, the more difficult it is to exercise discrimination, that is free will, in receiving the message. An explicit order, as in the army, is the worst; it is flatly coercive, binding, inhibiting flexibility and initiative. Equivalents to these direct, coercive, messages can be found in religious ritual or certain symbolic systems which allow not scope for interpretation or equivocation; one must either totally agree or totally reject - with all the consequences. They do not provide options or clues, but are in the nature of what Leach calls signals. A red light cannot be debated; one must stop.

On the other hand, the kind of indirect, negative, allusive communication which is a peculiar characteristic of England and Japan allows much more flexibility on the part of the receiver. He or she is presented with an opportunity to draw conclusions, "Perhaps you would like to consider..." This approach has several advantages. Firstly it avoids infringing the integrity of the other's will; acts are apparently entered into with free will, as the contracts of rational actors. Thus one does not say to one's Secretary "You must type this letter, Miss X" or "Shut that window", but rather "I need to write to Professor X, I wonder if you would..." or "Its a bit cold, don't you think, could you possibly..." Thus it is a form of courtesy or politeness, the essential requisite of the gentleman.

The indirect approach of the sheep-dog or ju-do expert

This might be termed the good sheep-dog strategy. To run straight at a sheep or herd of sheep barking loudly, to be imperious or aggressive, is to invite counter-aggression, subservience, or panic. It is much better to shepherd, to gently edge the individual towards agreement without apparent direct pressure. Thus he or she has the allusion that he or she took this path of their own free will. Let their force be channelled rather than met by counter-forces , as in Zen or Ju-do. It might also be termed the 'Jeeves' approach, for it was a favourite ploy of that famous butler.

The need for persuasion and assent of equals

To act under duress puts one in the position of the dependent slave. To act after considering options and alternatives and out of freely given and rational assent is the option of the free and independent spirit. The charge against the mafia is that it appears to make offers which one cannot afford to refuse because of that demeaning human characteristic, fear or cowardice. The charge against the English officer, employer, teacher, clergyman or whatever is that he or she makes an offer which it would not be sensible to refuse, not because of physical or other fear, but because of the self-interest of the individual to whom the offer is made. The trick is that the offer sets up a situation where both parties are expected to gain, from the welcome visit of Professor X after the Secretary has written to him, the warmer room after the Secretary has closed the windows, from the essay which "one wonders whether" the student would care to write.

The ultimate in communication; anticipation of the wish

The ability to make "your wish my command", of putting into practice the "who will rid me of this treasonous clerk" request, is one of the most important forms of communication. This is a situation of almost purely negative or absence signals, the silence, gap, unasked question, unformulated request. This is the height of Japanese (and English) communication. The communication is so good, the actors are so conjoined in mutual benefit, that only the slightest hint, if that has to be uttered, will lead to action. Indeed it is the receiver's pleasure even to anticipate the needs and wants of the sender. These negative signals, being absences, are very open to interpretation, or can be ignored. By not asking for help, it makes it possible to offer help or not, to offer a lot or a little. Often this elicits greater response than something more direct or explicit, for the giver feels a sense of gratitude and generosity, for he, likewise, has not been put under pressure. Many would prefer to give largely than to be forced to pay in a small way.

The impossibility of force in a contractual society

This strategy is also a necessary one where free and independent individuals are inter-acting. In an advanced and open and balanced economy and society where fear is minimal, cajoling, requesting, persuading is all that can be done. People are not slaves, nor even clients. They can always vote with their feet, take their labour or their over-drafts elsewhere. The art, one which English gentry and the Japanese are particularly adept at, is that of reversing the obligation, making the person who is under pressure feel that he is being done a favour through the kindness of the person who is real exerting the pressure. It is a variant of the famous trick of the public school prefect beating the boy, "I can assure you Smith Minor, this hurts me more than it does you".

It is, of course, the technique which has to be employed in the economy. You cannot, except in monopoly markets, be forced to buy a commodity, or forced to give your labour. You need to be cajoled or encouraged in such a way that in the end, instead of feeling you are being cheated, your money grabbed from you, you come to feel that the seller is doing you a favour, letting you have this precious article at an exceedingly cheap price. Perhaps this lies behind some of dynamic of bargaining; as each person lowers or raises their offer to come closer to the other, they are reducing their social distance, tacitly acknowledging the other's claims, making it easier to enter into a bargain without loss of honour or individuality.

Possibly one could liken positive communication to the syntagmatic flow of notes in music, which is very obvious and direct. Negative communication is much more like the paradigmatic communication of a chord, a comparison of the actual with the possible.

The importance of courtesy and politeness in Japan and England

It would be worth studying more deeply courtesy and politeness. Why are these qualities so deeply associated with the Japanese, so very polite that they become inscrutable to the western observer? And why is politeness and especially courtesy so much a central feature of the English gentleman? And how far is all this different from what in France or Italy is meant by "polite society", "politesse".

As far as I know, 'polite society' has two very different meanings. In the word 'politesse' and 'polite society' as used in French or Italian or Spain, we are talking about the observing of a strict code of etiquette which is only known to, and shared by, a small group. It does not necessarily have any relation whatever to courtesy, or politeness or thoughtfulness or kindness. Thus 'polite' people are known because they hold their handkerchiefs in certain ways, walk in a certain manner, leaver their knives and forks at a certain angle on their plates. These are social conventions which help to regulate society, with little reference to the showing of regard or 'courtesy' towards others, except in a very general and diffused way. This is the stuff of snobbery and elites, and of **nouveau riches** everywhere.

The importance of courtesy as part of politeness

What is rather unusual are the cases, which I am certain exists in England past and present, and I suspect in the Bushido and wider etiquette of Japan, where people are encouraged to go out of their way to show respect and courtesy to the partner in social interactions. This consists of putting oneself to some trouble to place one's partner either as one's equal, or even as one's superior. This is not just a crude matter of opening doors or walking on the outside of pavements, of enquiry after birthdays, of remembering employees families. It is basically an attitude in which, perhaps with a whiff of patronizing or even deceit in the eyes of foreigners, whereby the English gentleman or

Japanese try to minimize social distance and the force of command. They show as much modesty, humility, generosity and thoughtfulness as possible; this is the essence of true courtesy.

Respect as a result of negative power

What is required is a freely given effort of time, trouble and attention to the other where this is not really necessary and there is no direct return to the person in the position of power. "Lord X is a true gentleman', not because he has things, or has power, but because he restrains his things, cloaks his power. It is in the abnegation of power, that true power comes.

In one sense this looks like the common characteristic of societies where power comes not from accumulating but in giving away. The true gentleman creates social debts and respect not by coercing his superiority on others directly through command, but by his self-abnegation which, given the mutual knowledge of what he could have done, puts the receiver even more in his debt, adding respect and affection to the feeling of inferiority. Thus acts the great army leader, the great politician, the great teacher, drawing on an emotion which is even more powerful than fear, namely love.

Generosity and graciousness as elements of power

The love comes in the end from self-love. For the essence is that the true gentleman has shown that he or she has recognized the dignity, freedom, autonomy and worth of the other. He has made them special in some way, noticed them, not seen them merely as a means but as an end in themselves. This is sometimes termed graciousness; it is the art above all which someone like the Queen must master. She must make people who mean nothing to her and cannot possibly do anything for her seem to be important.

Now I know too little, as yet, to know whether courtesy, 'generosity' (in the older sense), politeness and so on have quite the same, or even a very significant meaning in Japanese culture, as they do in England. Yet I suspect they are important, for instance in the ethic of bushido, and a study of this would be most interesting.

The restricted and generalized arenas of courtesy

Related to this is the contrast of the arenas within which these qualities are deployed. Here we might distinguish between two extreme cases. At one end one has societies which show courtesy, possibly exaggerated, but within very restricted spheres or on particular occasions. One thinks of feuding kin groups at a reconciliation feast; kin groups at a marriage feast; host and guest. Here the obligations to courtesy are usually restricted to a small group and 'strangers' only incorporated on certain, set, occasions. The opposite to courtesy is war, and Warre, as Hobbes observed, is the

natural state of man. One cannot afford, nor is it thought appropriate to be courteous to unrelated person.

As kinship gives way to proximity as the basis for social organization, so neighbours or the whole village becomes the arena for courtesy. Yet this is soon cross-cut by rank and caste. There is no obligation to show courtesy to people of culturally or socially separate groups. Indeed caste is the very antithesis of courtesy, which is by definition considerate and levelling. There is nothing more 'discourteous' than telling a person he is ritually polluting and should not enter one's house, eat with one, marry one's daughters. To entertain in all these ways is the ultimate mark of courtesy.

Thus in the majority of agrarian civilizations, courtesy runs along well-marked channels. It would be inconceivable that a Brahmin be 'courteous' to a leather-worker, a Spanish don to a peasant on his estate.

The situation of diffused courtesy

At the other extreme is the situation of diffused or generalized courtesy, that is to say an obligation to treat as (almost) equal, worthy of respect, dignity and consideration, a wide range of people, many of them unrelated, strangers, people who have no practical importance to one and who will not bring either direct benefits or cause difficulties. Such people may indeed by **prima facie** very unlikely to be of help; poor, less educated, even uncouth and vaguely unpleasant or repellent. Nevertheless the diffused obligation is present that one should at least be civil and, if possible, helpful and courteous. Good manners enjoins this, one's Christian duty and general morality counsels that one should do as one would be done by.

Of course one explanation of this is that in a fluid and mobile society it is best to assume that everyone may potentially be useful: "be nice to the girls for you never know who they marry" as one Headmistress advised her teachers at the start of term, or as Robert Chambers found through the rewards of courtesy. So, casting one’s courtesy upon the waters may be the best long-term strategy. Yet there is probably more to it than this.

Firstly there is the group altruism dimension. If all are courteous and generous, then all will benefit. Rudeness breeds rudeness, what one might call the bad college porter syndrome, while kindness breeds kindness. Once a general market in courtesy is established, like the associated market in honesty, it works more efficiently. Co-operation is often the best policy.

The politeness and considerateness of the Japanese

Yet the infrequency of such generalized courtesy, perhaps most extremely represented by the superficial glad-handing of America, suggests that it does indeed need explanation. It will also be interesting to see how far it is a common phenomenon in Japan, outside small groups. Superficially, Japanese seem exceedingly polite and considerate. Is this just to those within a group

or relative equals, or is it even more pronounced with the weaker, lower levels? It is so very easy to be discourteous, denigrating, slighting, unthoughtful and so on, that it is curious that Japanese and English put so much energy into maintaining a high standard of courtesy. It will be worth looking at books on manners to look at their stress on this.

Courtesy as a recognition of equality

What is being conceded in such courtesy or politeness is that in some basic senses both partners are equal, whether in the sight of God or man. this basic premise of natural equality, of course warped by chance success, teaches some humility: "there but for the Grace of God, go I...". Furthermore, it is a premise of very limited geographical distribution, and indeed it goes against the basic premise of the majority of societies. Again the only major world civilizations which have espoused it seem to be North West Europe and Japan. Courtesy and politeness means projecting oneself into the position of the recipient, a form of empathy or sympathy which is pointless except between people who believe themselves to be, in essence, close enough or equal enough to have some sense of the other's feelings or predicament. This is hardly the feeling which an Ancient Regime nobleman or priest would feel himself to be in when dealing with his "swinish", illiterate and almost sub-human peasant countrymen.

Social mobility is important. If all positions are impermanent, status is achieved and so on, one may have come from that very status which now holds out a begging hand in the street, or return to it one day, in one's own person or that of one's children. If status is fixed and there is a gulf, there is less incentive to courtesy.

The preservation of another's integrity or social space

Yet courtesy and politeness are also distancing mechanisms, for they establish a certain common closeness, but then keep people at arms length. They can be used to emphasize the other's separate needs and wants, their personal social space. This can be a form of honouring of the other's identity, the personal identity of the other on which the more powerful is careful not to tread.

This idea of the social space surrounding an individual is an important one and goes with the individualism. The appropriation of the social space of those weaker than oneself, making another forgo his own time, space or will to accommodate one's own, is one of the chief devices for gaining power in the majority of societies. Trampling on another's time, as in chakari, is just as effective as physical abuse. Yet true courtesy is just the opposite of this; it is respecting that social space, keeping one's distance while showing concern.

The preservation of social space and body distances

The 'social space' is partly symbolic and invisible and hence dealt with through gestures,

postures, language. But it is also partly physical, and hence can be observed in body distances. Here one would have to consult the work of E.T.Hall and others on proxemics. But my guess would be that the range of body distance varies very roughly with the degree of intimacy and equality that is thought to exist in the relationship. At one extreme is 'untouchability', whether literally (as in the caste system) or through keeping one's distance, as with a nobleman finding it distasteful to be close to a commoner. Neither of these two extreme situation are what we commonly associate with England or Japan, but rather with very hierarchical societies of the Ancien Regime type, China, India, France in the eighteenth century. They deny brotherhood and fraternity and emphasize great distance.

At the other extreme are what we might archetypically describe as certain tribal societies, particularly Africa, but also, to a certain extent tribal India, Nepal and so on. Here there is, within the group, very little social and physical distance. So people will often stand or sit disconcertingly close for a westerner's tastes. There seems to be no appropriate appreciation of privacy, separateness, the need for a protected zone of intimacy into which no one intrudes; "nous" and "moi" seem to be painfully confused.

Japanese and English body distances; a middling solution

Thus the Japanese and the English effect a compromise, the same physical distance is maintained for everybody, whether close or far. Everyone is treated as standing under one law. This law says that people should remain not too far apart, nor too close. They should be close enough to show engagement and involvement, but not so close as to cause embarrassment and intrusion into another's personal space. It is a delicate compromise, which becomes confused by such space-reducing customs as the hug or kiss of the Continentals.

Even the hand-shake, like the Japanese exchange of name cards, is a delicate act of balance. It symbolizes friendship, equality, mutual grasping, in other words involvement and the taking of a calculated risk (of being rejected) by stretching out one's hand. On the other hand, the arm is extended and fends off the other, it is not a drawing together as in the embrace. It is a stiff gesture; let us be friends, but not so much or too close. The process is slightly more intimate, with at least some physical contact, than the exchange of cards which Japanese undergo and their elaborate bowing. Such devices are even more of a delicate compromise. A strong acknowledgement of the other is made, but no physical contact is established: communication without personal involvement, like two trains running alongside each other.

The gentle art of conversation in Japan and England

The establishing of a minimal bridge of communication through the hand-shake, bow, or cards is, of course, only a start. It is related to the conversational bridges that are thrown out. The art of entering into conversation is a delicate one in both England and Japan. Among the obvious dangers are the fact that one might become too deeply or quickly involved, and hence trapped, the problem

of closing the gap too quickly, and hence leaving no room to retreat. This is at one extreme. At the other is the danger of confrontation, disgust, bad feeling, argument and loss of face.

The situation is aggravated because at the initiation of a contact very little, if anything, is known about the Stranger (see Simmel on this). Given a common humanity, a bond has to be established, but it is likely that one will soon find that the Stranger is of no real interest, or, more fundamentally and awkwardly, that his or her attitudes are very different to one. What thus happens is that a delicate process of sounding out the other takes place. A sort of boot-strapping is performed, as with a computer. First a very thin thread is cautiously thrown across between the two communicating entities, a handshake, a card, a smile, a bow, a polite "How do you do". The first exchange is balanced, courtesy is observed, the door is ajar, but one has not entered and can indeed retreat at this stage.

Talking about the weather and neutral conversation

Then one may follow up on a subject which is as neutral, general and likely to cause agreement as possible. Characteristically, in England this is the weather. "Terrible rain we've had lately" is perfect. It asserts a common humanity for "we" are subject to the same malign English God of weather. There is little room nor little expectation that the other can do anything but vigorously assent, perhaps adding some gloss such as "Yes, not good for the harvest", or whatever. To which one can in turn assent. This is neutral, a matter of act rather than opinion; Labour or Conservative voters can agree about the weather. One does not burn people for their views on the weather. It is a subject to which everyone can contribute. And it is bounded as a topic. After a couple of exchanges, the duty to communicate has been satisfied, the subject is exhausted, one can beat one's retreat if that is what one wants to do.

Deepening the conversation; moving on from the weather

On the other hand, the door is ajar, the thin thread has been thrown over the chasm, and it is possible, if desired by both parties, to go further with another, perhaps mildly more personal gambit, "Do you come here often?", "Where do you live?" and so on. Then there commences a phase of placing the other individual. This is often deftly done in a few questions which establish the respective status, background and so on of the individuals, eliciting the kind of information printed on the Japanese name cards. This process also establishes two other important things. The first we may roughly call attitudinal. Is the conversational partner likely to have contrary views on fundamental issues, on the death penalty, women (or men), war, race and so on. If this begins to emerge, then communication is usually broken off. But if there is a "meeting of minds", it may continue and deepen.

The growth of liking and proper exchange

The further deepening of the relationship will depend on another dimension, on the exploration of a more personal kind. It is quite possible to meet someone from the right background, with similar views to one's own, but basically not to find them "attractive", in other words one does not "warm" to them.

The metaphor of heat is an interesting one. People are conceived of, certainly in England, as basically cold or even icy particles. Occasionally they are 'warmed' by others, and hence like all things which are warmed, they begin to 'thaw', or even to melt, to lose some of their separateness, hardness, distance. This allows them to enter a deeper level of communication, where their minds begin to communicate directly. Such communication, which tends to be total, through body language as well as speech, as in Japanese haragei, is a risky business and can only be based on trust. All the careful preparations have to be made and also, at least with Japan, a way to retreat should be maintained.

The depth and permanence of friendship in Japan and England

The stakes are high, for any initial encounter may, if both partners are willing, lead into a relationship for life, in other works into true friendship, which could totally change a person's life. Yet only very occasionally does this happen and one needs to proceed very slowly and warily like the 'Petit Prince' with the fox.

What both British and Japanese find so alarming, and objectionable, about the Americans, is the over-hasty (if endearing) way in which many Americans enter into apparently deep relationships. They seem to war their hearts on their sleeves, pouring out intimacies and psychological problems as the first encounter in a way that oversteps the bounds. But just as they seem to move too fast into a relationship for many Japanese or English, so also they move out too fast. Japanese often tell of their bitterness when they discover that Americans who seemed to encourage an open and intimate relationship soon neglected or even rejected it. Once a real friend is made in England or Japan, the ideal is a lifelong relationship. It is a contract, no doubt, but a contract of an enduring type like that of master-servant, teacher-pupil, adopted father- adopted son. In America, easy come easy go: people appear to be like any other consume durables which one picks up, uses while it is useful, and then scraps when it no longer has any direct utility.

The essence of friendship in Japan and England

Perhaps this also suggests a difference of what constitutes the essence of friendship. In the Japanese and English case the difficulty lies in overcoming, in a limited way, loneliness and separateness. Normally reserved, heavily defended, individuals gradually learn to trust and to open themselves up. Once this mutual trust has been established with someone, any exercise of the trust is a source of warmth and satisfaction. Just to be in an atmosphere of easy conviviality, to be able

to relax and joke, to share memories, all this is enough, especially if it is combined with some common interest, golf, bridge, one's children.

In contrast, American search for more in their friendships. Getting quite close to people is easy, convivial familiarity is not something exotic, a treasured experience in itself. The relationship must be positive, active, have content. It should involve continuous learning about the other, continuous exchange or continuous mutual benefits. Once the current passing between the friends stops for a while, the friendship is replaced by others. Hence there is what appears to English and Japanese a fickleness, restlessness, lack of loyalty and of constancy. They discern or feel that what satisfies them no longer satisfies the friend, who is constantly "roaming" in search of the "new fangled" and indulging in "a strange fashion of forsaking" of old friendships (cf. the Wyatt poem which captures this excellently).

Since much of the communication in England and Japan is negative, friends can sit in companionable silence for hours and yet still feel that they have had a good evening together. This would just strike Americans as dull. The subtle hints, oblique references to shared experiences, the nuances which are so deftly caught, for example, among the three friends in "Last of the Summer Wine", where a companionable drink in the pub and allusions to Nora Batty's stockings are considered a good night out, would strike most Americans as puerile, superficial or both. American friendships are kept alive by action, by doing things together. While doing things together is not unimportant in Japanese and English friendship, the emphasis is really more on being together, just existing along-side each other. The companionship of tea house, sake bar or pub or club are joys which are special to Japan and England, though they can also be found, with variants and in a milder form, elsewhere.

The engaging of the full personality in friendship

The difference may be to do with the degree to which a person engages another's personality. As Tonnies and others have observed, it is a characteristic of most of the social life of those in Gesellschaft or Capitalistic societies that they have partial, fragmented and broken relationships. People are like the many-sided mirrors or lights that hang in a discotheque, reflecting from many surfaces, each one turned to a different person or relationship. The encounters are brief, neutral, balanced; they take place fleetingly in the market, on the bus, at work, with neighbours. Occasionally, however, a persons meets another and begins to build up a trusting and deeper relationship, whether in love or friendship, a relationship of mutual delight. It is not an exclusive relationship, but the whole of a person is engaged. In the Japanese metaphor, the two partners become two mirrors, each reflecting and re-reflecting the other in a deeper and deeper enchantment, until they for a moment, as in Donne's 'Ecstasy', become conjoined so that the friendship "defects of loneliness controules".

Absence of intense friendship in most agrarian societies

Now this kind of mental and emotional release seems rather different from the rather more specific, active, transitory kind of American friendship. Yet it is equally, if not more different, from the relationships in the many agrarian societies where there is no friendship of this kind. This absence is due to several reasons, including the fact that loneliness caused by separateness does not need to be overcome since it never occurs in the first place. Nor does one achieve closeness through effort; closeness is ascribed. One is born with a ready-made set of people who have an identity of interests with one, one's kin, and one does not need to search the world for such people. Indeed it would be bizarre, if not dangerous and traitorous to do so. In a world of limited good, to establish a friend outside the group is a great to relations within the group.

The difference between ritual friendship and real friendship

In agrarian societies lacking western or Japanese style friendship, one device which is curiously the antithesis of the informal, gradually established model of friendship of the West, is the institution of ritual friendship (of which blood brotherhood is one variant). In such a system the gap with non kin is closed and made void by a fiction, by using ritual to create friendship, to make a non-related person into a kinsman. Yet in doing so, it is a travesty of friendship on the English or Japanese model, for now one is kin, in other words in a status relationship, obliged to behave like kin (or ritual friend) for life, whatever one feels.

This is contrary to the essence of real friendship which is contractual, freely chosen, freely abandoned, arising out of mutual need or desire, and lasting only as long as both partners desire. Friendship is based on liking, while kinship and fictive kinship is based on blood. Some of this is captured by Wilde's remark to the effect that one cannot be expected to like one's family, since they are willed on one, whereas one's friends are chosen.

The possibility of friendship across the gender divide

Even more extraordinary is the fact that in England (and Japan?) one can have cross-gender friendships. The idea of a Hindu or Islamic woman having a male friend, who was not a member of the family, is unthinkable. Yet this is widespread in the West, as the statement "we are just good friends" attests.

A possible magnum opus on the nature of capitalism?

(This is a digression on the theme and title of a possible work.) Marx's theme was the economic basis of a new social formation which he termed 'capitalism' and which was founded on a certain socio-economic framework which he termed Capital. Weber pursued the same themes, exploring the causes and correlates, more broadly, of the whole system which had been termed 'Capitalism'. Yet, as far as I know, there have been few major (though no doubt many minor, books titled 'Capitalism' which explore from an anthropological viewpoint the whole set of features encompassed by that word and speculate on its differences to other non-capitalist world

civilizations. So this might be a good title, or possible 'Capitalism, East and West', or more simply 'Capitalisms', to point out the central contrasts of the two major variants.

Anyway, whatever the title, the central theme seems to be emerging. This would be to undertake to paint a total picture of this fairly recent (about one thousand years) and eccentric, yet now almost totally dominant form of organization, which has emerged in two rather different forms in Asia (Japan) and West Europe (England). Thus an attempt will be made to look at the bones, the central institutional features of the economy, the political system, the law, the language, the demography and so on and how and why they had evolved in a certain way in England and Japan over the last thousand years.

This is the kind of thing I attempted to do in a preliminary way in Individualism and in the last section of 'Culture'. But a further dimension, which began to emerge in the essays on love, nature, evil in 'Culture', would assume greater importance, namely the flesh of capitalism, the sinews and skin and blood. That is to say not only the blood of technology, literacy, money and so on, but also the feel of the beast, the sort of things discussed above, in other words love, affection, politeness, humour, silence and so on. If anthropologists are right in their holistic faith, then all this should hang together, though the problem in this case is compounded because the evidence reflects a whole set of compromises and contradictions and hence almost every statement is refutable and almost everything is a double-sided coin, a paradox, 'both...and'.

Yet such an exploration, which is the realm of cultural anthropology, marrying Veblen and Simmel and Taine and Tocqueville to Marx and Weber, is something which has not, as far as I know, been attempted, let alone achieved (though I suppose that Norbert Elias' work is an attempt in this direction). It both needs urgently to be done as a clearing exercise and also would be fun to do. To penetrate to the heart of capitalism one needs both bones and flesh, for only then does its strangeness, strength and pitiless efficiency and calculated cruelty become truly established.

The fun comes because it would require an enormous effort in reading and research, all fields of literature would be relevant, but also because in writing such a work one would be led to explore all those intriguing forms of behaviour and thought which lie on the edges and in-between, so difficult for historians or others to apprehend - humour, pride, irony, time, friendship, loyalty, truth, sin, gender, reserve, aesthetics, morality, concepts of the person and so on. This is indeed Bloch and Febvre's 'Histoire sociale totale', with everything included and all given a central urgency, a connecting pattern, by the attempt to grasp the spirit, not of an age, but of a mighty techno-social-economic-political-ideological phenomenon which is eating up all hitherto and co-existing alternatives at an incredible rate.

The contradictions, costs and divisions of capitalism

Yet even in the moment of its triumph over its closed opponents, it is becoming increasingly evident that not only are there immense costs (not only ecological and the 'hidden' injuries of class,

gender etc, but in the psychological and other contradictions which are built into the system), but also that there are warring factions within the victor's camp.

There are, in fact, two 'capitalisms', not one. There is the individualistic, western model, of the classic Weberian type. This is now being challenged by a more communal, hierarchical variant centred on Japan and extending through South-East Asia. The superficial technologies and even the political systems are roughly similar, but the cultures and the relations built on them are based on very different premises.

Japan, England and contract; the rest and status

One of the most curious and difficult problems, to which I have already devoted considerable time, but which I feel is central to teasing out the variations is the core nature of the differences between Japan, Europe, Asian and Ancient societies. Let us start again. The essence of Tonnies Gemeinschaft or 'Community' is that it is based on blood, in other words on birth, it is a status group which is given and unalterable. In contrast, the two other cases are based on choice, achievement, contract. The firms, associations, Japanese large family (ie) are all constructed on the basis of will and agreement. One can achieve membership, join or leave and so on. They are thus much more fluid and can be adapted and shaped to the task in hand, and they can be much more special purpose.

Secondly the 'Community' is a total institution, encompassing and conjoining all the different levels. Thus the 'Community' is not a nine o'clock to five o'clock affair, it is one's whole world, a blend of economy, society, relation and so on. Particular activities are side-effects, consequences, not causes of its being. It produces wealth, ritual, defence as results of its being.

At the other extreme are associations which put very limited demands on their employees and call on only a little of their loyalty, a College Fellowship, Rotarians, a factory or whatever. This is the limited involvement type of activity characteristic of the English.

Total involvement only possible in the bounded

Interestingly, the only things in which the English become passionately involved are things that are very bounded and which do not, ultimately matter, by definition, for instance sports, games, hobbies. The inhibitions which prevent total commitment are temporarily overlooked and suppressed because it is safe to do so. The involvement is naturally limited for the game will end, and hence in a sense it is unreal, a willing suspension of disbelief like a play, pretend, make-belief, almost fantasy.

The cult of the amateur and war on seriousness

Perhaps this is related to the English cult of the amateur and the dislike of seriousness and

refusal to take anything too seriously, a trait which puzzles many foreigners. The aim of this strategy is to combine in the best possible way involvement, participating as one can do as an amateur play, without committing oneself for money, which would be constraint one is under as a profession. The 'fun' likes in the voluntary, take it or leave it, arms length nature of the activities. If it becomes too important, too serious, it is no longer 'fun'/ The playfulness, spontaneity, detached yet attached, half-serious activities without too much constraint, which make the English such passionate games players and so dedicated to their hobbies, puzzle many who wee an 'amateur' civilization, where serious things are left to amateurs, that is science, politics, art and so on. The English seem to love to turn things into 'games'; parliament, religion, even opera are not taken seriously. Hence many of their greatest geniuses were 'amateurs', lacking professional training and full-time employment in their chose vocation. This question of games and the English, a major export along with language, would be worth further investigation, but let us return to the question of groups, from which we have digressed.

The Japanese; half way between partial and total involvement

The Japanese solution to the question of involvement lies somewhere halfway between the two extremes we have sketched in. Neither is there total immersion or involvement in one group, for the Japanese have conflicting loyalties, for example to the family, to the Emperor, to themselves, to their religion. These things have not been fully fused into the work organization; even the Japanese business refuses to be a religious or political organization. Yet, notoriously, the involvement of the Japanese in their work organizations is far deeper than that normally found in the West. The cash nexus is less important, the loyalty and commitment greater, the social satisfaction of the workplace much greater. All this is puzzling to Westerners. The western expectation that there will be a very strong contrast of labour and leisure, the former being distasteful, the latter pleasurable, is blurred. Work in Japan is fun, holidays are a bore.

Work and leisure; the intermediate Japanese solution

Here again Japan seems to be at an intersection or mid point between two extremes. At one pole documented by anthropologists little or no distinction is made between 'work' and 'leisure', they blend into each other and each has elements of the other. At the other extreme is the nineteenth century English division of work from leisure. Work is by definition unpleasant, a chore, something to which one may have to give one's mind and body, but certainly one will not give one's heart or spirit.

An elegant solution to the problem of how to make 'work' more bearable is to re-define it and heighten its playfulness, thus temporarily overcoming the dichotomy. The examiner's meeting or committee meeting can be enlivened by spoof and irony, the lesson with a humorous theme, the session of Parliament by verbal games. All these are examples of the syndrome which through 'amateurism' turns work into play. In a sense, the Japanese take this one stage further by defining work as pleasurable. How precisely this is done, no-one really knows.

How the Japanese come to love their work

Part of the answer is related to the intense pleasure most Japanese get from frequent and intensive social inter-actions. Whereas for many English, social intercourse is often a burden, they are self-sufficient (more or less) and the presence of another (except for a real friend, who is by definition invisible) is a distraction or disturbance, for many Japanese, to be alone is the distraction, for it emphasizes the incompleteness of the person. Thus the defects of loneliness and of boredom are controlled in Japan by communication, by exchanging messages, by mutual signaling. While the internal resources are slight, when stimulated by others a person's activity can be intense and time passes quickly.

In a way the experience of Japanese at work is familiar to anyone who has enjoyed some professional or amateur activity. The factory is like a good pub, a good football game, a good play, all occasions where one shares, relaxes, joins with other people. It also has the added pleasure of making money, of providing identity, of providing satisfaction if successful, of making one feel needed and wanted. That the difference is largely attitudinal, and nothing innate, is shown by the success of Japanese business methods in North East England. Yet it does seem likely that the Japanese personality, which from childhood has laid great stress on mutual grooming and approval, particularly delights in a meaningful work environment.

Three models of involvement in work organizations

Another key to the difference may lie in the varying stake which the individual has in the work unit in different types of civilization. Here again we can contrast three models; the communal, the Japanese co-operative and the Western wage-earner/boss system. Let us start by seeing how inputs and rewards work in a communal situation, for instance in the classic Domestic Mode of Production.

Involvement in the Domestic Mode of Production

In this basically kinship based system, there is, in theory a pooling of assets; pooled labour, pooled rewards. The 'estate' is jointly owned and exploited. This benefits differentially, of course, depending on age, gender, luck and so on. But in theory any advantages to the group and any fruits of extra labour returns to the whole group. This encourages effort since each person can increase his or her share directly by added efforts. Basically, what goes in comes out; effort put in, rewards come out.

Non-involvement in the Capitalistic Mode of Production

At the other extreme is the capitalist-worker situation. Here, as Marx memorably showed, the capitalist profits from the surplus value created by the worker. Normally the wages are fixed and

are, in any case, the results of politics (power relations of worker and employer) and market forces (scarcity of labour). They are not directly linked to increases in productivity, except marginally sometimes through the payment of productivity bonuses. In this situation the worker does not share in any extra effort, invention or skill he shows, for profits go to the employer. The worker thus has little incentive to put in extra effort except under duress, for he does not benefit from something which only seems doubly irksome, extra work from which another is benefiting.

Then there is the alienation caused by an increasing division of labour. As Marx again showed, the labourer is alienated from the fruits of his labour, which becomes a commodity, he receives payment for unrewarding toil. What he has created, often only a fraction of the finished product, is wrenched from him. It is constant frustration, the opposite of the satisfaction which one would find in a craft activity, which almost by definition is a whole process, the making of a pot or rug from start to finish. Such craft activity will earn individual praise and perhaps individual rewards which bears a direct relation to the amount of skill and labour he or she puts in. Now the doubly negative situation created by the growth of capital and an increasing division of labour is common in western capitalism. It only marginally improves on the situation within a slave civilization in that there is at least an illusion of 'freedom' (one can, in theory 'get on one's bike' and take one's labour elsewhere), and there may be some room for bargaining.

The magic of Japanese labour involvement

The Japanese seem to have found a way of mitigating this harshness whilst sill not veering to the other extreme of total communalism or communism. They do this, it would seem, by creating organizations in which everyone feels they have a stake. They create the sort of **esprit de corps** one might find in a good regiment, a good orchestra, a good football team or a good college. They create a group of people who have discovered the joy of working together constructively so that the sum of the parts is more than the parts, where each individual can directly feel that his contribution is necessary, wanted, appreciated and rewarded.

Some of the techniques by which this is achieved in Japan are exactly parallel to what so often happens in those western examples cited above. Suggestions for improvements are mutually discussed; individuals are commended and praised for their contributions; those who make special efforts are commended, symbols (dress, eating, space) are used to stress unity (one staff canteen, one uniform) rather than differences and oppositions. And above all the assets of the institution are looked on as a corporate responsibility and its profits and successes are shared fairly between all on a principle of age and experience, rather than on whether one is the bosses son or has inherited a large chunk of congealed capital.

The Japanese as un-capitalistic, verging on the communal

In this sense, then, the Japanese are curiously un-capitalist. Their economic organization is not based on exploitation of surplus value and the siphoning of profits into the hands of a few (for

instance, share-holding as Dore shows, is rather unimportant in Japanese business). All this explains or is linked to the rather docile, productive and committed labour force. Why should such a work-force shoot itself in its own feet by striking? The Japanese have achieved a form of communism or communalism (though they might be horrified to hear it) in their organizational structures which provides much meaning and enjoyment. They know that good, well organized, well rewarded team 'work' can be as enjoyable as rugger, playing in an orchestra, becoming the 'fellow' of an Oxbridge College. They also know that it is equally, if not more, efficient.

Individualistic capitalism necessary in the early stages

It is possible to argue that at a certain stage of economic development, say in early industrialization, the western capitalistic model is both efficient and necessary. If windfall or other profits are shared too widely, the capital accumulation necessary for large enterprises may be difficult to achieve. Within the inner group, whether Merchant Venturers or East India Company, there may be sharing. But if all the thousands of workers were to partake in every small advance, too much might be diverted from re-investment. Or so many have argued. The tension and contradictions of hard-faced wage bargaining might be considered to be the pain, the oyster's labour that created the pearl.

Such a system also made some sense given the slow pace of technological change and its simplicity. It was not irrational to install a rigid and hierarchical division of labour. People co-operated, but only as on a conveyor belt by mechanically applying themselves to the external object, each adding cumulatively with his skills along a line. A would do stage one, B add to it, C refine it, as in the parable of the pin-makers.

New work organization needed for a new world

Yet this world has now changed in several ways which makes all this a less than efficient way to run a business, just as it would be a hopeless way to run an orchestra or football team. Imagine if each player played in turn without interacting with his fellows, and if two or three of the players, the 'bosses' were in opposition to the rest of the team.

We may examine the nature of some of the differences. The present world of high-tech is no longer capital hungry in the same way. Any good organization or idea can raise all the capital it needs from the vast funds seeking a profitable outlet. It does not have to pull itself up by seated, congealed, labour.

Secondly, the product is different. It is immensely more complex, hence requiring the pooling of many skills. Furthermore, it is constantly evolving, changing, trying to out pace its competitors. In order to do this, the whole work force must work as a team, constantly co-operating, interchanging information, re-thinking and re-learning. They literally must become like an orchestra faced with a new score every few days, or a football team which will win more through the level of its internal

communications skills than through the virtuoso performance of one star or the bullying of the coach.

The Japanese social structure adapted to the new work

For all this new team-work, co-operative, highly flexible and mobile world, the Japanese work organization is ideally adapted. The well known saying that one Japanese is worth half a Chinaman, while two Japanese are worth three Chinese (or words to that effect), captures the flavour of this. The strength of the Japanese is cumulative, just as the strength of any team is cumulative.

Now such team spirit is applied to economic activities in many simpler societies and helps them overcome many of the their technology-deficient difficulties. Yet the drive of western capitalism led people to believe with Adam Smith that the essence of progress was division of labour, the splitting of tasks into their parts, as with the famous pin-makers.

To a large extent Smith was right, for his time. It was a great power unleashed in the land, the division of labour. But it is now not enough. Tasks must indeed be analytically separated, very specialized and specific skills must be learnt. But then all this must be re-combined to achieve the goal. It is again just like an orchestra. First one must separate into the instruments, train the players up to excellence, but that is just the start. They must then combine so that while retaining their distinctiveness they are also "as one". The same is true, I am told, of good cooking or painting.

The West was extraordinarily good at the separation, which fitted with and contributed to its noted individualism. But it was less good at re-combining, focusing all the skills on one object, sinking the private aims and petty pride of individuals in a communal objective. Yet this is just what the Japanese (and others in that area) are particularly good at and enjoy.

The enjoyment, which good soldiers or games players or musicians obtain from shared and complementary skills put to a common goal is what Japanese or Chinese (south) get from their work. Consequently they are producing the most extraordinary objects; delicate, beautiful, strong and immensely complex. In this micro world of high technology, delicacy, sensitivity, the pooling of ideas and skills is the name of the game. Occasionally a charismatic figure can achieve this briefly in the West, forging a team out of disparate individuals. In Japan, however, it does not need an especial figure since it is a 'natural' state of affairs. The result is a lethally efficient and adjusted labour force which can keep abreast of a rolling technology.

Work organization, vertical and class structures

Combined with this is a different form of hierarchy which reflects the fundamental difference of European and Japanese society. The structure in Japan is based on dyadic, unequal bonds of a

classic feudal type. This is in the form of A having subordinates B and C, each of which have subordinates D, E, F, G and so on, a segmented and nested hierarchy like the branches of a tree, with smaller branches and then twigs. In this structure, all decision tend to be shared, for they move up and down the structure, perhaps starting at the top, perhaps lower down, but echoing up and down as in the classic practice of 'root binding'.

In this structure there are no large gaps between levels, just personal ties of loyalty, dependence and respect. Each person, except at the very top or bottom, looks both up and down. There is no basic confrontation of haves and have nots, but rather more or less. Furthermore, those with 'less', lower down the organization, have a sense that if they put a good deal of effort into their work they can move up and become the 'more'.

In theory, this is how the best organizations work in the west. Yet in practice most end up with a structure of a more binary, oppositional kind, with bosses and workers with sharply marked-off grades, with insuperable barriers almost verging on castes. Blue collar will never turn into white collar, the ranks will never get a 'commission' and become 'officers'. There is thus far less commitment, incentive, for people know they are in an organization where they are locked off from any say in decision-making, any share in profits, any chance to move to the top. They can hardly be blamed for being an uninspired and often reluctant and bitter work force.

The effects of insecurity on commitment

We may add to this the insecurity of a western world where there is no commitment by the employers to provide a haven from the random and cruel waves of economic fluctuation. Following what they consider to be the best practices and allowing the supposed iron rules of the market free play, workers are hired and sacked as if they were animals, taken up and then cast off. How can they possibly develop any sense of involvement and commitment when treated thus?

In contrast, in Japan, although this not apply to all the small business, there is the famed lifelong employment schemes. Once one has given oneself to a company, it gives itself to you. A really binding contract is entered into, whereby the worker gives of his best, above and beyond the minimum required as reciprocity for his wages, and this extra is returned to him in the form of a promise to see him through difficult times.

It is often thought that such a garnet would lead to complacency, apathy, sloth and so on, but this is bad psychologising. In certain contexts, as in government jobs in many countries, in which people feel no allegiance, this may be the case. Yet in most economic activities the reverse is true. With that curious Japanese characteristic of diffused obligations which cannot be fully repaid (giri), the worker works extra hard for his or her employer in the attempt to repay the kindness. The company takes on a human face, it cares, it becomes almost like a family, to whom gratitude, honour, filial piety and the best of one's efforts is due.

Loyalty and the work effort

The feeling of the worker is not unlike that loyalty described by the butler in Ishiguro's 'Remains of the Day' or what one feels for one's College as a Fellow. One seems to have received so much, friendship, money, security and so on, that one feels that it is not only an obligation, but more deeply a delight, to give what one can in return. Thus some of the deepest urges of children to their providing parents are harnessed in an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust. This is a recipe for hard work and creativity rather than, as the short-sighted and cynical proponents of brutal, short-term, market relations would have it, sloth and complacency.

The protection of the worker at the end of his career

Even at the end of one's main career much more care is taken to ease a Japanese worker out of work. Instead of the sudden and often traumatic western retirement, one day with meaning and wealth and a little power and dignity, the next day an old age pension, one has a system of gradual retirement. This basically takes the form of moving from a key, central, position, to a humbler and peripheral one or, as with civil servants, from a civil service job to one in industry or commerce. Many of those who retire take on smaller, half-time, simpler jobs. These smooth the transition, slowing down the rhythm at a more natural pace, leading to final retirement. Thus work is a curve, rather than, as in the West, an abrupt ending. This is much closer to what happens in simpler societies and more closely reflects human energy and inclination. It gives value to the individual and his potential.

SECTION 4: FURTHER REFLECTIONS

(Written 17-19 June 1992, as first draft for a conference paper at Achievement conference on 'Vocation, work and culture: a comparative approach)

The interest of work ethic and Japan/West contrast

It is self-evidence that the attitude towards and nature of work, its definition and the attitude towards it, are very central features of capitalism. If I am right in my theories about Japan and England, we should find that the attitudes towards work in these two countries differ dramatically from those in non-capitalist and other economies. Furthermore, there should be a dramatic difference as between Japan and England in their attitude. This might be represented as follows: England is different from Japan, but both are structurally different from other civilizations. Now what are these differences? In order to proceed here it is necessary to sharpen the focus by asking some specific questions. One of these might be. Why work at all?

Why people work in the West; the theory of need

The conventional answer in relation to the West is really a jumble of the Weber-type theories. We might divide this in a preliminary way into push and pull. People are pushed into work and continuous work by need. This need is created by a number of factors. One is the ubiquitous presence of money, which hollows out things so that they constantly insubstantial and like a sand-castle attacked by the eroding sea. As soon as a certain amount is achieved, it is sucked away again. There is no steady state. As with academic and other reputation, it constantly needs to be refreshed, there is no "resting on one's laurels". As soon as one has published a book, the question comes, "What are you working on now...?"

This is related to the more general condition, noted by Malthus, of inherent status insecurity in England. Reputation and status are constantly shifting: if one is not going up, one is going down, a sort of endless pressure of relative deprivation or status loss, which, as Malthus noted, forced people on to endlessly accumulate.

Restlessness, anxiety and total scarcity as work incentives

This is obviously related to that central feature of restlessness and anxiety, lack of satisfaction, feeling of "fool's gold" which is so graphically illustrated in much literature and autobiography (e.g. De Tocqueville's Memoirs, vol. 2). This is related again to my distinction (cf. article on peasant morality) comparing four situations. In the Peasant/Ancien Regime situation, means are limited and ends are limited - hence steady frustration. In Hunter Gatherer or what Sahlins calls the Original Affluent Society, Means are unlimited, and Ends are Limited, hence affluence. In the Japanese solution, the means are unlimited and the ends are unlimited, hence exhilaration. In the West, we have come to see means as limited and Ends as Unlimited, hence total scarcity. Thus, as Sahlins,

from whom these ideas partly derive, points out, we are condemned to perpetual scarcity in the midst of plenty. As he also notes, without the impetus which this scarcity provides, and the striving to overcome it, capitalist consumer market economy would dry up or freeze. Too much zen satisfaction and things would settle down into happy nothingness.

Why the ends are limited in the majority of societies

In order to progress beyond these vague assertions, we need to examine a little more carefully the reasons why such open-ended opportunities are not present in most societies. Among the reasons, the following could be suggested. Firstly, the 'goods' that can be obtained with the fruits of one's labour are limited. The extreme case is the Hunter Gatherer structure: the amount of mogongo nuts or meat one can consume is limited. Indeed it is more generally the case that physical needs are easily satisfied. It is only when they are tied in with social tastes, as with fashion, in a world where one can and should substitute oysters and champagne for bread and water, that things become unlimited. By a kind of magic, as the cornucopia of goods is produced in the world, so it inflames the desire to have such goods.

The disincentives to the pursuit of goods

Now it might be argued that in most societies, if people were left to their own devices they would pursue such goods. But they are not so left. There are usually strong barriers to such a pursuit, often enforced by neighbours, kin, governments (sumptuary laws) or other social classes. There are levels and thresholds over which people should not pass.

These levels are very often protected by customs and codes of particular social conventions related to caste-like social groups. 'Peasants', the vast majority of the population, have a fixed level, as Chayanov and others have shown. What is odd in this context is the open situation of Japan and England with the absence of a real peasantry and hence the presence of an unusually extensive 'middling' group which, as Adam Smith pointed out, provided the backbone of demand for the market economy. The reasons for this absence of peasantry deserve further exploration, but for the moment let us concentrate on its effect on demand.

Work as a means to an end; the pull of goods

Thus part of what I should have called the pull, is the demand for both necessities and luxuries, which can only, it is thought, be obtained by work. In this approach, work is a means to an end. As such it is looked on as a chore, a necessary evil which has to be gone through in order to obtain the necessary and good things of life. In many respects this is an extension of the attitude in peasant societies, the drudgery of work. The main difference is in the nature of the work (where there is a higher component of non-human power through technology and 'fuel' of various kinds) and the fact that it is paid for in cash. Furthermore, there is now, theoretically, no end to work, for the goals are unlimited and hence the means are unlimited.

Guilt, sin and insecurity and the push to work

Another topic to consider is the push to work. This is usually thought of in the West as being somehow related to guilt, sin and insecurity. Weber ingeniously linked it to the idea of damnation. People feel insecure about their salvation (that God loves them) and thus, in order to prove themselves and others, they strive to shine in this world. In this interpretation, it is an individual feeling of guilt which drives people, not a social feeling. In a sense they need to be active to redeem themselves. In this argument, whereas in Catholicism people were assured of salvation if they took certain magical precautions, in Protestantism they needed constantly to strive to prove themselves.

The Weber thesis on work needs to be widened

Now there is obviously some truth in this argument, especially if we widen it a little. The obvious fact is that although the connection may be manifested most clearly in certain nonconformists, Quakers, Benjamin Franklin, Josselin and others, it is not limited to them. Within Protestantism, Anglicans were possibly just as afflicted. Even within Catholicism, many Jesuits were as infected by the work ethic as many Calvinists. It would seem therefore that a better formulation would be that Christianity per se, if it is mixed with certain other pre-disposing factors (for example atomistic kinship system, absence of 'castes', advanced technology) will cause this restless, insecure, state. Hence Walzer's reformulation, that both capitalism and protestantism are side-effects of something else (which he rather lamely titles 'anxiety') is probably heading in the right direction.

A hint as to why anxiety and restlessness in the West

According to my more general theories, this 'something else', is the fundamental separation of spheres and the isolation of the individual, devoid of all contexts and hence 'meaningless', which I have developed at some length elsewhere.

Vocation and an attempt to dignify work

It does seem to be the case that there is an unusual attempt, within the Christian tradition, to give work a good name, to give it dignity. In the majority of societies, of course, there is little conscious objectification of work: it is, as many anthropologists have pointed out, just something one does in order to live and to live marginally better. There is no need to sell the idea of work, to urge people on, to tell people that work is good for them. There is no alternative to work. The problem comes when technology reaches a stage where people can afford to sit back, where the leisure society is upon us, when Veblen's world opens up. At this point a large group of people start to encourage (often other) people to enjoy work.

Making work dignified; an unusual solution

The first thing they have to do is to make work dignified. This goes against the grain of the dominant attitude in most societies. Most people find physical work an enormous strain and their first aim in life is to reach a position where they can 'retire' to less arduous work. Indeed, it is one of the most obvious features of the majority of civilizations that they make the decisive break in their system of social stratification, whether castes or estates, precisely on this criterion. The four major orders which characterize almost all agrarian civilizations are based on the nature of the work they do: the 'thinkers' (Priests, Literati, Brahmins) - who use their heads; the warriors (warriors, nobility) - who use their arms and weapons; the peasants, who use their arms, backs and legs on the earth; the craftsmen, who make things. The great divide is normally between those who work with their heads and those who work with their hands.

The indignity of physical work and the exceptions

In the normal agrarian system, the small literati and ruling class look down on normal, physical, work as demeaning, ignoble and so on. Now both Japan and England as they built up to industrial and capitalist take off were faced with a problem. A society will not take off or sustain the early phases of capitalism unless very large proportions of its population are prepared to work hard in the middle rungs, that is to say above the level of rural labourers, but below Veblen's leisure class. If everyone becomes a 'professional' too quickly, nothing will happen. A broad band of 'craftsmen' in the broadest sense is needed.

It is in this 'craftsmen' band, which may even include some of the more abstract crafts and mysteries such as lawyers, doctors and so on, that the idea of work as a 'vocation' is most usefully inculcated.

We may thus wonder how it was that this increasing valuation, if it did increase as historians appear to believe, of well done work, pride in the job, job satisfaction and so on occurred, in particular in North West Europe and Japan, for Japan was an even more extreme case than England?

Christianity and the dignity of labour

One theory is again derived from Weber and linked to Christianity. It is given dogmatic justification in a number of the stories told by and about Christ which commended good workmanship in sweeping a house, the parable of the talents etc. All work was a symbolic way of praising God, not a doctrine, I suspect, to be found in any of the other three great world religions? (see the awkwardly rhyming hymn along the lines of "He who...makes the task and God great", or words to that effect).

No doubt a great deal of Christian literature, not just confined to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, could be found to extol the fact that God is praised by the works of man. It would be interesting to see whether in its emphasis on this theme, namely that in acting in this world, in

striving, we please God, there is the difference which I suggested about as between Christianity and the other world religions. It does seem at first sight that Christianity is a much more this-worldly, doing, practical kind of religion than say Hinduism. The latter, with its commendation of the renouncer and mystical contemplation, and likewise Buddhism with its similar emphasis on withdrawal, see this world and work in this world as an illusion.

Monks and work in this world

It is perhaps significant here to note the difference between the great carpenter's religion (Christianity) and the life of Buddha and the saints of the Hindu pantheon. Likewise, the Christian monks are on the whole a very busy lot, organized, hard-working, methodical. In contrast Buddhist monks and Hindu holy men are often the religious equivalents of Veblen's leisure class, as is the whole of the Brahmin caste, who hate and despise physical work. It is difficult to think of Ralph Josselin with his farming and business enterprises as a Brahmin priest.

Christianity is not enough; other preconditions for work

Thus there does seem to be something generically present in Christianity which encourages manual work. This was indeed something which obviously attracted some of the early Japanese converts. Yet this 'something' is not strong enough to overcome the overlaying tendency in agrarian societies to place occupations on a sale of (almost) ritual purity depending on their distance from physical work. Most of them represent in some way and usually to a lesser extent, the caste system which explicitly states that the closer a person is through their occupation to physical processes and physical work, the lower their caste. This is not limited to Hindu societies, for the same can be found in China and to a considerable extent in Catholic Europe. It seems an almost inevitable concomitant of large agrarian civilizations. What is therefore particularly odd is that it was suspended, to a certain extent in sixteenth to nineteenth century England and permanently in Japan. Why was this?

One thing we can say is that a circular argument, which says that such an attitude is necessary for industrialization and therefore it had to happen, is not acceptable. As we can see, it did not happen in most civilizations; there was no necessity that industrialization should occur. We are thus still left with the problem of why work was so highly valued.

The market solution; let those who work eat

One answer might be along the lines of Adam Smith's work. The market will sort things out. Society rewards those who deserve to be rewarded. "He who does not work, neither shall he eat". Yet this solution does not really work, for we are not merely looking at an economic market, but a social esteem market. What we are trying to understand is that relatively rare and strange phenomenon, the high valuation given to practical activity. Why was Benjamin Franklin or Robert Hooke so very busy? It does not seem to have been merely a matter of insecurity, though, as we can

see with Defoe, this played its part. Nor does it seem merely to have been merely a matter of guilt. Nor was it some idea of praising God.

In fact, it seems to have been deeper than this, become internalized, and to arise from something else, which we find much more developed in Japan and which may be related to Huizinga's 'Homo Ludens', that is an actual physical and mental enjoyment in problem solving and creativity.

What makes work enjoyable?

Now in order for a feeling that work is enjoyable to be widespread, certain conditions have to be met. Firstly, the work should not be too physically (or mentally) demanding: this requires a relatively advanced technology and a reasonable division of the rewards of labour. It is difficult to see how a great deal of the grinding physical labour done in agrarian societies could ever be other than unpleasant. Where labour is the scarce factor in production and technology is primitive, as in much of Asia, Africa, Russia and pre-industrial Europe, it will be regarded as dreadfully demanding.

Secondly, the work should be varied, not monotonously uniform. Variety, of course, is largely socially constructed. Japanese factory works, we are told, find their work far from monotonous, though it looks like to us and the same work is thought monotonous in other parts of the world (though this may also have to do with the fact that in a Japanese factory, to keep pace with change, there is constant change). Work should ideally be creative, innovative, allowing the human being to explore new things and be rewarded and encouraged for doing so. Craft work falls well into this category, an intersection of art and practical work.

Thirdly, the work, and its product, should also be highly, or at least reasonably, valued by others. This can be expressed in many ways, most crudely by large money payments, more elegantly by criticism and praise (as we see, for example, in De Tocqueville's anxious remarks about his writing in his Memoirs).

Work as an expression of the love of communicating

This need to be valued by others is related to something more general. Human beings love to communicate. Most activity can be looked on both as a thing in itself and as a form of communication, either with oneself (as in writing these lines) or with a putative audience. Even Robinson Crusoe on his island, with no audience until the late appearance of Man Friday, seems to be acting as if he is trying to communicate with someone, perhaps himself, perhaps God, perhaps the novelist.

This need to communicate through doing things is obviously the backbone of sport and games, and in this they are very akin to 'work'. Now a lot of work, particularly the making of things, is an excellent way to communicate. This is widely recognized in relation to art, which is centrally seen

as a communicative act, but it is equally true of other labour. Marx recognized this well when he wrote movingly about how we objectify ourselves in our work, and how the fruits of this objectification are ripped away from us when we are alienated from such objects.

In order for this communication to be successful, certain pre-conditions are needed. An audience is needed, that is a group of people interested in the work, knowledgeable about its style, form etc. In other words a public which values it needs to be present. Without such patrons, work becomes meaningless, or practically so.

Work as communication in Japan

Now the use of symbolic communication through work reaches its highest levels in Japan, where the recognition, for example, that there is cultural treasure in techniques (and hence this can be embodied in "Living Treasures") is uniquely celebrated. In other cultures such a view is widespread in the idea of the literati, who have embodied intellectual property. Yet the idea of having an equivalent 'technocrat', though present to a certain extent in scientific work (embodied in noble prizes) in the West is less common in relation to workmen and craftsmen.

The need to command a whole process; divide and destroy

Perhaps another desideratum is the command over a whole process, either individually, or within a small bounded group. To take one thing and then to stamp one's personality on it and thereby transform it into another, whether leather, wood, clay, paint or whatever, is both internally satisfying, and also an extremely good way of communicating with others. In a way this contradicts the Smithian or Dukheimian assumption that increased productivity will arise from more and more division of labour.

The division of labour is in many ways another strong force against any pleasure in work, epitomized in Charlie Chaplin's activity on the conveyor belt in 'Modern Times' or the world of Henry Ford. How then is this alienation of undermining of value held at bay?

The art of retaining meaning in work

One technique is to keep certain occupations and activities away from the deadening effect of the division of labour. By definition, almost all craft activities are those very occupations where there is no, or little, division of labour. A calligrapher or potter or painter is a lone artist. Yet some crafts do need team-work, for instance sword making in Japan. The art then is to think of a form of co-operative work which preserves the integrity of the worker, while allowing him to share both in the labour and the rewards.

The guild system and its replacement in the west

It is perhaps here, most of all, that the western and Japanese paths diverge most. There is some evidence that the medieval guild system had some of the features of the Japanese co-operative work system. In it, the work group was more than just a work group; it was also a social, quasi-religious and other group as well. As such, it spread a blanket of inter-personal warmth over the workers so that they shared, to a certain extent, from each other's triumphs and success. They were not in competition, but like a good play, or orchestra or games team, worked together.

Yet this type of organization, though maintained to a certain extent in certain professions, for instance the Inns of Court, the Universities, the professions as a whole, tended to be replaced in the West by another type of work organization which seemed to work better (for a time). This was the work-shop and later the factory, based on a stricter division of labour and on greater hierarchy. Here people were joined by their confrontation (workers vs bosses), joined by money (wage bargaining), and joined by Durkheim's complementary form of the division of labour, segmentary oppositions. These forms took up and carried on certain forms or elements of the medieval guilds, but dropped others. It was much more flexible, adaptive and so on, but it notoriously led to alienation, the separation out of mutually competing and separated individuals, the Lonely Crowd. At the cost of loss of meaning in work, it produced greater meaning in non-work, in other words greater profits for the profit-takers. People moved from a world where work was to a certain extent an end itself, rewarding, to one where it was just a means.

Japan as an exception to the usual path of alienation

This path of alienation never seems to have occurred in Japan, which somehow leap-frogged this stage. Of course it could be that had they had to traverse the early phases of industrialization, that famous pulling of oneself up by one's boot-straps, as in the West, this phase might have occurred. We will never know. What we do know is that to a certain extent the Japanese have mentioned a sort of medieval guild system as the heart of their industrial system, but more so.

The Japanese and Western work organization models

The essence of the Japanese system seems to be a different set of social relationships between those engaged in a common activity. Instead of dividing the activities and rewards down into the smallest atoms, and then distributing them, the Japanese start with the individuals and their capacities and see what they can contribute to the whole. This is rather difficult to express and I am just groping at a way of conceiving of the difference. It might be represented in a diagram (see NB2, p.220)

In the western model, the task is divided into parts 1,2,3,4,5, each of which is allocated to individuals A,B,C,D,E,F. Thus the only thing that ultimately integrates the people is, as Durkheim pointed out, their roles in the divided labour. In the Japanese model, we have individuals and their capacities, A, B,C,D,E,F, who are allocated to tasks 1,2,3,4,5,6. In this situation, the social

relations and capacities of individuals come first and what they do second.

Now to treat human beings like this is far more satisfying; it lies behind the idea of "anybody can do anything", the competent amateur turning his hand to anything. It is an approach which gives work a meaning but sadly is a luxury shared by only a small part of the upper middle class professional groups in the West.

How does Japan successfully overcome Adam Smith?

The real question is, how does it work? Normally, if one proceeds in this way, according to Smithian and formalist economics, it leads to inefficiency. Very soon the economic is submerged in the social and one gets all those barriers which have been analysed as blocks in peasant economies by Chayanov. For instance, one gets nepotism, or everyone wants to do certain things and no-one wants to do the other things. It may be conceivable that the sum of private passions will lead to the public benefit if the whole situation is mediated through a free market and individualism. Yet is this so if we eliminate the market and let individual social relations determine the organization of labour?

Perhaps such a system would not work in most social structures and it only works in Japan because of the two central features which make it odd in comparative perspective. The first might be called ruthlessness (or an unusual emphasis on contract). The second might be called the dyadic principle, a limited form of hierarchy. How these two principles can be linked to the Japanese ability to combine the social and the economic to such a good effect (as compared to the Anglo-Saxon solution which is to split them to an equally good effect in terms of efficiency) we will proceed to analyse.

The central part of contract or ruthlessness in Japan

The first requirement is ruthlessness. This is best examined in relation to kinship and birth. Normally, economic efficiency is waved when it faces the claims of birth or status. Inefficient sons are allowed to take over the estate or firm. Disinheritance is impossible, primogeniture is absence, adoption of non-kin is forbidden. This is because the social and economic are so enmeshed that it is impossible to separate them.

This was clearly not the case in Japan where, as is well known, kinship was subordinated to economic (and political) success, with primogeniture, disinheritance, adoption of non-kin prevalent. Ultimately, the firm was more important than the family, just as the lord was more important than the father. This is contrary to the valuation of most societies. It reveals a world where contract could overcome status.

One of the reasons why this has not been more widely noted is that, as compared to an extreme case like England, the family in Japan was till the model on which the firm was based; but it was

an 'as if', fictional, family. Of course this happens by accident or forgetfulness (structural amnesia) in all social system. Yet in Japan it was done consciously and calculatingly. This is what I mean by ruthlessness. The larger good, the longer term, outweighed the smaller good, the short term. Sentiment gave way to practical reason. It is a cold-blooded attitude to kin obligations which has also been noted with the English (for instance in their attitude to parents or children). The difference is just one of emphasis and degree, not of kind.

The emphasis on vertical ties in Japan

The second feature is the emphasis on vertical ties. As is widely known, the language and social structure of Japan make equal relations very difficult. Indeed, this may be related to the curiously relational nature of Japanese society. It is much easier to conceive of pairs, dyads, relations of A to B if they are ranked and hence complementary in power. If A and B are symmetrical, balanced and equal, why should they need each other? They can stand on their own. Yet the essence of the Japanese is that nothing can stand on its own. Everything only has a meaning in relation to something else. And this approach is far more satisfactory if the pair has an inferior and superior, thus dove-tailing or fitting together. Japan is like the sound of clapping; it cannot exist, except in counter-intuitive zen speculation as one hand. Yet it is not enough that there are two hands. They need to be an upper and a lower hand.

The difference between dyadic and dual classifications

Here we can distinguish the ritual from the usual dual classifications which are just oppositional, yin and yang, left and right and so on. These are powerful enough, but the Japanese add the extra, cementing, value of ranking. This is not hierarchy in Dumont's sense. The higher does not exactly encompass the lower, but it does rest upon it, absorb it an shield it. It is not exactly like the normal patron-client relationships either, though it does contain the element of the lop-sided. The vertical relationship, however, does not come from an idea of an unequal contribution of the two parts, men and women, boss and worker, lord and servant. They start unequal because of inherent role differences, but their contribution is equivalent, if different, and equally valuable.

The Japanese ability to reconcile inequality and equality

Perhaps this is one of the secrets of Japan. It manages to reconcile intrinsic inequality and equality. People are born unequal, or become unequal, and therefore it is recognized that inequalities exist. Inequality does not have to be disguised, pretended away. It is a fact of life and widely accepted. Yet it is not a cause for shame, for each part can contribute equally, given its starting point.

This sentiment has some echo in Milton's poem on his blindness, "he also serves who only stands and waits..." The blind person, in his way, can offer as much as the sighted. This view, furthermore, is present in much of Christianity, with its ideal that each person should offer what he

or she has and it will be acceptable. This is how it is in the relationship to God. Yet in the normal cut and thrust of life, people are treated as of different worth. In contrast to Japan, they are given the original message that they are equally endowed by the creator, born free and equal (for instance as stated in the American Declaration of Rights), but in practice, some have a lot more to offer than others and are seem to be more valuable. Some are 'rubbish men', others are highly rewarded, as in other meritocratic and supposedly egalitarian and individualistic systems such as those in Highland New Guinea.

How does vertical and dyadic social structure help work?

Now, how does such a vertical and dyadic social structure help solve the problem of labour organization and the blending of the economic and social? We can approach this by realizing that what is needed is some way of tying people together into mutual activity which is not based on any of the following strategies. It is not possible for everyone to do the same thing; there must be division of labour and co-operation. People cannot only be linked by the division of labour itself, in other words by which part of the process they undertake, which screw they put in, so that the product is the only link. People must not be valued on the basis of their function alone, so that certain people are permanently very lowly and their life trivial.

The problem is that these negatives seem to be incompatible. If everyone is a Chief and there are no Indians, nothing will get done. If there are Chiefs and Indians, the Indians will be unhappy, even if they have the prospects of being Chiefs, perhaps, one day. On this last point, its is certainly a help if they have this prospect of promotion, which is much more likely in a seniority system like Japan than a class system like Britain.

The Japanese solution is a double one. Firstly, it makes everyone into both Chief and Indian. Everyone is caught in an endless web of dyadic relations where he or she is both superior and inferior, depending on the relationship. Only the Emperor, in his isolation, has no-one (except God?) above him. Thus people have the meaning in their life of both serving and being served.

Secondly, in Japan, being an Indian is valued, respected as much in its own way as being a Chief. This arises from the second feature of the vertical relations, namely that they are dyadic. Black may be 'below' white, but it is as necessary as white. Without it, white could not exist. The relations are complementary. The lord needs the servant as much as the servant needs the lord, though in different ways. The worker in the Toshiba factory is as needed, important, honourable, estimable in his way as is the manager. It is just that their roles are different.

The sense of involvement and meaning in Japanese work

This radiates Japanese life with its sense of fulfilment and meaning. People need to feel wanted. Through the constant and endless messages (body language as well as other) sent between pairs in the Japanese system, everyone feels rewarded and incorporated. The social satisfactions derived from belonging to a community and kinship group are experienced by ordinary Japanese.

Unusually, however, this is not based on a real community but an 'imagined community', to adapt Benedict Anderson's phrase. People have the advantages of community, but not its disadvantages. Because the whole thing is done on the basis of dyadic, ultimately contractual relations, it does not have the stultifying cost of the kinship solution.

Thus the work-place is enjoyable, fulfilling, like being in a club, game, or kinship group. Yet it is, objectively, filled with people who would appear to be doing repetitive, boring and often rather trivial things. They are linked together not by economic or technological bonds, as in the West, which though 'efficient' are not satisfying, but by social bonds, which is what human beings prefer.

The advantages of the Japanese way of work

Now this kind of alternative work structure is better adapted for certain needs. Firstly, it takes away much of the strain of work. Instead of work being unpleasant, a sacrifice of the social for the economic, a means to an end, work, as in real craftsmanship, becomes a pleasure, an end in itself. Indeed, as with really creative work, for example writing and researching, instead of working to live, one lives to work, one cannot wait to get to work each day. There is no problem except in stopping people from working too much. One needs to clear them out of the office, where they linger on happily for hours. It is a world of workaholics.

Secondly, as I have discussed elsewhere (see overlap), this organization is better adapted for the problems faced by high technology societies. The prima donna tradition is fine in certain fields of activity, in certain kinds of very abstract science and mathematics, certain arts, even in certain early phases of technological development. Thus a good deal of headway could be made by a Newton, Hooke, Boyle, Shakespeare, Franklin, Chambers, Adam Smith. In a relatively small-scale world, a single individual could know enough on enough fronts and have enough skills to be able to make a real break-through or contribution. A "master" with a small team of assistants or apprentices was enough.

This was fine in the 'heroic' period of development in the eighteenth to early twentieth centuries. But then the nature of work changed. The base of knowledge became so huge, so much was happening on the border-lands between disciplines, that it was necessary to advance as a team. The era of the research laboratory, the factory-firm, had arrived. Here the older Anglo-Saxon tradition bean to be less efficient than the Japanese (and German) approach.

The Japanese ability to pool skills

This approach is based on the pooling of skills, the casting of bread upon waters, the perpetual brain-storming, in which hurdles are overcome through mutual exchange of knowledge and information at a very rapid rate. As has been explained to me with great care by Jerry Martin, this is absolutely necessary if one is designing and making the highly complex and sophisticated high technology products which now dominate the world. These are elaborate mosaics or jig-saws of work, produced by the cumulative effort of numerous highly trained, skilled, people working

together. In such endeavours, the intellectual property rights are often indivisible, for they are pooled. The rewards of each part arises from their share in the whole. It is no longer possible for individual authors to hoard their contribution. The individual will sink or swim depending on the efforts of others.

The need for trust and commitment to work

For such work to be successful there has to be a sense of trust, that one's work will be valued and that one will not be exploited. There also needs to be a sense of commitment, so that one will be prepared to 'go the extra mile' even when there is no apparent direct reward to be had. This needs to be combined with a sense of excitement and pleasure, that one is creating something special. If all these are present, plus a mutual respect and affection, a small group can achieve wonders that no individual could possibly emulate. They are like the modern parallel processing computer, each inter-acting and adding to the cumulative effort in an ant-like way.

The need to move beyond the Mandeville-Marx model

In the Mandeville-Marx scenario there was also an idea of bees, each one busily pursuing its own end in the Grumbling Hive, each pursuing the honey dictated by private greed, but contributing to the general good. This combined individualistic passions and efforts with the general good in a new and relatively efficient way. Yet with modern technology one needs to go beyond the busy ant or bee metaphor. What is needed is much more co-operation. It is not enough for each ant or bee to play its individualistic part, fly off separately to fetch pollen and so on. A large number of slightly differentiated bees, each with complementary skills are needed to be able to work together, to focus their attention on a particular problem and creatively solve it.

One might see some analogy here with a team, as in football. The difference is that while a team is basically a group of people who unite as equals and individuals, under one captain, each contributing, the Japanese team is vertically linked, with everyone simultaneously different and yet also equal.

The reduction of the tension between individual and group

Another feature is that while in the West there is even in team sports a tension, because the individual is always faced with the contradiction between individual satisfaction and group glory. An example would be a football player; should he keep the ball and thus increase his chance of fame and fortune by scoring a goal, or pass to another, earning team approval and perhaps increasing the chance of group success, even at a direct loss to himself? The recognition of this tension has recently pre-occupied biologists trying to reconcile simple Darwinianism with the obvious and widespread 'altruism' to be found in human societies.

Strangely, in Japan, the tension is eliminated. As in perfect love, where to give to the lover is to

give pleasure to oneself, so to give to another is perfect fulfilment. It is similar to the injunctions of certain religions (George Herbert and others); to serve is to be free, to deny oneself is to satisfy oneself, through giving one receives. Continuing with the football analogy, to pass to another is to pass to oneself at one remove, and one knows that the ball will be passed back very soon. Instead of a team in which the basic premise is to hold onto the ball as long as possible, and only pass when cornered, it is a team when one should pass as soon as possible, and only hold on if necessary; it is more like volleyball than (bad) football.

The concepts of 'on' and 'giri' in Japan and work

This arises out of another aspect of the relational situation in Japan, and that is the concept of 'on' and 'giri', whereby the benefits derived from accepting a gift are greater than those of giving and hence the gift should be passed on. It is like musical chairs, everyone is very eager to be moving on, not caught red-handed, so to speak. There is a great delight in communicating, but each communication, if received, adds to one's level of obligations so that people are caught in a spiral of feverish reciprocation. It is a little like ceremonial pig giving; one is constantly trying to give, not because, as in New Guinea, it makes on more powerful to put others in one's debt, but because it makes one less weak. Each accepted gift or communicating pays back a little of the eternal debt.

Guilt, shame, sin and debt in Japan and England

The idea of the eternal debt and the need to redeem it, comparing the Christian sense of guilt and original sin with the Japanese sense of diffused debt and obligation, and seeing how these are linked to the need for work and the redemptive process of practical process needs serious consideration. For while there are some overlapping drives to work as between England and Japan, the need to earn a living, the insecurity of a relatively 'open' society, the pleasure in doing things and in creativity, the pleasure of joining with others in action, there does nevertheless seem to be one area in which there is a very large difference. This is concerned with that contrast which has been touched on, if somewhat distorted, in Benedict's opposition between a guilt culture and a shame culture.

It would be better to describe this as the difference between an individualistic and a relational culture. If there is anything in the Weber thesis, then a good deal of the pressure to activities in early modern Europe (especially Protestant cultures) was an individual feeling of guilt or sin. This is concerned with the relation between a single individual and God. The individual was born in sin, but through God's love was redeemed to eternal life, perhaps. For there was the rub. It was not certain to the individual, even if it was known to God, that the individual was saved or not.

Thus, in a sense, work and discipline and the orderly use of time were ways of repaying the debt that Christ had set up, repaying God's love. Yet the more one repaid, the more there was to repay, because the greater became one's obligation to a generous God for his kindness in even accepting the repayment. Thus, instead of being like a bank overdraft which was being paid off, it was more

like a loan to a Third World country, the more that was paid off, the more was subsequently lent and the more there was to be paid off. Or again it was like the balloon theory of knowledge; the more one learns, the more one realizes one does not know, for the surface area of one's ignorance expands proportionately to the amount of knowledge one pumps into the mind. Ignorance is bliss.

In such a situation, the striving is ceaseless, the pit one is digging gets deeper and deeper, the rainbow recedes as one hurries towards it. This 'open' predicament drove people on and on. Like a son with a very kind father, there was no end to what should be done to satisfy. This combination of guilt at one's own sin, lusts, weaknesses, feelings of worthlessness and insecurity and inability to make any worthily offerings, and an overpowering sense of how much was owed to a marvellous and loving God combined to put an enormous pressure on sensitive people.

The result was that well known inner-directed struggle to be true to one's vocation or calling and through it satisfy some of these demands. It was in the relationship of the Individual to God that the person worked out his destiny. Work, thus, was a privately inspired activity dictated by conscience. Of course there were the external rewards, but they were on the surface. At a deeper level one was satisfying oneself, or rather, satisfying God.

The Japanese sense of an open debt

The Japanese situation has one element in common with this; that is the desire to repay something, a debt that cannot be repaid, an obligation that is open and endless and which increases in size the more one attempts to repay it. The loan expands, like work, to fill the time and energy of the individual. Both work and the debt are open-ended and not closed. There is no threshold or fixed level. Like reputation, it is a fire that has constantly to be fed and the more it is fed the faster it consumes the fuel. Work thus creates work, rather than making it unnecessary. It is not a matter of there being a fixed quantity of work and of time shrinking and expanding to fit with this, as in agrarian societies or those with fixed status groups. Rather, we are in a Parkinsonian world where work expands to fill the time available, and when it fills up the time available it seems to overflow the edges. Then one tries to make a little more time available, and still it overflows, and so on. The solution which seems obvious in such a situation is to work harder, waste less, be more organized, delegate work. Yet the treadmill continues; the faster one treads, the faster the wheel spins.

The difference in the cause; Japan and England

This is the similarity in effect. The difference is in the inner dynamic of the cause. Rather than lying in a single relation between an individual and God, as in the western case, it lies in a multiplicity of relations with other individuals. (Here I need to expand on the concepts of blessing (on) and responsibility (giri), see the Kodansha).

As I understand it, the relationships of people to people in Japan were very similar to those of man to God in the West. A person was, in themselves, nothing. They were born as nothing,

insignificant, a worm. Yet they were then endowed with many blessings and kindnesses, not by God, but by their fellow human beings and principally their parents and other relatives. Yet, as with the Christian God (and especially given the fickle or contractual Japanese family) they could not be certain of this. All they could do was to strive to be worthy and to strive to repay.

This repayment consisted of work, or rather more generally, an endless flow of different kinds of communication; honour, respect, gifts, hard work, a loving attitude and so on. Now all this is also characteristic of most peasant societies, for instance the filial duty which is so strong in China and India. What is different in Japan seems to be two things.

The uncertainty of 'salvation' in Japan

Firstly there is the element of uncertainty: just as the Christian God can withdraw his love and send one to Hell, so the early parents can withdraw their love and adopt another son and heir. One needs to be constantly proving to oneself both that one is chosen, called, has a vocation, and that one is good at the vocation. Secondly there is the openness. In the normal situation, there is a balance: in a sense the barrel of family work is a certain size and after a certain amount of effort by everyone, it is full up. Then one can relax in a relatively easy old age.

The leaking barrel of the Japanese family

In the Japanese case the barrel seems to have a hole in. How does this hole appear? It occurs through the same psychological trick as that in Christianity, namely that one starts in an unequal and dyadic relationship. In Christianity this inequality is Man-God, in Japan it is everywhere. Basically, it is a vertical relationship (Nakane), which means that the two partners in an exchange start off as unequal. Consequently, when they exchange, rather than balancing the relationship as in a Sahlins-type balanced market exchange, the relationship becomes even more unbalanced. This could be illustrated by a diagram (see NB2, p.198). A gives a 'gift' of work and effort worth x to B. B then gives a counter-gift of blessings, including the overwhelming blessing of receiving the gift, which is worth x + y. Thus after each exchange, as McHeath puts it, one is "yet deeper in your debt". I'm sure that a short glance through Donne, Herbert and seventeenth century theologians would find plenty of support for this thesis, and likewise one would find it in Japanese moralists.

This is something like Mauss's 'spirit of the gift', but it works in a reverse way to Mauss. In Mauss spirit adds to the receiver's obligation, providing 'interest', which has to be repaid (A gives the gift, x, but it also has the invisible spirit, y, which is added value and needs to be returned in tangible form, with further added value z) . But in the Japanese case, it works differently. In this case there is contained in each gift an implicit counter gift, greater than itself, for we may represent it as a matter of giving x, from which has to be subtracted y, which is the debt one occurs to the receiver who is superior and honours one by receiving the gift. There is value subtracted. So while the receiver will reciprocate with a gift of apparently equal value, it is in fact far more valuable than what was given in the first place. There is thus a sort of built-in echo. The harder one shouts, the

louder the echo. Or one can look at it as a mirror, the closer one goes, the larger it looms.

The debt incurred by inequality

This inequality is partly a result of the unequal and dyadic relationship. This is well known in Japan where people are intrinsically inferior/superior, not just situationally. Built into the language and concepts of the self is the knowledge that people have that they are inferior and unequal. As Cohn writes of castes in court cases; it is no good pretending that one is equal before the law when one knows that one is inferior.

Hence the two parties to a transaction start off unequal, like two boxers, but in a loving match rather than a hating or hurting contest, or like two lovers. Each transaction means that the weaker partner, the 'I' by definition, only increases his or indebtedness and inferiority, because the stronger, better, kinder other has deigned to accept his humble offering, when there was no compulsion to do so. Thus, in a sense, the individual become more and more debased or humbled, groveling, insignificant, as the transactions continue. The relative deprivation and standing of an individual shrinks. The harder one climbs, the lower one seems to be. The obvious solution, as Dennis Healey memorably put it, would seem to be to stop digging when one finds oneself in a hole. But this is not open to people. It is really a world of "another day older and deeper in debt", not just paltry financial debt, but moral and social debt.

The mechanism of inferiority in Christianity

Now it may strike one as curious that in western societies, where the premise of intrinsic inferiority is not to be found, for instance England and America, this should still be a powerful mechanism. The reason seems to be that the vertical, dyadic, relationship has been transferred from the human level, where it exists in Japan, to the relation between Man and God. This was where it was located in the long centuries until the secularization of religion from the seventeenth century internalized it so that God became one's inner conscience. Thus we see that God is to Ralph Josselin exactly what one's father, lord, boss, husband and so on is to a Japanese. He is infinitely more powerful, loving, generous, all-seeing. He is the fount of all blessings, but also a stern bringing of (justified) punishments if one errs. God can do no wrong. If evils befall, they are the results of one's own failures. If blessings come, they are the results of His kindness and not one's merits. It is a 'tails I lose, heads You win' game, where every toss of the coin means another lost game and the needs for a further round becomes ever more pressing.

Moral debt and the needs of consumer capitalism

If this analysis is correct, then it is easy to see how it dovetails nicely with the infinite and expanding demands of consumer capitalism, whose chief requisite is a feeling of never being satisfied. The harder one strives, the further recedes the goal, a theme well pursued by Sahlins. It is not difficult to see how this occurs when the world of goods in infinite and every decision is a

choice between things. In this situation, every choice is a deprivation of the things not chosen, as Sahlins points out.

One could argue that this is only a difference in degree and not kind. In every known society, one is choosing between different goods; that is what economics is about. Yet there is a point where a difference in degree becomes a difference in kind. Many societies have perfected the art of providing people with endless 'Hobson's choices', in other words the illusion of choice. One appears to choose, but there is really no choice, and hence no deprivation. Yet perhaps even more important than this is the question I have discussed above, namely what happens when one does take action.

What is an acceptable offering or gift?

Another aspect which is worth looking at is the question of what are considered acceptable offerings or gifts by God and others. For it is not absolutely self-evident that the constant striving and deeper entanglements (as with love, a good analogy with its constant theme of "the more I give, the more I receive"), should take the form of work, or, put more generally, action.

The incompleteness of an individual in Japan and England

Perhaps we can step back here and say that the inferior-superior relationship causes in the individual a sense of incompleteness, as with the lover. He or she has no meaning in him or her self. This is a very strong sense in both Japan and England, but it takes a rather different form in the two. In England, the attempt to overcome the feeling of loneliness or incompleteness focuses on two objects, the lover (the "other one"), in other words a member of the opposite sex, and/or on God, the celestial lover/bride. In each case the defects of loneliness are overcome by communion or communication, by conversing or conversation (even on his desert island, R.Crusoe was talking to someone). This may be through he deepest form of communion with another human, love (physical and emotional, as in Donne's 'Ecstasy') or through spiritual communion with God. The essence in both cases is that one should exchange information, share each other, become involved.

The same is probably true in Japan, where a person is nothing except when communing with another, whether by physical presence, speech, gesture and so on. Hence the Japanese obsession with small-group interaction: they must be 'touching' each other in order to feel that they exist at all. For as Morishima and other novelists have described, Japanese are empty mirrors, only becoming full when another is there to reflect them. It thus takes two Japanese to make a single Japanese, just as it takes two hands to clap.

Why should meaningful communication take the form of work?

Now if we agree that such exchange, communion or 'conversation' is essential to give life meaning, we may still wonder why a good part of it should focus on work. Perhaps this is not so

surprising. For obvious reasons, activity in the external world, doing things, constitutes a very large part of the lives of most human beings. This activity gives pleasure and staves off hunger. It may even be a basic human biological drive; it is certainly essential to survival of the species. From very early on such activity must have had a symbolic or communicative as well as a practical value. It was a way of signaling to others. This is clearly true of play, where the symbolic/signaling value is, by definition, all there is (since by definition, it is not of practical use), and yet it is indulged in very seriously indeed, as we see with 'Homo Ludens'. The great advantage of concentrating on work as the main channel of communication is that one can literally have one's cake and eat it. It can be both a meaningful social relationship and of practical advantage. It has the heady attraction of alcohol, with the health-giving properties of medicine. No wonder that it becomes an addiction.

The Puritan preachers attempt to give work symbolic value

In a sense this was the message which the Puritan preachers were tying to inculcate. They exhorted people to see work not merely as a practical activity, but also as a way of symbolically communicating with God. Making and doing things was a way of glorifying God, and God would be more pleased with constructive, useful things like the doing of good works than the negative and destructive things of giving up, the smell of burnt sacrifices and so on.

The emphasis on positive work in Japan and England

It is perhaps worth looking here at the difference between active and positive works. Very broadly speaking, Japan and Protestants value positive work, while passive and negative work is much more usually what is valued, as in Buddhism, Hinduism, tribal religion. For we notice that whereas n the majority of societies there is a widespread emphasis on the need for sacrifice, renunciation, and the destruction of material goods, inactivity and negative actions, this is not what one finds in Japan and England.

There is no idea of sacrifice in the normal sense in either Japanese or English religion. That is to say, one does not find a tethered sheep or goat waiting to be 'sacrificed' in a Shinto temple or Anglican church in the way one would in a Hindu or tribal shrine. Yet there is, of course, sacrifice of another kind. The sacrifice has been internalized. The sacrifice is not of outer things, but of parts of the personality which are unacceptable to God or the superior. Not smoked offerings but a repentant soul, as a seventeenth century divine might put it, are acceptable in the sight of God. But why was this? Is it just a quirk of the religion? It cannot be so, for Catholicism, a variant of Christianity, incorporates a good deal of the idea of sacrifice.

Why is sacrifice internalized in Japan and England?

The essence of sacrifice, as Robertson Smith and others have pointed out, is the idea of exchange or communication. The communication takes the form of giving something that is valued, an external object (sheep), which is received by the other and in return a favour is granted. Sacrifices

may be in vain, but in general it is assumed that they will work.

Now the idea of outward sacrifices is based on rather an egalitarian and mechanical view of the 'Other'. It assumes that we own something that God or the other wants. We give it up to them; they are pleased; they give us something back. It is a form of spiritual barter between two partners or groups who are on the same place, equals, but separated because one participant is of this world, the other is of another. Thus it needs to be a special form of communications which will cross this boundary. Some powerful symbolic device is needed, like the use of death and the message of blood, to cross from the material to the spiritual world.

None of this is much use, however, for the seventeenth century Protestant or the Japanese, for they start with different premises. Firstly, God cannot be bribed or forced by mere things. Since everything belongs to God or the other in any case, all we are doing is giving back what we have been given - which is not ours to give. Secondly, the two partners in the exchange are so unequal that a small action by a human could, unaided, hardly be expected to have much influence or exert much pressure. God is not like some patron with whom one can do deals, just as the same way as a good father or mother is beyond simple deals. A much subtler approach is needed and a much greater gift is needed in order even to begin to tempt God or one's father to take an interest. After all, the essence of gift giving is to give somewhat of what is mine to you. What then indeed is mine, and what do I have to give in a world where I seem to have received everything?

The only real gift; the free will of the individual

Here the unequivocal answer of sixteenth and seventeenth century divines was that the only worth-while offering, the only sacrifice that God wanted, was a person's will and personality, the whole of one. God had made man with free will for this express purpose; he had made him free so that in his freedom, and not as a slave, he could give him back the freedom. Through the central paradox of freedom, to make oneself 'unfree' in this way was to gain true freedom. Just as Rousseau argued that only in relinquishing individual will into the general will would the individual become free, so the Christian argued that only in handing back his freedom to God would the Christian find true freedom.

This was the real sacrifice. One could choose to give or not to give what was one's own, that is the ability to make such a choice, free will. One could, as in the feudal or marriage contract, freely enter into a contract with another (lord or husband). Yet once it was entered into it was for life, unless the contract was somehow broken at a very deep level. A free and independent heart and spirit was what God was seeking for (cf. Francis Thompson, 'The Hound of Heaven' & G. Herbert's poem on God searching out the individual). One did this out of love and gratitude at God's goodness and also because one needed the shelter of a lord and master.

A similar sort of sacrifice was required of the Japanese. They did not offer things to each other. What was needed was the total commitment of one's deepest essence; "I want all of you". One

could not buy off or bribe God by giving him a bit of blood or the odd marrow. He needed a disciplined and repentant heart, from which would flow the rest.

Work as the central sacrifice

Perhaps this explains why work is so important, for if the central sacrifice is the core of the individual, that is to say their will, heart, spirit, stomach, mind, intellect, whole demeanour, total commitment, then everything becomes sanctified. It is a matter of placing oneself at the disposal of another, becoming "their man" in the feudal sense. One can see how one of the main ways of expressing this deep commitment is through activities, through doing things, not merely because they have to be done but in an especially effective and virtuous way as a love offering to God, one's parents, one's lover, or whoever the recipient is.

We have all experienced this mildly in relation to our parents, teachers, lovers and so on in the West. Yet few now feel its force in relation to God, or comprehend the force it has for many Japanese.

In this self-offering or self-sacrifice, in the Christian case to God, in the Japanese case to the many 'others' to whom one is increasingly in debt, one can use work activity of any kind as a symbolic instrument, as the outward activity to express one's offering. Making a pot, sweeping a room, making a computer, keeping honest accounts, all become symbols for something else. Work becomes not just a means to economic ends; nor is it just a pleasurable creative activity; nor is it just a pleasant social activity. It is all of these, but it also has a spiritual dimension. It is the using of one's whole body and mind in one's vocation to praise and glorify the Other. In Europe, the 'Other is God (or one's conscience), in Japan, it is other Japanese. Thus it has an added dimension.

The sacrifice of work makes it sacred or dignified

This added dimension gives it dignity and meaning, which work lacks in many civilizations. The tendency, as we have seen, is for work, particularly work with one’s hands, to be demeaning. It is regarded as demeaning because it leads to subservience, a loss of liberty. One is a servant, which is on a continuum with being a slave, to others. There is a loss of liberty. One has to work out of necessity. Dignity comes when one no longer has to work. A life of non-work, idle ease, is consummately to be desired; the 'Leisure Class' is the universal condition.

Yet somehow the Protestants and Japanese managed to invert or reverse this. People might agree that on the surface one is working for another, and hence there is a loss of liberty, be it Toshiba or the University of Cambridge. Yet at a deeper level one is not working for other, equal, people and hence demeaning oneself in relation to them. In Europe (England) one is really working for the glory of God, a worthy master, whose service does not demean. In Japan one is working for the person above one in the vertical chain, who is working for the person above them, and so ever upward through the chain to the apex, the God-Emperor. There is nothing demeaning in this either.

Work is noble for it is in a noble cause and for a noble recipient.

The pull theory of work or 'calling' and 'vocation'

Work is thus a 'calling' or 'vocation'. This is a significant and odd expression. Normally societies have a push theory of work. People work because of force, compulsion, external pressure, the loss of freedom, virtual wage or other slavery. It is a form of servitude one goes through to produce the necessities of life. On the other hand the idea of 'calling' or 'vocation' has two unusual elements. Firstly it introduces the idea of pull; someone out there is doing the calling, an invitation is being made, a message from outside is received. And this is an offer one can refuse. It is not a mafia-like offer or a Hobson's choice. Many are called, but few accept. Many are called, but few are chosen precisely because few choose. One has a real choice, to find and follow one's vocation, or to decline to do so. To fail to do so, as the man who hid his talents and failed to use them discovered, is to annoy God. Yet it is up to you. You are free, just as one is free to serve a lord or set up on one's own, free to enter into Hobbes social contract with the State or fight it out, free to offer one's labour on the market or not.

Freedom, vocation and the contractual element

This freedom to enter into a 'vocation; is the heart of a contractual arrangement. usually work is a form of servitude because it is status-bound. I am, therefore I work. Birth and work go together; it is automatic and the lot of most. Rest from work is both an expression of and a cause for high status; it is the goal of all sensible human beings.

In parts of the West and Japan it is the reverse. We start free and with no innate obligation to do anything. To work is a privilege, a desired good, a contract freely entered into. Without work, one is not really free. Thus work liberates, for in service there is freedom. As Marx half guessed, man realizes himself in work in the Christian tradition. To paraphrase Descartes, "Laboro ergo sum"; I work therefore I am. Without this means of expressing oneself through activity, a person is less than human. The worst thing one can do is to deprive a person of meaningful employment. Unemployment is thus a double blow, a practical blow to a person’s purse, and a symbolic blow to his personality. He is being told that he is worthless, that God and his fellows do not need him, that he has nothing of value to offer.

The more work, the higher the status

Thus whereas many societies would consider that to be paid to do nothing would be the ultimate goal, the West and the Japanese chafe at the humiliation and loss of any opportunity to express their worth through work. The more work the better. The higher the status, the more the work (hence overworked doctors, lawyers, media folk, academics and so on). This is a situation which would strike people in most civilizations as bizarre. The whole point, as they see it, is that the higher the status the less the work; that is the point of high status, to save one from the 'drudgery' of

work. (cf. Butler's Erewhon on this & other Utopian thought, .e.g the song on "The buzzing of the bees in the lemonade trees..."). Affluence and leisure go together in most societies, as Veblen illustrated. On the contrary in the inner-directed phase of Protestantism, as well as in Japan, they do not go together; affluence can only be gained and maintained by constant hard work.

From real work to good works; the solution to leisure

Of course there is a counter-tendency within capitalism as Marx, Veblen and others pointed out, for with the 'congealing' of capital there is the growth of a rentier, leisure class. There comes a point where work is so unnecessary that it is foolish to undertake it merely to earn a living. Although this is true, it is somewhat mitigated in the English tradition (inherited from Protestantism), by what one might call the public or good works syndrome. The concept of public service, noblesse d'oblige, keeps many busy with public-spirited activities even when they no longer have to work for a living. This is consistent with the old Puritan message, for the idea of glorifying God through 'works' did not limit itself to the hum-drum and directly practical. It was not merely a matter of how many spoons one could honestly sell of make, but what happened to the profits and what 'good works' one was able to do alongside the actual 'work'.

The concept of stewardship and re-investment of profits

Here we come to two further important ideas, that of stewardship and of re-investment of profits in further good works rather than in immediate enjoyment or consumption.

It is a curious paradox that in a society which such an advanced concept of the private ownership of property, individualism and so on, there should simultaneously be a strongly developed idea of stewardship, something one would normally link to a more corporate concept of property. In the usual forms of property, those who hold the assets are just temporary stewards, acting on behalf of others (the dead and the unborn). We have this concept in corporations such as College fellows, heads of peasant households and others. This was not, however, how most land and wealth was legally regarded in England. It was not held in trust, but in 'corporation sole', as individual property.

Yet, alongside this was the idea that one's whole life was held in trust, not of another human being, but of God. One had been given it on the understanding that one would do the best one could do with it, for the sake of one's master (God). Man was God's steward, entrusted with his own life and will and with all of God's creatures and other human beings. Each man held the world in trust. Like a good steward, as in the parable of the talents, he was accountable for what he did, answerable at the great accounting day in the sky, the Day of Judgment. Then it would emerge as to how he had managed his trust.

A good deal of his management skills could be seen in how he acted or worked. If he was given abilities and opportunities and he failed to realize them, he was betraying his trust and behaving like a lazy and bad steward.

The Japanese concept of stewardship

Although somewhat different, there is some element of this idea of stewardship and trust in Japan. It is basically the idea that we do not act for ourselves alone, but for some larger concern. In the English conception, this something is very large indeed, no less than God's creating, immortalized as "the white man's burden". In the Japanese case it is more constrained, for it is all those with whom one enters into direct, face to face relations with. Primarily it is those who have done one kindness by accepting social relations, those who bore one, the superiors who support one, and then through the threads of face to face relations up to the Emperor and down from him, indirectly, to all other Japanese. A man carries his talents as a responsibility to all others.

Japanese suicide as an illustration of stewardship

If one is no longer doing others any good, or positively hindering them by one's presence, then one should make the ultimate sacrifice commit suicide. In obvious cases, such as the old going off voluntarily to die of cold on Mount ???, one is making a sacrifice for a small group. Yet in many Japanese suicides it is more indirect; one has failed one's family or lord or loved one, one is a failure standing in the way of others. One should get out of the way, obliterate oneself. In this light, Japanese suicide fits pretty neatly into Durkheim's class of altruistic suicide.

Re-investment of profits in useful things

The second question concerns re-investment. This is one of the most important aspects of the Japanese and Protestant work ethics, namely the high proportion of profits that are re-invested in meaningful activity rather than "wasted". This is often seen as the key to industrial progress and is rightly noted to be rather unusual. In what way is it unusual and what caused it?

The normal course; spend what one earns, fast

The normal aim of human endeavour is to maximize, to obtain more out than one has put in. Here Adam Smith was right. Yet the aim of this activity is then to use what profit is made out of a transaction (assuming that one has some liberty in the matter and it has not been siphoned off in tax, rent, more children or whatever), in consumption. It is produced in order to consume. The consumption usually takes two forms; direct consumption (as in eating, housing, heating etc.) and, equally important, indirect consumption, that is social consumption or conspicuous consumption, feasting, giving away, potlatching, war and so on. It is almost as if most humans were troubled at having too many things and wanted to destroy them.

What is odd, of course, is the well known hoarding, saving, re-investing tendency of Puritans and Japanese. Part of the difficulty of understanding the motives for this may be that the consequences - re-investment - were un-intended and not the main 'cause'. It may not be that people loved saving, they just hated spending. It may not be that they consciously set out to accumulate with an aim of becoming rich, but rather that setting themselves ascetic and spartan goals, the unintended result was that the surpluses remained unspent and were hence, perforce, re-invested.

Importance of simplicity and asceticism; Japan and England

Here we touch on a curious similarity in Japanese and Puritan culture, what we might call the simplicity or Quaker streak. Whether this had always been the case in either, we do not know. There are signs that curiously, in both, the sixteenth century saw a rise of this kind of asceticism, in the one case in Protestant Christianity, in the other with certain ascetic and reformist sects in Buddhism (zen etc.). Yet it also seems probable that these merely emphasized an earlier tendency, as Weber suggested.

What this amounted to was a curious inversion of normal values. Instead of status arising from presences, from pomp, circumstance, external show and so on, there was a strong counter claim, that it was the absences that were important. The extreme instances are the crude simplicity of the Japanese tea house and the affected simplicity of the tea cups that were used, or the extreme simplicity (in speech, dress, architecture) of the Quakers. Ostentation, in colours, dress, speech, food and so on were eschewed. True dignity was to be found in renunciation.

Now this counter-value of renunciation and asceticism can be found in most civilizations, whether in the yogis and world-renouncers of Hinduism, the monks of Buddhism and so on. It is a strong streak in the simplicity and dislike of icons in Islam. What is curious however, is the degree to which it spread in Japan and England. In the other traditions, it tended to occur as a fringe on the culture, a kind of fore-runner of the world renunciation of modern fringes such as hippie-dom. Most people went on with their business and expressed their wealth through conspicuous consumption. Only a tiny group renounced and when they did so withdrew almost entirely from the world. They went to the opposite extreme. They were not of the world, but nor were they in the world. Hence they had very little impact on the whole of society.

Being in the world, but not of the world

What happened in England and Japan was that the ascetic, self-denying ethic, which gave moral justification to those who lived simply, frugally, refused to spend their wealth on feasting their neighbours and so on, permeated a broad swathe of society. They took Christ's injunction to heart; be in the world, but not of the world. Do not cut your ties in one sense, even if you do in another. It is a difficult balancing act, which few have succeeded in, or even attempted, carried to the extreme by a few notorious saints who tried to overcome self-inflicted temptations.

The wide spread of asceticism and the middling ranks

The wide spread of this-worldly renunciation may be related to the peculiar shape of the social structure of Japan and England, with their very large and substantial middling ranks. It was in these middling groups, the tradesmen, merchants, gentry, yeomanry, that the ethic really took off, though it probably impinged n the aristocracy and rural population as well. Since these were the dominant groups in these two peculiar societies, it was all the most influential.

Now this attitude, which is almost synonymous with what we now mean by 'bourgeois', could be explained by just this fact, as Marx (and Pirenne thesis?) might have explained it. While the mass of the peasantry are too poor to save and have little spend and hence consume what they can, and the aristocracy maintain their prestige through conspicuous waste, it is the middling ranks who exhibit the ascetic tendencies, whether in Jainism, Puritanism, Zen Buddhism or whatever. Hence when, for other reasons, such middling groups are dominant, their mentality will dominate. England is a country ruled by the mentality of shop-keepers because it is a country ruled by shop-keepers and likewise Japan.

This will take us a certain way, though it still leaves the question of the peculiar social structure open for explanation. More interestingly, it is too simple to assume that there is a necessary connection between trade, manufacture, merchants and simplicity. It would no doubt be possible to find many civilizations (sixteenth century Italy or Spain, ancient Rome) where even in the middling groups the ethic of conspicuous consumption leading to status, a Veblenesque world, was common. This is manifested in the desire for ornateness, patronage, moving out of trade if one has the money and so on. Splendour, the high life and so on are widely desired.

Furthermore, the pressures on a successful individual are usually so great that whether he wants to spend his fortune or not, he is forced to do so. Clamorous kin and friends are eager to share one's good fortune; to be termed mean and miserly is the worst abuse. Power is gained through giving.

The ethical justification for meanness

How, then, was it that two civilizations arose where right at the centre of their social structures was contained an ethical justification for not giving away or conspicuously displaying? How was it that an extremely wealthy man gained more prestige from his humble and simple life style, that if he had spent wildly?

Again the answer must lie partly in the nature of the relationship of the individual to God and others. If one is in a world of closed social orders, with discrete boundaries, then the claims of the others in the group on one's individual surpluses are too strong to be denied. What I have is yours and what you have is mine. Since such claims cannot be denied, one might as well make a virtue of necessity and obtain some social credit from the giving away, power through the circulation of pigs as it were. Or perhaps, even more cunningly, obtain power through the destruction of extra good fortune as in the potlatch, war or gambling.

On the other hand, in the loose and network situation of the cognatic Japanese and English social structures, where neither castes, estates nor corporate groups existed, the pressures were both greater and less. Greater in that almost everyone was one's kinsman or neighbour to whom one had some minimal obligations, but less in that no especially privileged group had co-ownership, undeniable rights. People lived in something similar to the predicament where, with the whole world potentially available for travel, one is often frozen into immobility, or with forty television channels, one decides not to watch any of them. The potential recipients of one's generosity are legion and all have a claim. The best thing then is to be extremely careful and to wait.

The limited claims that can be made on a person

This retentiveness is morally justified in Christianity on the grounds that really there is only one person who has a legitimate claim on a free man and that is God, and he can never receive enough. One should gear all one's activities to pleasing him. He is not pleased by wasteful expenditure and giving away. Like a good master, he wants the individual to grow in power and wealth. Yet this growth need not be vulgarly displayed in things, externals. God does not need to see one's wealth and power in outward pomp; one does not need to advertize one's bank balance, for God has the key to all vaults. God is not taken in by worldly show; what he demands is purity of thought and action.

The same, in a different form, seems to be true of Japan. The important relationships in one's life, to parents, lord, Emperor, Buddha, are so deep and internal, that they do not need externalizing in worldly goods. One does not please or impress these stern judges by one's new car or flashy clothes. What they notice is one's kindness, orderliness, deference and respect, the immeasurable things.

The central element, purity; why so important?

In both Japan and England, a central element seems to be purity and simplicity, the distilling out of the essence and the relegation of externals to an unimportant role. There is of course an irony in this in that the unintended consequence was that an emphasis on simplicity led in both cases to the growth of the most wealthy, consumerist, civilizations the world has known. Yet it is not difficult to see how asceticism led to economic growth. What is more difficult to decide is why it occurred. Why was purity so important, and what, in fact, does purity mean in this context?

It is perhaps useful to start with the Mary Douglas view that purity is somehow related to the idea of 'matter out of place', in other words the separation of seperables, an attack on boundary crossing and so on. Thus, in one simple example, the 'pure' colours beloved of zen and Puritans were black and white, where all other colours have been expunged. Or again, pure conversation was conversation which was largely factual, drained of emotion and rhetoric, of swearing and "highly charged language. Purity in art is functional.

Purity and rationality linked

One can see that this is almost synonymous with the means-end definition of rationality. Pure food is food which satisfies hunger, buns, no less and no more. Pure drink is water, which satisfies thirst. Pure clothes are those which warm and cover the body, but nothing more. Pure buildings are only filled with necessary things. (cf. Shaw, Three plays for Puritans).

Now most societies, as Christ explained, cannot 'live by bread alone'. Yet it is significant that what he suggested they also needed was not cakes, feasts and so on, which is what would normally be thought necessary. It was the 'Word of God' that was required, in other words a spiritual component. This may give us a clue. Whereas the thin gruel of pure existence is usually only made tolerable in societies by sensory excitement - by colour, alcohol, music, sex and so on, which add another dimension to consumption and make life worth living, the Puritans, whether in Japan or England, promised something even better and richer. They promised spiritual excitement.

The ecstasy of beauty, the beauty of holiness

Whereas the average human being would be bored and unexcited by the simplicity of a haiku, a Grecian urn, a Japanese pot, a Quaker meeting, those who had learnt to read the codes and respond could be driven to a deeper ecstasy or frenzy by these things. A simple flower might mean little the uninitiated, who could on the other hand appreciate the lily only when it was gilded. Yet Christ realized that the lily in its simplicity was more beautiful than anything else, and Wordsworth found "thoughts too deep for tears" in a simple flower or the waving of a bank of daffodils.

Beauty lies in the unrealized and unsaid; emptiness

In both Japan and England virtue and beauty lay as much in the unrealized, unsaid or understated, as in the said. An empty expanse of raked pebbles with a few rocks sticking out of it could send pulses racing in a way that a great Chinese palace would fail to do. A small simple miniature painting could impress an Englishman more than all the overblown painting of a Rubens or David. When extolling the "beauty of holiness", the demand was for clarity, simplicity, elegance, lack of fuss, plainsong, plainchant. The cool mathematical simplicity of Wren's Trinity College chapel, was of the essence. The mind is more powerful than the senses and can be reached negatively by absences, rather than with sensual delights. The cakes and ale are all very well, but have little meaning without Lent. Hence in Protestant countries it is Lent that is important, with its cold absences, while in Catholic or Hindu countries it is Carnival and Holi that are important.

Of course one should not push the contrast too far. The golden plated pagodas, the exquisite cloth, the superb pottery, are far from unsensual. Likewise beautiful Gothic architecture, the

richness of poetry and drama, the stately country house are all parts of the English tradition. Yet in both what is observable is a tempered restraint. They are both like Japanese swords, strong because they have been beaten again and again, beautiful because of a deep sense of order and control. The cool beauty of a poem by George Herbert or an Elizabethan miniature painting lies in this control, this simplicity.

Asceticism, Christianity, Islam and Buddhism

Now this ascetic or puritan streak, Weber thought, was intrinsic to Christianity and we can indeed see that Christ's whole message emphasized the negatives of life and its simplicity - no sex, no marriage, no ostentatious wealth etc. This strand found its expression in the medieval monastic orders with their stress on simple living. One can likewise see something similar in both Islam and Buddhism. The puzzle, though, is that these pre-disposing religions, when overlaid with particular cultures, came to take on such different hues.

In Spain or Italy, Catholicism lost much of its asceticism. In China or Sri Lanka, Buddhism lost much of its puritanism. Why was this, and why was it retained and indeed emphasized in certain unlikely areas, England, New England, Scotland, Scandinavia, Holland and Japan. What is there about these places which seems to lead them to engraft and indeed celebrate the puritan and ascetic?

Why is asceticism to be found in a few cultures?

We have touched on one theory, that of the prevalence of the middle classes. Yet while it is not difficult to see why self and other denying puritanism as useful for shop-keepers, it is hard to see it as intrinsically caused by them, though it may have been re-enforced by them in a circular fashion.

Another theory one might link to Norman Douglas' 'South Wind' novel, dating back to at least Montesquieu, which puts it down to climate and ecology. It is an attractive argument at first sight. Basically it suggests that those living in pleasant, sensuous, climates (e.g. where vines and olives crow easily) are sybaritic, luxurious and sensual. Those living in cold, inhospitable and generally ungenerous climates, what one might roughly call beer and cheese country, are less so, and verge on the cheerless. In a nut-shell, Puritans live in Puritan climes, Sensualists live in sensual ones. (cf. Babette's feast for the clash of these two worlds, French and Scandinavian).

There is perhaps something in this. Yet it could not take much anthropological rummaging to find that man so quickly transforms his environment that one could find real Puritans living in what would appear to be natural paradises (the Manus islanders are a famous example), while real sensualists live in the harshest of climates. It seems to be something deeper and other than this.

Another theory which can quickly be dismissed is the toilet-training one - namely that the anality induced by sit-up toilets in northern Europe from the later seventeenth century induced a

generally retentive Puritan style etc. This does not work either in time, nor in area.

A further theory might seek the answer in the kinship system. One is struck by the similarity of the cognatic kinship systems in the three areas where puritanism was most pounced, Japan, Tibet and North West Europe. It might be possible to connect these two phenomena by arguing that by failing to create groups, cognatic kinship left people with open and boundless potential relations. Hence one strategy was the shrinking on oneself, the methodological separation etc, as argued above. Again there may be something in this, but one is again left with the problem that he cognatic covers too wide an area of Europe and so on.

Again, any attempt to link the puritanism to the mode of subsistence does not work. There is nothing really in common between wet rice cultivation in Japan and dry grain cultivation of North West Europe. Perhaps a little more can be said for an argument that this ascetic streak was formed in times before grain production in these forms became prevalent. Here one could point to the basic asceticism found in the whole Judaic/Islamic belt from which sprung both Christianity and Islam, with their joint emphasis on purity and simplicity. Yet this desert pastoralism base seems unlikely to be the background of either the Anglo-Saxons or the Japanese, who are much more united by a theory of some intrinsic Hunter-Gatherer mentality.

Asceticism as a way of maintaining boundaries

Perhaps all these attempts are in vain and what one should look at more closely is the way in which purity and asceticism are manifestations of something much deeper, namely an attempt to keep boundaries between spheres, to separate the separable, to link means and ends within their contexts, to eradicate magic and so on. For puritanism seems to be the ideal philosophy to form the basis of a civilization that wishes to separate out the economic, scientific, social and political worlds. Its basic philosophy is the Cartesian/Humeian one of "only disconnect". Its injunction is "do not muddle or confuse"; introduce order and rationality and simplify.

The drive to simplicity, orderliness the reduction to essentials, bare necessities, is the application of that very English philosopher Ockham's razor. By paring things down to their elements it provides the essential foundation for the central characteristic of Japan and England, their disconnectedness or separation of institutional spheres.

The natural tendency to join or mix spheres

The natural tendency of human beings, and a good short-run strategy, is to move on a broad front, to maximize on as many areas as possible. Thus if one is eating, one might as well try to make it a socially significant event, add a bit of religion and perhaps set up some useful political ties at the same time. Or again, if one is involved in religious ritual, one might as well make it a useful social occasion, do some eating at the same time, and so on.

Now this muddling or multi-functionality is effective in the short term. But it seems that in order to progress in the longer term it is necessary not only to have a division of labour whereby parts of an operation are separated from each other (as with the pin-makers), but also, a division of labour of another kind. This is linked to occupational specialization, but is wider and deeper than that and could be called the concentration of attention. It means clearing away all extraneous purposes and rigorously concerning oneself only with the purpose in hand. (note: the idea of focused attention came partly out of discussions with Jerry Martin).

For instance, if one is eating, think about what eating is for - to satisfy hunger - and do not muddle it up with prayer, social contacts and so on. If one is dressing, think about what clothes are for, to be decent and keep one warm, not to display oneself. One could go on like this, but the important point is that the bringing of means and ends closely together requires careful planning and eternal vigilance. Time and space must be very precisely marked out so that each activity is bounded off.

The tea ceremony and the focusing of attention

An exquisite example of this focusing of attention is the tea ceremony in Japan. Through numerous devices, all extraneous influences are drained away and all attention is focused on one thing, the simple act of drinking a cup of tea. It is something similar that lies behind all high creative art or science and is so well captured in Yeats' poem the 'Long Legged Fly', or in the two immortal lines of Marvell (in 'The Garden'),

"Annihilating all that's made
To a green thought in a green shade'.
(Lines which could rest as a description of the tea ceremony, even down to the 'greenness' of the tea.)

Concentration or attention applied to all spheres

This attitude to art and religion is applied to work as well. One should carefully calculate what one is trying to do, for instance make a pot or a sword, and then focus all attention on that thing. The aim may only incidentally be the pursuit of efficiency in itself, though a rapid increase in efficiency does usually occur. It is primarily the desire to increase purity, to distil out again and again all impurities, all extraneous elements, and to focus on the thing in hand, that is important.

In a way one is applying to behaviour and thought something like a mental magnifying glass or microscope. One is cutting out all the extraneous and framing more and more precisely a single thing. The cost is to the rest of life and the relations with other things. The advantage is that each magnification brings greater detail.

A new kind of economy of scale; small is efficient

In terms of 'progress', the results of this are an application of a rather different type of law of the economies of scale. Normally what is meant is that the larger the operation, the greater will be the economies. Yet this is a reverse law: small is not only beautiful, but more efficient. "To generalize is to be an idiot. To particularize is the only true way to merit" (or words to that effect), or "..Art and science cannot exist but in minutely organized Particulars." (William Blake).

One can see how this comes about. Most people, most of the time, have a very rough understanding of a broad range of things. It is when they specialize, focusing on one tiny part, that gains are made and can be handed on to others in a stored form as technology, writing or whatever. Occasionally, of course one needs synthesis, to stand back and look at the whole sky. Yet for the millions who have looked at the whole sky and seen almost nothing, there are the few who have concentrated on one star, or part of a star, and made startling progress. Again Blake captures the essence of this, "To see a world in a grain of sand, or heaven in wild flower".

The 'size' of the object of attention is not merely its literal size; it can be quite a large object like a star or the whole of the earth's surface, or the history of the Mongol tribesmen or whatever. What is essential, however, is to make conscious decisions about how one is going to approach it, why one is doing so, and what are the best methods to effect the activity.

Asking the question; why do this at all?

One constantly needs to ask the question, what is the point or purpose of this activity. Then, depending on the answer, to act accordingly. This is the basis of a great deal of B.Franklin and other's self-examinations. They are working out the aims and then working out the means. This working out might be said to contain three elements.

Further questions and separations which are needed

Firstly one needs to delimit the ends, thus making them reachable. Secondly one needs to separate out all the secondary aims from the primary aim, the rifle approach with one bullet rather than the shot-gun approach. If one is trying to do or understand something, don't try to do other things at the same time. If the aim is religious, do not try to maximize on the social front as well, for instance. Thirdly, break down the process of achieving the ends into stages and build on them cumulatively (an insight I also owe to discussions with Gerry Martin).

If one combines these three methodological devices, one will achieve very difficult things which many far more energetic and talented people have failed to do. Let us take an example. Two individuals (or groups) A and Be decide that they would like to comb a mountain. Their different strategies on the basis of these three tactics might be as follows.

Group A might set its target as climbing Everest, alongside which, as unpruned subsidiary aims

it is decided to learn Nepal, study Buddhism and provide aid to a development project as well. As far as the planning of stages is concerned, it is felt best to buy a ticket for Nepal first and see how things go when one gets there. The result of course is that achieves none of these things and returns probably frustrated and disappointed.

Group B sets a much lower target, to climb Helvellyn. There are no subsidiary aims, just to climb the mountain. The planning is done carefully, with each day's journey and all the stops, equipment etc. worked out. The result is a successful holiday in which not only is the mountain climbed but a whole lot of other things, incidentally, are done.

The spin-offs of concentrated activity

The difference might be put in another way. In the concentrated version, in achieving single-heartedly the goal, there may be spin-offs, and that is all to the good. Yet they are spin-offs. They are things which occur as a bi-product of the achievement. In the alternative, shot-gun, approach, the ultimate goal may, with luck, be a 'spin-off' of the other minor goal.

Returning to the example, even if B had raised his threshold, say, to climbing a larger mountain, he would probably have succeeded. Indeed, such is the power of the mechanisms in the devices of separation of goals and separation of stages when combined, that people can achieve amazing feats, which they would normally believe themselves incapable of.

The necessity of plans

Hence the obsession with plans in business and the need to break down activities into stages. The difference could again be illustrated by the building metaphor. A cathedral has to be conceived of as a whole, and then carefully disaggregate in the mind, carved into tiny pieces which are put together in a strict logical order. One wrong action, in the wrong order, the placing of a high piece before a low, and the whole edifice will crash to the ground. King's College Chapel looks easy, when finished, but the calculations that go into it (cf. William Golding's 'The Spire') are immense.

Zen and the art of going beyond planning

Again, the self-discipline to undertake this kind of activity is very considerable. In many ways zen is an archetype of it, for one is trying there to go even one stage further. One is trying to empty one's mind not down to one object, for instance Keat's Grecian urn, the flower in a Japanese tea house or whatever, but one stage further, empty it altogether, so that it clings round nothingness. This is extraordinarily difficult, like teaching a drowning swimmer in a vast ocean who has found a piece of wood to let go of it, to relax, to cling onto nothing and to float.

Why is it so difficult to concentrate attention

It is so difficult to concentrate attention for several reasons. Firstly, it goes against that very strong and often sound human impulse to be interested in many things, to be sidetracked, to see significance in all sorts of things, to think laterally. How is the steady concentration of Thomas Mann's bead game or Newton's mind or a game of world-class chess achieved? Secondly, it is hard work. It requires great self-discipline to sick to one narrow thing. The difficulty of writing, pottery, book-binding for long periods is considerable, as any teacher knows. The moment an excuse presents itself, there is a great sense of relief or release, as if an elastic band were released. There is great pleasure in withdrawing, unbending, giving up the struggle, attested to by poets, for instance Elliot's account of the wrestling with words and with "undisciplined squads of emotion", Yeats on "All things can tempt me from this craft of verse..." and so on.

Usually there are consolations along the way in most journeys, small treats and side pleasures which make the journey bearable and even comfortable. Yet it is by definition the minimizing of these, the constant admonition to look to neither right nor left, to keep one's head down, to concentrate on the final goal, which wins the big prizes. Without an iron will and great self-confidence, many falter and fall and never discover their America or Australia. No doubt there is a good deal in the Pilgrim tradition immortalized by Bunyan which tries to represent this.

What sustains the singleness of purpose?

What sustains the singleness of purpose, "to dare, to ...and not to yield" as Milton's Satan puts it(?). Here we come backs to a different set of factors, perhaps leading to the same result, in the European and the Japanese case. In the European, the strength seems often to come from sort of inner conviction or vision of the final goal, often traditionally linked to God. The idea is that while others may scoff, or try to impede one, one knows something can be done, and that with God's help, it will be done. Whereas alone one would falter, one begins to feel inspired, "Methinks I am a prophet new inspired...!, as if some power or force larger than oneself were blowing through one and impelling one on.

The need for inspiration as well as perspiration

In the most difficult of activities, writing a great book, winning a great battle, making a great scientific discovery, achieving some great physical feat, it is probably necessary , if it is an individual activity, to have this feeling. Most people have constant attacks of insecurity, feelings of inadequacy or just feelings of weakness and exhaustion. They would soon give up, or wander off into the many tempting meadows that line their path, administration, sensuality, leisure, honour or whatever attracts them. Yet, like Bunyan's Pilgrim, those who are 'called' are able to reject these temptations, as they label them, firstly because they are able to recognize them for what they are, temptations. Secondly, they feel guided, supported and encouraged by something greater than themselves.

The fear of the unknown and the inability to see which way one should take are mitigated

because it seems that already, ahead of one, a light is beckoning, there is Light at the end of the tunnel. The tunnel metaphor is very appropriate; it is like mental or physical pot-holing, moving further and further from the known and safety into uncharted realms of almost total sensory and other deprivation. If only one can get through this, at the other end, the very narrow tunnel will lead to Paradise. If one has any kind of a map or chart that helps. As Jung is reputed to have said; Columbus had an erroneous map and an erroneous idea, but he discovered America. The faith instilled by God and his faulty map were enough.

The Japanese incentive to great achievement

The Japanese incentives are rather different. There the support does not come from some internalized force of God, but a sense of mutual support of others. Usually, societies are so arranged that if someone wishes to narrow their attention and focus on one tiny detail, society conspires to put an end to this. This is what one might call the crying baby syndrome (cf the amusing passage of L.Durrell at start of 'My Family...' lamenting the difficult of writing works of genius when all his family have colds). Any attempts at sustained activity usually means a cost to others; one's attention is withdrawn, normal social intercourse is abandoned. In the most serious cases, for instance Newton in his study, De Tocqueville writing L'Ancien Regime in his chateaux, Descartes in his oven or Chambers or Wallace, and many other famous cases, people enter a shell of silence and non-communication. They are almost like that 'thinking' stage of a computer working quietly in its RAM/CPU. It is not possible to communicate with them.

Now it is difficult to justify such withdrawal, particularly if others have to bear the burdens, in the same way as it is difficult to reject their pleas for one's extra wealth if one is successful economically. The European answer is either the idea of a profession - "I'd love to be diverted, but I've got to stick at it because I'm a professional violinist and that is what they have to do". Or there is the linked idea of vocation; God has called me and I cannot disobey him, to whom my first duty is due. "I'd love to mind the babies, but God has called me to write a great sonata" and so on.

How do the Japanese achieve?

Without this protection, how have the Japanese achieved the same goals? The first thing to question is whether they have. Although it has its weaknesses, the idea that individual achievements are less in Japan may have an element of truth, the "Why are there no Nobel prizewinners" question has some force. On the other hand, small group achievements are very considerable.

Here it would seem that within a small group, the individual receives the encouragement and support to attempt very difficult things. These groups often fulfil all the conditions noted above. They are directed to a very specific and specialized goal, the making of a particular kind of paper or sword or Kabuki play. There are no extraneous influences or aims. The process, procedures etc. have been very carefully dissected and the details of the craft or 'mystery' (often a secret, much like

a computer program) are passed on from generation to generation.
With the constant warmth and support of others, acting in a team, with well specified and widely accepted goals, and with a step-by step set of instructions of how to achieve these goals, great things have been and can be achieved.

How creative are the Japanese?

How great is the 'creative' element in all of this? One definition of creativity which links it to this very precise, rigid, demarcated, rule-bound, ends/means related vision of great work, might be paradoxically that while middling creativity can be achieved in this way, it is only middling. Painting by numbers, playing the violin very well indeed, an excellent kabuki performance, a masterful sumo wrestler, the middling to high levels of all these can be achieved through method. But to reach above and beyond this, to make the creative break-through. What is this?

Zen and the art of creativity

One might approach this problem through zen. The aim of zen training seems to be to use all the power of the above techniques, concentration, rigorous logic, separation of spheres, learning all the rules, and then in an explosive moment of ecstasy to throw them all over. It is to find release and deeper insight by thinking the impossible, illogical, contradictory and so on. The same may be something similar to great creative moments, the discovery of gravity, relativity, uncertainty, evolution and so on.

In such situations one performs or knows all the rules, concentrates the attention, homes in on the problem, goes through the preparations and then, through disobeying all of them, by doing all the unthinkable things, connecting instead of separating (lateral thinking), allowing emotion and intuition and 'fuzzy logic' in, where usually reasoned argument is necessary, by jumping stages and proceeding very fast, by above all taking risks, having an unprovable hunch, one achieves something which before had been thought impossible or not even dreamt of.

Constructing the ladder behind one

Of course, once it has been achieved, the 'leap of faith' made, one constructs a logical, systematic, ladder behind one, so that others can follow, as did Newton or the discoverers of DNA or Columbus or whoever. Yet by definition, the ladder is an ex post facto construction: it was not there before and indeed people probably either thought that it was impossible to reach this point, or that nothing existed to be reached. The real discoverers sail out into blanks on the map and doing so means that they level the well-known share lines and move into dragon-infested zones.

The tools and the job

Such explorers may take humdrum tools with them, the compass and quadrant and their

navigational skills. Yet these are only aids. What is ultimately needed is a compound of courage and daring, a high sense of intuition, an idea of what might be possible, and a burning desire to achieve some hitherto unrealized goal. Here stand Galileo, Darwin, Columbus and others. Of course, as Columbus bitterly observed, it always looks easy after the event, since one can see how it was done and that it could be done. What is difficult is the leap of faith to come to believe that it may be possible, the planning to make it possible, and the daring to attempt it. Thus much more is required than sheer intelligence or determination; a whole parcel of attributes is needed, varying with the task in hand.

The difficulty of creativity and risk-taking in Japan

It may again be different in Japan, where creativity and risk-taking is both more difficult and easier. It is more difficult because if the individual gets too far out on a limb he is not protected by the strength of an inner, well-developed, sense of himself as a single individual, nor by an inner voice of God. He or she is thus enormously vulnerable to every gust of adverse criticism. The fact that everything is relational is also a weakness. If the rest of the shoal move away, the individual finds it very difficult to continue without joining them, for he seems to be drained of all purpose or meaning by their absence. He is one hand clapping; no sound is heard. There must be an audience. He cannot make a world on a desert island like Robinson Crusoe, that archetypical individualist and risk-taker.

On the other hand it is easier because of the very same relational structure. As long as an individual can impart his vision and aim to one or two others, whether it is to make the most beautiful pot in history, found Sony electronics, or write a work on Japanese civilization, then he can proceed a long way. He is never alone: he becomes imbued with the strength of a team pulling together, taking the strain, combining and focusing their attention on the problem, and achieving results beyond the abilities of one person.

Different kinds of achievement

Perhaps this difference is just another way of re-stating the cliché that the West makes the great, seminal, blue skies break-throughs - DNA, inner combustion engine, electricity, splitting the atom, computers, theory of evolution, but the Japanese then exploit them with a vast range of intricate and complex middle-range inventions, filling in the middle ground. All the attempts to stimulate creativity of the highest order in Japan tend to fail because it goes against the deepest principle in the culture, that is caution, avoidance of risk, conformity to the small group norm. Even zen cannot cure them of this, though it is a risk-taking religion.

Creativity and risk as the spice of life

What is certain is that a measure of creativity is what gives spice to 'work' and, at a slightly lower level than the greatest inventions, it is found widely in the best types of work in both civilizations,

and particularly in their crafts. By this middle-level creativity I mean the kind of application of rules in a creative way, which is the central aim of much scientific and craft activity. It is not just paining by numbers, for while the general rules of the game are known, the particular strategies are left to the individual. It contains an element of the unexpected, the spontaneous, the surprise, the inversion, the trope, which gives the delight. It is, of course, an element in humour and especially ironic humour which takes the well-worn phrase or convention and plays with it. It what lies behind the potter's art in Japan or Bach's fugues, or higher level mathematics. It is playing or frolicking at a very high level, delighting in the freedom which comes from knowing all the rules and using them to develop new and hitherto undreamt of possibilities. It is the best that can be achieved in a period of what Kuhn calls 'normal science'. The great paradigm changers, the Newtons and Einsteins and Darwins are something different.

What are the necessary pre-conditions for creativity?

It is difficult to know what provides the ideal seed-bed for such high level and middle-level creativity. Probably if one set out a list of desiderata they would be disproved by a number of cases, but it is worth noting a few helpful factors.

Absence of external worries would seem necessary, yet much of great literature, music (Mozart) and so on was created as an escape from those very worries and a more contented and worry-free life might have led to nothing. Or one might think that an alternating and varied existence are important, giving mental refreshment. Though no doubt one can find cases where this is not true, it is a very widespread feature of truly creative acts that they seem to occur either in solitude or in a period of withdrawal, or unexpectedly. The 'eureka' syndrome, the dropping apple in a moment of idleness, all this points to the fact that after battling with a problem at close quarters, it is when one relaxes and does something else, walking gardening, having a bath or, as Evans-Pritchard told me, washing up, that the really big ideas come. Hence the need for Darwin to have a "thinking path", through his garden at Down. An alternation of distance seems to be partly behind this: after pressing one's nose up against the pane, one stands back and sees the whole house, and only then notices that one was looking into the wrong room.

Again, the comparative perspective, which puts the here and now into focus by movement, either through time or space, seems important. It is no coincidence that many of the greatest discoveries or works were done during or after travel, whether Darwin, Wallace, De Tocqueville, Marx or Fukuzawa. Travel teaches breadth and shows something of what is eternal and what transitory.

Again, it seems to be an advantage to live and work on a fault line, on a boundary between systems, whether it is a culture divide (a Jew in a Christian culture or whatever), or a regional/national divide (Germans in the nineteenth century, for instance Weber and Marx; Scotsmen in the eighteenth century straddled across the Highland line). Again, to live on an historical divided, whether the English revolution (Milton or Hobbes), or the French revolution

(Wordsworth, Rousseau, Beethoven) can help. Yet these are difficult things to prove since as soon as one locates some great 'achievement', one can usually find that there was a boundary or fault line which explains it, because there are so many such lines.

The stimulus of alternatives

Yet it is not difficult to see how and why such 'fault' lines should be stimulating, for they set up a set of alternatives in the mind, other possibilities, thus forcing one to re-consider what one has taken for granted and either to re-confirm it consciously, or reject it, or improve it. This was what stimulated Tacitus in his work on Germania, Montaigne in his essays, the Scottish philosophers, De Tocqueville or Fukuzawa. If one does not live on the fault line, one can create it by travel and exploration, as we found on our trips to Nepal or Japan. Although travel does not always broaden the mind, and a broad mind is not always a path to creativity (as we have argued to be too broad-minded may be a disadvantage), yet the shock of comparison, as Bloch argues, can be very stimulating.

The stimulus of stability

Yet another element of creativity lies in stability. Curiously, some kind of stable background, firm 'home base' is required for most kinds of really creative work. Few people can dare or wish to take risks on too many fronts. Great social risks can be taken by those who are in other ways assured, and likewise great intellectual risks can be faced if in other respects one's position is assured. Hence the social security of a Locke, Darwin, De Tocqueville was important. Yet no doubt counter-examples could be found, Wallace and Chambers to name but two. Perhaps here one should distinguish between short-burst creative acts, the tossing off of a poem or a Schubert sonata, which can fit with the romantic image, as opposed to the solid, deep and long work that lies behind the discoveries of an Adam Smith, Malthus, Darwin or Newton. It is the latter which requires a solid background of some, but perhaps not too much, security.

The stimulus of ambition

Finally, there is ambition. Usually fame is only part of the spur, or is cloaked for the individual by projecting it into a wider ambition. The creator wishes to leave his or her name to posterity, to do some great good deed for mankind or whatever. The ambition merely to be rich and famous for one's own life does not justify the effort; there are many easier and more trivial ways of achieving this.

Alongside all of these there is the problem-solving love that we call curiosity and pattern-seeking. For it seems that in the end the greatest discoveries become obsessions which cannot be fully explained except by some other, apparently irrational, factor. This is a factor which humans (and other animals) are probably naturally endowed with and has been of great survival value to them; it is their joy in solving puzzles. They see around them a mass of objects which are a

jumble of possible connections, sights, sounds, scents. Their greatest joy as thinking machines is to sort these out, categorize them, decide which is cause and which is effect. In other words, to seek patterns. The great discoverers are the great pattern finders.