# Communications to the Editor

To the Editor:

Theory is in the eye of the beholder in a November 1993 (*JAS* 52.4:1003–4) review of my book, *Welfare Policy and Politics in Japan: Beyond the Developmental State*. I argue that a central paradox is that Japan does not embrace the ideology of a "welfare state" as reviewer Steven Reed uses the term. Further, this paradox reflects the beliefs of many citizens: Japanese themselves do not openly have the certainty that policies exist for their welfare needs.

First, our theoretical disagreement is not about a flaw in my book as much as with the definition and ideology of a welfare state. My book went to lengths to avoid using ambiguous terms and I strongly disagree about applying the term "welfare state" to Japan as it was in the review. Can Japan be called a "developmental state" and a "welfare state" at the same time? I think not. The core of the difference is that Reed takes the leap to define all state activities toward welfare as a welfare state. I grant that this loose application of terms is followed by comments on some observers of America and various countries in the world.

For other political analysts, including myself, the ideology of a "welfare state" is much disputed outside of Europe. In Sweden, the Social Democrats built the prototype model of a welfare state that others in Europe imitated. In Britain, the welfare state encouraged by the Beveridge Report and supported by the Labor Party was an ideological punching bag and a target for program cuts under Margaret Thatcher. In the United States, however, Ronald Reagan had to attack proxy programs for the poor in particular and not nationwide "social security" in general nor any welfare state model because of the lack of American national health insurance. Note here that there is no single "Western model of welfare state development" to elaborate, as the reviewer implied. To return to Japan (with an eye to similarities to America), my central paradox is that the Japanese under one-party dominance developed substantial welfare policies, especially national health insurance (*kenkō hoken*), but did not develop the ideology of a welfare state. In my conclusion, I argue that it is wrong to refer to Japan as a "welfare state" when the conservative rulers seeking a "welfare society" refused to do so.

Second, the problem of overlap with the work of John Campbell is exaggerated. Campbell's book focuses on the aging and my book covers all areas of welfare, as the reviewer admits; thus the books are complementary. Further, the theoretical foci of the books are different, with Campbell interested mainly in the theories of "policy process" and my work interested in why the state provides welfare policies. I made theoretically informed references to the studies of Campbell, Calder, Samuels, and Pempel about Japan, but my central concern was to characterize particular areas of welfare policies.

Here is the rub: Why is Campbell's detailed monograph on areas of the policy process a "better" contribution to theory than broad comparisons of the key welfare policies in Japan with elsewhere? Methods of deep description with highlights of similar elements are common in policy studies and mine are as systematic as any case study. The reviewer missed that the Japanese model of policy coalitions is in

a table in the conclusion that gives a specific array of interest groups and institutional features for Japan. The reviewer also quoted what I think is the contrasting common understanding of models about Western welfare states, which I did not think needs much elaboration. The book focused instead on variants in the policy process that are more similar to the United States and developing countries, such as Brazil, than to the European countries that exemplify welfare states.

I return to the key question assumed away by Reed's review: Is Japan really a welfare state? I repeat from my conclusion that many Japanese citizens do not believe so. The *seizonken* rights given in Article 25 of the 1947 Constitution and affirmed by the 1957 Asahi Case are still not widely viewed as adequate to assure security for aging Japanese who fear their welfare benefits will diminish. Here, I simply do not think that the Japanese have yet developed the ideology of a welfare state.

Our debate extends to ideas about citizenship and rights. Japan's legislature in the future after electoral reforms may openly affirm the rights to welfare. But at the time of my book's publication in the spring of 1993, I did not think so and presented a paradox about policies created under one-party dominance. Reed dismissed it, but that does not constitute a lack of theoretical rigor on my part.

In the midst of electoral reforms and demographic changes due to aging, future conflicts are likely about whether Japan's new governments will affirm the budgets and priorities of welfare policies. As John Campbell properly noted, demographics play a large part in debates about welfare in Japan. Questions arise about whether welfare benefits will be maintained when Japan's population over age 65 doubles in the next century. I think an open question remains about whether the new coalition governments will support an ideology of a welfare state.

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TO THE EDITOR:

Perhaps because of the perspective generated by my multidisciplinary and multicultural training in Italy, Japan, and the United States, my reading of both Edward Said's critique of Orientalism and of the "post-Orientalist" views of colonial and postcolonial Asian experiences is at odds with current Anglo-Saxon orthodoxy, which the *Journal of Asian Studies* symposium on Dimensions of Ethnic and Cultural Nationalism in Asia (53.1 [February 1994]:3–123) so well represents. This new orthodoxy seems to combine an uncritical acceptance of the Saidian position with the enthusiastic use of postmodernist views of culture on the one hand, while, on the other, it adopts an unjustified distinction between "Western-style" and "ethnonationalism." In my opinion, the result is an extremely ethnocentric, almost patronizing view of the historical processes characterizing postcolonial settings. It is also an intellectual position so typically in line with the ideology of "phase-3 capitalism" (which others call "late," "postindustrial," or "consumer capitalism") that it is rather hard not to see a connection between the two—a connection Antonio Gramsci has forecast very precisely.

Responding to Benedict Anderson's model (1983) of nation-building, Partha Chatterjee observes that to see the "imagined community" around which anticolonial resistance movements built their national aspirations as shaped by "modular forms" first developed in the West denies these movements their autonomy (1993:5). Chatterjee goes on to point out that the most powerful results of the nationalist

imagination in Asia and Africa "are posited not on an identity but rather on a *difference* with the 'modular' forms of the national society propagated by the modern West" (1993:5).

This is an important point. I would argue that the "post-Orientalist" position is built upon massive disregard of the active, constructive, *but thoroughly culture-specific* contribution of indigenous populations both in the way the West came to define the Orient, and in the formulation of ways of fighting Western colonialism first, and of national self-definition later. That Orientalist interpretations of different cultural traditions were *used* by some Western colonial powers for specific political purposes is not in question and is definitely not something Said discovered. Similarly, anthropological documentation of the cultural specificity of, say, certain indigenous American or African groups was certainly manipulated in self-serving ways by the American Bureau of Indian Affairs or by British colonial administrators. But to say because of this that all Western anthropological descriptions of alien cultures are "made up" is, I think, akin to throwing away several babies with some dirty bathwater. Obviously, all crosscultural analysis—in fact, as Bruno Latour (1993) has conclusively argued, all knowledge—is "made up" in the sense of being profoundly culture-specific. But the much-maligned "Enlightenment project" was an attempt to find ways to advance knowledge by carefully exploring the weaknesses inherent in it because of its human matrices; that is why some of us believe that that project is eminently "unfinished" (see Habermas 1989), and reject the obscurantism implicit in postmodern positions.

Terry Eagleton has recently pointed out that while postcolonial theorists seem to celebrate cultural ambivalence, hybridity, and indeterminacy because this implicitly challenges Western primordialist views of the "other," their "elusive in-betweenness" neither provides an explanation for "post-colonial misery" nor proposes any *political* translation of an intellectual position "so endlessly qualified that it disappears up its own subtlety" (Eagleton 1994:28). If one sees postcolonial theorists in the context of a broader postmodern ideology this is hardly surprising. Aijaz Ahmad (1992) has powerfully argued that postmodernist academic arguments reveal a bourgeois preoccupation with techno-managerial expertise and the implicit rejection of "naïve" engagement in political action. In fact, Ahmad relentlessly critiques the Saidian position insofar as its rejection of "essentialisms" implies the devaluation of emancipatory ideologies. This is a critique also applicable to Ronald Inden's work (1990), which clearly reveals as well the postmodern (and very Anglo-Saxon) inclination toward giving more value to individual agency than to social movements.

If both the uncritical acceptance of the Saidian position and the celebration of cultural indeterminacy can be seen to be direct byproducts of postmodern ideology, the one component of post-Orientalist orthodoxy that remains problematic is the distinction between "the West and the rest" in terms of nation-building processes. Even more surprising is that very sophisticated non-Western analysts of nationalism, such as Stanley J. Tambiah, seem to have accepted this view. In my opinion, this is a distinction based on two unwarranted premises: that when Friedrich Meinecke, writing in 1908, separated "the *Kulturnation*, the largely passive cultural community, from the *Staatsnation*, the active, self-determining political nation" (Smith 1991:8) he was highlighting a "natural" dichotomy, and that the Western model of the nation emerged from the privileging of political over cultural loyalty, so that communally accepted legal-political institutions became the core of national identity.

In fact, "every nationalism contains civic and ethnic elements in varying degrees and different forms" (Smith 1991:13); the anthropological literature conclusively

documents that when cultural uniqueness—which may initially be catalyzed by any factor—affects a critical mass of people and combines with territorial concentration it inevitably leads to a desire for political self-determination. Thus, far from being separate phenomena, the cultural and civic community are completely intertwined; indeed, the best way to define ethnic groups is as "formerly autonomous small-scale cultures [i.e., nations] that become fully incorporated into the state [expressing the civic dimension of a different culture], yet still retain distinct . . . cultural characteristics" (Bodley 1994:200). Any large-scale nation-state is likely to incorporate a number of ethnic groups and this certainly applies to Western cases just as much as it applies to Asian, African, or American ones.

So, *all* nationalisms are "ethnonationalisms," and the fact that certain large European nations (the classic examples are England, France, and Spain) managed to acquire a measure of cultural cohesion quite early in their history has much less to do with a hypothetical "rational" privileging of civic communalism over cultural particularism on the part of their entire populations than with the skillful process of mass acculturation the elites managed to carry out. In other words, the early establishment of European nation-states shows that particular hegemonic classes had the ability to "culturally homogenize" their subjects. This is why, of the three "classic" cases mentioned above, the most successful was the English one, since the Norman tradition of establishing close links with the upper echelons of neighboring ethnic groups both diluted the cultural specificity of their heritage and identified cultural membership with social class. Consequently, starting as early as the fourteenth century, the Englishness of the English nation became a myth increasingly accepted and supported by all those people who aspired to be "coopted" into the ruling class.

The content of ethnicity, then, is thoroughly cultural, just as its uses are thoroughly political. Thus, a wish for self-determination is the usual byproduct of cultural specificity, just as the dilemma of "modern" nationalism has always been how to reconcile the incorporation of different ethnic groups into a theoretically homogeneous cultural framework. The current phase of capitalist development seems to be increasingly setting the stage for an end of this type of nationalism (in current world-system economics the role of the large-scale state as the agent and guarantor of economic success is being constantly reduced). That is why we are witnessing what naïve commentators call "a resurgence of tribalism." As I have argued elsewhere (Cerroni-Long 1993), the "tribe"—or the small-scale, culturally homogeneous, politically independent society—is our species-specific preferred module for social organization, and acknowledging this would take us a long way toward a better understanding of ethnic conflict, wherever it may take place. Also, one only need read the daily news to see that Walker Conner's prediction on the forthcoming challenge of ethnonationalism to the modern European-style nation-state (1994) is already coming true.

While it may accelerate the demise of large-scale national structures, current world-system capitalism is not necessarily facilitating the establishment of justice, freedom, or social emancipation. Partha Chatterjee states: "Here lies the root of our postcolonial misery: not in our inability to think out new forms of the modern community but in our surrender to the old forms of the modern state" (1993:11). Economic forces may well eliminate the need for this particular type of surrender but they will most certainly demand other types. It may be cold comfort for the victims of Western colonialism but the currency all must pay for the regained ability *to define their own cultural community in its own unique terms is inescapable* subjugation to a global economic system.

By disregarding all these issues, the post-Orientalist brand of revisionism seems oddly reductive. But, again, it does reinforce the "cultural denial" outlook of postmodernism. If the theorists of the large-scale nation-state could lead the masses into thinking that they all shared a common ethnic/cultural heritage and that, in any case, legal-political equality and a shared civic ideology superseded the importance of all other factors in creating a common national identity, it may well be that the theorists of globalization can now convince us that cultural boundaries do not exist, and that all cultures are hybrid and heterogeneous, intricately bound up with each other in their indeterminacy. Globalization theory may look like the ultimate flower of liberal pluralism but are its roots not feeding in the same ground that produces Benetton's "United Colors" view of the world? It remains to be seen whether the voices supporting the continuing relevance of cultural specificity (neither primordial nor situational, but locally documenting the richness of human creativity) can counter this view; all they need to find is a way to express themselves at the intellectual level as forcefully as they are already doing at the sociopolitical level.

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TO THE EDITOR:
Cynthia Ann Humes's critical review of my book, *All the Mothers Are One: Hindu India and the Cultural Reshaping of Psychoanalysis* (*JAS* 53.1:256–58) raises an important question. Can we delineate patterns that cut across subregions or genders within a broad culture area without being guilty of either racist generalization or the sexist silencing of women? I think we can, and must, turn our attention to transregional

and transgender patterns. This is so because variation of any kind can only exist against a shared background.

Humes never quite grasps that *All the Mothers Are One* is meant to open the way to a new understanding of intracultural difference. She complains, for example, that I jumble up data from joint and nonjoint families, with no attention to systematic differences. Yet in the book I show that clinical reports of stress within urban, modernizing, nonjoint families need to be understood as systematic variations on the traditional joint family pattern. I also assess the evidence for variation by region, caste, and class in the ethnographic literature on Hindu child rearing, pointing out that differences exist within a context of considerable commonality. My argument, therefore, is that regional investigations of Hindu child rearing and psychology are best conceptualized as the study of permutation within certain shared cultural patterns.

Those who attempt to study intracultural difference in a vacuum will simply import falsely universalized Western assumptions as a background against which to construct parameters of variation. Thus, Humes defends the universality of individualism against my emphasis on the importance of groups in Hindu culture. Humes says it is "obvious" after even a "superficial" look at indigenous theories of personhood that Hindus do have a well-defined concept of the individual. A superficial look may indeed yield similarities between the Hindu concept of the person and our own. Humes is correct, for example, to say that rules meant to offset maternal favoritism within a joint family are only necessary because a tendency to favoritism exists in the first place. Humes is mistaken, however, to equate the special tie between an "own" mother and her child with "individualism." I argue that in Hindu India it is not the individual, but a culturally distinctive form of the dyad, that stands as a counterpoint to the family group. Even interaction between the dyad of an "own" mother and child within the family group proceeds according to principles derived from the notion of group honor. Rather than "individuals" poised against groups, then, we have groups within groups, moving outward in concentric rings.

Humes's case against my alleged overgeneralizing misrepresents the book on several important points. Contrary to Humes's claims, I have a good deal to say about gods, as well as fathers. Moreover, I nowhere assume that Muslims have the same psychology as Hindus, since I am quite careful to confine my claims to Hindu India. In only one case study, and after noting the potential difficulty, I discuss a man who was born a Muslim but who became a worshiper of Kālī.

Humes points out that I do not present a systematic model of Hindu female psychology as a variant within the broader pattern that I sketch out. My analysis of development in the first three years, however, is based on a system of child care that applies broadly to both boys and girls. Indeed, the cross-gender applicability of the basic child care pattern is affirmed by female and male ethnographers alike. Moreover, I present case study evidence to show that the broad tension between dyads and groups can structure female psychology as well as male (pp. 201–19). I also offer theoretical suggestions as to the direction in which the construction of a specifically female variant of the shared pattern might go (pp. 284–85). This is far from what we ultimately need to see, but Humes misses the point. Identifying a broadly shared and culturally distinctive model of Hindu child development is the necessary first step in generating a less ethnocentric theory of Hindu gender difference.

Humes extends her critique of my alleged gender bias by objecting to a book about women as mere "mommies." In truth, however, the study of Hindu Indian mothering has been relatively neglected for over two decades by feminist scholars

who are more interested in women and work than women and children. Different studies and different interests contribute to a broader vision of the whole. Facile accusations of racism and sexism short-circuit the possibility of a reasoned dialogue about that which unites and divides us.

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TO THE EDITOR:

Stanley Kurtz makes three major points in his response to my review of *All the Mothers Are One*: (1) his use of materials focusing on various Indian religions, nonjoint families, and various "Hindu" religions is permissible because this endeavor is "best conceptualized as the study of permutation within certain shared cultural patterns"; (2) I have imported "falsely universalized Western assumptions" regarding his denial of individualism; and (3) his treatment of "Hindu psychology" is not sexist, and he calls for examining "trans-gender patterns." I will respond to each point briefly.

The most significant problems in Kurtz's use of materials from all over modern India is that he falsely assumes the singularity of "Hindu religion" and "culture," and he has misperceived the very system he posits as the essence of Hinduism.

Kurtz portrays Hinduism as an Advaitan approach centered on the Goddess. First, leaving the sticky issue of the term Hinduism aside, that such an entity is best characterized in terms of theology is highly suspect. In general, Hindus have understood and defined themselves not so much by belief as by practice; Kurtz's understanding of Hindu religion is biased toward belief, a decidedly Western preoccupation. Second, the essence of Hindu theology is not necessarily Advaita Vedanta. This in itself is a repetition of many well-intentioned outsiders who presume to understand the "highest Hinduism": the most representative is the most elite and, of course, it is also the one closest to that shared by the observer. One could well argue because of its greater numbers that deeply iconic, intensely personalized bhakti is preeminent. Against this devotional approach Kurtz responds, "In the highest Hindu view . . . self-restraint is imposed to reach a state beyond mere personal relationship" (p. 70). Third, Kurtz criticized in advance scholars who might insist on historical trends and possible distinctions between Hindu perceptions of deity for "knowing, Western, scholarly" "individualist" bias (p. 5). Thus, once he insists on a specific normative Hindu religion independent of time, space, and history, he can easily explain away all rival concepts as mere "permutations within certain shared cultural patterns," or as unfortunate misunderstandings on the part of the critic. Similarly, the "clinical reports of stress within urban, modernized, non-joint families" (these reports are a brief collection of case studies) are merely systematic variations on the "traditional" Hindu joint family pattern Kurtz assumes, which itself is based on ususual cases, such as the Rajputs of Khalapur, who, ironically, adopted the Muslim custom of purdah and thus became unusually segregated by gender.

Kurtz fashions his psychology on a Goddess theology presumed to be dominant in India. This predominance is not proven, and indeed, he relies heavily on the Khalapur case, yet the researchers there found that the Goddess played little or no role among males there. While Advaita was vaguely adhered to by the men and even women to varying degrees, the strongest and most recent influence on the religious life of the men was the Arya Samaj, whereas the women worshiped goddesses.

It is clear in the work of Susan Seymour and others that Kurtz examines, that both men and women are involved in child care. Thus, while I appreciate Kurtz's attention to Hindu Indian mothering (which I compliment in my review), I believe he distorts the data by underrepresenting male influence in the early lives of children and portraying all women in joint families as "mommies" to boy children.

The concept of ego and individualism as a Western construction has its own bias. I do not defend "Western individualism" as Kurtz has reified and is so intent on attacking it. I do defend Hindu beliefs of individuality in philosophy, religious quest, and society. For Kurtz to deny that Hindus believe in an ego flies in the face of over a thousand years of native philosophical explanation. Advaita Vedanta and virtually all other Hindu philosophies current today have devoted tremendous energy to elaborate this concept. In Advaita, the individual self (jiva) is not illusory, but is rather the ultimate Brahman itself appearing through media or limiting adjuncts. Once one understands this, the liberated jiva is preserved as Brahman. Kurtz's system denies individuals altogether; a being is not an individual, but part of a group interacting with groups. Advaitans specifically criticized such a view of non-self. The jiva is not false or illusionary as the world is, because if it were there would be none to be saved. Further, understanding this relation to Brahman is reserved only for the very select few; to presume that all mature Hindus have such an insight through the socialization process is absurd, and it implies that those who do not hold to such a view are immature. Kurtz's characterization of Hindus as dyads and groups devoid of concepts of self is un-Hindu as he has defined it, and inconsistent with the data.

Kurtz thus succeeds in cross-grouping people in terms of their geographic location who have similar childbearing circumstances (and many who do not), beliefs in religious affairs (and many who do not), all the while misrepresenting the chosen representative religion. While I believe there is merit to assuming "Hindu India" to be a cultural entity, as well as examining psychological differences as they may pertain to intracultural differences found among people there, these many methodological flaws all undercut the system Kurtz attempts to create.

Kurtz's call for study of "trans-gender patterns," while tantalizing, is not addressed specifically in his book. If that was his intention, it would have been useful for him to have made that his stated purpose and justified it.

Kurtz claims that his analysis of development in the first three years is based on a child care system that applies broadly to both boys and girls. He claims to have identified a broadly shared and culturally distinct model of Hindu child development, which is a necessary first step in generating a less ethnocentric theory of Hindu gender difference. Researchers have long found differences in Hindu child care relative to gender, however, including those sources Kurtz relied on. Most important, perhaps, is that boys are consistently preferred to girls, and that this preference leads to many significant differences in the treatment of children according to their gender.

Girl children are ignored more, weaned sooner, clothed more poorly, fed less, and their health care needs are neglected relative to boys, leading to what some have likened to be "indirect female infanticide." I believe this does matter in terms of child-rearing patterns. Further, it is also well-documented that men's and women's perceptions of deities' personality and the meaning of their mythology may vary dramatically. Thus, while I would like to learn more about transgender patterns, facts in the cases Kurtz himself uses do not support a transgender early child

psychology. Finally, if "transgender patterns" are rendered synonymous with male experience, as Kurtz uses the term "Hindu" in his book, this obscures more than it enlightens.

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