

Summary Report on the Symposium

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1. Summary of the Symposium “The Future of Inquiry into Human Beings” and Report Outlines

Reports on the symposium’s topic were submitted from three different research fields: primatology, anthropology and philosophy of education. Speakers included professor Juichi Yamagiwa, president of Kyoto University, who has conducted his research on gorillas in the field of primatology, professor Naoki Kasuga of Hitotsubashi University, who has led the “ontological turn” of anthropology and its further development in Japan, and professor Satoji Yano of Kyoto University from the field of philosophy of education (titles omitted below).

Yamagiwa calls for a reinvestigation of the incest taboo, which has been thought to be peculiar to human beings and which has shaped the characteristics of human society. He suggests this via focusing on the relation between physical characteristics and social structure to seek out the reason for incest avoidance observed in primate society.

Kasuga’s critical consideration of the *Ida* ritual of the *Umeda* people in Papua New Guinea as analyzed by anthropologist Alfred Gell, presents the possibility of an “asymmetric and bidirectional analogy” between the two fields of everyday life and ritual. Thereby, he also presents a possibility to transform today’s anthropology since the advocacy of the “ontological turn” into what can be called “ontology” in the original sense beyond an anthropology that “follows the natural sciences blindly” (for example anthropology of Alfred Gell or Victor Turner).

Employing a critical anthropological perspective, which launches a re-inquiry into what makes human beings human, Yano traces back the intersection point between primatology and anthropology to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and points out the importance of “self-consciously staying on the

borderline of the binary opposition” of human beings/animals, culture/nature, and adult/child. Here, the task of education is the transmission of the proper art of “how to close or open” this borderline.

2. Outline of Discussion

The discussion following these presentations included a Q&A session first between presenters and then between presenters and the floor.

The first question by Kasuga was directed at Yamagiwa: How can primatology explain the “neither distant nor near“ relationship with exchange partners in exchange and marriage relations within “primary” human society? Yamagiwa’s answer: Unlike other Primates, the relationship with one’s descent group is maintained even after marriage in the case of human families and communities, and this functions as bond between different groups. At the same time, “cross cousin marriage” is located on the boundary between cutting and keeping of the relationship with descent group. Kasuga also asked if and to what extent it is possible to talk about early human beings by drawing analogies to chimpanzee troops. To this question Yamagiwa answered that it is impossible to talk about early human beings by drawing analogies to chimpanzee society, because monogamic society comes from society where notable swelling of sex skin is not observed whereas this physical characteristic is notably observed in chimpanzee society characterized by promiscuous sexual-marriage relationship. Yano asked Yamagiwa to tell his views on the difference between learning and education from the perspective of primatology. Yamagiwa’s answer was that in order for education to take place, certain behaviors need to be displayed: educator and educand understanding the knowledge disparity between them and the educator teaching the educand even if it leads to loss of his/her own profit. According to Yamagiwa, such behaviors may have developed in the evolution process of human beings because of an over-development of our ability to sympathize with others.

Next, questions were directed at Kasuga. Yamagiwa asked him on his views on the limits of our ability to merely use visible things (as base-analog) in analogy, or the asymmetry between invisible and visible things in analogy. Kasuga suggested that natural sciences are thought to search for patterns (visible things), whereas human and social sciences take

up intention (invisible things). But in fact both of them are connected to each other: Similar to researchers in the human and social sciences, a physicist sees what he/she *intends to see* and understand what he/she *intends to understand*. Yamagiwa also asked Kasuga why symbols do not remain at the level of simple analogy in rituals, but rather are extended toward flamboyant decoration. Also, what meaning does this have for human beings? As to this question, Kasuga gave his opinion in reference to Gregory Bateson supposing that play sets the logical level in a different, meta-, or excess dimension. Human culture's characteristic of extending analogy in this way comes from such play.

Then, Yano asked Kasuga whether an anthropologist as an observer of the *Ida*-ritual, which establishes a passageway and traffic between the world of everyday life and the world of ritual by analogy, adds another layer of analogy from the outside. As to this question, Kasuga gave the example of anthropologist Marilyn Strathern. Strathern attempted to save anthropology out of the so-called "crisis of representation" into which anthropology had fallen in the 1970s by adding one analogy to another and thereby also trying to describe the chain movement of analogy in observation targets. Yano also asked Kasuga how the possibility for human beings to understand other cultures is explained by the analogy concept. As a response, Kasuga mentioned that anthropology has attempted to represent local knowledge on the one hand, and tried analogy on the other hand in order to understand other cultures. Marcel Mauss made one such attempt in his article "*The Gift*". Here, Mauss tried to make invisible things visible by means of analogy, using broad concepts of "gift" and "money" – concepts, which might not even exist within target populations.

Finally, questions were asked for Yano's presentation. Kasuga, citing 'The Lives of Animals' in John Maxwell Coetzee's novel "*Elizabeth Costello*", asked Yano about his views on the dangers accompanying the crossing of the boundary to de-humanizing. Yano replied to this with reference to his own previous studies on animal picture books. Acknowledging differences between feral child, feral man and savage, who are located at the boundary between human and non-human, and the inherent violence that lurks in discussing them all together, Yano explained that it is his attempt to make an inquiry into commonalities and issues which do not come into view until we dare to discuss them under the

common theme of 'boundary line'. Then, Yamagiwa cited Junichiro Itani's "*Discourse on Equality*" in which he criticizes Rousseau's feral man having no influence from others and asserts an evolutionary stream from 'original equality' through 'transcendental inequality' to 'conditional equality'. He asked Yano about his opinion on such thought that human beings are unequal with regard to their bodily properties, but also have directionality to produce equal society by adding a variety of conditions (observed even in play of Japanese macaque). To this Yano remarked that he did not give his presentation along Rousseau's "*Discourse on Inequality*" and suggested the importance of reconsidering the way of connection from animal world to human world along Itani's argument. Further, Yamagiwa pointed out that Yano did not discuss sexuality, despite it being one of the important conditions for society's construction, as well as one of the important moments of boundary crossing between child and adult. Yano admitted that Yamagiwa's comment positively "shocked" him, recognizing that unlike adults who interact with children every day, the tradition of philosophical and pedagogical thought (except for Sigmund Freud and others in his line of thought) has regarded and excluded sexuality as animal affair.

Moderator Tanaka asked if "sympathy", which Yamagiwa mentioned in his explanation of the difference between learning and teaching, is a sort of analogy. Yamagiwa answered that it is analogy, which is carried out "in a temporal gap". This analogy is formed by either the teacher or the person taught on the basis of the image of the latter's grown-up condition. Further, Tanaka asked both Yamagiwa and Kasuga if analogy (*analogia*) between creature and "invisible" god has been taken into consideration in primatology and anthropology. Yamagiwa expressed the following view: Since human beings have come to control the night by use of fire and mutually communicate analogical illusions created in the night's darkness by means of symbols including language and gesture, they acquired an ability to express something like god which does not exist in reality. Kasuga suggested as ~~his imagination~~ the possibility that to feel someone's intention in the night darkness and an adult pointing a finger to call a child's attention to something are related to each other. In addition, Yano pointed out the importance of inventing various ways to draw boundary lines, especially since European and American thought based on

monotheism has drawn clear, uncrossable boundary lines between god/human/animal, whereas in Japan the crossing between the three has been regarded as possible. Tanaka asked further whether the Japanese way of drawing boundary lines and Rousseau's "pity of all living beings" (handout, p.7) overlap. Yano suggested the possibility of a new way of thinking by returning to "St. Paul's Christianity" as a classical source of "cosmopolitanism" (handout, p.6) and start a re-inquiry as to its importance, which is different from Henri-Louis Bergson, who extended the thought of "cosmopolitanism" and reconsidered its possibility, no matter whether that can be called Japanese way of thinking. Further, Yamagiwa asked Yano how pedagogy understands our current state of transition in which science and technology change the ways of producing human life and thereby have the potential to make the realm of sexuality, which has been regarded as important for society's construction, more ambiguous. As to this question, Yano suggested the necessity to cross swords with the dimension of religious thought and to accept knowledge of advancements in leading fields of science and technology to contrive various teaching tools according to learners' growth stages, because it is religion that has dealt with questions on the boundary line between life and death as well as between before-birth and birth.

Following the panelists' discussion, the discussion was opened up to the floor. Itakura (Waseda University) pointed out the following three points: First, those who discussed the boundary line between animality and humanity in the eighteenth century to which Yano pays attention attempted to destroy the realistic meaning and importance of Christianity, and were situated within dynamics between god, human, and animal, because they thought that unsettling the boundary line between human and animal would lead to an unsettling of the boundary line between human and god. Second, in relation to the problematique which Yamagiwa pointed out concerning Yano's argument, despite sexuality being the most important theme in and after the fourth chapter of "*Emile*", that is in its two thirds, pedagogy established in academism in response to teacher training in the nineteenth century has interpreted and used this book by ignoring most of this part. Third, Rousseau's theory of "great cosmopolitan souls" is located within the context of his criticism of the lost of ability to sympathize with other's pain among large parts of people in society in those days and therefore

understanding this as aim just as Yano did leads to an overvaluation of Rousseau.

Yamagiwa's response to Itakura was that in his opinion eighteenth century discussions of natural law centered on how humans, not god, are able to create society within the natural law. Therefore, not only god but also animals did not appear there. Also, with regards to the issue of sexuality, Yamagiwa expressed his opinion that sexuality occupied a very important position in "*Emile*" in relation to "telling lies". After that, Yano explained that he took up the theory of "great cosmopolitan souls" with reference to the context which he developed in the second half of his presentation.

Then, Atsushi Suzuki (Oita University) asked Yamagiwa for his opinion on the idea that the animal world is in principle characterized by high birth and death rates, whereas in the human world fecundity became useless due to advancements in science and technology, so that also in education as well as pedagogy a discourse on considering human maturity (adulthood) as intellectual maturity instead of sexual maturity was produced. To this, Yamagiwa presented his opinion that if machines could substitute sexually mature bodies for reproduction, the physicality of human beings would gradually become insignificant (even though we do not know how this might change taboos). This could lead to discrimination against those who have not reached certain levels of intellectual development, but it could also lead to feedback of our physicality.

3. Summary

The fact that Japanese primatology started with the application of sociological methods to Primates research and that findings from Primatology have given sociological research new suggestions makes us realize that the history of these disciplines is one example of "asymmetric and bidirectional analogy" (Kasuga). Also, in the parts on primate society analysis in his books, Yamagiwa conducts a careful search for "patterns" by paying attention to many exceptions, and develops daring opinions in those sections that discuss human society. Could this be an expression of his "intention" toward analogy, which crosses the boundary line between animal and human? Further, the connection between Yano's argument of "self-consciously staying on the boundary line of the binary opposition

between human and non-human beings” and Kasuga’s argument of “asymmetric and bidirectional analogy” is very strong. We can also see this from the material, which Yano distributed entitled “Personification and Contra-Personification as Subjects of Thought concerning Boundary Line”.

As mentioned at the beginning of this symposium, its purpose was to “provide a chance to take an academic deep breath through knowing new tendencies in human sciences adjacent to pedagogy”. The topic contained the risk of dispersing the discussion, but it was in large measure thanks to the presenters’ thoughtful attention to theme selection that the discussion was focused on some central topics. Especially, the proceeding of the symposium benefitted largely from Yano’s discussion of points of intersection between primatology, anthropology and pedagogy in the first half of the symposium. Allow us to use this opportunity to offer our thanks to the presenters.

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