THE EUROCENTRIC WORLDVIEW: MISUNDERSTANDING EAST ASIA

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The United States, especially since 1941, has exercised enormous power throughout the world. East Asia, one region meriting America's heightened attention, spans a significant part of Eurasia, from the Japanese island chain to the Ili region in Central Asia. Peoples there number more than one billion, natural resources abound, while states like China and Japan wield considerable influence. Unfortunately much misunderstanding concerning East Asia permeated, and still permeates, American education and scholarship.1 Therefore this essay will explore and analyze this problem by focusing on China.

After a brief historical introduction showing how the Europeans have viewed China since the seventeenth century, the focus will shift to evaluate how East Asia is treated in education (vocabulary, concepts, source materials) through teaching. Then, research will occupy the center stage, with special reference to the social sciences. Of course, teaching and research overlap, but here they are separated for analytical purposes. It must be noted that unlike Edward Said's Orientalism, which limits its scope to Islamic studies, this essay examines not merely Sinology or even East Asian scholarship, but rather the larger academic treatment of world history. Textbooks purporting to survey objectively world civilizations actually promote Eurocentric bases throughout their pages. Terms like modern, modernization, or revolution are likewise steeped with Eurocentrism.² Furthermore, as this essay makes no claim to be comprehensive— Said reports that between 1800 and 1950 alone about 60,000 works were written about the Orient3—only a few representative works will be explored.

¹ S. S. Eisenstadt, "Sociological Theory and an Analysis of the Dynamism of Civilization and of Revolution," *Daedalus*, CVI (Fall 1977), pp. 59-65,

² Perez Zagorin, "Prolegomena to the Comparative History of Revolution in Early Modern Europe," Comparative Studies in Society and History, XVIII (April 1976), pp. 156-157, 172-174. It is interesting to observe that Zagorin who specializes in pre-1789 European history rails against colleagues who judge sixteenth and seventeenth century political movements as backward simply because they did not espouse the progress concept. Therefore Eurocentrism also has its internal divisions.

³ Edward Said, Orientalism (New York, 1978), p. 204.

Some Historical Perspectives

Europeans interacted with East Asians in large numbers beginning about 1600. Although missionaries and merchants had traveled to and lived in East Asia since the 1540s, Matteo Ricci was able to reside in Peking, capital of the Chinese Empire, only after 1600. About that time, the English East India Company and the Dutch East India Company were founded. From these varied religious and commercial contacts many European images of East Asia One striking view of China emanated largely from the emerged. Jesuits. Beginning with Ricci who mastered both spoken and written Chinese, the Jesuits managed to win concessions that permitted them not only to take up residence in the capital but gradually to ingratiate themselves to the imperial court. Thus even though they witnessed the tumult accompanying the Ming Dynasty's (1368-1644) fall and the Ch'ing Dynasty (1644-1912) rise, the Jesuits associated themselves with China's most sophisticated cultural and political elites. Moreover, Ricci's Chinese dress reflected a keen cosmopolitan spirit and cultural receptivity. This positive regard for China later surfaced in the writings of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz, who urged Europeans to learn from the Chinese, especially about ethical and political matters.4 Leibnitz spoke at length about Chinese philosophy in a work, Discourse on the Natural Theology of the Chinese, where he eloquently argued for understanding, exchange, and interaction between the Chinese and the Europeans.⁵

This favorable perspective continued to the Enlightenment and may be seen in the writings of the philosophes and the physiocrates. Representing the growing secularization of European thought, Voltaire and others admired the Chinese not merely for their political and ethical accomplishments, but also because they fashioned their systems without a Christian basis. Even in the artistic realm, a craze for collecting Chinese artifacts (chinoiserie) developed.6 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, however, saw the Chinese quite differently. Here, as elsewhere, he may be viewed as a maverick Enlightenment figure because in his essay "Has the Restoration of the Arts and Sciences Been Conducive to the Purification of Morals?", Rousseau used China as an example to illustrate his negative conclusion:

There is in Asia an immense country where learning is so honored that it takes men to the highest positions in the state. If the sci-

⁴ Donald Lach, trans., The Preface to Leibnitz' Novissima Sinica (Hono-

⁴ Donald Lach, trans., Ine Frequee to Letonia Indiana, 1957), p. 69.

⁵ Gottfried W. Leibnitz, Discourse on the Natural Theology of the Chinese, trans. by Henry Rosemont Jr. and Daniel J. Cook (Honolulu, 1977), p. 7.

⁶ Michael Sullivan, "The Heritage of Chinese Art," in Raymond Dawson, ed., The Legacy of China (Oxford, 1964), pp. 167-168. Raymond Dawson, "Western Conceptions of Chinese Civilization," in Dawson, ed., The Legacy, p. 12. E. A. Kracke, Jr., "The Chinese and the Art of Government," in Dawson, ed., The Legacy, p. 335.

ences purified morals, taught men to shed their blood for their country, and animated their courage, then the peoples of China ought to be virtuous, free, and invincible. But there is no vice that is not common among them. If that vast empire could not be saved from the yoke of the crude and ignorant Tartars by the sagacity of its ministers, the supposed wisdom of its laws, and the great number of its inhabitants, of what use to it were all its scholars? What has it gained from all the honors heaped upon them, other than the distinction of being peopled by slaves and scoundrels?

The decades around 1800 witnessed a shift in Europe's attitudes about East Asia generally, and China more specifically, being closely tied with the twin transformations: the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution. Broadly speaking, the political upheavals in France brought, among other things, a highly centralized, unified bureaucratic state which could effectively mobilize that nation's energies for vital tasks like war. A coherent and elaborate ideological system revolving about liberty, equality, and fraternity became a means to measure and judge other societies. At the same time, French nationalism developed, and soon sparked national awareness within the European community, an awareness which tended negatively to view foreigners as different and therefore inferior. The Industrial Revolution transformed the United Kingdom, propelling the British bourgeoisie dynamically across the globe in its search for markets and raw materials. Now, as war materials as well as textiles could be mass produced, British strength seemed invincible. Europeans reckoned a country's worth in terms of its warships, cannon, and colonies more than ever before.

In China the British settled on much different terms than their Jesuit predecessors. Britain's merchant class, a social group traditionally despised by Chinese elites, lived outside Canton, itself distant from Peking. As social and cultural outsiders, the British observed a declining China weakened after nearly two centuries of Manchu rule, population explosion, and widespread corruption. Unlike the Jesuit "cosmopolitan internationalists," the British presented a narrow nationalism and "Western modernism" which tended to scorn the Chinese. Protestant missionaries contributed to the dehumanizing process by considering the Chinese as heathens and therefore inferior. European power, influence, and contempt for colored people reached an apogee in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The essential attitudes that the West dominated a stagnantly passive Asia, that the Western road to industrialization or "modernity" was the only one to follow, and that the Western model was therefore the one

⁷ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, The Essential Rousseau, trans. by Lowell Bair (New York, 1974), p. 211.

by which nations would be judged, have continued until today despite certain changes in the degree or sophistication of scholarly treatment.

Eurocentrism in Education

Education, in this essay, will be defined rather broadly to include both kinds of formal schooling, public and private, as well as the electronic and printed media. All these educational forms powerfully convey information including perceptions to the public. One striking example of Eurocentric bias vis-a-vis East Asia is the continued use of Far East, which means far from Europe—in the Eastern direction, of course. Far East refers somewhat vaguely to China, Japan, Korea, and possibly Vietnam. To designate collectively these nations as the Far East implies that Europe is the world's wealth, power, and cultural center. One very elementary, common-sense objection to that view is that the globe cannot possibly have a center on its surface but only at its core. When Americans employ Far East in their speech or writing, they show unthinking mindlessness. China, Japan, and Korea really lie to America's West, being the "Near West" from Hawaii and the "Far West" from Washington, D.C. Certainly, American usage of Far or Near West would be equally biased. The point is that a more accurate and less biased terminology must be employed in education. "East Asia," for example, usually refers to Eastern Eurasia with or without Vietnam's inclusion. Similar appropriate designations would be "Southwest Asia," "South Asia," "Southeast Asia" and "Central Asia." Southwest Asia is a seldom-used name for a region that scholars and news-people call the Near East or the Middle East. Yet Near East is as Eurocentric as Far East but it is much more widely used in all educational aspects. East Asia and Southwest Asia should be employed because they are more accurate and less biased.

This discussion may seem rather old-fashioned or out-of-date. At the most, professors might use "Far East" pedagogically to heighten students' sensitivities about images used to characterize East Asia. Unfortunately, however, "Far East's" usage did not die out in the 1950s, 1960s, or the 1970s; rather it is still "alive and well" in the 1980s. Late in 1979, for example, Richard Holbrooke, Assistant Secretary of State for Asian Affairs, used "Far East". Such lapses by high ranking policy making American officials are disconcerting and inexcusable. Franz Schurmann, a noted American sinologist and author of numerous articles and books on China, recently wrote an article about the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan using

⁸ The Far Eastern Economic Review, (November 16, 1979), p. 16. This periodical's title, of course, reflects Eurocentrism.

"Far East".9 Moreover, in recent years several articles written by French and Russian scholars refer to the "Far East". 10 American textbooks still widely employ the term in their titles or in their contents. Therefore future generations of scholars, teachers, and citizens will read these texts which are steeped with Eurocentric bias.¹¹ Closely related to this usage is the tendency to treat Europe as the only "true" civilization in the world; the underlying assumption is that "civilization" began in Greece and Rome, underwent a revival in the Renaissance, and has flourished ever since in Europe and the United States. Asian or other civilizations receive scant or condescending attention. These attitudes dominate nearly every textbook concerning world history.¹² Elbaki Hermassi summarized this kind of attitude most succinctly:

But in a complex and multi-centered world, it will take a good deal of ethnocentrism ... to believe that political and innovation can take place only in certain historical and geographical areas.13

This most serious issue must be confronted immediately and with wide-ranging discussion.

East Asians used the term "Far East" too. In the Republic of Korea, for example, Yonsei University ran a Far Eastern Studies Institute which published a periodical, The Journal of Far Eastern Studies. 14 A Korean business establishment was known as the Far

⁹ H. Franz Schurmann, "Geopolitics Behind the Soviet Occupation of

⁹ H. Franz Schurmann, "Geopolitics Behind the Soviet Occupation of Afghanistan," Hawaii Tribune Herald, January 25, 1980, p. 4.
10 See for example A. Mikhailov, "Victory in the Far East and the Destinies of the Chinese Revolution," International Affairs, IX (1975), pp. 39-47. "Revolution Culturelle Chinoise et Politique Américaine en Extrême-Orient," Revue de Défense Nationale, XXIII (1967), pp. 507-516.
11 Joseph Strayer, Hans W. Gatzke, et al., The Mainstream of Civilization, 3rd edition (New York, 1979), II, vide supra, 683-688, 777-778, 785, 787. E.
M. Burns and P. L. Ralph, World Civilizations, 5th edition (New York. 1974), 143, 147, 154, 279, 289, 307, 314, 578, 688, 693, 917, 948 ff, 1171, 1211, 1220.
L. S. Stavrianos, The World Since 1500, 3rd edition, (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1975), 203, 276-277, 492-496. W. H. McNeill, A World History, 3rd edition (New York, 1979), 44, 104, 117, 221-222, 230, 238, 260, 289, 298, 316, 337, 347, Chapter 22, 399-400, 458, 516, 546. This is a representative, not an exhaustive sampling. McNeill used Middle East in his work (not reflected in this citation). He also employed Western Asia, Far West, European Far West, and Far East. His terminology although somewhat inconsistent does Far West, and Far East. His terminology although somewhat inconsistent does seem to point out that he used the Eurasian land mass as a reference point. Far West would presumably be Europe, European Far West would be Western Europe, Middle East would be near the center of Eurasia, and the Far East would be the Eastern part of Eurasia. This is still somewhat vague but perhaps slightly less Eurocentric.

¹² Strayer, Gatzke, et al., The Mainstream, Part I, for example, has but two chapters (44pp.) on India, China, and Japan whereas most of the remaining nineteen chapters (450pp.) concern the European culture area. The other texts cited above have similar distributions except for McNeill whose coverage

is most even pagewise but nevertheless Eurocentric.

13 Elbaki, Hermassi, "Toward a Comparative Study of Revolutions,"

Comparative Studies in Society and History, XVIII (April 1976), 234.

14 Hapdong News Agency, Korea Annual, 1972 (Seoul, 1972), 446. Hapdong News Agency, Korea Annual, 1975 (Seoul, 1975), 372-373.

Eastern Transport Company. 15 The Japan Times, an English-language newspaper in circulation since the nineteenth century. employed "Far East" on numerous occasions in early 1980, especially when quoting from Japanese language newspapers. 16 The interesting thing is that the Japanese characters (kanji) used to translated "Far East" literally mean East Asia. 17 A particularly confusing example in the Japan Times appeared in reference to a trip by a former government official who was scheduled to travel in the "Middle East." Not only was it mindless to use "Middle East" from a Japanese perspective, but "Middle East" was employed in the same sentence with Southeast Asia, and in a mutually exclusive context:

Former Foreign Minister Sunao Sonoda is going to visit countries in Southwest Asia and the Middle East...18

Such examples illustrate the wide-ranging influence that Eurocentrism wields throughout the world.

That the term Far East can create problems in the international arena is seen in an early 1980 article' "How Wide is Far East?" by Kiyoaki Murata. Therein the author noted that much Japanese governmental concern with Far East stemmed from the September 8, 1951 Japan-United States Security Treaty. Article I of that document gave the Americans:

... the right ... to dispose United States land, air, and sea forces in and about Japan. Such forces may be utilized to contribute to the maintenance of international security in the Far East and to the security of Japan against armed attack from without...19

Thus by this treaty the Japanese government permitted the Japanbased American forces to strike at parts of the "Far East" when conditions warranted. The Far East's vaguely defined nature emerged when the Security Treaty's revision became a major political issue in 1960. During some extremely sharp exchanges with opposition Diet members, government officials stated that "Far East" was an area, not defined with geographical precision, located within the "Far Eastern" region. Muddled rhetoric aside, the imprecision became necessary when other Asian countries became the recipients of American interest and involvement. In the mid-1960s, for example, the Americans added Vietnam as a fringe area so as to justify Okinawabased flying missions over that war-torn land. About the same time,

¹⁵ Hapdong News Agency, Korea Annual, 1978 (Seoul, 1978), 434.

¹⁵ Hapdong News Agency, Korea Annual, 1978 (Seoul, 1978), 434.
16 The Japan Times, (Hereafter JT)), 2/1/1980, p. 16; 2/3/1980, p. 38;
2/7/1980, p. 12; 2/16/1980, p. 192.
17 P. H. Clyde and B. F. Beers, The Far East (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1975), vide supra. The text's cover is especially interesting because it reproduces the kanji meaning East Asia which it translates Far East.
18 JT, 2/19/1980, p. 228.
19 JT, 2/8/1980, p. 16.

the Japanese government did define "Far East" to include Japan, the Republic of Korea, Taiwan, Matsu, Quemoy, and Japan's northern territories as defense areas. Such specific connotations, however necessary they might be for diplomatic or security purposes, excluded the People's Republic of China and North Korea, thus making "Far East" even more imprecise and problematic. With the rise of the Iranian and Afghanistan "hot spots" in 1979-1980, the possibility that American forces stationed in Japan might be used there, and thus involve Japan in a wider conflict, clearly worried many Japanese, who asked whether

... the Persian Gulf which is in the Middle East be considered a 'fringe area' of the Far East.²⁰

A Japanese Foreign Ministry official stated that:

The Persian Gulf is not within the scope of the Far East. But the transfer of the U.S. forces to that region from Japan would pose no problem. It would not be an infringement of the Security Treaty if it is only a transfer.²¹

The security issue, although quite important and critical, lies outside this essay's scope. Nevertheless it is most interesting that the Japanese, who in effect had the term "Far East" thrust upon them via the Security Treaty language nearly thirty years ago, have felt compelled to continue that usage into the 1980s. They do this so as to remain loyal allies. The American government, on the other hand, save for some inexcusable lapses like that of Assistant Secretary of State Holbrooke, generally dropped "Far East" from its vocabulary. Thus we are presented with the spectacle of non-Europeans employing "Far East" terminology without seriously questioning its bias.

Uncritical word usage by authors, revealing the Eurocentric worldview's continuing influence, must now be examined. Pyongchoon Hahm, in an otherwise brilliant article attacking Eurocentrism in relation to Korean history, employed the words "lacked" or "failed":

For example, no one can deny that Korea lacked manorial feudalism and had a highly centralized government; it was militarily weak; it failed to enjoy a high level of civilization...²²

This passage clearly shows that although Hahm, who thoroughly criticized biased Eurocentric interpretations of Korean history, he still unconsciously felt that Korea somehow did not measure up to

²⁰ *Ibid*.

²¹ *Ibid*.

²² P. C. Hahm, "Toward a New Theory of Korean Politics: A Re-examination of Traditional Factors," in E. R. Wright, ed., Korean Politics in Transition (Seattle, 1975), 329, 337. Thomas Metzger, Escape From Predicament (New York, 1977), p. 32.

European standards. Therefore, since Korea did not have European institutions or living patterns, it "lacked" something or "failed" some test.

Other authors' Eurocentric views surfaced when they noted that Asian history "lurks", that the Chinese "evade" the mind-body dichotomy basic to Western philosophy since Descartes, and that there is a "peculiar" logic of Confucian ethics.²³ One particular passage forcefully conveys this view:

Self-assertion therefore, was intertwined with interdependence. It is in this context too that we can understand that tendency toward indirect, Machiavellian, and devious strategies of behavior which political scientists are increasingly regarding as a major aspect of China's inherited political culture.24

In condemning both traditional and current Chinese political behavior, the author presumably believed that European or American political activities are direct, non-Machiavellian, and non-devious.

Uncritical word usage also hampers our understanding of China in other ways. Granted that most works exhibiting Eurocentrism are written by Westerners for Westerners; however, widespread utilization of Western adjectival forms like Machiavellian, Appolonian, Dionysian, Sisyphean, Eriksonian, Weberian, Panglossian, Promethean, Faustian, and Spenglerian to characterize traits, be they Chinese or some other, may seriously impair our understanding.²⁵ In the first place, summarizing a person's work or major ideas by a single word or name, can be grossly misleading. Chinese traits thus described may not accurately equate with Weberian or Eriksonian traits, whatever these may be. At best, these words approximate Chinese things; at worst, they represent that tendency "if one is off by the slightest fraction to begin with, one ends up nowhere near the target."26

Eurocentrism also surfaces when scholars evaluate events then rank them. When reviewing the so-called decisive battles in history, for example, one usually finds Blenheim or Agincourt, but seldom if ever, the Talas River Battle. In the latter, Islamic forces in Central Asia met and badly mauled the Chinese forces in 751. This defeat not only weakened the T'ang Dynasty (618-907), it reversed a centuries-long Chinese expansion into Central Asia. Furthermore, forces from China did not permanently re-enter Central Asia until the mid-1750s. Nothing could be more "decisive" than that one

²³ Leon Stover, The Cultural Ecology of Chinese Civilization (New York, 1974), p. 151. Metzger, Escape, pp. 85, 209.
24 Ibid., p. 44.
25 Ibid., pp. 3, 14, 18, 29, 32-34, 36-38, 44, 46, 56-57, 64, 168, 198, 200, 207-209, 211, 215, 220-221, 226. 26 Ibid., p. 4.

thousand year reversal. Again, consider some key human inventions or discoveries like gunpowder, the compass, paper, movable-type printing, and pottery making. East Asians developed each, in most cases long before their non-East Asian conterparts.²⁷ Yet, a contemporary scholar could not apparently conceive of Chinese having abilities to invent such things as chariots or a system of writing. Therefore he created a myth:

West Asian warfare, bronze armor, horse and chariot, compound bow, and square walled encampments ... (were) new techniques probably brought by chariot driving warriors originating in the Iranian plateau who after oasis-hopping across Chinese Turkestan for generations, marrying locally and sending their sons ever eastward, finally arrived in the densely settled area of North China and there conquered the Lungshan people...28

This may make "interesting fiction" but rather sloppy history or anthropology. Unfortunately the eminent historian William McNeil also subscribed to a similar hypothesis despite admitting that there was no evidence to support it.29 Stover also derived his negative view of traditional China by relying heavily on critical accounts written by hostile Westerners, radical Chinese writers, and Marxists who visited or lived in China during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. China, in that period, was in serious decline. Therefore this jaundiced picture was projected back into the Chinese history.³⁰ Stover stated, for example, that Chinese office-holding merely added "dignity to a style of profiteering" and that the examination system meant cribbing and cheating.31 Some officials probably did profiteer from their positions, but Chinese rule was neither better nor worse than elsewhere in the world. No mention was made that the Chinese created and staffed a government using a civil service examination system which the British copied in the nineteenth century, or that the Chinese state merit-rated its officials two thousand years before the British. This political system held China together during the long centuries when Europe was still divided into many quarreling particularistic entities.³² Similarly scholars have viewed Confucianism as backward-looking and therefore unchanging or stagnant.³³ Yet

²⁷ Ho Ping-ti, The Cradle of the East (Hong Kong, 1975), pp. 122-123. Joseph Needham, "Science and China's Influence on the World," in Dawson, ed., The Legacy, 242, 299. Ho's book abounds in Far East and Near East usages, something unfortunate for a great Sinologist who described the Western usages, something unfortunate for a great Sinologist who described the Western intellectual chauvinism which long dominated him. The book itself clearly shows that China developed independently from other world cultures.

28 Stover, The Cultural Ecology, pp. 43-44.

29 McNeill, A World History, pp. 51, 104.

30 Stover's sources included May Fourth Movement figures like Lu Hsun and unsympathetic Westerners like J. J. M. de Groot.

31 Stover, The Cultural Ecology, pp. 205, 220.

32 H. G. Creel, Shen Pu-hai (Chicago, 1974), pp. 47, 52-63, 75-76, 130.

33 Stover, The Cultural Ecology, pp. 4, 57. Max Hamburger, "Aristotle and Confucius: A Comparison," Journal of the History of Ideas, XX (April 1959), pp. 243, 247, 249.

pp. 243, 247, 249.

Confucianism survived more than two-and-one-half millenia by being a dynamic, vibrant way of life and thought. Confucianism could and did change; indeed, there is a Chou Confucianism, a Han Confucianism, and a Sung Confucianism. A recent book, Thomas Metzger's Escape From Predicament, also demonstrates that previous Western accounts of Confucianism's twentieth century demise are premature to say the least. It flourishes today in Hong Kong and Taiwan.³⁴

Eurocentrism in Research

In this section attention will center on research, especially as related to the social sciences, and how they have influenced our understanding of East Asia. A major premise is that because the social sciences originated in Europe or America, they project Eurocentric values, something which sharply undermines their claims to being objective.

Many, if not all, social sciences evolved in the nineteenth century, that epoch of the glorification of science. Scholars organized disciplines, conducted research, and exchanged information. Although a key aspect of scientific undertakings should be an objective approach to the subject matter, when considering human beings especially those outside Europe, the resulting scientism was anything but scientific.35 Darwinism, for example, was perverted through its application to homo sapiens as Social Darwinism to support racist ideas.³⁶ One example of this scientism is found in the term "Mongolism." When a nineteenth century physician, J. L. H. Down, described characteristics common to a group of children and adults judged to be mentally retarded, he emphasized the folded skin around the eves which he associated with a primary feature of the Asians. Since Down considered Asians, especially the Mongol or Mongoloid group, to be racially inferior, he called the retarded group "Mongoloid." Despite the fact that there is no scientific basis for Down's racist views, "Mongolism" or "Mongoloid" have been used until comparatively recent times. Today the disorder is also known as Down's syndrome, supposedly a more "neutral" designation, but one still honoring a racist.37

Psychology, begun by Sigmund Freud and others in the late nineteenth century, has developed a wealth of insights about European cultures. Yet this branch of the social sciences must be cautiously applied to non-European cultures, because of the European values

³⁴ Metzger, Escape, pp. 7-8.

³⁵ Daniel Kwok, Scientism in Chinese Thought, 1900-1950 (New Haven,

^{1965),} p. 3.

36 Ibid., pp. 24-26, 34, 81, 87, 92.

37 Webster's New World Dictionary, 2nd College edition (Cleveland, 1976), p. 919.

it contains. For example, filial piety, a vital concept and practice central to Confucianism not only in China but in Korea, Japan, and Vietnam, embodied deep-felt love by children for their parents, as well as invoked similar responses by parents for their offspring. Such warm, expressed love, interpreted as neurotic or abnormal by Western psychologists, seems perfectly natural to East Asians.³⁸ Hahm presented a detailed view of Korean familial relationships, which countered Western Freudian psychological interpretations.³⁹ This contradiction suggests that Freudian assumptions be sharply modified before they are used to interpret Korean (or East Asian) society or history. Of course, while Freudians occupy but one part of Western psychology, Eurocentrism has permeated all psychological schools. Chinese psychologists have been reported as having problems treating their patients with behavioral norms developed by American psychologists. Such norms that grow out of a particular Western cultural environment regard many traditional and current Chinese traits as pathological or undesirable. Some scholars have called for theories of personality devoid of the cultural bias favoring individualism found in Western psychology. 40 Psychological theories relating to East Asia must be rooted in East Asian practices to be at all valid.

Thomas Metzger's Escape From Predicament noted many shortcomings common to Western psychology yet employed troubling psychological techniques.⁴¹ Although Metzger somewhat cautiously interpreted Chinese familism from a Chinese perspective, he then projected this view backward to eleventh century China. Such a practice seems misleading because even if it can be demonstrated that twentieth centry Chinese exhibited a certain set of behavioral traits derived from Western experience (something quite debatable), to assert that eleventh century Chinese also manifested these traits is most incautious.42

Anthropology is another Eurocentric social science discipline whose perspectives inhibit objective interpretation. Leon Stover, for example, wrote about China on several occasions from an anthropological viewpoint. One such work, The Cultural Ecology of Chinese Civilization: Peasants and Elites in the Last of the Agrarian States, should be carefully considered. Stover used "Far East" or "Far Eastern" on occasion, and talked about the necessity of observing non-Europeans in a "pristine condition"; presumably this meant as

³⁸ Stover, The Cultural Ecology, p. 206. Hahm, "Toward a New Theory," p. 339. ³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 338-344.

⁴⁰ Metzger, Escape, pp. 6-7, 45.
41 H. D. Harootunian, "Metzger's Predicament," Journal of Asian Studies
XXXIX (February 1980), p. 247.
42 Ibid., p. 251.

in a scientific laboratory or perhaps a zoo. Stover's Eurocentric viewpoint surfaced on the first page where he classified China as an agrarian state, "one which grows out of its prehistoric roots." Although unclear about how this occurred, or even what it means, Stover stated that the agrarian state is the "most archaic form of civilization known to archaeology" because such a state evolved out of its own "primitive" beginnings. Thus the book's whole tone and China image is forcefully established: that of a primitive, archaic China incapable of positive, meaningful change. Thus, unlike the future-oriented Western elites of Europe and the United States, the backward-looking Chinese elites kept their government and society unchanging and stagnant because they seldom, if ever, gave serious concern to problems of change and development. Never mind that this claim is simply untrue. Chinese elites did consider all kinds of problems including change, government and society to change radically on occasion, and Chinese culture is different from but not inferior to Western culture.43 But, never mind, even Chinese eating habits revealed their "primitive" nature because chopsticks developed in Neolithic times.44 Elsewhere Stover noted that the Chinese agrarian system, highly specialized in one way only, was another characteristic of the static "primitive condition of archaic civilizations." 45 Again the Chinese pattern is judged inferior. These views raise a host of interpretative questions, not the least of which is historical accuracy. During the tenth and thirteenth centuries, the Chinese created a highly diversified, agrarian system with cash crops distributed through the local, national, and international markets.46 Also by the eleventh century, China's rather enormous industrial capacity could produce more than fifty thousand tons of pig iron per year.⁴⁷ These two examples constitute but a small part of the amazing economic diversity in Chinese history. Indeed some scholars, impressed by China's accomplishments, have labeled the Sung Dynasty (960-1279) as "modern" or "pre-modern."48

Sociology also embodied deeply held Eurocentric perspectives. Macro-sociological analysis coupled with the comparative study of societies was an early focus of sociology in nineteenth century Europe. The first important sociological thinkers were Karl Marx, Herbert Spencer, and Auguste Comte. They viewed modern (European) society as progressing through stages by means of technology, social

⁴³ Raymond Van Over, ed., I Ching (New York, 1971), pp. 249-252. This classical work is just one example of Chinese scholars' interest in change.

44 Stover, The Cultural Ecology, pp. 1-2.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 67.

46 Mark Elvin, The Pattern of the Chinese Past (Stanford, 1973), Chapter 9. Peter Golas, "Rural China in the Song," Journal of Asian Studies, XXXIX (February 1980), pp. 296-299.

47 Elvin, The Pattern, pp. 84-85.

48 Golas, "Rural China," p. 291.

development, the extension of liberty, and the use of rationality. All other societies were judged backward. In the early twentieth century, Max Weber projected a Eurocentric bias when he tried to show how non-European countries "failed" to develop capitalism, of which more will be said later.

Then in the post-World War II era America inherited the Eurocentric worldview. Modernization studies, which will be analyzed below, dominated the American intelligentsia's interests until at least the 1970s although by the late 1960s a powerful critique within sociology began to appear. The revisionist scholars faulted modernization studies for a historical methodologies, simplistic traditional-modern dichotomies, as well as Eurocentric biases. Although a variety of new models relating to economic growth and social development have since appeared, Eurocentric views still seem to be evident.⁴⁹ S. N. Eisenstadt's most recent analyses relating to revolutions and civilizations seem less culture-bound and more objective but still use the European experience as a positive model against which other countries are measured.⁵⁰

Eurocentrism in modernization and comparative studies

To borrow from Crane Brinton in his famous Anatomy of Revolution, modern "is one of the loose words."51 Modern, modernity, modernizing, and modernization have been employed by historians. political scientists, and other social scientists with inconsistency and non-clarity. Scholars commonly speak of modern Western politics, a modern political perspective, modern ramifications, a modern industrialized Occident, a modern vocabulary of history, society, and culture, as well as late imperial and modern times in Chinese history.⁵² These examples manifest a strong Eurocentric orientation. Indeed, when speaking about Europe, "modern" has rather specific connotations. Yet, when used in relation to China, the meaning is not so clear.53 Calling the Sung period "modern" means that it possessed traits usually associated with European institutional history since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, such as a rationally established, staffed, and evaluated bureaucracy. The "mo-

say why he separates the two.

53 Golas, "Rural China," p. 251. David Kopf, "Hermeneutics Versus History," Journal of Asian Studies, XXXIX (May 1980), p. 501.

⁴⁹ Eisenstadt, "Sociological Theory," pp. 59-65.
50 Ibid., pp. 59-75.
51Crane Brinton, The Anatomy of Revolution (New York, 1965), p. 3.
52 Metzger, Escape, pp. 9, 11, 16, 91. Kwok, Scientism, pp. 3-4, 9, 12, 17,
20. Said, Orientalism, pp. 43, 88, 104, 122, 132, 156, 232-233, 237, 260. Hamburger, "Aristotle and Confucius," p. 236. G. S. Alitto, "Introduction," Journal of Asian Studies, XXXIX (February 1980), pp. 238-239, 241. Metzger does differentiate between modern and Western in his text but does not clearly say why he separates the two

dern" characterization, accurate or not, has generated much discussion within the Sung studies field.⁵⁴ In a related example, many nineteen century Chinese scholars, impressed by the similarities between "modern" Western thought and that of China more than two thousand years earlier, urged that the two be fused into a unified doctrine.55 Just when should China be characterized as "modern": in the fourth century B.C., in the twelfth century A.D., the 1890s, the 1920s, the 1950s, or the 1980s?56 Scholars attach the modern label without really analyzing just what the word meant or means. (Indeed, one scholar added more confusion by referring to the "electronic, post-modern world.⁵⁷)

Modernization is a process involving change and power. Process means sustained activity over a time period, measured in years, if not decades. Change involves not only the transformation of institutions but also of perceptions, and in this case from a "traditional" to a scientific, future-oriented, industrialized, secularized, literate, mobile, democratic, individualistic, or modern society.58 This change may occur gradually in a relatively peaceful manner, or it may be violent, structural, and irreversible. The latter kind of change is usually associated with revolution, a topic briefly considered later. The People's Republic of China until recently viewed itself as a modernizing, revolutionary society. Since Mao Tse-tung's death, however, more stress has been placed on modernization. Power refers to the fact that change or the impetus for change often occurred from country to country to country through the medium known as colonialism or imperialism. British imperialists initially spoke of an Anglicized India or the French of a Gallicized Indochina, A broader European imperialist program incluling other countries brought the term "Europeanization" to the world, then when America was added, "Westernization" seemed a more appropriate designation. Finally some argued that after Japan and Soviet Russia became dominant powers, "Westernization" was no longer accurate, hence "modernization" must be used.⁵⁹ Presumably this also meant that a society might be modernized without becoming Westernized.

Although modernization theory developed in Europe, its most complete elaboration came under the "tender care" of American

⁵⁴ Golas, "Rural China," p. 251.
55 Alitto, "Introduction," p. 241.
56 The B.C.-A.D. dating system also reflects Eurocentric tendencies. One argument in their favor, of course, is uniformity in dating world events. Why not a less biased dating system?

⁵⁷ Said, Orientalism, p. 26. J. A. Goldstone, "Theories of Revolution: The Third Generation," World Politics, XXXII (April 1980), p. 451. This latter author employed the term late modern.

⁵⁸ International Encyclopedia, X, p. 387. 59 International Encyclopedia, X, pp. 386-387.

social scientists during the 1950s.60 Supposedly the "scientific nature" of modernization should mean a value-free, non-judgmental approach to research but once again Eurocentrism permeated the various studies. Americans first labelled non-modernized societies "underdeveloped," then, when that term became controversial, "developing" was substituted. Whatever name appeared, those states with a different approach to solving the twentieth century's problems were judged backward and inferior. The American radical movement of the late 1960s added new insights about the modernization theorists. In the radicals' view modernization theory masked U.S. imperialism. Conflicts between America and China or between Britain and China, which the modernizers saw as results of China's failure to modernize, brought a different interpretation from the radicals. They argued that by shifting attention to the so-called responding (challenge and response theory) nation, the destructive policies imposed by the imperialists were de-emphasized. In addition, the modernizers desperately constructed their theory to counter the growing acceptance of the Marxist worldview.⁶¹ Samuel Huntington, a key modernization theorist of the 1960s, applied his views to Vietnam:

In an absent-minded way the United States in Vietnam may well have stumbled upon the answer to 'wars of national liberation.' The effective response lies neither in the quest for conventional military victory nor in the doctrines and gimmicks of counterinsurgency warfare. It is instead forced-draft urbanization and modernization which rapidly brings the country out of the phase in which a rural revolutionary movement can hope to generate sufficient strength to come to power.62

One may well ask just how this forced-draft "urbanization and modernization" would be accomplished. Huntington did not shrink from facing the issue:

For if the 'direct application of mechanical and conventional power' takes place on such a massive scale as to produce a massive migration from countryside to city, the basic assumptions underlying the Maoist doctrine of revolutionary warfare no longer operate. The Maoist-inspired rural revolution is undercut by the American-sponsored urban revolution.63

Not merely content to place this "solution" (one is sadly tempted to say "final solution") in the "modernization" mode, Huntington added:

⁶⁰ Alitto, "Introduction," p. 237.
61 James Peck, "The Roots of Rhetoric," in Friedman and Selden, eds.,

America's Asia, pp. 41-52.
62 Samuel Huntington, "The Bases of Accommodation," Foreign Affairs,

XLVI (July 1968), p. 652.
63 Ibid., p. 650.

In this sense history—dramatically and brutally speeded up by the American impact—may pass the Viet Cong by.64

A sober counterpoint to Huntington's analysis comes from Harry Eckstein:

Rebels who can count on popular support can lose themselves in the population..., count on the population for secrecy..., and reconstitute their forces by easy recruitment; if they can do all of these things, they can be practically certain of victory, short of a resort to genocide by the incumbents.65

This refugee-generation strategy was a key policy of the American government until 1975. Here modernization theory reached its logical conclusion in a most blatant form, proving the radicals correct in their argument.

Thomas Metzger's Escape from Predicament also analyzed Chinese history from a modernization perspective. Therein the author refined Max Weber's perspectives as they related to China. Weber had argued that China "failed" to develop capitalism and therefore modernized because of weaknesses in Confucianism. Metzger saw much more dynamism within Confucianism than did Weber and stressed continuity between twelfth century and twentieth century Confucians. Nevertheless, Metzger also concluded that the Chinese failed.66 Furthermore, although employing a much more impressively sophisticated and sensitive analytical method than most other Sinologists, by arguing within a modernization framework, Metzger unnecessarily clouded his work with Eurocentrism. He arbitrarily imposed questions regarding modernization on twelfth century texts which had nothing to do with the interested or categories of Western origin. Metzger's desire to show continuity between Sung thinkers and those of the late Ch'ing caused him to overstress their similarities, while minimizing their differences.⁶⁷ The resulting history is artificial, and does little to clarify Western-Chinese interactions of the last century.

 ⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 652.
 65 H. Eckstein, "On the Etiology of Internal Wars," in B. Mazlish, A. O.
 Kaledin, D. B. Ralston, eds., Revolution: A Reader (New York, 1971), pp.

⁶⁶ Metzger, Escape, pp. 234-235. Here is the critical passage: We are thus brought back to the importance of Max Weber's analysis of the Confucian ethos. His perspective was partly different from ours. He was asking why in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the indigenous development of the West led to capitalism and China's indigenous development did not. He concluded that China's failure was largely due to the effects of the Confucian ethos, and his conclusion still carries weight today, even though his early analysis was erroneous. 67 Harootunian, "Metzger's Predicament," pp. 249-253.

The study of revolutions is similarly interconnected with Eurocentrism. An important reason for this stems from the fact that many revolutions originated in Europe, beginning in the seventeenth century with the English Revolution of 1640-1688. Therefore, not only did the interest in revolution as a political phenomenon commence then. but additionally, the very definition of revolution related to the English, or even more important, to the French Revolutions of 1789-1814 and to the Russian Revolution of 1917-1921. Thus the key revolutional models and paradigms related to Europe. They included focusing on pervasive ideologies, particular vanguard groups, and polarized societies.⁶⁸ In addition, social scientists' theories built on political protest and change models derived from liberal democratic or capitalist societies.⁶⁹ One common scholarly view of revolution defines it as something total, grand, and monumental which excludes many types such as the American Revolution.⁷⁰ One problem is to define revolution, then develop a meaningful typology of revolutions devoid of Eurocentrism. Elbaki Hermassi seems to have stated the issue quite clearly:

The re6cognition of a world-historical culture to which all societies at different times and in various ways ... contribute and from which they borrow, should free social science from its parochial limitations and open it up to the multiplicity of historical facts and the manifold ways in which values come to be realized. The study of revolution which requires the patient collaboration of historians and a wide range of social scientists can achieve much...71

Another dimension manifesting Eurocentrism in the social sciences is comparative studies. When value-free and devoid of judgmental assessments, comparative studies can be extremely useful. They point out special institutional and societal features by indicating differences as well as similarities. Some studies also develop, test and refine causal, explanatory hypotheses about social structures.⁷² If properly developed and refined, classification can lead to sympathetic thinking and understanding. Often, however, in comparative works there is an underlying premise, a kind of perceived law of development patterned after European experiences. This "law" is often metaphorically expressed by a line or road.73 The development road has a beginning, end, and is universal to the extent that comparativists imposed it on all states. Through analysis each country is placed at a particular spot on the road according to the scholar's

⁶⁸ Hermassi, "Toward a Comparative Study," p. 211.
69 Theda Skocpol, States and Social Revolutions (Cambridge, 1979), p. 2.

⁷⁰ Zagorin, "Prolegomena," p. 156.
71 Hermassi, "Toward a Comparative Study," pp. 234-235.
72 Skocpol, States, p. 36.
73 Harootunian, "Metzger's Predicament," p. 247, and Hahm, "Toward a New Theory," pp. 330-332.

classification. A state like Korea in the 1960s might find itself labeled "underdeveloped" or "developing", especially when compared with the Eurocentric norm. Beyond this is the judgmental aspect whereby a wealthy and powerful country is good while a declining state or one with different values is bad or seriously defective.⁷⁴ Therefore wealth and power are critical determinants measuring all countries.

Korea has been considered backward and underdeveloped because Japan ruled her as a colony from 1910-1945. To explain these "deficiencies," Japanese and Western scholars studied Korean history. Their universally negative conclusions focused on the many Korean "inadequacies" like the "lack" of a feudal period and a non-aggressive foreign policy. This supposed failure to develop a militaristic tradition weighed heavily against Korea.

P. C. Hahm exposed the assumptions underlying these comparative studies. He demonstrated convincingly that wealth and power, critical values in Eurocentrism, were but two among many for the Koreans. As serious students of Chinese history, the Koreans equated an excessive wealth and power drive with tyrannical rule and inhumanity, such as occurred during China's short-lived Ch'in Dynasty (221-207 B.C.). Although Ch'in conquered and united China in a strong centralized manner not previously attained, it collapsed after a mere fourteen years. The Korean scholars believed that Ch'in fell because it relied heavily on wealth and power and ignored the human concerns of its subjects. Furthermore, in observing human nature, the Koreans saw that those people obsessed by wealth and power usually treated their family members inhumanely. Therefore, as wealth and power easily corrupted, they should be gathered in moderation.⁷⁵ In addition, Korea's decision to maintain an army only large enough to quell internal disorders reflected values different from Eurocentrism.76

This discussion thus highlights another issue—judging cultures by wealth and power norms. Often rich and strong countries which dominate others so as to force them to adopt "modern" cultural aspects merit the designation "advanced." Views which equate progress with numerous guns, tanks, fighter airplanes, missiles, or neutron bombs, are seriously biased against humanity. Why consider nations backward simply because they refuse to find more efficient ways to kill people? Progress should never be equated with murder. Growth and rapid change should not be the only positive societal measures. Confucianism offered many stabilizing elements which gave generations of relative peace and prosperity in China and Japan. European

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 331-334. 75 *Ibid.*, pp. 346-348. 76 *Ibid.*, p. 345.

competition and warfare after the fifteenth century may have been interrelated with growth and development;77 but to label non-European societies as stagnant simply because they valued different thnigs is to misunderstand them.⁷⁸ China, for example, has different rather than inferior patterns in her history and should be respected for uniqueness as well as for similarity. One scholar has stated the problem facing comparative studies with the utmost clarity:

Perhaps the most important task of all would be to undertake studies in contemporary alternatives to Orientalism, to ask how one can study other cultures from a liberation or a non-repressive and non-manipulative, perspective. But then one would have to rethink the whole complex problem of knowledge and power.79

Scholars should immediately begin this task, devoid of Eurocentrism, Sinocentrism, or ethnocentrism; with a strong commitment to scientific objectivity as a guide.

Conclusion

Social scientists must continually remember that their disciplines emerged from the European and American culture areas and that they still manifest Eurocentric biases. Thomas Metzger's work, Escape From Predicament, for example, while provocative and challenging, needlessly suffers from an attachment to modernization theory. Metzger judged China for failing to develop capitalism rather than noting and then analyzing the different road which China travelled. P. C. Hahm, Elbaki Hermassi, and Edward Said have all pointed out significant flaws in Western political theorizing, yet each scholar unconsciously manifested Eurocentric traits.

Scholars would do well to approach the study of people from a humanist perspective. By humanist is meant developing, maintaining, and manifesting an interest in, appreciation for, as well as a commitment to not only the similarities, but also the differences, found among people across the globe. Self-examination and constant criticism of one's methodology and practice have to be continuously and rigorously implemented. This process hopefully should weed out Eurocentric, Sinocentric, or other biases.

⁷⁷ Max Weber, The Religion of China, trans., H. H. Gerth (Glencoe, Illinois, 1951), p. 103.
78 Hahm, "Toward a New Theory," pp. 322-323, 330.
79 Said, Orientalism, p. 24.