

Some Setbacks in the Reception of Popper in Japan

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ABSTRACT

The reception of Popper in Japan has not been a glorious history up to the present day. There have been numerous misunderstandings and distortions. It is important to record and discuss them in order to learn from them and to make use of his ideas in the Japanese intellectual climate. This is the purpose of the present paper. From the perspective of the reception history, we searched the reasons why Popper has been misunderstood in Japan (especially in four areas: philosophy, economics, history, and political philosophy), and tried to identify some of the factors responsible for this misunderstanding. To this end, we applied the method of “situational analysis” to the Japanese peculiar intellectual situation after the so-called *après guerres*, rather than by using a chronological order. If the causes of misunderstandings and distortions in Japan can be clarified by means of a situational analysis, we can learn a great deal from this history and can use this knowledge to throw new light on the status of critical rationalism in Japan.

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Introduction

Karl Popper's philosophy was introduced to Japan almost simultaneously with Japan's defeat in World War II. Since then, it has exerted a lasting influence on Japanese thought and practical politics. Except for the chaotic period immediately after the defeat, there has been a continuous activity of Japanese researchers in discussing and translating Popperian philosophy, and by now, most of his major works have been translated into Japanese. Furthermore, in 1989, the Japan Popper Society was established with Junichi Aomi as president. Since then, it has held yearly conferences and published a journal twice a year. So, we can say that Popper's philosophy has been continuously digested and studied in Japan.

Such a breeding ground, as it were, produced large numbers of articles and illuminative books concerning critical rationalism. Among them, we may count a book written by Makoto Kogawara, one of the authors of this article.¹ It is one of few introductory books aimed at the general public; it presents an overview of Popper's philosophy. Also in 2000, Kogawara edited and published *Critique and Challenge (Hihan to chousen)*,² a book of criticisms and challenges against various misconceptions and distortions of the Popperian philosophy. This book forms the basis of this article. In the same year, Yasuyuki Kageyama published an excellent study of Popper's philosophy of science concerning Popper's views on metaphysics, non-justificationism, World 3, indeterminism, and so forth.³ In 2001 and 2002, the Japan Popper Society published *Critical Rationalism (Hihanteki gouri shugi)*⁴ in two volumes. In 2010, Kogawara published *Falsificationism (Hanshou shugi)*,⁵ which comprehensively discusses various issues related to falsificationism. Guided by Popper's arguments, it provides some powerful rejoinders to essentialism and instrumentalism.

Despite the accumulation of such research, the history of the reception of Popper in Japan has not been a glorious one up to the present day. Rather, there have been numerous misunderstandings and distortions with regard to Popper's ideas. It is important to record and discuss them in order to learn from Popper and make use of his ideas in the Japanese intellectual climate. This is the purpose of this paper. However, we are not interested in describing the reception history in chronological order. The purpose of this paper is to explore why Popper has been misunderstood in Japan, and to dig out the causes behind numerous misunderstandings and various circumstances that gave rise to it. Therefore, it would be more appropriate to make use of the "situational analysis" or the "logic of the situation" as a method of describing history proposed by Popper, rather than chronological writing. If the causes of misunderstandings and distortions in Japan can be clarified through the

¹ Kogawara, M., *Popper: Critical Rationalism (Popper: Hihanteki gouri shugi)*, Kodansha, 1997.

² Kogawara, M., ed., *Critique and Challenge (Hihan to chousen)*, Miraisha, 2000.

³ Kageyama, Y., *The Thought of Critical Rationalism (Hihanteki gouri shugi no sisou)*, Miraisha, 2000.

⁴ Japan Popper Society ed., *Critical Rationalism (Hihanteki gouri shugi)*, Miraisha, first volume 2001, second volume 2002.

⁵ Kogawara, M., *Falsificationism (Hanshou shugi)*, Tohoku University Press, 2010.

application of situational analysis, we can learn a great deal from the history of reception of his ideas.

Since Popper has been discussed variously and extensively in Japan, albeit mostly in misguided manners, it would be better at first to take up the misidentification of the criterion of demarcation with the criterion of significance (or meaningfulness). This we will try to do in section 1. In section 2 we will discuss the assertions of the economist Takamitsu Sawa, who criticized Popper's criterion of demarcation, regrettably based on his miscomprehension. In section 3 we will discuss how Popper's "logic of describing history" had affected the Japanese debate concerning the relationships between Weber and Marx. In section 4 we will examine how Masao Maruyama, one of the most prominent historians of political thought in Japan, received Popper's political and social philosophy. Thus, this paper may be considered as a confrontation with the misunderstandings of Popper in Japan.

1. Criterion of significance or demarcation?

Kogawara, editor of *Criticism and Challenge (Hihan to chousen)*, has suggested that the first book introducing Popper into Japan was an anthology of translated papers, *Vienna Circle: Scientific Logic (Vienna gakudan: Kagaku ronrigaku)*, edited by Katsumi Nakamura et al., Nisshinshoin, November 1944. This book contains the translation of chapters 1 and 2 of Popper's main work, *Logik der Forschung*. However, in this book, Popper is considered as a member of the Vienna Circle. This may have been one of the reasons why Popper was misunderstood as a logical positivist in Japan. Nevertheless, in the *Preface* of this book, Popper is introduced as follows.

After having described the purely formal aspects and theoretical branches of scientific logic, Popper's "Introduction to Methodological Logic" tries to explain the methodological application of logic to the various sciences. (*op. cit.*: 1)

It is clear that Popper was introduced as a logician who tried to apply logic to the field of methodology. After having briefly explained the criterion of falsifiability, the translator adds the following comments on Popper's assertion.

We may say about Popper that he had analyzed in detail and classified the arguments concerning the problems of induction and requirements of certainty, and with clarity, pointed out the logical weak points of each of them, and presented a new viewpoint. Therefore, we may say that this is, up to now, the clearest and most original presentation of what has been argued about scientific methodology and problems of truth, and it shows the new direction of studies. (*op. cit.* 314)

These comments clearly show that Popper was at first introduced to Japan as a highly regarded philosopher of scientific methodology. However, when logical positivism and analytic philosophy came to be discussed in Japan, Popper was, in most cases strangely enough, regarded not as a

philosopher who proposed the criterion of demarcation between science and non-science, but as a philosopher who discussed the criterion of meaningfulness of statements. His reputation was also devalued. This situation reflects the problem that the overwhelming majority of researchers misunderstood the criterion of demarcation as a criterion of meaningfulness. One of the individuals who should be held responsible for this is Shozo Omori, who studied in the U.S. immediately after World War II and later taught at the University of Tokyo, one of the most prominent universities in Japan. In 1953, he said the following.

Popper also proposed that a proposition is meaningful if its negation is confirmable (i.e., falsifiability).¹

Needless to say, Omori's formulation of Popper's criterion is evidently mistaken. And yet he wrongly asserted that this version of the criterion was what Popper originally meant. Omori identified Popper's criterion of demarcation as a criterion of meaningfulness, and this mistake has been repeated in the history of studies of logical positivism in Japan. Furthermore, in 1961, a Marxist philosopher, Hidekichi Nakamura, made a similar mistake and wrongly criticized Popper.² This situation shows that the proper understanding of the criterion of demarcation disappeared after the chaotic post-war period in Japan.

A reason for this misguided reception of Popper seems to be due to the big influence of Ayer's book. The Japanese translation of his book *Language, Truth, and Logic*,³ was published in 1955. This book seems to have had the following negative effects on Japanese researchers. (1) Disregard of the fact that Popper's criterion of falsifiability is directed not to individual sentences but to systems of science. (2) Complete neglect of the fact that Popper himself clearly had recognized that existential statements are not disprovable, and on this recognition, he built up his own falsificationism. (3) Erroneous comprehension of the fact that Popper is not talking about a complete disproof of a theory. (4) Disregard of the fact that the problem is not to exclude metaphysics but to draw the appropriate demarcation line between the empirical sciences and non-empirical doctrines. (5) All this was added to the mistake of equating the criterion of demarcation with the criterion of meaningfulness.

Japanese scholars and researchers—we will refrain from citing examples here for the sake of brevity⁴—accepted Ayer's false theses without critical examination. Adding to this fact, we must point out that Popper's main work, *Logik der Forschung*,⁵ had not yet been translated into English

¹ Omori, S., "Logical Positivism (Ronri jisshou shugi)," in *Philosophical Magazine (Tetsugaku zasshi)*, vol. 68 (1953), no. 718: 75.

² Nakamura, H., *Logical Positivism and Marxism (Ronri jisshou shugi to Marx shugi)*, Aoki Shoten, 1961: 20 ff.

³ Ayer, A.J., *Language, Truth, and Logic*, London: Gollancz, (2nd. edition), 1946.

⁴ Kogawara, M., "Distortions in the History of receiving Popper (Popper juyoushi ni mirareru yugami ni tsuite)" contained in *Critique and Challenge (Hihan to chousen)*, provides a detailed explanation of this point.

⁵ This book was translated into English as *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* in 1959. Japanese translation was published in 1971-1972.

at this time. The German language of this book made a close reading difficult, so that many researchers did not make any effort to study it.

We should here mention another inconvenient background peculiar to the war-and-afterwar time. After the defeat in World War II, cultures of the victorious nations, especially of the United States, flowed into Japan in torrents. It is good to remember the fact that during the 1930s, logical positivists from Vienna and other parts of Europe sought asylum in the United States. Among them, Carnap and Reichenbach were particularly famous. However, they were also persistent critics of Popper. Carnap taught at the University of Chicago (1936-1952) and the University of California (1954-1961), and as is well known, his teaching, combined with the popularity of American pragmatism at the time, was highly influential. Reichenbach, the founder of the Berlin Circle, also immigrated to the United States just before World War II and took a teaching position at the University of California, Los Angeles, where he trained Hillary Putnam and Wesley C. Salmon. Compared to these facts, Popper did not stand in a good position. He was far removed from the center of civilization, and had been left in New Zealand, where he had been absorbed in writing his magnum opus: *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, and did not have a chance to exert his influence over the young and talented students.

Thus, the distorted image of Popper, and the American culture in general, prevailed over the defeated Japan. Under these conditions, it took a long time for the following sober judgement of Passmore¹ to take root in Japan.

In fact, however, Popper was convinced that “the problem of meaning” is no real importance; the positivist attempts to find a “criterion of significance,” he thought, led to no positive results, but only to the setting up of quite arbitrary stipulations. Refutability, as he conceived it, is not a criterion of meaning but a method of distinguishing between science and its simulacra.

The fallacy of confusing the criterion of meaningfulness with the criterion of demarcation was not eradicated until at least the late 1990s. It would be tedious to give specific examples and discuss them in detail. Suffice it here only to mention some of the scholars who have committed this fallacy and their books in which this mistake appears.

1. Jiro Watanabe, *An Introduction to Anglo-American Philosophy (Eibei tetsugaku nyumon)*, Chikuma Gakugei Bunko, 1996. The original version of this book was entitled *Modern Philosophy*, (Foundation for the Promotion of the Open University of Japan, 1991).

2. Yasuhiko Tomita, *A Philosopher of Science: The Busy Summer of Tatsuhiko Kashiwagi (Kagaku tetsugakusha, Kashiwagi Tatsuhiko no tabouna natsu)*, (Nakanishiya Shuppan, 1997).

3. Jiichiro Takeo, *the Development of Analytic Philosophy (Bunseki tetsugaku no hatten)* (Hosei University Press, 1997).

¹ Passmore, J, *A Hundred Years of Philosophy*, Penguin Books, (2nd edition, 1966: 407). The first edition was published in 1957, but the authors have not yet seen it.

4. Kiyohiko Ikeda, *The Adventures of Structuralist Theory of Science (Kouzou syugi kagaku ron no bouken)* (Kodansha Gakujutsu Bunko, 1998; originally published by Mainichi Shinbunsha, 1990).

5. Keiichi Noe, *Kuhn*, Kodansha, 1998.

These examples clearly indicate that there were some major obstacles to the understanding of Popper properly. Of course, in haste, we must add that these books did not exclusively treat the problem of meaningfulness. There were other factors that prevented an appropriate understanding of Popper.

However, before treating them, it would be better here to say some words with regard to logical positivists' misunderstandings of Popper. Concerning the sentences of sciences, we could say that for logical positivists to be scientific means to be meaningful, and to be meaningful means to be empirical, and finally to be empirical is explicated by Popper's criterion of falsifiability. They would readily admit that on this point Popper indeed made a good contribution. It follows from the above that for them the following is a valid equation "scientific = meaningful = falsifiable". But at the same time, it is also clear that existential statements are not falsifiable. However, we cannot deny that they have some kind of meaningfulness. Therefore, many logical positivists thought that they should exclude the criterion of falsifiability and Popper's criterion of demarcation, because, they thought, they did not address their problem. Their concern was to protect the part of the equation which was dealing with the notion of meaning, i.e. "scientific = meaningful." As a result, it became difficult for them to understand the challenging importance of the criterion of demarcation for the philosophy of science. They had forgotten that their so-called meaningless (non-empirical) sentences (metaphysics or non-science) have in many cases seminal power to the development of science. It is rather harmful to exclude non-empirical sentences without consideration. However, positivists could not understand this important point.

In addition to this, it should be remarked that the wrong influence of positivism disturbed the proper understanding of Popper. A piece of evidence for this can be found in Noe's book referred to above. He wrote the following.

"Neutral language" is a language that purely describes observational facts, as the sense-data language and object language do. Logical positivism relies on these languages. Popper also admits the existence of such "basic statements" as the basis for the theory of refutation. In this respect, Popper inherits the "theory-observation dichotomy" from logical positivism.¹

This is indeed an astonishing distortion. Apparently, Noe knows nothing about "basic statements" in Popper's sense. Popper did not overlook the theory-ladenness of observation; rather,

¹ Keiichi Noe, *Kuhn*, Kodansha, 1998, p. 232.

he himself had pointed it out.¹ Minoru Akima, who is a Marxist scholar, approved this point in 1974.²

Why, then, had such a distortion, or rather fallacy, prevailed for so long after the war, until well into the 1990s? One reply is that there were not many counterarguments from the Popperian side. However, this reply is not sufficient to fully explain the fallacy. To find a better explanation, we have to take into consideration the worldwide constellation of thought in the postwar period. Kogawara has proposed a hypothesis which can shed some light on the situation. His hypothesis is as follows.³

For some time after the war—and, this seems to be true mainly for the West—there were, to put things very roughly, three main trends in philosophy. These were existentialism (and German idealism as pulpit philosophy), Marxism, and logical positivism (including analytic and scientific philosophy). They were engaged in a struggle with each other in the West and also in Japan. In this situation, Popper's critical rationalism, as clearly had been shown in his *Open Society and Its Enemies*, was thoroughly critical of all these trends. Popper was critical of philosophers such as Heidegger, Jaspers, and continental philosophers including Hegel. Furthermore, Popper criticized many important aspects of Marxism, including its unscientific prophecy of the inevitable collapse of capitalism, and its dialectics. In addition, Popper was critical of the views of logical positivists, as was shown, for example, in the 17th chapter of his *Unended Quest*: “Who killed logical positivism?”, and in many of his comments concerning Carnap, Wittgenstein and other positivists in *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. In a word, Popper was surrounded by enemies from all sides.

In this context, Popper had been continuously misrepresented as a “logical positivist,” although somewhat a “heretical” one. Why was this? The answer seems to be that under these circumstances, it was more convenient and useful for all parties opposing him.

First, existentialists and idealists had no sufficient understanding of the problematic of logical positivism. They had shown no interest in taking science into consideration, and if Popper was a logical positivist, he was no more than the empiricists who had appeared in the history of philosophy, i.e., no more than Berkeley, a mere phenomenalist who knew nothing of the real world beyond perceptual representations, and therefore not worthy of mentioning. By creating such incredible fiction, they were able to ignore Popper's philosophy.

Second, many Marxists saw logical positivism as nothing more than an ideology that neither knew the real nature of capitalist society nor intended to fight against it. For Marxists, in general, positivism was an ideology that protects and justifies the existing order (status quo) against attacks from oppressed people. We believe that Cornforth's *Open Philosophy and the Open Society: A Reply to Dr. Karl Popper's Refutations of Marxism*, published in England in 1968 and translated

¹ Popper, K.R., *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, section 19.

² Minoru Akima, *The World of Theories of Sciences (Kagakuron no sekai)*, Ootsuki Shoten, 1974: 334.

³ Kogawara, M., “Distortions in the History of Receiving Popper (Popper juyoushi ni mirareru yugami ni tsuite),” in *Critique and Challenge (Hihan to chousen)*, Miraisha, 2000.

into Japanese in 1972, shows this tendency.¹ Also, the members of the Frankfurt School, which emerged in the 1960s as neo-Marxism, were under the influence of Marxists' traditional comprehension of positivism.

It is a well-known fact that there was the so-called positivist dispute (*Der Positivismusstreit in der deutschen Soziologie*) in Germany in the 1960s.² This dispute was regrettably not fertile. The members of the Frankfurt School failed to accurately grasp the kernel of falsificationism because they were strongly influenced by the logical positivistic version of positivism and their own historical comprehension of positivism à la Marxism. Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, two leaders of this School, show a very poor understanding of epistemological problems under the influence of Marxist tradition. We think that they could not understand Popper's criticism of dialectics. Under such situations, it is clear that their prior miscomprehension of positivism informed their distorted understanding of Popper's falsificationism, never vice versa. They exploited a prevailing distorted image produced by the cliché of "Popper is a positivist". But as a result of this exploitation, they fell victim to their own misattribution of positivism to Popper.

Third, since the logical positivists, with the exception of Otto Neurath in the early period, did not have a social philosophy comparable to Popper's *Open Society and Its Enemies*, Popper's criticism of Marxism was an important and sharp weapon for them to fight against other philosophical tendencies, especially against Marxism. Even if they could not agree with Popper's philosophy of science, they could not help but admit the advantage of holding Popper's political position in order to fight against Marxism. It was convenient for them to lock Popper into the framework of a mere social philosopher and to keep him within the group of philosophers of meaning instead of taking up his philosophy of science seriously.

In Japan, Kuhn's *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, an internationally famous book, which treats the history of science with the linkage of logical positivism and sociological analyses, was translated into Japanese in 1971 and brought about the "paradigm controversy". However, this controversy consisted mainly of importing foreign articles and books to Japan. They came mainly from the U.S., reminding us of the strong influence of the American philosophy of science. In this context, Keiichi Noe argued for Kuhn. But his arguments, as Yoshihisa Hagiwara has pointed out,³ were full of fallacies and we have already pointed out his error about Popper's basic statements. In Japan, however, the substance of this controversy was not digested, and the mass media utilized the term "paradigm shift" as a buzzword and used it as a promotional term to sell their innovations. It gradually lost its academic character. The Japanese translation of *The Structure of Scientific*

¹ Popper gave no heed to Cornforth. Japanese Marxist philosophers did not seem to make a serious effort to understand Popper's social philosophy as part of their own responsibility.

² Kogawara has already published two articles on the positivist dispute. He has also mentioned it in his book: *Popper: Critical Rationalism (Popper: Hihanteki gouri shugi)*. In the present paper, and due to space limitation, he has refrained from repeating his arguments in his book.

³ Hagiwara, Y., "Karl Popper's Political Philosophy? (Karl Popper no seiji tetsugaku?)" in *Critical Rationalism (Hihanteki gouri shugi)*, second volume, Miraisha, 2002: 175 f. Kogawara's *Falsificationism (Hanshou shugi)* deals with the so-called paradigm controversy and thoroughly criticizes Keiichi Noe's interpretations of this controversy.

Revolutions, an object of many discussions, contained a lot of defective interpretations and many misconceptions. This shows one aspect of the scholarship in Japan. Instead of measured and cool-headed debates, fashions ruled. In the meantime, and as a result of changes in intellectual fads, Popper's views fell out of favour and he was turned into a forgotten philosopher of the past, not least because of his intellectual modesty.

These circumstances led to a rather unfortunate situation: Popper's critique of logical positivism in general and also of Popper's criticism of Wittgenstein in the notes of *The Open Society and Its Enemies* remained almost totally unappreciated. According to Popper, philosophy was not a cure for the misuse of language, but rather a cosmology in the sense of an understanding of the world, including ourselves. Popper was a critical rationalist both in name and reality. However, if we admit the fiction that Popper himself was a logical positivist and that logical positivism had already gone away, then Popper's antagonists, namely, existentialists and idealists, Marxist philosophers, and logical positivists and analytic philosophers could, without feeling the reproach of conscience, ignore Popper's philosophy.

Now we have mentioned many regrettable errors in receiving Popper. Unfortunately, similar errors were also committed, in the context of Japanese thought, in disciplines such as economics, the history of political thought and others like them. In what follows, we examine some examples of the misconception of Popper's views in these disciplines.

2. Can economic theories be falsifiable? (Takamitsu Sawa)

Popper's criterion of demarcation is fairly well known among Japanese economists, and whether they accept it or not, its impact has been considerable. In this section, we discuss the views of Takamitsu Sawa, as a representative economist who is skeptical of Popper's criterion of demarcation. Before entering into a discussion of Sawa's views, it would be useful to explain the intellectual orientations of Japanese economists prior to the introduction of Popper's criterion of demarcation.

Traditionally in Japan, many economists were used to drawing a line between Marxian economics and other disciplines such as neoclassical economics and Keynesian economics, and the latter two were usually lumped together and labelled "modern economics (kindai keizaigaku, in Japanese)". This is an academic tradition peculiar to Japan and seems to be a unique and a rather strange phenomenon from an international perspective.¹ It is in the context of this special tradition that the criterion of demarcation should be understood. This tradition has emphasized the scientific nature of "modern economics" and despised Marxian economics. This was largely due to the unique academic situation in Japan after World War II.

At that time, Marxian economics, on the whole, declined in the West, while American economics expanded its territory and established itself as a policy science. In postwar Japan, GHQ

¹ Hayasaka, T., "What is 'Modern Economics'?" ('Kindai keizaigaku' toha nani ka) in Inada, K., Okamoto, T. and Hayasaka, T., eds., *Modern Economics Reconsidered (Kindai keizaigaku saikou)*, Yuhikaku, 1974.

(General Headquarters, the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers), guaranteed free speech for the purpose of democratization of Japan and tacitly encouraged the inevitable rise and expansion of socialist and labour movements. Through these policies, Marxism regained political power after the suppression imposed by Japanese militarism during the war period. On the other hand, academicians warmly welcomed non-Marxian economics, such as neoclassical economics and Keynesian economics. This situation inevitably generated two paradigms that were theoretically and methodologically incompatible and conflicted with each other.¹

Needless to say, “modern economics” made great contributions to the development of large-scale econometric analyses and tried actively to utilize them in policy making and to build a legitimate empirical science.² Given this, it was natural for researchers to stand on the side of “modern economics,” and to make the following comments.³

The most basic criticism of Marxian economics, even from the standpoint of modern science, is that it is neither an empirical science nor based on the scientific method.

Marxian economics is, in our opinion, a grand system of thought ... the core of which contains many elements that are alien to science, such as philosophy, philosophy of history, views of the world, ideologies, and so on. Philosophies and views of the world encourage people and give them guidelines for actions to take, and Marxian economics in fact plays such a role, but science, in the strict sense of the word, is not like that.

With regard to this demarcation problem, it was Popper’s criterion, especially via Samuelson, that exerted the strongest influence on modern economists. In his book *Foundations of Economic Analysis* (1947), Samuelson was one of the first who had mentioned Popper’s falsifiability. However, Samuelson incorrectly states that “By a meaningful theorem, I mean simply a hypothesis about empirical data which could conceivably be refuted, if only under ideal conditions.”⁴ It is clear that he does not accurately understand the difference between falsificationism and logical positivism.

Samuelson’s misunderstanding was very unfortunate for the reception of Popper. For it created a situation in which the familiar misunderstanding was repeated in economics. The statements of prominent figures like Samuelson were influential, for better or worse. Almost none of the Japanese

¹ Fukasawa, T., *The Conflict of Two Economics and Guidelines for Studying Economics: Marxian Economics and ‘Marginal Revolution’ II* (Futatsu no keizaigaku no soukoku to keizaigaku gakusyuu no shisin: Marx keizaigaku to ‘genkai kakumei’ II), *University Reform and Lifelong Learning: Bulletin of Yamanashi Gakuin Lifelong Learning Center Daigaku kaikaku to shougai gakusyuu*, 2017: 47 ff.

² Murakami, Y., “Possibilities and Limitations of Modern Economics (Kindai keizaigaku no kanousei to genkai),” *Chuo Koron*, 1971: 57 ff.

³ Imai, K., Uzawa, H, Komiya, R., Negishi, T., and Murakami, Y., *Price Theory I (Kakaku riron I)*, Iwanami Shoten, 1971: 29. The next quotation is from p. 30.

⁴ Samuelson, P. A., *Foundations of Economic Analysis*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1947: 4.

researchers gave careful consideration to his misunderstanding. As a result, Japanese economists received Popper's views according to Samuelson's reading of him. We can find such traces in a series of publications by Takamitsu Sawa in the 1980s.¹

However, strictly speaking, Samuelson and Sawa have very different views concerning the criterion of demarcation. Sawa is very skeptical about the feasibility of Popper's criterion, while Samuelson defends it. Importantly, both the advocate and opponent of Popper's criterion are equally guilty of misinterpreting it. Since this point is somewhat complicated, we will examine Sawa's argument in more detail.

Sawa is a talented econometrician. Since the time he was a young academic until now, he has acquired outstanding academic achievements to the extent that we can now call him a famous member of the mainstream of "modern economics (kindai keizaigaku)." But, in a series of essays in the early 1980s, he frequently challenged the scientific character of the practice based on falsificationism as the methodological norm of "modern economics (kindai keizaigaku)", as follows.²

Although neoclassical economists, in general, use Popper's falsificationism as a shield in identifying their own work as "scientific" and disparaging Marxian economics and other schools of economics as unscientific, they have to give negative answers to the questions whether they have truly practised falsificationism in the history of their teachings and academic endeavours..... If this is the case, is it merely an illusion or delusion that neoclassical economics is qualified as a science having "falsifiability"?³

It is not difficult to guess the background of his attitude. Perhaps he was strongly influenced by the alleged new philosophy of science and the ideas of paradigm or scientific programmes of Kuhn and Lakatos. Based on these alternative views, Sawa was deeply skeptical of the feasibility or applicability of the criterion of falsifiability.

However, as we will see below, Sawa misunderstood this criterion in exactly the same way as Samuelson did. On the basis of this erroneous understanding, he criticized falsificationism as well as neoclassical economics that uses it as norms or rules of science. Let us consider some of the passages where Sawa seems to have misunderstood falsificationism.

The "economy" drawn by neoclassical economists is so structured that one can mathematically formulate their own assertions, and as a result of these manipulations, the rest of their assertions are able to be inferred in no other way than in a deductive way. This means that the conclusions are "true" without any

¹ For Sawa, See the following detailed study. Sato, M., "What was *Keizaigaku to wa Nan Daro ka* [What is Economics]?", *The Economic Review of Kansai University Keizai ronsyuu*, 2022: 57-79.

² Sawa, T., *What is Economics? (Keizaigaku toha nan darou ka)*, Iwanami Shoten, 1982.

³ Sawa, T., *Fiction and Reality (Kyokou to Genjitsu)*, Shinyosha, 1984: 103 f.

complaints. But these consequences deduced from the presuppositions seem to be not falsifiable (at least in practice, although thought experiments make them falsifiable). In this sense, one must make here an additional comment that it is highly doubtful whether the theorems are really “meaningful” scientific propositions in the sense of Popper’s falsificationism.¹

While Sawa’s question of whether neoclassical economics qualifies as science is very important, it does not seem that he understood Popper’s demarcation-criterion correctly. This is because he made a blatant mistake of confusing the demarcation-criterion with the meaningfulness-criterion. In his next quotation, the confusion is expressed in a clearer way.

In so far as one stands on falsificationism or logical positivism, as Friedman says, it would be meaningless to discuss the practical [empirical] validity of the hypotheses (laws), i.e., presuppositions of the argumentation. What constitutes the basis of the meaningfulness of a theory is the falsifiability or verifiability as consequences of the deductions or predictions.²

This quotation, published in 1986, clearly shows that he has failed to properly understand even the most basic teaching of falsificationism. Only the reading of the first chapter of *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* would have swept away this kind of misunderstanding. To be meaningful does not have any connections with being empirical. Incidentally, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* had already been translated into Japanese and published in 1971 (first volume) and 1972 (second volume), as was pointed out in section 1. Unlike Samuelson, Sawa could have access to this book in his native language. It is very regrettable that he omitted careful reading of this book.

There is one more point to be taken into examination. Sawa asserts that neoclassical economics, even in its ordinary practices, employs ad hoc “manoeuvres to evade refutations” and therefore falsificationism does not work as the norm of scientific activities.³ Even if inconvenient data are found in empirical studies, it is usual to treat them as flaws in collecting data or presenting auxiliary hypotheses (Lakatos’s “protecting belt [bougyotai, in Japanese]”) and to introduce ad hoc manoeuvres in order to keep the theory itself unscathed. Therefore, Sawa, under the influence of Lakatos, claimed that “the neoclassical scientific research program ... has so far suffered no decisive ‘disproof’ (to change its ‘hard core’) and is expected to survive and thrive in years to come.”⁴

What confronts us here is the alleged paradigm theory that was very influential in Japan at this time. Sawa argues that the driving force of the paradigm change is the “context of the times” and also the “context of the societies.” He pointed that the shift “from Marx to Keynes” corresponds to

¹ Sawa, T., *What is Economics? (Keizaigaku toha nan darou ka)*, Iwanami Shoten, 1982: 59 f.

² Sawa, T., “Dreams and Abstinence (Yume to Kinyoku),” Asada, A., Kuroda, S., Sawa, T., Nagano, K., and Yamaguchi, M., *What is Scientific Method? (Kagakuteki houhou toha nanika)*, Chuokoronsha, 1986: 79.

³ Sawa, T., *Fiction and Reality (Kyokou to Genjitsu)*, 1984, Shinyosha: 109.

⁴ *Ibidem*, 106.

the change in the social context that the rise and fall of the New Left movement triggered. According to Sawa, the shift “from Keynes to neoclassical economics” reflects the economic upheavals of the developed countries in the 1970s, where we can find the end of the high-growth period caused by the oil shocks, the consequent expansions of financial deficits and curtailing the “overgrown governments.”¹ In other words, Sawa supposes that the “social usefulness” of a theory, that is, the ability to respond quickly to the changes in conditions and demands of society, strongly affects our choice of theory. In this respect, he seems to be fallen into the postmodernist and contextual relativist way of thinking.

We should not overlook the hard fact that Sawa’s argument does not necessarily represent the views of all other economists. For example, Masao Fukuoka, a famous theoretical economist and avowed falsificationist, has expressed the following complaints against Sawa.

I am extremely uncertain about [what Sawa says], although the context of the periods or the quotidian knowledge yields change, it is very difficult to say that they are greatly independent of people’s experiences or experienced refutations through facts. Is it not true that what shook the authority of Keynesian economics in the 1970s was, above all, the fact that the trade-off relationship between unemployment and inflation disappeared because of supply shocks, and also the Phillips curve shifted upward? In this respect, I would like to prefer Blaug’s view that the 1970s provided Popperism with good illustrations. I do not want Sawa to make irresponsible statements that “the gradual ‘progress’ of theory through the accumulation of refutations is an unfulfilled wish.”¹

We think that Fukuoka’s comments are right, and would like to raise a question concerning Sawa’s conception of usefulness depending on the context of the times and society. Isn’t it true that the utility of a theory depends on its ability to successfully explain or predict various kinds of economic phenomena? Isn’t it also true that the usefulness of a theory is supported, after all, by the fact that the theory has passed through rigorous empirical tests? Isn’t it true that these facts explain that the usefulness of a theory depends on empirical tests, not on the context of the days and societies? It will become Sawa’s task to explain how these contexts occur, not by using an unclear and vague rationale in selecting theories.

3. Had Popper ignored historicity? (Terushiro Sera)

Having discussed the applicability of falsifiability to economics as a theoretical science in the previous section, we now turn to history or description of it, particularly Weberian studies in Japan. In Japan, due to the strong influence of Marxism, the relationship between Marx and Weber has been a major issue. This is a problem of how history should be interpreted and has often been

¹ Sawa, T., *The Road to Economics: The Gutenberg Forest (Keizaigaku eno michi)*, Iwanami Shoten, 2003: 120.

¹ Fukuoka, M., “The Anti-Popperian Pitfall (Han-Popper syugi no kansei),” in *Economics and I (Keizaigaku to watashi)*, Sobunsha, 1994: 443.

discussed as a question of “Weber or Marx” or “Marx as well as Weber” (see below). Needless to say, Popper criticized Marxism as a whole, and especially in chapter 25 of *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, he argued the logic of describing history in connection with Weber’s methodology. This means that Popper is important for both Marxists and Weberians.

We would like to pick up Terushiro Sera, who was once strongly influenced by Marxism, and has now mainly shifted to the Weberian camp and in the past has had dialogue with Masao Maruyama, whose views will also be discussed in the following section. Sera was a graduate of the University of Tokyo, the same university as Maruyama’s alma mater, and was Maruyama’s junior. When Sera was an assistant at the University of Tokyo, he belonged to the same study office as Maruyama.² Sera largely majored in the legal systems of Western medieval history. He tried to analyze Western feudal societies and studied the methodology of history that was supposed to serve as the basis for such analysis. In the course of critically examining Marx’s view of history, he tried to be acquainted with Weber and produced many famous translations of Weber’s works, and became a forerunner in the studies of Weber after the war.³ It was by way of studying Weber’s methodology that Sera got acquainted with Popperian philosophy.

Nevertheless, Sera’s central interests were in “Marx as well as Weber” rather than “Weber as well as Popper”. In Japan, it was not unusual for researchers to begin with Marx and then move closer to Weber. In his article, Sera recalls his young student period in the following way.

I came to realize that there were many problems for which the formulas of Marxism could not suggest any solutions. This made it necessary for me to critically re-examine the ideas of Marxism, and through such studies, I gradually became less and less a simple Marxist young lad.¹

The reexamination of Marxism forced him inevitably to get closer to Weber and Popper. In Japan during the prewar time, orthodox Marxists (the so-called Kouza School⁴) came close to Weberian approaches while maintaining Marxism. For example, Goro Hani argued that economic factors alone did not always play the primary role in the development of capitalism but that it was necessary to take into consideration the influences from the so-called superstructure, including political, social, and ideological factors. He was implicitly aware of the fact that introducing Weber’s social scientific methods mean to go beyond Marx’s materialist view of history, but he also anticipated the birth of a methodological approach that would stimulate both sides to merge into one body of knowledge, and in consequence to “make Marx a Weberian.”²

² Sera, T., “My Student Years (Watashi no gakusei jidai),” *Hogaku*, vol.49 (1985), no.1: 72 f.

³ Hayashi, T., “On the legal history of Sera: A note (Sera hoshigaku ni tsuite: hitostu no oboegaki),” *Hogaku*, vol. 44 (1981), double issue for no. 5 and 6: 599; Koyama, S., “Mourning the Passing away of Professor Sera (Sera sensei no goseikyo wo itamu),” *Bulletin of the Tohoku University Faculty of Law Alumni Association (Kaihou)*, no.16, 1989: 3.

¹ Sera, T., *op. cit.*: 74.

² Uchida, Y., *Weber Reception and Cultural Topology (Weber jyuuyou to bunka no topology)*, Libroport, 1990: 190 ff; Schwentker, W., *Max Weber in Japan: Eine Untersuchung zur Wirkungsgechichte 1905-1995 (Max Weber no nihon: Jyuuyou shi no kenkyu 1905-1995)*, translated by Noguchi, M, Suzuki, T, Hosoi, T, and Kimura, Misuzu Shobo, 2013: 100 ff.

It was Hisao Otsuka, an internationally renowned historian of economics, who pushed the “Weberianization” of Marx in the most original way. Otsuka himself was of the orthodox Marxist school, and in the postwar period, his works formed the school known as “Otsuka Shigaku (Historiography à la Otsuka)” and his introductory book, *Methods of Social Sciences* written in 1966, was sold over 500,000 copies (as of 2013).¹ This was an exceptional bestseller of the methodology of the social sciences. While, here, we refrain from investigating its details, we can say that Otsuka’s position was, in summary, an attempt to synthesize Marx and Weber in a complementary way, disregarding their epistemological and methodological incompatibility. In a sense, it was an attempt to “rescue Marx for the social sciences with Weber’s help”.² On the other hand, Otsuka’s view of history was constantly criticized, especially from Marxist camps, and also it provoked Marxist repugnance simply on the grounds that he associated Weber with Marx.³

In sharp contrast to the position of Otsuka Shigaku, Sera made a clear distinction between Marx’s views of history and methodologies on the one hand and Weber’s on the other. He distinguishes and discusses four types of comprehension of history and methodology of history: naïve positivism as represented by Ranke, Marx’s materialist view of history, Weber’s methodology, and Popper’s methodology, and gives high estimation to the latter two. It seemed to him that naïve positivism and Marx’s materialist view asserted that historical facts and laws have objective meaning in themselves, while Weber and Popper put emphasis on the fact that researchers give meaning to history by selecting and describing facts from their own “point of view” or “interest in the issue”.⁴ These two positions are completely different and incompatible.

In defending Weberian and Popperian views of history and their methodologies, Sera encountered the important question of “how to ensure the objectivity of describing histories?” In describing history, historians and researchers often realize that a “point of view” and “interests” are related to one’s value system, and are themselves entirely subjective in nature. If this is the case, then there will be as many different images or descriptions of history as many historians and researchers can exist. As a result, the question of how to ensure the objectivity of historical description becomes a serious problem. According to Sera, Weber’s and Popper’s solution to this problem basically consist in (1) giving a causal historical description using “ideal types” as a kind of empirical law, and (2) testing the hypotheses to determine their validity. He understood that the testing of a hypothesis consists of (a) checking its logical consistency and (b) subjecting the hypothesis to [empirical] refutations.⁵

¹ Schwentker, W., *op. cit.*: 181.

² Schwentker, W., *op. cit.*: 196.

³ Michishige, I., “Hisao Otsuka and Tomoo Matsuda: Theoretical Structure of History à la Otsuka and Its Significance (Otsuka Hisao and Matsuda Tomoo: Otsuka shigaku no riron kosei to sono igi),” in Sumiya, K, and Wada, T, eds., *Gazing into History: Otsuka Shigaku and Its Times (Rekishi he no shisen: Otsuka shigaku to sono jidai)*, Nihon Keizai Hyoronsha, 1998: 154.

⁴ Sera, T., “Legal History (Hou shigaku),” in Aomi, J. ed., *The Modern Law 15 (Gendai hou 15)*, Iwanami Shoten, 1966: 123 ff.

⁵ *Ibidem*, 131 ff.

Thus, in the context of the pursuit of objectivity in history especially via the testing of hypotheses, Sera defends Popper as well as Weber. Sera appreciates that Popper's critical method of conjectures and refutations has a public character and provides a means of pursuing objectivity in the sense of intersubjectivity, as follows.

Regarding the issue of Wertfreiheit [axiological neutrality], I think Weber tended to treat it as a matter of individual ethics for each researcher, but Popper takes it down to the social dimension and points out that academic study is not possible without freedom of thought reinforced by social conditions. I think this is the only point where he goes further than Weber.¹

On the other hand, Sera describes Popper's views of history as "very Weberian," but in discussing the differences between Popper and Weber, he turns around and concludes that "we cannot expect much" from Popper's methodology of history, or that "there are elements that we cannot accept" in it.² This change of attitude, insofar as we can understand it, is related to Popper's view of (1) ideal types as a kind of empirical law, as mentioned above. Let us quote the relevant passages.

In his [Popper's] social science, each fact is only useful as a demonstrative or disproving example of universal law, and there is no room for such notions as the historical individualities or the historical limitations of social phenomena. As a matter of fact, he rejects the concept of "periods." He thinks that the concept of diversity of each period is merely a result that the lack of exhaustive causal analysis brought about. Thus, in his case, the purpose of science lies in verifying universal laws that transcend the so-called domain of history, therefore it is not surprising that he has little interest in studies of history. Therefore, his theory is not only a denial of historicism, but in fact, it has a markedly "anti-historical" character. So, when we enter the field of social science and historiography, we realize that Weber is much deeper.³

According to Sera, describing histories is, in the first place, to study facts irreducible to universal laws. Historical facts have uniqueness corresponding to the varieties of each "period," and therefore each "period" has its uniqueness. Sera asserts that it is the task of historians to comprehend and describe this uniqueness, but Popper's methodology cannot depict it, because Popper believed that all events of history can be encompassed by universal laws. So, Sera thought that Weber's historical methodology was superior in this respect.

¹ Maruyama, M. and Sera, T., "Dilemma of History (Rekishi no dilemma)," (a dialogue held in 1980) in *Masao Maruyama: Dialogue 8 (Maruyama Masao: Zadan 8)*, Iwanami Shoten, 1998: 255. This will be abbreviated as *Dialogue 8 (Maruyama Masao: Zadan 8)* in the following.

² Sera, T., "Legal History (Hou shigaku)," in Aomi, J. ed., *The Modern Law 15 (Gendai hou 15)*, Iwanami Shoten, 1966: 123 ff. 132. See also *Dialogue 8 (Maruyama Masao: Zadan 8)*: 256.

³ *Dialogue 8 (Maruyama Masao: Zadan 8)* : 256 f.

If such a judgement can have any significance, it is only for those people who have read carelessly “the logic of describing history” in Chapter 25 of *The Open Society and Its Enemies* without paying attention to the importance of Popper’s arguments about the functions of viewpoints. However, Popper presents the “logic of situation” or the situational analysis in many places, for example, in *The Poverty of Historicism*, and gives the readers an utterly different image that does not match Sera’s understanding.

One of its most important tasks is undoubtedly to describe interesting happenings in their peculiarity or uniqueness; that is to say, to include aspects which it does not attempt to explain causally, such as the ‘accidental’ concurrence of causally unrelated events. These two tasks of history, the disentanglement of causal threads and the description of the ‘accidental’ manner in which these threads are interwoven, are both necessary, and they supplement each other; at one time an event may be considered as typical, i.e., from the standpoint of its causal explanation, and at another time as unique.¹

At the very least, if Sera only had read this passage, he could have evaded the wrong conclusion that Popper’s methodology was “anti-historical”, without difficulty. Sera’s complaints are also very similar to those of Maruyama, whom we will discuss in the next section. We hope the discussion in the next section can clarify a major misunderstanding with respect to the receiving Popper.

4. How had Masao Maruyama fallen into a pitfall of relativism?

As we have seen above, in Japan, Popper’s philosophy has been studied mainly from the perspective of the philosophy of science. However, this does not mean that Popper’s socio-political philosophy itself was ignored. The idea of the “open society” as social and political philosophy had left a great impact on the internationally renowned and leading Japanese scholar, Masao Maruyama (1914-1996). However, almost 20 years later, he came to take distance from Popper.² What was the reason for this? It is useful to initially glance at the intellectual relationships between them.

Maruyama was a professor of history of Japanese political thought at the University of Tokyo. He trained many talented students and played an important role as one of the intellectual leaders purporting to enlighten the Japanese people. It seemed that it was Herbert Norman’s letter to Maruyama in 1951 that led the latter to read Popper’s *Open Society and Its Enemies*.³ It is clear that Popper’s philosophy influenced Maruyama considerably during the 1950s. We can find Popper’s footprints in Maruyama’s two famous articles: “Opening the Country (Kaikoku)” and “Being and Doing (‘Dearu’ koto to ‘Suru’ koto),”⁴ both published in 1959. But according to the

¹ Karl Popper, *the Poverty of Historicism*, ARK ed. London: Rutledge, 1994: 146 f.

² *Dialogue 8 Maruyama Masao: Zadan 8*: 256 f.

³ Herbert Norman, *The Collected Works of Herbert Norman (Herbert Norman zensyuu)*, Iwanami Shoten, 1978: 436 ff.

⁴ Both articles are included in *The Collected Works of Masao Maruyama (Maruyama Masao shuu)*, Vol. 8 Iwanami Shoten, 1996.

recently published *Lectures of Masao Maruyama [Separate Volume II] 1957-58*,¹ Maruyama used quite often the concepts of “closed society” and “open society” in his lectures on the history of Japanese political thought. Where were Popper’s main influences? They seem to have been on two fronts.

Firstly, he uses these two concepts as ideal types in describing the movements of the Japanese history, and secondly, he adopts the idea of “open society” as his own political ideal within his own historical context. To say in traditional terms, Popper gave great influence to the “Erkenntnis” of Maruyama as a historian of ideas and to his “Praxis” as an enlightening thinker and activist.² Let us first try to make Popper’s influence on Maruyama’s views on the history of Japanese political thought clear.

Maruyama asserts that Japan had experienced “Opening the Country” three times. He attempted to explicate these events of history by using Popper’s concepts of the “open society” and “closed society.” In order to understand his main ideas, we must at least refer to what he calls the “second Opening of the Country” and the “third Opening of the Country.”

The “second Opening of the Country” refers to the Japanese historic event that the closed Tokugawa regime (Edo period in Japanese history) was forcibly opened from the outside, i.e., by Perry’s fleet detached from the United States in 1854.³ Japan began advancing towards the “alleged civilized era” known as the Meiji period. This was a period of great renovation and “birth pains” to create a new society. According to Maruyama, this second opening of Japan to the West was merely an opening to Western technologies and not, as the phrase “Wa Kon Yo Sai (Japanese spirit with Western learning)”⁴ suggests, to the spirit that made Western civilization what it was. As shown by the fierce exclusivist movement (ultra-nationalism), the Japanese (especially the ruling class) of the time sought only to adopt advanced Western technologies while maintaining the spirit of the old Japanese society. As Maruyama points out with regard to Nobuhiro Sato (1769-1850), there was clearly a “feudal Japanese inferiority complex”⁵ that always sought to secure spiritual superiority at all costs.

Maruyama describes Japan’s Edo period as a “closed society” and depicts in great detail its culture and the mentality of the people, social customs, institutions, and morals and behaviour patterns. It is interesting that Maruyama, like Popper, points out the disdain of the ruling class for

¹ Maruyama, M., *Lectures of Masao Maruyama [Separate Volume II] 1957-58 (Maruyama Masao kougi roku, bessatu II, nihon seiji sisou shi, 1957/58)*, University of Tokyo Press 2017. In the following this book will be abbreviated as *Lectures (Maruyama Masao kougi roku, bessatu II)*.

² Editors of this volume testify Popper’s influence on Maruyama’s views in the following way. “..... Maruyama’s process of reconstructing the history of Japanese political thought can only be described as a unique trial-and-error testing process of the ‘transition from a closed society to an open society’ in the history of Japanese thought.” (*Lectures [Maruyama Masao kougi roku, bessatu II]*: 331.)

³ The “first opening” was the encounter with Christians in the 15-17th centuries, according to Maruyama.

⁴ This word means that Japanese people should keep Japanese spirit (ethical mind) invariantly in importing and digesting the western materialistic technologies. According to Maruyama, *Lectures (Maruyama Masao kougi roku, bessatu II)*: 168, it was Hakuseki Arai (1657-1725) who formulated these ideas.

⁵ *Lectures (Maruyama Masao kougi roku, second volume)*: 76.

lower casts (peasants, craftsmen and merchants, etc.) as the characteristics of the “closed society.”¹ Maruyama, as a historian of political thought, pays special attention to the ideological situations in Japan. It is remarkable that Maruyama’s description of this period uses Popper’s concepts of “closed society” and “open society” as a framework of description.

The “third Opening of the Country” was caused by the defeat of Japanese militarism in World War II. The defeat of Japan meant the collapse of the so-called Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere, which was the reversal of “feudal Japanese inferiority complex” as pointed out above. Japanese imperialism lost its extended territory and was forced to open the closed system that attempted to put the Asian nations under the yoke of Japan racially and economically, and at the same time, was forced to emancipate Japanese people from the severest militarism. The American occupation and governance relentlessly destroyed the old feudalistic relations and characters of the Japanese closed society. Maruyama considered this sweeping renovation as the start of the “third Opening of the Country.”

Japan started a movement—forced again by the outside victorious powers—to liquidate ultra-nationalism and to absorb the Western mind, especially political ideals such as democracy and equality under the law and so on, in order to rebuild the nation as a truly peaceful one. As usual, in defeated countries, emperors are used to being swept away by revolution, for example, as was the case with the German Kaiser after World War I. In Japan, however, the emperor system was sustained by exalting the emperor as a “symbol of our country” under the new constitution. It was such incompleteness of the liquidation of ultra-nationalism that Maruyama faced after the defeat of Japan and decided to participate in postwar politics.

Let us take a glance at the differences between Maruyama and Popper concerning their arguments about the process of establishing the “open society.” This will help us understand more clearly Popper’s influence on Maruyama. The “open society” discussed by Popper was a remote goal in the ancient Greek world, where we can see various contacts and clashes of various peoples and cultures. It was the large trading area of the Mediterranean world that made possible the ancient Greek world a forerunner of the open society. According to Popper, it was the “Great Generation,”² consisting of Pericles, Socrates, Protagoras, Democritus, and the Gorgias’ school, that turned on light of the open society and carried out the anti-slavery movement. This movement emerged endogenously, especially in comparison with Japan. The ancient Athenian society and Japan are each maritime nations, but the latter could not have an endogenous bud (idea) of an “open society”. This point forms a striking contrast with ancient Athenian society.

From this perspective, it is evident that the “Opening of the Country,” whether the second or the third one, was forced by outside powers, as Maruyama described partly them. From the geographical point of view, maritime nations usually have great chances to achieve prosperity by trade like Athens, but Japan was unable to take advantage of its commercial opportunities

¹ *Lectures (Maruyama Masao kougi roku, bessatu II)*: 237. See, for example, Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, Rutledge and Kegan Paul, 1966, chapter 4, note 29. This will be abbreviated as *Open Society* in the following.

² Popper himself coined this word. See *Open Society*, chapter 10, section 4.

(especially during the Edo period) due to its isolation policies, and as a result, was stuck in exclusionism. Compared with the ancient Greek world, Japan was fundamentally a different and strange world. Moreover, Japan had not the movement towards an “open society” from within, but was always changed by outside powers. Maruyama, in connection with the “second Opening of the Country,” says the following.

..... Within this system, a completely heterogeneous mode of production and an independent class relying on it scarcely grew up, and the possibility of a fundamental confrontation with the whole system was largely blocked. Accordingly, there was scarcely room for the conditions for the powerful emergence of the ideologies or worldviews growing daringly from within to confront this system’s mentality in principle ... The closed society itself, which was the historical precondition of the Bakuhan system [Tokugawa regime] , did not fall in collapse until the impact of world-historical destiny and its progression towards the East put its sustainability in danger as a fatal blow to this vast system.¹

Although Maruyama used different historical case studies in order to make clear the possibilities of the “open society”, we may say that he successfully revealed the rich applicability of Popperian concepts by clarifying the importance of outside powers, and by using the concepts of “open society,” “closed society” and “culture clashes” as a basic framework to support his own thinking under different conditions of application.

However, Maruyama did not use the Popperian ideal types only as means for describing history, but also used them as his political ideals for his own society. He realized that we could utilize this ideal to reform Japan, which has not yet truly “opened” its doors to the outside world. He said as follows.

... It is not without significance to try to introduce a category with an “ahistorical” or “transhistorical” dimension, such as Bergsonian category or Popperian, into the historical situations as a framework for measurements.²

Maruyama regarded an “open”-“closed” conceptual pairing as “a category with an ‘ahistorical’ or ‘transhistorical’ dimension.” He thought that this pairing is a scale to evaluate critically the events of history, and as such it should stand “ahistorically” and “transhistorically” outside the flux of history. Maruyama made this point clear through his creative application of this scale in an article titled “Being and Doing (‘Dearu’ koto to ‘Suru’ koto)” (1959) written at the same year as the article “Opening the Country (Kaikoku).” This article is an appeal to us, the Japanese people, to step forward towards the direction of individualism, by which each of us takes the initiative in

¹ *Lectures (Maruyama Masao kougi roku, bessatu II)*: 118.

² Maruyama, M., *The Collected Works of Masao Maruyama (Maruyama Masao shuu)*, vol. 8, Iwanami Shoten, 1996: 47.

making concrete decisions and taking responsibility for themselves. In order to look at Popper's influence on Maruyama in the domain of ethics and politics, it will be useful to briefly sketch the content of this article.

What kind of group one belongs to and what attributes one possesses are matters of fact ("Being"), whereas "Doing" is a concept that refers to one's proactive performance of some task. Maruyama assumes that there is a mediating zone between these two domains. He characterizes it with a category of "Rashiku (like)." This category has the social power to demand us to "behave, as if a member of the group" to which we belong by way of Rashiku (namely by adjusting ourselves to the customary behavioral patterns of this group). This is the ethics or morals of closed societies. Maruyama contrasts such societies with a performance-based society, of which the scale is the achievements of individuals, in other words, what they do on their own initiative ("Doing"). He believed that this is where individualism lies. There he expected a possibility to break through the semi-feudal and conventional disciplines of Japanese society. His argument seems to express both a criticism and an irritation towards the Japanese society that demands "Rashiku." This argument reminds us of Popper's assertions in the following passage. It seems to us that Maruyama depicted the negative sides of Popper's assertions.

In our own way of life, there is an ever-widening field of personal decisions between the laws of the state on the one hand and the taboos we habitually observe on the other, with its problems and responsibilities; and we know the importance of this field. Personal decisions may lead to the alteration of taboos, and even of political laws which are no longer taboos. The great difference is the possibility of rational reflection upon these matters.¹

This is where Popper talks about critical dualism as a basis for the "open society". Maruyama seemed to have gained a hint through reading this passage and was led by his own mediation to the concepts of "Being" and "Doing" as a creative attempt to introduce an "individual decision-making" area into Japanese society. It is clear that this argument was widely welcomed in Japanese social and political movements at that time.²

However, it seems that Maruyama does not pay sufficient attention to Popper's grand scheme of history about the development of ethical ideas in the ancient Greek world. If he had paid sufficient attention, he would have gotten some hints for his argument about "Being" and "Doing," dualism of fact and decision, and furthermore for his study of the history of Japanese political thought in general.

Popper discussed dualism of fact and norm (standard, decision) and a way for going to critical dualism in chapter 5 of *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. In this chapter, Popper defined a "closed society" as a world of naive monism, where almost all people do not succeed in distinguishing

¹ *Open Society*, chapter 10, Section 1.

² His book: *Thought of Japan (Nihon no sisou)*, which contains this article, is still selling well today (109th printing as of September 2021), and there is even now a commentary book (Haruo Miyamura, *A Close Reading of Masao Maruyama's "Thought of Japan"* (Maruyama Masao "Nihon no sisou" seidoku) (Iwanami Gendai Bunko, 2001). Maruyama's book nowadays gets the status of a classic.

between (natural) laws and (legal) laws, and he discussed three stages in the procession from there to critical dualism where almost all people are sufficiently conscious of the changeability of legal laws by human wills. Popper indicated three stages of ethical consciousness in the development from naïve monism to critical dualism by the following concepts.

- (1) Biological version of naturalism
- (2) Ethical or legal positivism
- (3) Psychological or spiritual version of naturalism

From Popper's point of view, Maruyama's argument of "Rashiku" corresponds to the "ethical or legal positivism" described in (2) above. For norms are justified by what actually exists as conventional and customary practices. Conversely, Maruyama's thought, because it lacks a theory of these stages, also lacks the perspective to describe the phases of changes of ethical consciousness, although it may be able to describe the monistic fusion of facts and norms. It seems that Maruyama does not succeed in sharply picking up aspects of the developments from monism to dualism.

However, Maruyama was well aware of the necessity of considering events of history as phases of historical development in Japan. This required of him to reconsider the foothold on which the historians stand. Historians are bound to interpret and evaluate history from the standpoint of a certain kind of (value). However, these interpretations and evaluations will become objects for other historians within history. Maruyama perceived a problem here, because he ardently sought objectivity in describing history. There he found the problematics of **historicity** of those who are engaged in interpreting history and giving meaning to it. He expressed these problematics in the following words, "the subject of historical comprehension is at the same time a historical object".¹ Maruyama asserts that these problematics are "the problematics posed by Troeltsch, Meinecke, Mannheim, and others, namely, how is it possible to grasp historical individuality without falling into historical relativism?"² Maruyama devoted himself in vain to searching for an objective way of describing history. This situation forced him to become a relativist. This clearly shows how far away he came from what he thought twenty years ago when he introduced the pair of "open"- "closed" concepts as an "ahistorical" or "transhistorical" scale of evaluating historical events.

Maruyama believes that each historic event is unique ("einmalig" in German). He mistakenly thought that Popper's methodology could only force us to use the idea of laws and initial conditions, because it tacitly and wrongly presupposes the repetitive nature of history. From these standpoints, Maruyama even accuses Popper of being "tone-deaf to history," that is, someone who has never been tormented by the dilemmas associated with writing history.³

¹ *Dialogue 8* (Maruyama Masao: *Zadan 8*): 250.

² *Ibidem*. 253.

³ *Ibidem*. 254. It is not clear what is meant by "the problem of dilemmas associated with describing history." Maruyama also seems to send into oblivion that Popper, in chapter 10 of *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, describes the history of the reconstruction of Athenian democracy after the defeat of the Peloponnesian War. One who reads his inherent understanding of Plato or his interpretation of Socrates in this chapter can hardly accuse him of being a "tone-deaf of history." Herbert Norman, as above

But does this criticism of Popper have any validity? Popper evidently emphasized the importance of the viewpoints that unify events and give meaning to a series of events, and nowhere said that only the logic of laws and initial conditions, and nothing else, is sufficient to describe histories. In addition to this, Maruyama's epistemological thinking seems to be flawed. Isn't it self-evident that we cannot make objective and absolute judgements without standing outside history? Popper proposed the replacing of the concept of objectivity by the concept of intersubjectivity through criticizing Mannheim's sociology of knowledge in chapter 23 of *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. It seems that Maruyama did not understand Popper's argumentation.

Furthermore, if Maruyama's "problem of the dilemma in describing history" means that it is inevitable for us to remain relativists because of the impossibility of standing outside history in order to make "objective judgments". Below, we briefly discuss Popper's solution to this problem. Popper offers a logical argument to overcome the **historist** argument. Popper discusses it in the context of Toynbee's historism. While Toynbee's historism asserts that no historian can escape from the constraints of his or her "historical" habitat, Popper denies this type of constraint of habitat in the following way.

... (It would be another form of the paradox of the liar; for if no genius is exempt from expressing the fashions of his social habitat, then this contention itself may be merely an expression of the fashion of its author's social habitat, i.e., of the relativistic fashion of our own day.)¹

From this perspective, Maruyama's dilemma that the historian cannot escape from the historical constraints of his own historicity will be interpreted as a kind of liar's paradox. What does this mean for the logic of describing history? Popper says as follows.

For it indicates that historism or historio-analysis can be applied to historism itself, and this is indeed a permissible way of dealing with an idea after it has been criticized by way of rational argument. Since historism has been so criticized, I may now risk historio-analytical diagnosis, and say that historism is a typical though slightly obsolescent product of our time; or more precisely, of the typical backwardness of the social sciences of our time. (*Ibidem.*)

Maruyama neglected Popper's logical analysis of historism and as a result, fell into its trap (the dilemma of describing history). Popper's solution to escape from this trap would recommend Maruyama to be within history and to make a historio-analysis of himself and present it to the public discussants. It might be difficult to try to be critical of oneself. He does not show sufficient access to this position in his Erkenntnis of history. All that Maruyama had to do was to grow his

referred to, had pointed out in his letter to Maruyama that Popper's Open Society depicts the rise and fall of Athens (*op. cit.*: 437).

¹ *Open Society*: 256. In the note to this passage, Popper writes as follows. "For if *all* thought is in such a sense 'inevitably relative' to its historical habitat that it is not 'absolutely true' (i.e., not true), then this must hold for this contention as well."

own historical consciousness and use it as the basis for his own value judgments and interpretations, without worrying about the dilemma. Objectivity is located in the severest intersubjective criticism.

On the other hand, Popper had already opened a way to the logic of describing history without being entangled in the dilemma and the shallowness of the covering law model. For Popper's article, "On the Theory of the Objective Mind,"¹ had presented the logic of describing history quite differently from the mere application of the covering law model. It was a developed form of the "situational analysis" or the "logic of the situation" that Popper had already talked about in *The Poverty of Historicism* and *The Open Society and Its Enemies*.

However, this important point was completely ignored by Sera, as had been indicated in the previous section, in his dialogue with Maruyama in 1980. Although Sera was a famous Japanese historian of European medieval history, a leading figure in the study of Popperian philosophy in Japan at this time, and therefore was best placed to point out the development of Popper's logic of describing history, but he did not carry out this task.

Popper's article, "On the Theory of the Objective Mind," informs us of the world of objective mind that independently exists outside the human subjective mind, in other words, World 3, and also explains how objective ideas develop according to the diagram of "P₁(problem)→TT (tentative theory)→EE(error elimination)→P₂(new problem)." This is a methodological refinement of the so-called method of understanding (Verstehen) and of the dialectics that describes the development of ideas in the Hegelian style. As Popper himself pointed out, this schema of problem-solving is an alternative to the traditional dialectical triad model of the developments of history, and may be called legitimately the "logic of describing history." Therefore, we can say that Maruyama was merely criticized a straw figure of Popper.

By the way, Yosuke Mamiya, a researcher who has discussed Maruyama's views, claims that Maruyama understood Popper's World 3 without mentioning it as such.² According to him, Maruyama assumed that there is a world of "works" or "fictions" between the natural, physical world on one side and the human subjective world on the other. He further asserts that Maruyama's "world as fiction" is similar to Popper's World 3. But Mamiya fails to point out that Maruyama does not sufficiently argue the meaning of the existence of "works" or "fictions". Mamiya only emphasizes an aspect of Maruyama's argument, i.e., that "world as fiction" is not a world that can be created freely. He puts it as follows, "He [Maruyama] means public orders and institutions in a real sense, as *nomos* in opposition to *physis*." (p. 230). Needless to say, the opposition between *nomos* and *physis* had been the central idea of Popper's "Nature and Convention," the title of chapter 5 of *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. If Mamiya's assertion is correct, then Maruyama, despite the influence of Popper, has omitted a very important issue, i.e., the meaning of the existence of "works" or "fictions" and of the forms of their development. Maruyama could not

¹ This article is contained in *Objective Knowledge* by Oxford University Press in 1972 and translated into Japanese by Hiroshi Mori, contained in *Objective Knowledge*, Bokutakusha, 1974.

² Mamiya, Y., *Masao Maruyama (Maruyama Masao)*, Chikuma Shobo, 1999: 228 ff.

have presented a schema like that presented by Popper. Maruyama's thought does not succeed in forming the methodology of history that he, as a historian of political thought, urgently needs in order to describe the unique movement of ideas in World 3.

The "logic of describing history," which Maruyama was not able to fully digest, has recently been steadily explored by Kogawara and his research group in their attempt to take over Popper's methodology.¹ This is an attempt to inherit Popper's P1-TT-EE-P2 scheme from the standpoint of methodological (institutionalistic) individualism, and to grasp human activities that are controlled by ideas and at the same time, by new ideas of individuals. We hope that these attempts contribute to the reception of Popper.

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¹ Kogawara, M., Matsuo, Y., and Yeo, H-S., "Popper's Methodological Individualism and the Situational Analysis," in Bulle, N. and Di Iorio, F. ed., *Palgrave Handbook of Methodological Individualism* (forthcoming).