STRUCTURE, CULTURE AND LANGUAGES
An Essay comparing the Indo-European, Chinese and Japanese Languages

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to examine the role of languages as carriers of social cosmology. In doing this nothing problematic will be assumed in connection with the term "language": we are referring to natural languages, as they are written and as they are spoken, by men and women around the world. The title limits the subject but at the same time indicates that it is fairly broad: "Indo-European languages" stands for a major family or "clan" of languages out of which we are particularly thinking of the ones we happen to be familiar with: Norwegian and the Scandinavian languages in general; German and English and Dutch; French, Italian and Spanish and the Roman languages in general; Russian and some other Slavonic languages. Hence it is only out of tradition in linguistics that we use the term "Indo-European". Similarly the word "Chinese" also stands for a family of languages with common writing and certain common characteristics although it is Mandarin Chinese we have had in mind, and "Japanese" stands for standardized (non-vernacular) Japanese which itself is a family of languages, defined by social relations between sender and receiver of verbal communication.

Then there is the idea of cosmology.[1] It is taken here to mean "deep structure" and "deep culture". In that explication of the concept something more than Weltanschauung is indicated. First, there is the qualifier "deep" - pointing to that which is not on the surface, that which is deeper down, implicit, latent, not talked about in general, unquestioned, assumed. Then there is the juxta-position of "structure" and "culture", also found in the title of this essay. They are here seen as being at the same level,

none of them preceding the other in a temporal or causal sense, thereby rejecting both the "materialist" position that structure (particularly socio - economic formation) should shape culture or the "idealist" position that culture is primary and is materialized in structure - positions held, respectively, in certain types of liberal and Marxist thinking, in the West.(2) The position taken here is not necessarily agnostic in the sense that "since we do not know which one comes first we should take no stand on the matter", but treated like a chicken and egg problem. Rather, the position is that both structure and culture are apparitions of the same deeper lying phenomenon here referred to as "cosmology". But that phenomenon is "deeper lying" not in the sense of being located somewhere behind, below, beneath or beyond structure and/or culture. Rather, it is deeper in the sense of being in them both, but only to the extent that the structure and culture in question are "of the same kind", "of the same family" - in other words are manifestations of the same cosmology. My right hand and my left hand are both parts of me, so are my thoughts and my mental activity - but one usually does not see anyone of these as being the cause or the effect of the other but rather as aspects of "me". That "me" can be conceived of in a material, organic / genetic sense and/or in a non-material mental/ genetic sense. One day we might perhaps be better than we are today at seeing relations and similarities between the two. In socio-cultural matters, however, the assumption here is that we can already see such similarities, for instance as isomorphisms between what is usually referred to as structure and as culture, and that is exactly what cosmology (or more precisely social cosmology) is about.

How can "languages" be carriers of "social cosmology?" In most usages of the terms languages are seen as parts of the culture of that nation, or language community. As such they should or might express, when looked at along particular dimensions, some basic assumptions of that culture, carried by the very language itself. But the same applies to the term "structure": languages induce structures between senders and receivers of verbal communication; and they structure the reality which they try to mirror in their expressions because any language system itself, in its syntax, have structures that through semantic rules induce structures on that which is reflected. Perhaps it should

be pointed outthat in saying this we do not conceive of the words "structure" and "culture" as very separable. On the contrary, there is structure in culture, and every structure has or is a culture. The reason for this is that the term "structure" is in fact ambiguous: On the one hand it often refers to material arrangements, such as urban architecture; on the other hand it refers to any kind of pattern which can be expressed in a logical form, in terms of a set of elements and a set of relations among these elements. Mathematics is an abstract language carrying structures in this pure form.

So, the point is that a language takes structural and cultural stands; and partly in order not to have to say whether these built-in positions are inherently more structure or inherently more culture, we use a term that carries these deep aspects of either: cosmology (exactly which aspects will be elaborated below). However, in saying this it should also be pointed out that both "stand" or "position" as expressions are too strong. Rather, one might talk about "biases" in certain directions, predisposing the members of one language community, to act, to think, and perceive the world in certain directions rather than others. After all languages are to a large extent mutually translatable, with more or less success. They are not discontinuous with each other. A person deeply steeped in one language community can surface from it and get sufficient depth in another to serve as a living bridge between the two. He is not cut off from any other language, in principle.

But then he is also marked by his language experience for life and more so the longer he has lived in a particular language community. This would account for a certain bias. Or, to weaken the expression still more: for certain compatibilities. Being a part of one language community is not incompatible with the type of cosmolgy prevalent in another language community. But having been trained in one is highly compatible with the corresponding cosmolgy; it comes easy, by itself, so as to be considered normal and natural, so as not to stand out radiating incompatibility. Language predisposes, that is all we are trying to say; it does not determine in any unambiguous way.

2. Cosmology dimensions and language analysis

No attempt will be made here to justify the six dimensions used in the present and related essays for analysis of cosmologies, viz.:

SPACE
TIME
KNOWLEDGE
PERSON-NATURE
PERSON-PERSON
PERSON-TRANSPERSONAL

The general assumption is that these six dimensions are if not sufficient, at least necessary in order to describe a culture, and more particularly a macro-culture, a civilization. Each culture is seen as having a stand, a position on these six dimensions, and the question is to what extent languages are carriers of that stand or position.

Given the point of departure of this essay this means that we should try to say something about how three languages or language groups relate to six dimensions, in other words 18 combinations as in the following table:

Table 1. The framework for cosmology/language analysis

	European	Chinese	Japanese
Space			
Time			
Knowledge			
Person-Nature			
Person-Person			
Person-Transpersonal			

Obviously, an exploratory task of this kind can be carried out vertically or horizontally. The vertical approach would give a presentation of the languages, running through the gamut of cosmology analysis. The horizontal approach, which is the one that will be chosen here, would take one cosmological dimension after the other and compare the languages on them, proceeding from the European via the Chinese to the Japanese. The advantage of this approach is that it compares languages, keeping the cosmological dimension constant, rather than the equally interesting but different task of relating cosmological dimensions, keeping language group constant. Since both approaches are significant however, we shall start with the horizontal approach and then summarize using the vertical approach, in an effort to say something about the language groups as a whole. The factors of this exercise are then repeated in table 2 towards the end; the reader is referred to it for a quick summary at any time.

3. Three language groups: a comparison

SPACE

Languages appear in two forms, written and oral; in space and in time, respectively. We are used to thinking of written language in terms of two-dimensional space, the hand-written or printed page, where thinking in three-dimensional space might be equally relevant: a book is clearly three-dimensional. And we are used to thinking of speech as a string of sounds, stretched out in time, starting at one point in time and ending in another. Actually, that string of sounds can be recorded on tape or in other ways, thereby projecting time on space. But for the present purposes the arrangement of language in its written form is seen as a key to how that language community structures space, and the arrangement of language in usual oral form is correspondingly seen as a key to how time is structured.

A book printed in a European language is a highly standardized and unambiguous arrangement of one-dimensional space in three-dimensional space. The first page is in front, the last page in the back of the volume; to avoid any confusion the pages are serially numbered and hence arranged in a one-dimensional fashion. The reading of a single page is from left to right and from top to bottom; anyone of the other three possibilities would bring considerable discomfort to the reader unless he is deliberately in search of non-meaning.

Not so with Chinese and Japanese. For the latter we are thinking in terms of the Chinese characters, not the Japanese use of the two syllable alphabets (katakana and hiragana) and the Japanese use of "Roman" characters (in roma-ji). As opposed to the European rigidity there is considerable flexibility. In the Sino-Japanese language community, books may start in front or in back, and at least three of the four ways of reducing the two-dimensional printed or written page to a one-dimensional string can be found. Though it may well be that there is at present a tendency towards a reduction of this variety in modes of book/paper production, variety still there is.

However, there is more to say about spatial arrangement than can be said in terms of the oposition between rigidity and flexibility - noting in passing that once the choice has been made a particular Chinese or Japanese book becomes as rigid as any European text. There is not only the possibility of printing or writing in various ways; once a choice has been made it may also be possible to read in various ways. A European sentence read backwards, from right to left on one line may give some meaning, but usually be so syntactically incorrect that it will be rejected by any language-sensitive mind. A European printed page read vertically, for instance by reading the first or the last words on each line, from top to bottom or from bottom upwards to the top will probably by most members of that language community be rejected even before the experiment has started (the reader is encouraged to try this page, for instance).

Of course the same may be the case for Chinese and Japanese. However, it can be attempted, and possibly with more success. And what is to the point: the composer of the printed page, the author and/or the printer, may arrange the characters in such a way that additional meanings may come out of non-conventional reading orders. In fact, there are examples of high-level achievements in arriving at several meanings this way, even combining diagonal reading as a possibility, even off-diagonal reading.(3) Of course, in the West this is known as games, immortalized through the crossword-puzzles. But in Sino-Japanese space it may also point to a different way of conceiving space, replete with meaning, in a less unambiguous and linear fashion. Even circular arrangements can be found.(4)

However, there is more to it than that. The sum total of meanings arrived at by reading a row or a column backwards and forwards, downwards or upwards, or doing this for the whole page, may serve as pointers to a meta-meaning. If well composed the sum of one-dimensional, partial meanings may be more than the set of the parts, and the step from meanings to meta-meaning may be accompanied by some kind of quantum jump in consciousness. To the extent that this is the case it is obvious that one page may carry more "information" than would usually be the case in a European book.

And yet, there is still more to it than this. A printed page in Chinese or Japanese, with characters arranged, usually very neatly, in rows and columns can be compared to a comic strip where pictures are arranged in rows and columns, usually with children as receivers in European countries. As for the cartoons the receiver can grasp what is happening or communicated at a mere glance. One second or two spent on a Donald Duck cartoon will tell the reader (or onlooker) what it is about; after that holistic perception, he or she may then proceed to the details in a more regular, linear fashion. Something of the same is the case with Chinese and Japanese script: since the characters are ideograms a quick sampling of ideograms, in a more or less random fashion, but well-distributed over the page, will give a good notion of the contents before more systematic reading is initiated. But this means that there is the possibility of proceeding in a more hermeneutical manner than is usually the case with respect to European writings, from a grasp of the totality to concern with detail, from there to totality and back to detail again, and so on. Of course, some of the same same effect could be obtained using European script, sampling a word here and there - but these words are usually less evocative than a Chinese character, one reason being that so many words are not - like nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs - carriers of much meaning but are connectives, filling-in words with particular syntactic functions, and so on. Such words are also found in Chinese and Japanese, but the eye of the reader will more easily be attracted to the characters more saturated with meaning.

Hence, the messages about organization of space are actually quite different when one compares European languages on the one hand with Chinese and Japanese on the other. There is the distinction between rigidity and flexibility in the projection from three-dimensional to one-dimensonal space. There is the use of flexibility in order to arrive at more variety. There is the possibility of meta-meanings as the sum of partial meanings gleaned from any one way of proceeding in printed or written space. And finally there is the potential for holistic and hermeneutical relations to space, engendered by the organization of Chinese and Japanese written language. In short, European languages stand out as

simplistic in their space structure relative to the much more complex use of space made by Chinese and Japanese.

TIME

Something of the same may be said about the organization of time, although less clearly so. The objection to any exploration of this is immediate: There is something absolute about time, it flows and fleets but only in one direction, whereas space can be looked at and handled in so many ways, turned upside down, and so on.

However, even if we do not seem to be very good at mastering chronological time we can always do something about the strings of sounds, and the strings of words. The appropriate question to ask seems to be: Given a set of words, can they be organized in only one way which is the correct word order, or is there a certain flexibility so that more than one permutation is legitimate? And if the latter is the case could it then be, once more, that there is a change in meaning, if only a subtle change, with the permutation, and that the set of all legitimate permutations, limited by the set of all possible permutations, might carry a hidden message, a meta-meaning? In other words: To what extent is a language so rigid that it permits only one word order, or so flexible that it permits several word orders out of the mathematically possible ones? And then, beyond that: not only whether language is flexible, but also whether alternative word orders can be used and do in fact carry meanings, even meanings that complement the standard meaning conveyed by the initial word order. Poetic potential is obvious if this is the case.

Off hand one might perhaps surmise that a language like German would be extremely rigid whereas a language like Chinese might be very flexible. We have not come across efforts to confirm or disconfirm such hypothesis, although there must have been much research done in this field. The German word order with not only one verb but often several verbal forms mostly accumulating at the end of the sentence does not seem to stand much rearrangement without transgressing the borderlines of the legitimate. On the other hand, similar rigidities seem to be much less prevalent in Chinese.

It should be emphasized that the meaning, of course, changes with the permutation, as it also, in general, will do when the reading is done in a different direction, as mentioned above. It should be noted, however, that the point made here about permutations goes much further than what was discussed above under the heading of space: It is now a question of all permutations, not only forward and backward, upwards or downwards.

Imagine that some statistical study had been undertaken, or could be undertaken, and proved the hypothesis by and large to be correct. What would be the implications of that? That there is at least a potential flexibility. Whether it is really made use of is another matter. But in many European languages there may not be that potential and hence much less opportunity to play with word order, and thereby also with time.

KNOWLEDGE We shall try to discuss this subject under three headings: predicative vs. relational; abstract vs. concrete and precise vs. vague. By and large the idea would be that Indo-European languages tend to pick up the former horn of these three dichotomously expressed dilemmas, Chinese and Japanese the latter.

The predicative aspect of European languages is already seen in the typical sentence structure: there is (usually) a subject, and something is predicated of that subject - a qualifier (adjective) and/or a verb, with or without qualifier (an adverb). In other words: something is atributed to something, predicated of something. In fact, this structure is so deeply ingrained in members of these language communities that it is propably seen as the normal way in which human thought can be expressed, there being no alternative.

Chinese and Japanese, however, are examples of alternatives. The Chinese philosopher Chang Tung-Sun[5] sees relational presentation as much more important, even to the point of being typical of Chinese language structure. He quotes Mencius: "human nature towards the good as water downwards", a fairly optimistic view of human nature, but clearly relational. The general structure would be a quartet, A:B = X:Y, which is a much more complex thought structure than predicating something of a subject, P(S). What it says is that there are two realms of discourse, one or them relating to human beings

and the other one to physical nature. Two elements are picked out of either, they are related to each other within both types of discourse, and then the relations are related so as to arrive at a quaternary relationship. The important thing about this relation is that it predicates nothing in any precise sense of any of the terms; it only says that the four terms are related to each other in a certain way. Whereas predicative language would tend to be more static, attributing something to something for ever ("I am a boy"), relational language keeps the absolute properties or predicates open, and puts the element of invariance at a higher level of abstraction. It is galilean rather than aristotelian; Funktionsbegriff rather than Substanzbegriff.(6) In this sense, hence, Chinese has a much more abstract language structure than European languages - and since this particular characteristic of Chinese is taken over by Japanese it will also be applicable to the latter. And the quartet is a very frequent form.(7)

An interesting aspect of this has to do with the difference between the connective that is used to predicate something, like "I am a boy", in European languages (be, sein, être, and so on) and in Chinese (shih 是) or in Japanese (desu and aru です and ある). Whereas in European languages these connectives are asymmetric, in Chinese and Japanese, perhaps particularly the former, they are seen as much more symmetric. It is I who possess boyishness, as expressed in the sentence above; it is not "boy" which possesses I-ishness. In Chinese and Japanese, however, this distinction is much less strict. Both constructions would be valid; permutations in the sense made above are possible. Connotations may be different, the meta-meanings may be important. In short, a predicative proposition may be valid both ways and hence becomes relational although in this case binary, not quaternary.(8)

This general emphasis on relational expressions may place Japanese and Chinese closer to dialectic reasoning than is the case for European languages. Predicative expressions tend to become more static, more "unary", hence less malleable, less fluid. At the first glance this may seem to be exactly the opposite of the next point, the predilection for abstract expression in Indo-European languages as opposed to concrete expressions in Chinese and Japanese; but that is only at the first glance.

It is often pointed out that both Chinese and Japanese are very concrete languages and that members of those language communities are dissatisfied with any thing but highly concrete descriptions, for instance in the form of precise examples. The ideograms, the characters themselves, have very concrete origins although some of that may have been lost through the millennia. But then there is another point which has not been lost: there are no articles in Chinese, as also in Japanese, and the Chinese language, from the European point of view, has an almost incredible lack of inflection in gender, case or tense, and with regard to singular vs. plural. Of course this in no way means that such distinctions cannot be expressed, only that they are not built into single words with appropriate prefixes and suffixes or similar means, but are derived from the context. But it does mean that the distinction between a tree, the tree and just simply 'tree' does not occur automatically.(9) A tree is any tree, "the tree" is that particular tree, whereas 'tree' is tree-ishness - an abstract property of a tree, like boyishness; an universal aspect of trees, opening for the lasting controversy between nominalism and realism.(10)

This becomes much more interesting when instead of trees one looks as such concepts as "freedom" and "equality". In many European languages these words can be equipped with articles, but in general appear without, denoting abstract concepts. They stand for essences, for something essential that may or may not be said to exist or be present in, for instance, countries. As such they are the tools of abstract reasoning, they can be used as subjects, and something can be predicated of them, the predicates can be compared, and long chains of deductive reasoning can be established. Europeans, perhaps particularly the Germans and the French, can go on for a considerable length of time discussing the relation between "freedom" and "equality" without ever having to use a single example. Not so in Chinese and Japanese: The language will force a certain concreteness on the language users or at least tend to bend them in that direction. "You mean like in - - -?" would be the typical question asked by a Sino-Japanese to an Indo-European speaker when the abstract discourse has gone on for some time and turned into utter meaninglessness from the point of view of concreteness.(11)

In respect of these two aspects of the eypistemological dimension of language the ground has already been prepared in linguistic development for the emergence of basic characteristics of occidental intellectual style: atomistic and deductive.[12] Predicative expressions permit detachment of one subject from another in order to assign attributes; essentialism permits deductivism as a logical operation, unencumbered by any misplaced concreteness. Relational expressions are much less permissive of atomism unless one should talk about molecularism, the detachment of a more complex unit from the rest of the universe, like in a quartet, a relational tetrad. To attribute something concerning this much more complex entity will be more problematic, however. And if in addition essentialism is less developed deductive reasoning would be impeded.

At this point the third aspect enters with full force. European languages are constructed in such a way that they at least give the impression that people in such language communities can arrive at very precise conclusions that are open to falsification; if they cannot be "confirmed" they can at least be "disconfirmed". The conclusion itself would tend to be a predicative statement, a proposition, and as such subject to a decision, a judgement in terms of "true vs. false" (or the weaker form of that dichotomy, confirmed v. disconfirmed). Not so in Chinese/Japanese. The vagueness of the allusive, literary style, often referred to by Westerners as "poetic", has been the constant theme of commentary.[13] It also shows up when Japanese learn foreign languages: expressions such as "may-be", "vielleicht", "peut-être" pop up very often in order to reflect the vagueness of Japanese discourse. A question like "When does the train leave?" by a Norwegian husband is likely to elicit the answer "the train leaves, may be, around noon" - when the train in fact (from a Western point of view!) leaves at 12.00, sharp. In this, it should be noted, is not only a certain vagueness of the language but also in the self-presentation of the speaker: to issue a precise, absolute statement is to present oneself as a ruler of the universe, or at least as a director general of Japan National Railroad (JNR). Neither is considered appropriate to put it mildly.

Deductivism presupposes preciseness; if not the whole purpose of deductivism is lost. And the purpose is this: from clear, precise premisses via the iron laws of deductive logic to clear, precise conclusions. It seems that both the Chinese and Japanese languages

would be very imperfect vehicles for such thought figures, by people in the West seen as necessary conditions for science in the Western sense. The units on which propositions are built are no longer simple subjects. The basic figures of thought are relational rather than predicative. There is little or nothing of essences where the logical nature of their interconnection can be explored, and both beginning, the middle and the end of an argumentative chain would be vague rather than precise. Which, of course, only points to other types of intellectual styles, more holistic, more dialectic; all the time keeping in mind that both the Chinese and the Japanese languages are capable of serving as carriers of Western scientific thought, only that it comes less easily since that type of thinking has not developed together with the language structure.

PERSON - NATURE There is much less to say about this dimension. On the one hand so many of the Chinese characters are concrete, taken from natural objects that were depicted in earlier versions of the characters. It is even found in family names today in Japanese, for instance: Tanaka meaning "central paddy", Inoguchi meaning the "mouth of a boar". The absence of clear distinctions between abstract and concrete properties, or aspects, of the same term makes all things more equal. There is less of a world of the concrete and touchable, "nature" to which the human body would also belong, on the one hand and on the other hand a world of the abstract, that which can not be touched, of essences and even souls, the essence of human beings. Both are concrete, both are the same.

In European languages by the same token, there is also a certain personification of nature through the use of genders other than neuter in references to nature (la nature, die Natur) and parts of nature, such as anything in the biosphere. Nevertheless, it is clear that essences and abstractions are attributed to human beings and things created by humans more than to the animal plant and mineral "kingdoms". It is typical that "foxiness" is an attribute of certain human beings rather than of a fox. So by and large we would be inclined to say that the differences between the language families will point in the direction of making human beings different from nature in the European languages, more similar in Chinese and Japanese. The step from essence (abstraction) to soul is but a short one, and this is

what is already built into the languages morphologically.

PERSON - PERSON This again is a fairly comprehensive topic, and of course of immense importance to social scientists since this is where social relations are being implicitly defined, by certain tendencies or biases already built into the languages. We shall try to discuss this important aspect of cosmology in general and social cosmology in particular, under three headings: collectivist vs. individualist, vertical vs. horizontal and inside vs. outside - the general thesis being that Japanese will tend to pick up the former head of these three dilemmas and European languages the latter, with Chinese being more in-between but tending in the Japanese direction.

Let us start with the collectivist vs. individualist dimension and with a somewhat metaphorical but in our view useful way of approaching the problem. Imagine one comes as a total foreigner to a community where English, or Chinese, or Japanese is spoken. The newcomer is completely ignorant of the language, understanding nothing. It comes as a flow of sounds, undifferentiated, more or less like a waterfall, like the chirping of birds, the grunting of animals. Would there in all of this be one sound that stands out, one that -after listening to the phenomenon- the newcomer would recognize and then rerecognize to the point of using it as the first sound he might repeat, with a questioning expression in his face, trying to elicit some type of interpretation?

Here three candidates are suggested: the "I" in the English language, the "wǒ-men" in the Chinese language, and the "hai" in the Japanese language. The first of these is simply interpreted: it is the assertive first person singular pronoun, the symbol of individualism and selfassertion, even capitalized in writing ("I") so that it stands out, shouting its message of individualism to any eye trained on this phenomenon in a page filled with English print. The second one is also assertive, it is the first person plural pronoun, "we". The individual speaker presents himself (or herself, but then Chinese does not reflect gender) as

a part, even a particle in a group, the collective We. This we is a subject, a potential or even actual actor. And this differs from the ubiquitous "hai" found in Japanese discourse, sometimes (incorrectly) translated into the English "yes" and its equivalents in other languages. One interpretation of this "hai", which according to the tone in which it is uttered also may come close to "no", would be something like this: "I am tuned on you, I am receiving the signals you emit, I am switched on".(14) It may, however, also have a connotation of subservience as it is the underdog rather than the topdog who has to confirm that he is tuned in, that the switch remains on. When the topdog utters a question, or a semi-question, this may release a cascade of "hai" among underdog listeners, and the question is often formulated in such a way that the "hai" can be given in affirmative interpretation. In short, "hai" stands for some kind of we-ness only that it is relational between the sender and the receiver, a symbol that they at least for the time being constitute a language community, a relation, not only a group of people.

This can then be contrasted with the well-known Japanese reluctance to use the first person pronoun, particularly in the singular, but also to some extent in the plural. One may even talk about an anti-individualism built into the linguistic habits. Impersonal expressions can be used: Instead of saying "I am going to Yokohama tomorrow" one might say "tomorrow - to go to Yokohama - there is a plan".(15) Reflexive verbs may be used impersonalizing the action, or at least putting the action away from the speaker.

Of course, this is not unknown in other languages, for instance in Spanish. A manager of a jam factory in Chile once had the problem that a worker had lost a thermometer in the jam (which had to be treated at very definite temperatures). It was an important act, even a grave one as the thermometer might disintegrate into the jam. The worker, much to the irritation of the manager out to distribute guilt, expressed what had happened not by saying "Yo perdí el termómetro" but by saying "el termómetro se perdió" - "the thermometer lost itself". Obviously this could be interpreted as an exculpatory formulation, and as such very useful in a situation loaded with tension. It should be pointed out that in a language like Norwegian the corresponding reflexive sentence would be a wrongly formulated sentence, making this type of depersonalization difficult. In English

"the thermometer got lost" does not express the same: the thermometer being a subject capable of losing itself.

Still another way in which this suppression or denigration of the individual expresses itself in Japanese would be through self-effacing comments. If reference has to be made to oneself then they should at least be negative; the opposite being unbearably self-assertive. And that brings out how Westerners in their speech come across to Japanese: as egocentric and self-laudatory, and also as self-assertive, presenting themselves as always in command of the situation (I am going to Yokohama tomorrow), and with themselves in the center of the scene.

Then there is the other side of the collectivist-individualist dimension: not only avoiding individualist expressions, but making full use of collectivist expressions. It does not necessarily take the form of the first person plural pronoun, but of some identified collectivity named, to which one belongs. A Westerner might present himself as "Johan Galtung from the University of Oslo", starting from the inside with the personal attribute, the first name, then the family name and then institutional belongingness. A Japanese would do just the opposite: "University of Oslo's Galtung Johan". First comes the collectivity defining ones position in society, the place of work, then a genitive possessive connective, the Japanese "no"), then the family name to symbolize biological belongingness, and at the end what to the Westerner would be "myself".

Where would a Chinese be located on this dimension? Probably somewhere in-between, capable of using first person pronouns, both in singular and plural, but with a certain predilection for the latter. But they would also be perfectly capable, linguistically, of not using them, letting them be implied by the context. And this brings out an aspect of Chinese already hinted at several times. Chinese is a language which can easily be stretched both in the Western and in the Japanese direction, a language in the middle, a real zhōng wén (middle language) as one might expect from a zhōng guǒ (middle kingdom). It takes less definite stands.

Let us then look at the next aspect, vertical vs. horizontal. No language is insensitive to vertical social distance ("class difference", although this is a somewhat limiting term) and horizontal social distance, the distance to foreigners of various kinds, the difference between inside and outside (the language community), to be discussed below. Each social layer has its way of using the language, its particular vocabulary, its own grammatic paradigms, idiomatic expressions, perhaps syntax, even semantics, its intonation. The social group at the top is usually able to define the way it speaks the language as the "correct" usage, the others being deviations and aberrations, even incorrect, even "vulgar". Also, the social group in the centre of the language community, whether it is or not the social group at the top, is usually able to define its usage of the language as "national", "standard", and other usages are defined as "vernacular". And this becomes even more the case for world languages such as English. Nationally other groups than those at the top and/or in the centre may fight, even successfully, for equal rights within the total language community. But internationally it seems to be taken for granted that the country of origin, such as England, has all the right to define correct usage and other countries none, regardless of how much the language is a "world language". For that reason English could be seen as belonging to the world, just as a "national language" is more and more seen as being a part of a national heritage, meaning by that <u>all</u> parts of the nation, not only the élite. All users could be seen as having more equal rights in defining the language.

Standard Oxbridge or "King's" English; Hannover German, the French of the Touraine, the Italian of Toscana/Umbria, the Spanish of Salamanca, the Chinese of Beijing, Tokyo Japanese - all of these are examples of the pattern just mentioned, thrusting wedges between "standard" and "vernacular", "dialect". In doing so geography is equipped with a vertical gradient, classifying districts as well as individuals. There is moreover the interactive aspect of this, also found in all languages: speech differs according to social relations, one does not talk in the same way to the Foreign Minister and to his driver. And it is not only a question of which personal pronoun is used (in English the differentiation can be made by means of last name or first name respectively, where a German might use <u>Sie</u> or <u>du</u> a French <u>vous</u> or <u>tu</u> ; it is also a question of tone of voice, and the choice of vocabulary.(16) A sentence spoken upwards becomes longer, ornate; the same content expressed downwards may

become shorter, more direct. Horizontal language, to equals, may be located somewhere in between. But that does not necessarily define it as the national language. It may be very local. The slang, jargon, argot, of equals may vary between classes and from place to place.(17)

This, however, is a universal phenomenon although it differs in degree from one language community to the other. Thus, in Norwegian there is certainly not much left of this kind of differentiation particularly after the second personal pronoun singular "du" is now almost universal; "De" having almost disappeared.

But Japanese as a language goes far beyond this, even to the point that one might talk about four different languages: a downward language, an upward language, a very much upward language, and a horizontal language. The syntax will differ, and so will the concrete words used, even to convey more or less the same meaning. Consequently, the Japanese have to know where they stand in relation to each other before correct verbal communication can start. The proverbial act of introduction to each other, with two Japanese gentlemen, both of them dressed in black, approaching each other, gradually bowing down with straight legs and straight backs, experimenting with the relative angle at the hips till they, by uttering sounds of belongingness and names, have found out what will be the correct relative angle; underpinning the mutual presentation by fishing out of the breast pocket of the jacket a visiting card (generally of the same size) becomes meaningful. It is a precondition for talk.

But can they not simply make use of horizontal language? That is the language of mass communication, of newspapers, radio and TV, to be used in impersonal relations where the senders do not know who the receivers are, only that they will be scattered around in Japanese society in such a way that none of the three vertical languages can be used. Of course this would have been the answer if Japanese had been a Western language; it would have moved in the same direction, like Norwegian has at a more superficial level. But the other Japanese languages are there, crying to be used, defining social relations of superordinance and subordinance. One day they may be given up, horizontal Japanese may spread at the expense of the vertical versions of Japanese. But that day is probably still far away.

This, however, does not mean that horizontal language is not used in personal relations, only that it is fragmented. One group may use this type of horizontal language, another one that type - depending on gender, age, occupational category, geographical location (and probably also other factors). Again this means that language becomes a symbol of social attribution, of belongingness as well as relationship in a more vertical sense. Almost every linguistic act defines attributes and relations, meaning that the spoken and written language is not only a social act in the usual sense of being interactive, but in the sense of pointing out, underlining, even reenforcing social divisions and relations. They function like a map of the underlying social territory; without that map territorial location and relation will get lost, and the individual Japanese would feel at a loss. This, incidentally, will also be a reason why Japanese often keep quiet in contexts where Westerners would not: the situation may not be clear enough to define the adequate language. And the problem is not solved by loading one's language with honorifics to be on the safe side: to talk too much upwards may be as insulting to the other person (and thereby also to oneself) as the opposite mistake. When in doubt, keep quiet, wait and see, wait and listen, till somebody else defines the situation.

However, all of this is more than merely an analytic exercise. There is a concrete application of the principle of built-in verticality, morphologically that is, in the Japanese language that could be mentioned. Is a student revolution, or any revolution possible in that society at all, without also changing the language? One basic aspect of revolution is to build down some forms of verticality, for instance relating to command over means of production, or command over means of reproduction - whether the latter is in the biological sphere, linked to aristocracy, or in the sphere of social reproduction in general, linked to meritocracy. The student revolution of the late 1960s can be taken as an example. The "student revolution" is a chain of events, which actually started in Latin America in the early 1960s, then appeared on the West Coast of the United States in the form of the "free speech" movement, and then exploded in China during the Cultural Revolution 1966-69, later on to appear in Western Europe and Eastern United States

and then finally in Eastern Europe (but never to appear in any form, it seems, in the Soviet Union and in Israel). Professors were built down, other members of the university were to some extent built up, possibly as a hoped for consequence of building professors down. One way of doing this was by changing speech habit, addressing them with fewer honorifics, with less respect, even with disrespect. In some languages this could be a question of changing from "Sie" to "du", but without at the same time changing from family name to first name since the latter might bring the class enemy uncomfortably close.

But in Japan no such atomistic change could be done. Not only language molecules, but the whole language would have to be changed. Horizontal language, indicating a belongingness to the same group, bordering on intimacy, was out. Hence, the only alternative to vertical up-language would be vertical down-language. For the Western mind it might be difficult fully to comprehend what this means since it goes so far beyond a mere change in personal pronoun. There are stories of Japanese professors having committed suicide after having been exposed to an experience of that type. As a consequence one might draw the conclusion that this approach is not only too dramatic, but also non-revolutionary or even anti-revolutionary, unless one assumes the dictatorship of the proletariat ("studentiat"?) as the goal of a revolutionary process. A nationwide horizontal society would not at present find its linguistic expression within Japanese language, as it is known, and this constitutes a major impediment to any such change. Whatever change does take place language will command consciousness in the speaker of who is high and who is low. And when all dimensions of hierarchy have been eliminated some new ones would have to take their place. This had actually happened once, after the Meiji revolution, placing those with higher education from elite institutions at the top and others below at various levels in a "degreeocracy", as a successor order to the preceding aristocracy.(18) Hence, it could very easily happen again, if for no other reason, then for purely linguistic reasons: verticality reproduced by linguistic necessity.

In a sense the inside-outside distinction also points to a very basic Japanese peculiarity: a sharp borderline between Japan and the rest of the world, between nihon (the Origin of the sun)

and gai-koku (outside country, "abroad"). Most important is the way in which foreigners are talked about and addressed. They are talked about, to a large extent, as non-persons, using constructions that could also be appropriate for animals and commodities.[19] If the foreigner talks Japanese a problem arises: where does s/he fit into the Japanese hiearchy? What kind of language should be used? If there is no answer to these important questions then two possibilities still remain: to use a foreign language (of which the Japanese are increasingly capable), or to use no language at all, keep quiet. A non-committal smile might be one solution in that kind of situation.

Added to this comes a basic characteristic of Japanese and Chinese from the point of view of European languages: their inaccessability. Not only Europeans, also the Japanese and Chinese themselves would need the full duration of elementary school in order to acquire adequate mastery of their own language, in order to be "alphabetized", which of course is a wrong expression since there are characters and no alphabet ("characterized"?). As for most language learning the difficulties increase with increasing age of the student. Given this it follows that one almost has to be a member of those societies in order to become members of the language communities - not quite, but almost. And from elementary knowledge (e. g. of the famous 1850[20] characters prescribed by the Japanese Ministry of Education as the basic must for any Japanese) there is a very long, seemingly endless ladder to climb towards higher levels or mastery, perfection. Most Japanese and Chinese themselves will never be able to come very high on those ladders, thereby reinforcing whatever rank differentials there may be within those societies.

This actually means that the inside-outside metaphor is only correct up to a certain point. There is a steep dichotomy between speakers and non-speakers of those languages including the way they are addressed and talked about. But once that borderline has been passed there are even considerable distances between periphery and centre of linguistic competence.

In European languages there is hardly any particular distinction between how insiders and outsiders are addressed and talked about. Moreover, the reaction to foreigners aquiring European languages may differ from the reactions found in China and Japan. Particularly in Japan a foreigner capable of speaking adequate Japanese may be, or even should be, considered with a certain tacit uneasiness.[21] He or she will bring difficulties into internal social arrangements, inevitably. Moreover, he or she penetrates into a corpus mysticum, a society reserved for insiders. Linguistic competence is not enough to acquire membership; very complete social belongingness including position in a Japanese organization, probably also Japanese education would be required. And even if these membership criterial are fullfilled the racial distinctions might might still stand out, East and Southeast Asians to some extent excepted. All of this actually only underlines the much more social character of the Japanese language, very simple (for Europeans) in linguistic grammar, very complex in social grammar.

For the Chinese something of the same may apply although the social grammar aspect of Chinese is more comparable to European languages. A civilization setting itself apart, drawing lines between the Chinese on the one hand and the barbarians (North, East, South and West) on the other is not a civilization that would easily admit foreigners,[22] and linguistic obstacles can be used to keep foreigners out. In a sense one might even turn this around for European languages and say that the relative ease with which at least some of them can be aquired (such as Spanish, to some extent also English) serves as a means to let foreigners in, to become a part of the communitiy at large. There is even considerable satisfaction when a foreigner attains linguistic competence: some kind of confirmation of the universal validity of the language, and more so the more exotic the foreigner. France is perhaps the extreme example of this, with the French seemingly regarding their language as la langue universelle. An African talking French perfectly is one more confirmation, walking on two feet, of that proposition. Precisely the opposite may apply to Chinese and Japanese. Not only do they not regard their languages as universal languages; they may not even want them to be universal, but to be particular, languages for themselves, not necessarily for others. These languages are ideal for setting the members of the language community apart to defend their identity. They are less adequate as offensive linguistic instruments to conquer the world.[22]

PERSON - TRANSPERSONAL Can one say that these languages take a stand on the transpersonal, even the transcendental? In a sense yes, but perhaps only indirectly so. Looking at Japanese, for instance, the concreteness of the language, the relative absence of essentialism, might make the language less capable of imbuing anything with soul-like characteristics, be that non-animate or animate nature, and for the latter non-human or human. Because of this symmetry, with everything emerging linguistically without an inner Wesen, one may of course choose either interpretation: that humans are without soul, or that everything else is with soul; Janpanese is so different from European languages because of the de-personification of persons, particularly of oneself, that this cannot be without implications.

At the same time the Japanese language has a special variety for talking "very much" upwards. But that language is not for talking with God, but for talking or thinking about, for instance, the Emperor. In other words, one might say that exactly because the language is so steeply vertical, and nonetheless used on earth, the vertical pyramid remains a non-transcendental one. That does not mean that the Emperor is a person, he is probably a trans-person, or was; embodying Japan and the Japanese. But he is still of this world, meaning that God has become non-transcendental. And this means that Japanese as such is entirely compatible with two basic characteristics of the buddhist belief-system: non-soul and non-God, meaning no personal god.

All European languages render themselves easily to the attribution of soul-like characteristics. There is also a special language for talking to (some might say with) God: quaint patterns of very polite address, also used for kings, like the English forms thou art, thou hast. But this is certainly also available in Japanese, meaning that in some future, when Emperor worship has completely disappeared then the linguistic forms might be resurrected and filled with a monotheistic content. This is no prediction that Japan in the 21st century will become Christian or Muslim, only an indication that the language would not stand in the way where verticality is concerned. There is enough verticality to serve also this purpose. But as it stands today social collectivism and non-transcendental verticality are eminently compatible with buddhism of a mahayana variety. And that collectivism or anti-individualism, would stand in the way of Occidental religions, particularly of individualizing Protestant Christianity.(23)

4. Conclusion

It is now time for an attempt to pull all of this together and the first step is the summary presented in Table 2, which is nothing other than Table 1 with the conclusions of the analysis in section 3 in highly concentrated, epigrammatic form. In contrast with the exploratory horizontal approach used in the preceding section, let us now try to read Table 2 vertically to see what this tells us about the languages as carriers of cosmology.

As regards the European languages: Both space and time are endowed with relatively rigid and rather simple structures. There is a point of departure and a point of arrival, what is in-between is linear and relatively rigid, unambiguous. The knowledge structure comes out as predicative (attributive), and at the same time abstract and precise. In short, the right type of language for both atomistic, dichotomous and deductive reasoning. As concerns the person-nature dimension the languages at least permit conceiving of nature and humans as different (although not very clearly so), and - if we now make a jump-also make it possible to conceive of God and humans as different, the latter equipped with a soul, possibly relating to a possible God. In short, there is a hierarchy with God on top, then human beings, then nature; God being abstract, essentialist although equipped with human features. At the interpersonal level the languages are flexible: there is a predilection for individualism but then there are nevertheless openings for vertical as well as horizontal relations, and no sharp distinctions between ingroups and outgroups.

One may conclude in saying that these are languages that are compatible with European universalism, incorporating the rest of the world, in social formations that although individualist are accommodating to both vertical and horizontal arrangements. This flexibility is lost when one looks at the organization of space, time and knowledge: all of them rigid, linear, centralist.

As regards Japanese, here in a sense we find exactly the opposite pattern. There is considerable flexibility where the organization of space, time and knowledge, as expressed in linguistic patterns, are concerned.

Table 2. Languages as Carriers of Cosmology: A Summary

	European	Chinese	Japanese
Space	linear rigid unambiguous	flexible ambiguous meta-meanings	flexible ambiguous meta-meanings
Time	linear rigid	flexible meta-meanings	flexible meta-meanings
Knowledge	predicative abstract precise	relational concrete vague	relational concrete vague
Person-Nature	nature and humans different	nature and humans same	nature and humans same
Person-Person	individualist vertical and horizontal ingroup and outgroup symbol: I	collectivist vertical and horizontal ingroup only symbol: wǒ-men	collectivist anti-individualist vertical mainly horizontal poorly ingroup only symbol: hai
Person-Trans-personal	soul vs. body dichotomy God vs. humans dichotomy	no soul no God	no soul no God

Neither space, nor time, nor knowledge is equipped with a clear centre, the latter because the language is not adequate for theories with clear deductive reasoning implying that all propositions that can be correctly formulated are true or false and contradicitions will not appear. Then the transpersonal, personal and nature spaces are more placed at the same level, at least linguistically. There is not that tremendous gap between a personal yet transcendental God, via human beings to an inanimate nature.[24] Verticality, however, is clearly expressed in social organization, and is well reflected in one of the world's more extreme languages in this regard. And that language also draws a sharp line between ingroup and outgroup, making Japanese anything but a candidate for a position as universal language.

As regards Chinese, maybe this would be the candidate for universality, not only because it is the language spoken by the largest fraction of humankind?[25] It is flexible both were space, time and knowledge is concerned, and also in terms of relations to nature, to other human beings and to the transpersonal. It stands out as the richest language family among the three compared, not taking such clear stands, leaving options open. In a sense it is to social cosmology what the Russian language is to phonetics. But there is one rather basic shortcoming: the inaccessibility - Chinese tends to remain an ingroup language for that reason. However, what about the vagueness and ambiguity? This is not necessarily an objection. One might argue, as Chinese often tend to do, that reality is ambiguous and hence inadequately mirrored in over-precise statements.

Conclusion: languages are carriers of cosmology, alongside religion, technology, sport and art, the organization of space and time, and so on.[26] Languages condition thought in the language community; they do not determine thought. They induce and condition structures; they do not determine them. And culture/structure conditions languages; weaving all of this together, not seamlessly, but to a family, a scheme of things. And that is what cosmology is all about.

NOTES

A first version of this paper, "Language Structure and Social Structure: the Case of Japan" was written in 1972 and since that time both of us have been discussing these topics in lectures and seminars, particularly at the Inter-University Centre, Dubrovnik; Universiti Sains Malaysia (1979); Ost-Asiatisches Seminar, Freie Universität, Berlin (1983). We are indebted to discussants all places, and particularly to Einar Flydal and Yü, Cheung-Lieh.

(1) The cosmology perspective has been developed in a preliminary form in Johan Galtung, with Tore Heiestad and Erik Rudeng, "On the Last 2500 Years in Western History, And Some Remarks on the Coming 500", in The New Cambridge Modern History, Companion Volume, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1979, pp. 318-362.

(2) As an example of an effort to give a more symmetric position to material/structural and non-material/structural factors, see Johan Galtung, "Structure, Culture and Intellectual Style: An Essay Comparing Saxonic, Teutonic, Gallic and Nipponic Approaches", in Social Science Information (SAGE, London and Beverly Hills) 20, 6, 1981, pp. 817-55. Maybe the basic point is the relative absence of tense in Chinese/Japanese making the expressions less time-bound than in past-present-future conscious Indo-European. Werner Müller, in "Sprache und Naturauffassung bei den Sioux", in Unter dem Pflaster liegt der Strand, H.P. Duerr, ed., Kramer Verlag, Berlin, 1981 points out that Bibri in Costa Rica classifies things as round, and in that category are not only fruits and oranges, but also years, saying much about how that language conceives of that particular unit of time. The basic text in this field remains B.L. Whorf, Language, Thought and Reality, MIT Press, Cambridge,

(3) A condition for this, of course, is the high level of flexibility in the Chinese language. "Broadly it may be said that any word may do duty for any part of speech within the limits set by its intrinsic meaning; and, particularly, that what seem at first sight to be adjectives are in a very large number of cases capable of use as nouns and verbs, and almost universally used as adverbs."
In a discussion of "That Awful German", by Bradley Graham, International Herald Tribune 9 January 1980 (p.14) it is pointed out how long German words have a tendency to be, and that "these words, accompanied by even longer modifying clauses, always seem to come before the verb, which, in many German sentences appears at the end, when one finally learns

what is happening." We cannot resist including his reference to Mark Twain: "I heard lately of a worn and sorely tried American student who used to fly to a certain German word for relief when he could bear up under his aggravations no longer - the only sound was sweet and precious to his ear and healing to his lacerated spirit. This was the word damit. It was only the sound that helped him, not the meaning (it means merely herewith); And so, at last, when he learned that the emphasis was not on the first sylable, his only stay and support was gone, and he faded away and died."

R.A.D. Forrest in The Chinese Language, Faber and Faber, London 1973.

(4) See Nakamura, Hajime, Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples: India-China-Tibet-Japan, Honolulu, The University Press of Hawaii, 1964, p. 184. Such patterns, however, were also found in ancient Greek. In general, the cyclical nature of Greek time perspective is compatible with this type of writing, as it is for Chinese - not meaning by that cyclical as totally exclusive of linear perspectives. For a general discussion of this see Joseph Needham, Time and Eastern Man, London, Royal Anthropological Insititute, 1965, particularly chapter VIII, "Time and History in China and the West", pp. 45-52.

(5) Chang Tung-Sung, "A Chinese Philosopher's Theory of Knowledge" Yenching Journal of Social Studies, Vol. I, no. 2, Beijing, 1939, p. 25. We have made use of a translation into Norwegian, ("Kinesisk og vestlig tenkning", Vinduet, Oslo, 1971, no. 1, pp. 18-28, in turn based on a translation into French, published in Tel Quel, no. 38/1969).

(6) These terms are used here to point out an essential difference in how to conceive of reality, essentially as static, or essentially as dynamic. According to the former perspective bodies, or things, at rest, or with permanent characteristics were more real, the transient being ephemeral. According to the latter perspective bodies, or things can be seen as real also when not at rest because their movement is according to certain invariances (such as the galilean law of motion). A predicate defines a subject in an invariant way; a relation places the invariance at a higher level.

Jean-François Billeter, in "Ding, der Koch, zerlegt ein Rind", Asiatische Studien/Etudes Asiatiques, 36(2) 1982, quotes Paul Valéry, Cahiers, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, Callimard, Paris, 1973-74 on the relation between thought and speech: "Les 3/4 de la métaphysique constituent un simple chapitre de l'histoire du verbe Etre". Valéry

points out how the very circumstance that a correct sentence in an Indo-European language has a noun and verb imposes a causal order, "Notre phrase occidentale crée de la causalité" (p. 88).

This becomes particularly important when the verbs are transitive. Thus, it could be argued that the verbs "développer" and "former" in French should be intransitive only, not transitive. A construction such as "Les pays riches développent les pays pauvres" should be as impossible linguistically as it seems to be in social reality. The construction using reflexive forms, however, is valid both linguistically and empirically: "il se développe", "elle se forme". This construction might sound somewhat artificial in English, however.

(7) Two examples of typical quartets: "no destruction, no construction", and "construction lives in destruction". It does not say that there is or should be destruction or construction: what is pointed out is only how intimately the two are related. I yin i yang chih wei tao; positive and negative elements make tao. (Chang, op. cit. p.22) "One divides into two" and "Two unite into one" are quartets along this line.

As for quartets so also for duets: "crisis" becomes "danger/opportunity": "contradiction" becomes "spear/shield"; "thing" becomes "East/West": "cosmos" becomes "time/space". "Unity of opposites" is the general formula.

(8) Again, it should be emphasized that there is no strict dividing line between Indo-European languages and these Oriental languages. In Russian "I am a boy" is "ja mal'chik", but the inversion, "mal'chik ja" might come closer to the second interpretation mentioned in the text.

(9) The example is taken from I. Elders, "Les rapports de la langue et de la pensée japonaises", Revue Philosophique, No. 156, 1966, pp. 391-406. Elders points out that ki stands for the wooden material in the tree rather than the idea of the tree; hence one cannot say that a ki is in blossom, the flowers of the tree may be in blossom. As another example of the concreteness of the Japanese language he takes the word tsumi, which stands both for "sin" and for the infraction

of a regulation; just like kimochi stands for my "inner state" both in the sense of "health", and "mood". To make clear what is meant the Japanese would have to use concrete examples, or rely on the context.

(10) This debate, then, about whether "essences" can be said to have an indpendent existence prior to the things, ante rem, or only in the things themselves, in rebus, is more meaningful within the context of Indo-European than these Oriental languages.

(11) Elders, op.cit., p. 405, makes the point that the examples are carrying the burden of proof: "La démonstration, au sens strict du mot, est souvent presque absente. Une analyse des concepts, une division du thême et des définitions ne sont pas nécessaires, parfois elles sont même embarrassantes. Ce sont les exemples qui le plus souvent entrainent l'adhésion". Elders is probably not himself aware of his own cultural limitation when he refers to what appears to be deductive reasoning as demonstration "au sens strict du mot".

(12) Both atomism and deductivism can both be associated with Descartes. Seen from the outside these pillars of Western epistemology have as their consequence that entities are fragmented into smaller units that are then studied separately, and relinked to each other deductively. There is a primacy of logical over other ("organic", "inner meaning") linkages. Again Western languages are not the same in this regard. As Arthur Koestler said in an interview sent after his death (in West German TV, 4 March 1983): " You cannot say in English 'die innere Logik der Ereignisse' - there is only one logic",

(13) James A. Michener in the best-seller Sayonara, Corgi 1979, pp. 164-65, gives some examples of the ambiguities of the Japanese language, concluding "it isn't clear, because I'm only guessing that's what the stranger meant - Our life in Japan is one of implied meanings, hidden significances."

(14) The Polish word tak ("yes") may be interpreted the same way, having a very high frequency in Polish parlance. In Norwegian many young people use the word riktig ("correct") the same way, meaning "go on", not "I hereby certify that what you have said is correct".

(15) Elders, op. cit., p. 398. As Elders adds: "Pour la femme de cet homme il est clair que c'est son mari qui vient partir en voyage". However, Elders adds that the younger generation and those who have been more in contact with foreigners (meaning "Westerners") "utilisent plus souvent les pronons personnels".

In general Hindi seems to have most characteristics in common with Indo-European language in general, as it should; but then there are characteristics that are more in the direction of Chinese and Japanese. Thus, "Hindi speaking Indians have a tendency to use the words ham, "we" and hamara, "ours" where Danes would say I and mine. I think this is due to the circumstance that Indians have a tendency to see themselves as a parts of a bigger unit, where the Dane is inclined to put himself in the center."

From "Nogle Betragtninger over Sprogets Medvirken ved Dannelsen at Verdensbilledet", Danmarks Lærerhøjskole, Copenhagen, 1982, by Finn Thiesen, p. 199.

(16) The following four expressions all stand for "welcome home", but at four different levels of social relations:
okaeri-asobase; okaeri-nasaimase; okaeri-nasai; okaeri. Of course, honorifics, politeness may also be a technique to create distance. Distance and verticality may go together as in the impolite politeness of bureaucrats. An isolated village may defend itself against "intruders" with excessive politeness, which may also be a way of making fun of people.
Bernhard Karlgren, in Sound and Symbol in Chinese, Hong Kong University Press, Hong Kong 1962, has this irresistible anecdote as an illustration of what Chinese politeness implies (p. 94):

A visitor called, clad in his best robes, and awaited the arrival of his host seated in the reception room. A rat, which had been disporting itself upon the beams above, insinuating its nose into a jar of oil which was put there for safe keeping, frightened at the sudden intrusion of the caller, ran away, and in so doing upset the oil-jar, which fell directly on the caller, striking him a severe blow, and ruining his elegant garments with the saturation of the oil. Just as the face of the guest was purple with rage at this disaster, the host entered, when the proper salutations were performed, after which the guest proceeded to explain the situation. 'As I entered your honourable apartment and seated myself under your honourable beam, I inadvertently

terrified your honourable rat, which fled and upset your honourable oil-jar upon my mean and insignificant clothing, which is the reason of my contemptible appearance in your honourable presence.'

(17) This seems to be where socio-linguistics enters with particular force not so much exploring the social significance of the differences between as within languages. A book with the attractive title Language in Japanese Society: Current Issues in Sociolinguistics, F.C.C. Peng, editor, University of Tokyo Press, Tokyo, 1975 contains nothing of direct reverence to the present exploration. Discontent is also formulated by S. Takdir Alisjahbana, in his The Failure of Modern Linguistics in the Face of Linguistic Problems of the Twentieth Century, Kuala Lumpur, University of Malaya 1965. He points out that "while the other social sciences, like economics, politics - even sociology and anthropology - are intensively interested in national and international development, structural linguistics and phonology have more and more isolated themselves from social and cultural problems --" (p. 8) and "What they/the leaders of developing nations/need is not descriptive, but prescriptive linguistics. It is thus very regrettable that precisely in these processes and problems that are crucial for the languages of developing countries, processes and problems which can be formulated succinctly in the terms standardization and modernization, modern linguistics, through its static, formal and micro approach, is least able to contribute " (p. 15). In other words, linguistics becomes like botany. However, Alisjahbana does not discuss how languages may carry developmental codes, which might be a more important aspect of the interface between languages and development than the linguistic engineering problems Alisjahbana has in mind.

(18) The preceding order was by and large by birth, the shi-nō-kō-shō (samurai-farmer-artisan-merchant) system: "degreeocracy" would be by the merit accumulated through degrees, the point being not the ranking of the person according to subject or grade, but of the university according to prestige. See Johan Galtung, "Social Structure, Education Structure and Life-long Education: The Case of Japan", Essays in Peace Research Vol, III, Ejlers, Copenhagen, 1976, chapter 11.

(19) Thus, "Professor Galtung is giving lecture there" would be "Galtung-sensei wa achirade kōgishiteoraremasu" if Galtung were a Japanese: "Galtung wa asokode kōgishiteimasu" as he is not. The total lack of honorifics makes the expression similar to one that could also be used for dogs. That this clear demarcation of the nai-gai distinction might be painful for the Japanese wife of a gai-jin goes without saying.

(20) It should be pointed out that this is a minimum, and although it assures some competence it may also serve to reinforce the class structure of a society run as a "degreeocracy", by defining a minimum for the lower ranks of The social order. See A Guide to Reading & Writing Japanese, The 1.850 Basic Characters and the Kana Syllabaries, Tuttle, Tokyo, 1975. The 1850 characters include the "881 characters designated by the Ministry of Education as the basic requirement for the six Years of elementary school" (p.7).

Derk Bodde, China's Cultural Tradition, Dryden Press Hinsdale, Illinois 1957 has the following to say about class differences in Chinese (p. 13): " --- even a native Chinese requires years of study to master the written language (also commonly known as literary or classical Chinese). And yet so great was the prestige of the literary language that until recently almost everything was written in it, aside from fiction and drama (which for the very reason that they followed the colloquial idiom, were looked down on in traditional China).

(21) This particular theme is elaborated at some length by Roy A. Miller in Japan's Modern Myth, The Language and Beyond, Weatherhill, New York & Tokyo, 1982, ch. 8, p. 157. A foreigner capable of some phrases in Japanese is very much appreciated a foreigner capable of really talking Japanese is not. But this does not only apply to language but also to insight in matters Japanese in general. A foreigner who has understood a little of Japan is complimented; when the understanding starts getting deep he is feared. Western universalism produces foreigners with a very high level of insight in the West; they are welcomed and praised although usually accorded only secondary positions. Japanese (and Chinese) particularism produces a strong inside-outside, nai-gai divide: foreigners are to be kept at a distance. All of ch. 8 in Miller's book deals with this.

(22) Of course, any language is also the carrier of a certain cultural code and hence not universal insofar as the adoption of that language would be at the expense of other cultural codes. But Chinese and Japanese are also difficult, in the sense of time-consuming, to learn for an adult with no prior knowledge of the language. However, as a semi-secret language they are very adequate: a network of Chinese (or Japanese) abroad, eg Chinese belonging to the same clan, or Japanese belonging to the same company, will to some extent be shielded off from peeping Western eyes. The Japanese could colonize Taiwan (1894-1945) and Korea (1910/11-1945) also linguistically, using Chinese characters as a basis; but it is doubtful whether they could have done so in countries with other systems of writing.

An interesting study about Chinese marxist terms has been made by Wolfgang Lippert, Entstehung und Funktion einiger Chinesischer marxistischer Termini, Franz Steiner Verlag, Wiesbaden, 1979. The basic point is that marxist terms came into Chinese via Japanese and underwent considerable change on the way: "Eine Reihe marxistischer Termini, die aus dem japanischen ins Chinesische übernommen wurden, erhielten in der Folge eine veränderliche sprachliche Gestalt" (from the preface). The book may serve as one continous warning against believing that Chinese marxist terminology can be directly understood the same way as it is in the West.

(23) Elders, op. cit., p.p. 403 f." -- on voit combien la strucutre du language est proche de la pensée buddhiste, où tout de vient un flottement subjectif".

Nakamura, op. cit. p. 575 characterizes the Japanese attitude in this connection as follows: "Thus, the Japanese people have seldom confronted objective reality as sharply distinguished from knowing subjects. This attitude may be called their common way of thinking. It is often said that they are practical and adept in techniques of action, but that they are rather weak in studying the objective basis of their practical action because they are too anxious to accomplish the action. It is partially owing to this characteristic that they have been inclined, for centuries, to follow foreign ideas with an uncritical mind". This judgement, of course, presupposes, that Western thought is somehow superior and does not explain how Nakamura was ever able to write his superb book - in Japanese. Nevertheless it is clear that a language like English, for instance, has great capacity for producing abstractions, simply by means of gerunds, adding -ing to verbs, or adding -ty to many nouns or adjectives.

(24) In the West this gap is perhaps nowhere so clearly expressed as in the very first pages of the Old Testament, in Genesis, with man above women. It is interesting to note that in Spanish comrade, Genosse can be used both in masculine and feminine: compañero, compañera. But this does not work for the boss: like in French le chef does not have a feminine form, el jefe does not in Spanish either (it does in contemporary German, however, die Chefin). Females may be equal, but not above. For an exploration of differences between masculine and feminine speech, see V. Aebischer and C. Forel, Parlers masculins, parlers féminins, Paris, 1983.

(25) However one subdivides the Chinese language community it comes out considerably above the number of people talking English (350 million), Spanish (200 million), Arabic (120 million), Portugese (115 million). Figures from The Economist, 26 January 1980, based on a study made by Le Monde.

(26) This is the theme of a forthcoming study, Johan Galtung, Social Cosmology, An Approach to Civilization Theory.