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Conceptual Universalization in the Transnational Nineteenth Century

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The nascent discipline of global intellectual history must confront a fundamental question: What makes the global? What defines the scale and shape of this history's globe, and is it dealing with one globe or several? Until it has resolved this problem of definition, global intellectual history is likely to remain a series of "big-frame" national histories—how intellectuals in one country grappled with ideas from elsewhere—or a collection of comparative studies that recapitulate national frames as they try to overcome them. We can begin to answer the question by investigating specific examples of concepts moving *in the world* (not between nations). By examining the patterns of their movement in a given period, the conditions that made their movement possible, and the consequences of the movement for the concepts themselves, we can begin to understand the scale and organization of intellectual fields that are "global" in historically specific terms, defined by and defining particular moments. With such a working understanding, we can start to develop methods of research. This chapter is meant to explore the shape of one transnational intellectual field in the nineteenth century and to propose methods that may apply to other parts of the enterprise of global intellectual history. My example is the intellectual field defined by the universalization of concepts from European social thought in the nineteenth century. We can see the outlines of the field by tracing the ways in which originally European ideas such as "civilization" and "society" reached Japan during the Meiji period (1868–1912).

My argument is that as concepts moved around the world, they experienced multiple mediations, including translation into other languages and mass reproduction in the form of textbooks and publications for popular audiences. The resulting process of abstraction attenuated the concepts' connection to their originators and to the European historical examples from which they were derived. Mediation and abstraction allowed the "universalization" of concepts in a specific sense: the *use* of a concept as if it were valid in all places at all times. To avoid confusion, I want to make clear that I am not talking about the *universality* of concepts, a quality presumed to inhere in their meaning. Rather, I am talking about a *universalization* that can be observed in a concept's use. (I will address universality later.) In the nineteenth century the movement, circulation, or "travel" of concepts was essential to their universalization. Travel thus created the transnational intellectual field that should be the proper object of a global intellectual history for the nineteenth century. The extent of intellectual circulation by the end of the century may show that the scale of this intellectual field finally became coextensive with the geographical globe, to the disadvantage of other intellectual "worlds" defined by distinct processes of universalization. Investigating this and other issues requires research into the technological, political, and economic conditions underlying the field's emergence; the processes of mediation through which concepts spread; and the socially situated uses to which they were put. In trying to define and study a *transnational* intellectual field, the project I propose differs from recent fruitful studies of conceptual transfer, translation, and "crossed history."[1] Each of these tends simply to multiply the frame of national history in positing departures and arrivals, source and target languages, or the distinct actors of intercrossings. As I will note along the way, "nation" was one idea universalized during the nineteenth century. The political consequences are part of the history of conceptual universalization. Allowing national frames to define the method of global intellectual history, however, would install an intellectual and political blind spot in the enterprise just as it is being founded.

The Era of Civilization and Enlightenment

The period in Japan beginning in the early 1870s, shortly after the establishment of a new state in 1868, and extending into the middle of the 1880s is frequently called the era of "civilization and enlightenment" (*bunmei kaika*). The period saw intensive study of the institutions, technology, and thought of European countries, primarily those of Britain, France, and Germany, and the United States. Following the example set in the 1850s and 1860s by the Tokugawa state and some of the individual domains of that period, the new government organized study missions to North America and Europe that investigated a host of aspects of life in these regions, from systems of government to newspapers and education. The Meiji government also sent students to study in European and U.S. universities. In addition, it enacted a series of reforms, many modeled on institutions and practices observed abroad, including the introduction of a military draft, public schools and institutes of higher learning, and new legal codes.

The era is remarkable for the number of new concepts that appeared. With the government promoting the study of foreign languages, a wide range of European and North American works on philosophy, law, and political economy were translated into Japanese, including Montesquieu's *L'esprit des lois* (1748, trans. 1874), the American Declaration of Independence (1776, trans. 1866), Johann Bluntschli's *Allgemeines Staatsrecht* (1851, trans. 1872), and John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty* (1859, trans. 1872). Translation produced a steady flow of neologisms, from names for technologies such as the telegraph (*denpō*) to designations for abstract concepts like "society" (ultimately translated as *shakai*), which posed a particular challenge that I will discuss later. The phrase *bunmei kaika* joined two such words, each a translation of the English *civilization* and its cognates in other European languages.[2] The duplication in the Japanese phrase, which is lost in the customary reverse translation as "civilization and enlightenment," alerts us that the meaning of civilization was in dispute. *Bunmei*, moreover, is written with characters signifying "letter(s)" and "brightness" (文明), and *kaika* with characters signifying "opening" and "change" (開化). The two translations recall an ambiguity in the concept of civilization as it

emerged in France and Britain, as to whether civilization was a condition or a process.[3] Translation, then, was a part of debates in the 1870s and 1880s over the nature of civilization and how to accomplish it.

Fukuzawa Yukichi, one of the era's most important intellectuals, defined civilization in his book *Outline of a Theory of Civilization* (*Bunmeiron no gairyaku*, 1875) as not a state of material comfort but a process that included the moderation of human sentiment, the increase of knowledge, and "the tendency toward successive improvement of human intercourse for the better."[4] Described in this way, the value of civilization would seem self-evident, but Fukuzawa and other reformers inside and outside the government commonly distinguished between civilization as end and means. In *Outline of a Theory of Civilization*, Fukuzawa disparages Japan in comparison to Europe but argues that European civilization is merely the most advanced example of civilization at present and thus a model to follow rather than an end in itself.[5] "The independence of the country is the goal," he declared, "and the civilization of the nation [*kokumin*] is the means to reach that goal."[6] Remarks like these reveal the instrumental orientation of much civilization and enlightenment thought. The orientation supported a tutelary attitude toward the inhabitants of the Japanese islands: for Japan to survive, the argument went, the people had to be civilized. There were disputes over how to reach this end, with some, like Fukuzawa, stressing the transformation of mentalities and others focusing on material changes, but all agreeing that the people would be civilized whether or not they desired it. Many of the reforms that resulted, from changes in diet and hairstyles to changes in religiosity and the organization of labor and leisure, were carried out with such disregard for existing patterns of life that Takashi Fujitani likens them to a "cultural terror."[7]

Fukuzawa's view of civilization as the means to achieve independence was not up-by-the-bootstraps idealism. The treaties that the Tokugawa government signed with the United States and the European empires in the 1850s and 1860s limited Japanese sovereignty so long as standards of civilization did not prevail within its borders. Revising the treaties, with their much resented privileges of extraterritoriality, depended on demonstrating that Japan had become a civilized country as defined by European international law. The Meiji government's

domestic policy of civilizing the people and its diplomatic policy of treaty revision thus operated with the same logic and goal.[8] The conjoint strategy reflected the prescriptive force of the late-nineteenth-century system of states and empires: the only way out of semicolonial domination was to establish a sovereign state ruling a civilized nation. Even having come this far, however, we can recognize that concepts like state and nation gained their normative power through a transnational intellectual field that grew, among other ways, through the work of translation. The history of this field cannot be grasped if we confuse historical phenomena like the nation-form with analytical categories.

Many of the new institutions and social practices that appeared in this period endured. It therefore has a privileged place in historical writing on nineteenth- and twentieth-century Japan. To sketch out the most common tendencies in historiography since the end of the Asia Pacific War: In the 1950s and 1960s, modernists in Japan and modernization theorists abroad treated the era of civilization and enlightenment as the political, economic, and intellectual beginning of the modern in Japan. English-speaking historians presented the period as Japan's Enlightenment, analogous to a period in Atlantic intellectual history that they associated with the establishment of democratic capitalism. By this account, the example of civilization and enlightenment could provide the foundation for a similar transformation of Japan and its realignment as an ally in the Cold War.[9] Historians in Japan during the same period did not take as optimistic a view of the early Meiji period. Liberals such as Maruyama Masao, a scholar of political thought, turned to the era to ask what had gone wrong in Japan. Scholars like Maruyama, often referred to as postwar modernists, used the Enlightenment in Atlantic history as the basis for negative comparisons of Japan with Europe. That is, the era of civilization and enlightenment was the origin of a distorted intellectual and political modernity in Japan that led to fascism and a disastrous war. In more hopeful moments, modernists wondered whether it might also offer the foundation for a true, European-style modernity, but they did not think that establishing it in Japan would be as simple as modernization historiography suggested.[10]

Modernization and modernist historiography, each tending to focus on the state and its allied reformers, were challenged in the 1960s

and 1970s by a variety of social history known as *minshūshi*, "people's history," which examined the consequences of Meiji-era reforms for farmers, laborers, and other non-elite groups. Irokawa Daikichi and other scholars of people's history also searched the era for precedents for a progressive Japanese democracy.[11] In the late 1980s and 1990s, the relatively simple view of the "people" in people's history came under scrutiny in Japan and the United States as historians reevaluated the era of civilization and enlightenment as the period in which a Japanese national identity was solidified and bound to the state. This historiographical turn was a critical revision of people's history among Japanese historians, and it finally put an end to histories of modernization in English-language scholarship, which had staggered on for many years.[12] Because such reevaluations of the period required a resolute historicization of ideas of nation and nationality, they eventually reinvigorated the study of the era's intellectual history. Some of the most interesting recent work on the period focuses on the history of translation and the adoption of such concepts as state, sovereignty, and rights, so that it now is common to speak of the "translation culture" (*hon'yaku bunka*) of the early Meiji period.[13]

A few observations on these trends in historiography, thinking particularly about intellectual history: First, the idea of the early Meiji period as the inception of the modern remains strong. Even historians who argue that some of the practices and institutions that appeared in the Meiji period have pre-Meiji roots view the 1870s and 1880s as a decisive transformation. Second, the paradigm of influence and reception seems almost unmovable. The historiography of the 1950s and 1960s presented the intellectual history of early Meiji as the adoption of "Western" ideas. The more recent work on translation and conceptual history takes a more sophisticated view of the process, but the focus on transfer into Japan is basically unchanged. Both the paradigm of reception and the emphasis on the Meiji period as a beginning, however, tend to obscure the histories *outside* Japan of the concepts in question. Many of the key concepts dated only to the seventeenth and eighteenth century in Europe. As concepts they were thoroughly historical, not "Western." The stress on reception, moreover, often overlooks the politics behind the use of concepts such as civilization and rights. Recent work on the intellectual history of civilization and

enlightenment notably tends more toward Reinhart Koselleck–style conceptual history than a Quentin Skinner– or a J. G. A. Pocock–style history that accounts for the political usage of the new concepts.[14] Even the forthrightly political people's history focused on popular struggle against ideas imposed from above without inquiring deeply into the source of their authority.

Worldly Paths

We can account for the normative force of the concepts that appeared in the early Meiji period, while avoiding the reductive emphasis on use over meaning in Skinner's work, by asking how concepts such as civilization were universalized.[15] These concepts could legitimate the new government's efforts to reorganize Japanese society because they were alleged to be true anywhere, anytime. To understand the process of universalization, however, we have to reconsider the era of civilization and enlightenment in Japan in terms of a longer and broader history, which is essentially the transnational history of liberalism. Doing so requires setting aside the paradigm of reception and relinquishing the national border that it draws around the beginning of the Japanese modern. With this in mind, I offer several examples of ideas of society and social change that traveled from Europe to Japan during the nineteenth century in ways that illustrate how social thought developed through transnational circulation.[16]

The concept of civilization that appeared in eighteenth-century France and Britain was twinned from its beginning with the idea of progress. Forms of governance figured prominently in definitions of both.[17] The Scottish philosopher Adam Ferguson notably attached an evolutionary history to forms of political organization in *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767). Ferguson's argument, which tied the historical development of civilization to the creation of republican government, was widely read on the European continent, where it appeared in the work of Benjamin Constant, Victor Cousin, and other French liberals during the Bourbon Restoration. (Ferguson's *Essay* appeared in French in 1783.) The idea that civilization developed in time was essential to the case that François Guizot made for a liberal

French monarchy in *Histoire générale de la civilisation en Europe* (1828). Guizot contended that a liberal monarchy that avoided the "excesses" of the Revolution but preserved its reforms was the *telos* of European history.[18] Guizot's arguments on the evolution of political institutions gained wide attention (Alexis de Tocqueville, Karl Marx, and John Stuart Mill read him with interest).[19] Four translations of Guizot's book appeared in Britain between 1837 and 1846. One of two translations from 1837 was published in the United States in 1840 and then rereleased with notes by Caleb Sprague Henry, a professor of philosophy and history in New York.[20] Fukuzawa drew on Guizot in *Outline of a Theory of Civilization* to establish that civilization was a historical stage that Japan could reach. Fukuzawa, however, read Henry's annotated edition of a British translation.[21] The path of ideas from Ferguson to Fukuzawa begins in Scotland and passes geographically through France, England, and the United States before reaching Japan, with successive translations, annotations, and "repurposings" along the way.

The European historical novel, another important means of describing society and its transformations, also had a far-flung career. Novels like Walter Scott's *Waverly* (1814), which led the rise of the genre, are commonly taken as the sign of changes in historical consciousness during the nineteenth century, including a growing opinion that social forms evolved in ways that could not be resisted.[22] Whereas Guizot gave a history to civilization, Scott made one for the nation — potentially any nation, once the genre was established. He won followers in Europe, such as Alexandre Dumas *père* in France, and around the world. In the United States, James Fenimore Cooper used Scott's methods to describe the evolution of colonies into a nation, and writers such as José de Alencar followed Cooper's example to create "foundational fictions" in South and Central America. Scott's descriptions of the relationship of the British periphery to England had a profound effect on fiction in Britain's overseas periphery, its settler colonies. The encounter of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee with the work of Scott and his contemporary Edward Bulwer-Lytton helped transform Indian fiction.[23] Scott and Bulwer-Lytton were translated into Japanese in the 1880s, as writers were looking for new techniques to describe a rapidly changing society. Another contribution came through translations via English of French historical novelists such as Dumas.[24]

The circulation of liberal political economy, whose theory and rhetoric contributed to new descriptions of society and its evolution, was similarly complex. The misnamed founder of liberal economics, Adam Smith, innovated through summary in *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), by drawing together currents of thought in England, Scotland, and the European continent, including those of the French Physiocrats.[25] Jean Baptiste Say, who considered himself an interpreter of Smith despite his own contributions to the field, helped reintroduce these ideas in France.[26] In turn, Say's *Traité d'économie politique* (1803) was translated in Britain in 1821. Along with editions of Smith and David Ricardo, the translation spurred the popularization of liberal theory in the United States and became a college standard.[27] The first course in liberal economics offered in Japan—incidentally taught by Fukuzawa Yukichi—used an American textbook marked by Say's work, Francis Wayland's *Elements of Political Economy* (1837).[28] The first works of liberal theory published in Japanese also were translations of books meant for non-specialists: John Hill Burton's *Political Economy for Use in Schools and for Private Instruction* (1852), roughly half of which Fukuzawa included in *Conditions in the West* (*Seiyō jijō*, 1867), and William Ellis's *Outlines of Social Economy* (1846), translated by Kanda Takahira as *Elementary Economics* (*Keizai shōgaku*, 1867). The latter was a double translation from a Dutch edition by Simon Vissering, Kanda's teacher at Leiden University.[29]

Reproduction, Mediation, Abstraction

These examples offer rich material for studies of "translingual practice" in the manner of Lydia Liu and the collection *Words in Motion*. One case would be the translation of the English word "society" and related words in other European languages (*société, Sozietät,* etc.). Crafting a Japanese equivalent for "society" was difficult because no word existed to signify a group whose members were formally equal but whose scale extended beyond acquaintances. The lexicographer Saitō Tsuyoshi found that writers tried out more than forty words and phrases between the 1790s and 1880s. The compound *shakai*, which ultimately prevailed, was originally coined in Chinese (*shehui*) as a translation for the Dutch *klooster*

("cloister" or "monastery" in English). It entered Japanese in 1826 with this meaning and was not clearly used as a translation for "society" until 1875, finally becoming the generally accepted translation after 1877. Other translations continued to circulate until the late 1880s.[30] It would be possible, following Liu, to treat "society"/*shakai* and other negotiated translations as signifiers for heterolinguistic signs, that is, signs whose production requires more than one language. In light of its importance in treaty revision, "civilization"/*bunmei* could be seen as what Liu calls a "super-sign," a variety of heterolinguistic sign that articulates relations of imperial domination through a meaning established by treaty.[31] According to this approach, the history of civilization and enlightenment thought in Japan would be the history of heterolinguistic signs.

Translation-focused studies are troubled, however, by several problems. Most have difficulty deciding on the difference between a word and a concept. Clearly these are not identical, but the slippage means that Liu's recent work and many of the stimulating essays in *Words in Motion* are effectively conceptual history, despite the ostensible focus on words and translation.[32] More gravely, translation studies tend toward a binary logic exemplified by Liu's focus on linguistic transactions between English and Chinese to establish equivalents for terms such as the English "right."[33] Like "society," "right" was a heterolinguistic sign (or, better, a concept with signifiers in *several* languages) well before the British and Chinese empires clashed. Negotiations over a Chinese equivalent continued an already transnational history that constrained the potential meanings of both "right" and its eventual equivalent, *quanli*. Liu gestures toward the longer history, but the emphasis on creation of equivalents posits an essential difference between a concept's national history—starting with the struggle to find an equivalent—and what would be, from this perspective, its extranational prehistory.[34] Aside from resurrecting the national frames they hope to escape (a politically hazardous tendency when dealing with the age of nationalism), national or international histories of translation lose sight of the source of the normative power of concepts in circulation in the nineteenth century, which was not the creation of equivalents, or the concepts' "Western" origin, but the assertion that they applied in all places at all times. The key question for any history of concepts in circulation must be how they were universalized.

We cannot understand universalization simply by studying translation, reception, or appropriation. There are essential lessons to learn from how and why ideas traveled the world at specific moments. The histories of travel I offered earlier provide interesting examples. First, there *appears* to be a lot of serendipity, even chance, in how ideas traveled. If a certain book fell into the hands of someone with certain linguistic skills, it might be translated. The more ubiquitous the book was, the more likely this would happen. Thus Burton's *Political Economy* and Ellis's *Outlines of Social Economy*, which were in the domain of political economy but not especially important, were translated into Japanese and had an important influence. As the cases of Burton and Ellis also suggest, many of the works through which concepts such as civilization and society traveled belonged to the vulgate of ideas. They were textbooks or books written for popular audiences. Thus while the ideas of Smith, Ricardo, and other key figures in political economy eventually made it to Japan, they passed through one or several mediations involving other writers. Translation—another kind of mediation—also was part of the movement of ideas. But this was truly a matter of *movement*, not just the creation of equivalents, because works often circulated in languages other than the one in which they were first written. (Recall that Fukuzawa read Guizot in a British translation annotated by a professor in the United States.) For Japan as for many countries, English was the most important language of translation; anything translated into English was likely to get more attention. Finally, in the early Meiji period there seems to have been no sense that one should find the original source of an idea. More important was its usefulness in responding to the dire geopolitical situation.

These observations, all concerning how concepts arrived in Japan, have to be tempered by one more that turns the others on their heads (or puts them upright). The fact that concepts such as civilization traveled so widely, through so many different circuits, that they were repeatedly picked up, translated, and used by authors without acknowledgment of the source—if they knew the source—shows that the concepts were recognizable in places far from their country or region of origin. That writers treated signifiers from different languages as if they were equivalents, regardless of whether languages

are ultimately incommensurable, is further proof. In light of the transnational currency of concepts like society, what *seems* to be a large degree of contingency in which works became influential simply indicates the concepts were available in *any number* of works by this time. The fact that many of the concepts arrived in mediated form—through the intellectual vulgate, through translation—means it was not necessary to go to the origin to get the concepts, which by this time may have been more recognizable in their popularized than in their original forms anyway. Such recognizability came from the *reproduction* of concepts, not their original *production*. And as much as geopolitics inflected the creation of equivalents—a key part of the circulation of ideas—the readiness with which equivalents were accepted shows that these concepts' lingering associations with particular parts of the globe did not leave them looking any less universal.

Several material factors underlay the patterns of circulation of European concepts in the nineteenth century. Changes in technologies of publishing and transportation, particularly the rotary press and steam navigation, made the circulation of printed matter cheaper and faster.[35] Increases in literacy in western and central Europe and North America supported the rise of publishers offering popularizing books in large print runs. (This was the specialty of one of Guizot's British publishers, the Edinburgh firm of William and Robert Chambers, which also published Burton's introduction to political economy.) The large runs may have been meant for domestic markets but nonetheless injected more physical volumes into international circuits. European imperialism also affected the movement of concepts outside Europe. The transportation channels established by the European empires facilitated the physical circulation of works, while the familiarity of imperial languages such as French and English made them accessible, in translation if not in the original languages. Students trained at European or North American universities, such as Kanda, or at missionary-founded local colleges, introduced concepts from European thought to non-European intellectual milieus. Colonial governance made some European ideas, such as those clustered around the concept of "population," a part of social practice.[36] Similar reorganizations of governmentality could be found in noncolonized areas, as the example of Meiji Japan shows. In both cases, intellectuals often regarded

European ideas as technologies to block further imperial incursion, even as they tried to distinguish the ideas from imperialism's ideological apparatus.[37]

These material factors distinguish the era when conceptual universalization as I have defined it could take place. The process of universalization that can be seen in the movement of ideas such as society and civilization from Europe to Japan was grounded in print mass-production and circuits of communication facilitated by imperialism. More broadly, it was grounded in capitalism and imperialism in their nineteenth-century forms. The shift from the free-trade imperialism of the middle of the century to the formal colonization of its end facilitated universalization by more tightly linking distant parts of the world to Europe and, in the 1890s, to the United States. (While my examples are limited to the nineteenth century, we can therefore extrapolate that this mode of universalization probably dominated until the era of decolonization.) I have stressed the importance of reproduction over original production, but it should be clear that this historically specific process of universalization included engagement and revision, not simple repetition, and did not take place without antagonists such as the Neo-Confucian social thought that had been hegemonic in Japan since the early seventeenth century.

The paradigm of "intercrossing" from the work of Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann allows us to describe the mode of engagement under these historical conditions with more precision. Werner and Zimmermann use intercrossing to describe the ways that two or more concepts or bodies of thought are modified through mutual contact. As opposed to the linear trajectories of influence posited by studies of conceptual transfer, Werner and Zimmermann stress that contact affects all "parties" in an exchange. Nonetheless, the resulting transformations may be asymmetrical: one side may be affected differently and to a greater extent than the other.[38] Outside the Atlantic world, asymmetrical interaction with Europe was the norm in the nineteenth century. When Neo-Confucian views of governance and post-Enlightenment social thought crossed in Meiji Japan, for example, Neo-Confucianism emerged greatly diminished, as an "Oriental" particularism, even though not long ago it had been the source of Enlightenment adulation.

It should now be possible to theorize, inductively, the process of conceptual universalization characteristic of the nineteenth century and the role that the travel of concepts played in it. As concepts like society and civilization circulated, their connection to their original source was attenuated. Scottish ideas of political economy, for example, reached Japan after many mediations along multiple paths. Smith's ideas (themselves a synthesis) moved through Say to Wayland and thereby to Japan, where Fukuzawa used Wayland's textbook in his course on economics. The same constellation of ideas reached Japan along different paths, such as Kanda's translation of Ellis (based on a Dutch translation of the English original) and Fukuzawa's translation of Burton. As concepts moved further away from their origin, along multiple paths, the first source may have become irrelevant because it was no longer the means through which people encountered the concepts. At the same time, propositions first derived from examples in European history, such as Guizot's view that liberal monarchies were the *telos* of the evolution of civilization in Europe, became increasingly disconnected from those examples as they were used to understand human communities in other parts of the world. The result was a process of abstraction through which a concept such as civilization, originally a description of human life in Europe, became "civilization in general." The process could be sped up by efforts to disengage the generality of concepts from the exemplarity of Europe, as when Fukuzawa argued in *Outline of a Theory of Civilization* that Europe was only the most advanced example of civilization, not civilization per se. Intercrossings with competing views of the order of human relations whose result was asymmetrical served the process of abstraction: the "disqualification" of competing ideas as regional particularisms compounded European ideas' appearance of generality. As a consequence, it became possible to use them as if they applied to all human communities in all places and all times. In a phrase, they were universalized.[39]

Universalization and Particularization

To understand conceptual universalization, we have to take what is likely an unpopular step back from the view of universality as an

inherent quality and universalization as the recognition or Hegelian realization of such universality. By reconsidering what universalization consists of, whether it is *historically* possible for all concepts, and indeed whether the process is the same for all concepts that are universalized, it may be possible to put universality on firmer ground. In the transnational history of nineteenth-century social thought, the universality of concepts concerning human aggregations was an effect of how they were used, not of their "meaning." The quality of universality, moreover, emerged as concepts were used *outside* their point of origin. For a thinker in France to regard the history of European civilization as the model of the history of the world may have been just banal ethnocentrism. When an intellectual in Japan used a concept abstracted from European examples to appraise the history of Japan and propose social policy to suit, the concept had gained an entirely different breadth of application. For historians, the ultimate measure of the universality of an idea must be its incorporation into social practice in places far from its origin, including not only behavior in the world of ideas but also modes of governance and, potentially, resistance.

The role of abstraction in the process of universalization observable in the nineteenth century suggests an operative definition for distinguishing between concepts that are universalizable and those that are nonuniversalizable at a given moment: a nonuniversalizable concept is one that cannot be abstracted without a loss of meaning too great for the process of transformation I have described to take place. By this measure, however, nonuniversalizability would be a historically specific quality subject to the same contextual factors affecting universalization. Universality thus had a counterpart in particularity, understood not as an inherent quality but as an outcome: particularization. For several centuries the concept of "way" (Chinese *dao*, Japanese *dō*), important to many strands of thought in East Asia, including governance, has been particularized as a matter of "Eastern religion." One wonders, however, if its status may change in a new economic and political environment.

I should be clear: that such concepts were accepted as universal does not mean they were innocent. The more universal they seemed, the more politically potent they could be. As Fukuzawa's habit of

comparing Japan negatively with Europe suggests, universality as I am defining it, as a consequence of use, is essentially normative. In the era of civilization and enlightenment, concepts such as civilization and society carried strong assertions about the form that human relations in Japan should take, in fact *had to* take. The force of such assertions depended on the putative universality of the concepts: if "civilization" could be used as if it were a stage in the development of all societies, then Fukuzawa could say that the populace of Japan must be civilized from above if it would not civilize itself. The normative quality of universality-in-use was not limited to policies meant to protect the Japanese state's sovereignty. Beginning in the 1870s the state exploited the universality of the corpus of international law to transform its relations with China and Korea and ultimately to legitimate its colonization and "reform" of the latter.[40] Domestically and internationally, the universalized concept of civilization was a means to protect and aggrandize the state.

The example of the Japanese state's actions in East Asia contradicts the view that the dissemination of concepts from European social thought was intellectual imperialism that directly benefited European and, by the 1890s, U.S. empires. The universalization of concepts such as civilization, right, and sovereignty strengthened these empires' claims that colonization was legal and beneficial. Yet the support did not arrive directly as proof of the superiority of European civilization, for example. Rather, it was mediated by the concepts' universality-in-use and ultimately by the transnational—not "Western"—intellectual field created by the circulation of works and ideas. The universalization of these concepts legitimated the organization of the globe as a system of sovereign states and colonial dependencies, strengthening the position of *any* empire in it. Theodore Roosevelt's endorsement of Japan's domination of Korea, on the grounds that Japan "played the game of civilized mankind," is an example. In the Taft-Katsura Agreement (1905), the United States pledged not to interfere in Korea in exchange for a free hand colonizing the Philippines. The agreement among imperial powers on the universality of civilized right (reprised later in 1905 in the Second Anglo-Japanese Alliance, concerning Korea, India, and Burma) simultaneously particularized colonial objections.[41]

From Generalizing to Relativizing Universalisms

It is now common to note that European universalism made antico-lonial movements possible. As before, we should recognize that the universalization of concepts through use, not an inherent universal-ity "turned against hypocrisy," allowed such resistance. Note also that often the concepts supporting anticolonialism were subtly different from those that legitimated colonization. As observed earlier, many key concepts from European social thought were used as if they were valid in any situation. Once universalized, "civilization" was a measure that could be applied to any human community. We could say that such concepts were used in a "generalizing" manner established dur-ing the Enlightenment.

Other concepts, however, were universalized in a different way. In these cases the concept was used as if it were universally valid *as a category* but described a phenomenon that was essentially different in every iteration. An example is "culture" (*Kultur*) as it was used from the nineteenth century onward, beginning in Germany: every place "had" a culture, but every culture was different. Moreover, every culture was the equal of any other in and because of its difference. In contrast to generalizing uses, we could say that such concepts were used in a "relativizing" fashion: the universality of the category was insepa-rable from the difference of all possible instances from one another. Concepts used in generalizing and relativizing ways often competed. As Brett Bowden shows, *Kultur* was an antagonistic response to "civi-lization."[42] In the 1890s a group of Japanese intellectuals known as the Seikyōsha used relativizing logic to defend the country's "national culture" (*kokumin bunka*) against generalizing uses of civilization by domestic reformers and Japan's treaty partners, who demanded that the country meet the standard of civilization to regain full sovereignty. The Seikyōsha writers likened Japan to Germany in its struggle for cultural independence from France after the Napoleonic wars, citing Johann Gottlieb Fichte and other champions of German culture.[43]

Nineteenth-century intellectual history is riddled with similar pairs of universalized concepts used in generalizing and relativizing man-ners. Among the most important examples is "state" versus "nation": in

international law, each state was categorically identical; in nationalist thought all nations were the same in that each differed from all the others.[44] Both generalizing and relativizing universalistic concepts are normative, but the latter are paradoxically so, because they assert dif-ference on normative grounds. Again, the distinction can be observed in use: state and right underwrote the "generalizing universalism" of international law; nation and culture, the "relativizing universalism" of movements for national self-determination and the protection of cultural difference. In the nineteenth century, the two types were uni-versalized through the same mechanisms; they existed in the same historically specific intellectual field.

The spread of concepts universalized through relativizing uses in the nineteenth century and their special prominence in the twenti-eth, especially in the form of Wilsonian nationalism, was consequen-tial. Relativizing universalisms enabled responses to economic and political domination that were both constrained and transforming. Anticolonial nationalism, an important example of a relativizing uni-versalism assaulting a generalizing one, was constrained by the norma-tive dimensions of the concept of nation (particularly the restriction that an individual may belong to only one) and therefore undertook to transform diverse populations into singular nations with rights.[45] The competition of generalizing and relativizing universalisms signifi-cantly affected the intellectual field: by the late twentieth century, gen-eralizing uses of "civilization" were joined by relativizing uses meant to explain the rise of competitors to Europe and North America. (The title of Samuel Huntington's 1993 essay "The Clash of Civilizations?" exemplifies the change.)[46] Indeed, generalizing uses of universalized concepts now are often on the defensive against relativizing uses. Generalizing uses of the concepts of liberal economics—extensively universalized after the disappearance of large-scale alternatives to capi-talism—face only disperse and fitful opposition, but generalizing uses of human rights discourse encounter persistent challenges on the basis of national particularity and cultural sensitivity.[47] The mid-twentieth-century shift in balance between the generalizing uses of universal-ized concepts that dominated in the nineteenth century and the relativizing uses that dominate today marks the beginning of a change in the structure of the transnational intellectual field. (Distinguishing

between generalizing and relativizing universalisms thus helps us periodize the transnational intellectual field of social thought.) Such a change is not the topic of this chapter, but we may observe that several material factors are again involved, particularly the rise of electronic media, from radio to Internet-delivered text and video, and the emergence of a polycentric economic and political structure. Because these conditions will endure for the foreseeable future, political actors whose goals are best served by generalizing uses (such as environmental campaigns and programs to establish labor standards) must recognize that struggles over universalization will take place in a field dominated by relativizing uses.

The Shape of Global Fields

I began with the question of what makes the "global" of global intellectual history. I am now in a position to offer a definition for the nineteenth century. The circulation and universalization of concepts from European social thought show the formation of a transnational intellectual field that by the end of the century was coextensive with the physical globe. Material conditions such as the resumption of formal colonization and improvements in transportation supported the field's extension. Intellectually, the field was defined by the constellation of universalized concepts and the "particularisms" excluded from it through asymmetrical encounters. Geographically, if we account for both production and reproduction, the aggregate travels of the concepts in question would approximate the field's scale and shape. (Its edges would be indistinct.) The field as a whole reveals a historically specific process of universalization characterized by physical circulation, mediation, reproduction, and abstraction, in which many critical steps took place outside Europe. Generalizing uses of universalized concepts dominated the field, although competition from relativizing uses increased by the century's end.

Understanding the history and dynamics of the nineteenth-century intellectual field, and of global intellectual fields in general, requires a change in methods. As I have observed, many approaches to the study of supranational intellectual phenomena reproduce the national

frameworks they set out to escape. Because global intellectual fields form through the transnational circulation of concepts (whether or not the fields reach the scale of the physical globe), we must approach such circulation in nonnational terms while treating the nation-state as one of several factors shaping it. For the same reason, we should resist "scaling up" national frameworks to the global level, approaching transnational intellectual fields as the composite of national histories. Because the circulation of ideas determines the shape of these fields, their scale must be defined by circulation alone.

Doubtless this approach poses challenges: in contrast to the spuriously self-evident boundaries of national history, the boundaries of a given topic in global intellectual history will not always be clear at the beginning of the project and will have to be refined during research.[48] The examples I have given from the nineteenth century suggest some strategies for research that can simultaneously illuminate the issue of scale. The importance of accounting for the material conditions that affect both the circulation of ideas and their relationship in the field, such as communication technologies and regional and global political orders, should be self-evident by now. Because reproduction is as important as production to the circulation of concepts, global intellectual histories may need to pay as much attention to popularizers and the intellectual vulgate as to the well-studied originators of ideas and their intellectual monuments. Practically, this may mean examining textbooks and the catalogs of publishers of books and magazines for popular audiences. In addition to studying translation and the establishment of equivalents, such histories will need to examine the role that languages of translation played in the travel of works and ideas. Whether these were imperial, sacred, or mercantile languages (*linguae francae*) would depend on the era and the concepts at stake. While the genesis of ideas will remain important, global intellectual histories will also profit from looking for the moments when ideas begin to lose their association with one part of the world and become common property. Attention to use, in addition to meaning, will maintain a focus on intellectual processes, such as the universalization of ideas rather than the dissemination of ideas treated as universal in themselves. The same focus on process will help reveal transformations in the structure of global fields, such as the shift from

generalizing to relativizing uses between the nineteenth century and the present, in addition to changes in their geographical scope.

The intellectual geography that would follow from these methods would be lumpy, uneven, and heterogeneous. The position of "originating" countries or regions would change significantly. In the nineteenth century, Europe would remain the first site of many crucial ideas, but many of the important events would take place elsewhere. The terrain would be shifting—dynamic—rather than stable. Above all, it would be a complex landscape in which material conditions, transformations of intellectual practice, and political domination and resistance are intertwined.

Notes

Names of Japanese authors are given in the customary order of family name followed by personal name.

1. For examples, see Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink, "Conceptual History and Conceptual Transfer: The Case of 'Nation' in Revolutionary France and Germany," in *History of Concepts: Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Iain Hampsher-Monk, Karin Tilmans, and Frank van Vree (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1998), 115–28; Lydia H. Liu, *The Clash of Empires: The Invention of China in Modern World Making* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004); and Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, "Beyond Comparison: Histoire Croisée and the Challenge of Reflexivity," *History and Theory* 45, no. 1 (2006): 30–50.

2. Douglas R. Howland, *Translating the West: Language and Political Reason in Nineteenth-Century Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 33.

3. Brett Bowden, *The Empire of Civilization: The Evolution of an Imperial Idea* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 27, 32.

4. Fukuzawa Yukichi, *Bunmeiron no gairyaku* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1995), 57. An English translation is available as *An Outline of a Theory of Civilization*, trans. David A. Dilworth and Cameron G. Hurst (Tokyo: Sophia University, 1973); here, see 35.

5. For example, Fukuzawa, *Bunmeiron no gairyaku*, 27–29; *Outline of a Theory of Civilization*, 14–15.

6. Fukuzawa, *Bunmeiron no gairyaku*, 297; *Outline of a Theory of Civilization*, 193.

7. T. Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy: Power and Pageantry in Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 19. The forced reorganization of

daily life in the Meiji period was supported by changing views of history. See Christopher L. Hill, *National History and the World of Nations: Capital, State, and the Rhetoric of History in Japan, France, and the United States* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2008), chaps. 2, 5.

8. Alexis Dudden, *Japan's Colonization of Korea: Discourse and Power* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 27–32, 45–46. On the standard of civilization in international law see Bowden, *Empire of Civilization*, chap. 5.

9. Carmen Blacker, *The Japanese Enlightenment: A Study of the Writings of Fukuzawa Yukichi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964); Albert Craig, *Civilization and Enlightenment: The Early Thought of Fukuzawa Yukichi* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009). On the historiography of modernization, see John W. Dower, "E. H. Norman, Japan and the Uses of History," in *Origins of the Modern Japanese State: Selected Writings of E. H. Norman*, ed. John W. Dower (New York: Pantheon, 1975), 46–65.

10. Maruyama Masao, "Nihon fashizumu no shisō to undō," in *Maruyama Masao shū* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1995), 3:259–322; available in English as "The Ideology and Dynamics of Japanese Fascism," trans. Andrew Fraser, in *Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics,* ed. Ivan Morris (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), 25–83; J. Victor Koschmann, *Revolution and Subjectivity in Postwar Japan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), chap. 4.

11. Irokawa Daikichi, *Meiji no bunka* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1970), in *Nihon rekishi sōsho*, vol. 12; translation available as *The Culture of the Meiji Period*, ed. Marius B. Jansen (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985); Carol Gluck, "The People in History: Recent Trends in Japanese Historiography," *Journal of Asian Studies* 38, no. 1 (1978): 25–50.

12. Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy*; Oguma Eiji, *Tan'itsu minzoku shinwa no kigen—"Nihonjin" no jigazō no keifu* (Tokyo: Shin'yōsha, 1995), available in English as *The Genealogy of Japanese Self-Images*, trans. David Askew (Melbourne: Trans-Pacific Press, 2002).

13. Kamei Shunsuke, ed., *Kindai Nihon no hon'yaku bunka* (Tokyo: Chūōkōronsha, 1994); Howland, *Translating the West*.

14. Howland's thoroughly researched *Translating the West* is an example.

15. For Quentin Skinner's distinction between meaning and use, see "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas," *History and Theory* 8, no. 1 (1969): 3–53.

16. The examples are drawn from Hill, *National History and the World of Nations*, 11–13. The book as a whole argues that the consolidation of the international state system and capitalist market in the late nineteenth century made these concepts credible and useful in areas where they had not been so before. For another compelling example, see Sheldon Garon,

"Savings-Promotion as Economic Knowledge: Transnational Insights from the Japanese Experience," in *Worlds of Political Economy: Knowledge and Power in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Martin Daunton and Frank Trentmann (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 163–88.

17. Bowden, *Empire of Civilization*, 30, 46, 51.
18. Fania Oz-Salzberger, "Civil Society in the Scottish Enlightenment," in *Civil Society: History and Possibilities*, ed. Sudipta Kaviraj and Sunil Khilani (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 58–65; Ceri Crossley, *French Historians and Romanticism: Thierry, Guizot, the Saint-Simonians, Quinet, Michelet* (London: Routledge, 1993), 39, 71, 76.
19. Larry Siedentop, introduction to *The History of Civilization in Europe*, by François Guizot (New York: Penguin, 1997), xxx–xxxvii.
20. Editions: *Lectures on European Civilization*, trans. Priscilla Maria Beckwith (London: John Macrone Whiting, 1837); *General History of Civilisation in Europe*, anonymous translator (Oxford: Talboys, 1837); *General History of Civilisation in Europe*, anonymous translator (Edinburgh: Chambers, 1839); *The History of Civilization in Europe*, trans. William Hazlitt the Younger (London: Bogue, 1846); *General History of Civilization in Europe*, anonymous translator (New York: Appleton, 1842), text identical to Oxford edition.
21. Matsuzawa Hiroaki, "Kaisetsu," in *Bunmeiron no gairyaku*, by Fukuzawa Yukichi (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1995), 368.
22. Georg Lukács, *The Historical Novel*, trans. Hannah and Stanley Mitchell (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), 23.
23. Doris Sommer, *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 26–27, 52–56; Katie Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997), 11–12; Priya Joshi, *In Another Country: Colonialism, Culture, and the English Novel in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 152, 154–61.
24. Maeda Ai, "Meiji rekishi bungaku no genzō—Seiji shōsetsu no baai," *Kindai Nihon no bungaku kūkan* (Tokyo: Shin'yōsha, 1983), 3–4; Atsuko Ueda, "The Production of Literature and the Effaced Realm of the Political," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 31, no. 1 (2005): 67, 77.
25. Joseph A. Schumpeter, *History of Economic Analysis*, ed. Elizabeth Boody Schumpeter (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), 182–85.
26. Eric Roll, *A History of Economic Thought*, 5th ed. (London: Faber & Faber, 1992), 290.
27. Ibid., 383; Schumpeter, *History of Economic Analysis*, 515.
28. Dorothy Ross, *The Origins of American Social Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 43; Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *A History of Japanese Economic Thought* (London: Routledge, 1989), 48.
29. Craig, *Civilization and Enlightenment*, 60–65; Morris-Suzuki, *History of Japanese Economic Thought*, 49–50. On the continuing transnational

development of economic thought in the twentieth century, see Garon, "Savings-Promotion as Economic Knowledge"; and Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), chap. 3.

30. Saitō Tsuyoshi, *Meiji no kotoba—Higashi kara nishi e no kakehashi* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1977), 181–83, 192–96, 220–25, translations listed on 195–220. Howland examines the history of Meiji-era translations in *Translating the West*, 158–64, 171–73. See also Yanabu Akira, "*Shakai*—The Translation of a People Who Had No *Society*," trans. Thomas Gaubatz, in *Translation in Modern Japan*, ed. Indra Levy (New York: Routledge, 2010), 51–61.
31. Liu, *Clash of Empires*, 13–14, 33–34. Liu at times uses heterolinguistic sign and super-sign interchangeably.
32. Examples of the slip between word and concept can be found in Itty Abraham, "Segurança/Security in Brazil and the United States," and Driss Maghraoui, "'Ilmaniyya, Laïcité, Sécularisme/Secularism in Morocco," both in *Words in Motion: Toward a Global Lexicon*, ed. Carol Gluck and Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2009), 31 and 115.
33. Liu, *Clash of Empires*, 124–29.
34. Andrew Sartori's criticism of postcolonial scholarship's focus on the "epistemic violence" wrought by foreign concepts also speaks to this point. See his *Bengal in Global Concept History: Culturalism in the Age of Capital* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 19.
35. On the impact of steamships on communication, see Daniel R. Headrick, *The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 30–39.
36. As Omnia El Shakry shows through the example of Egypt, the process extended beyond the work of colonial administrators. The incorporation of "population" into governance in Egypt, through the institutionalization of statistical, medical, geographical, and sociological, began in the mid-nineteenth century and culminated in the interwar period. Omnia El Shakry, *The Great Social Laboratory: Subjects of Knowledge in Colonial and Post-Colonial Egypt* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2008), chap. 5.
37. Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 41–42; Mark Anderson, *Japan and the Specter of Imperialism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 52.
38. Werner and Zimmermann, "Beyond Comparison," 37–39.
39. On these points, see also Hill, *National History and the World of Nations*, 13–14.
40. Dudden, *Japan's Colonization of Korea*, 46, 101.
41. Roosevelt quoted in Frank Ninkovich, "Theodore Roosevelt: Civilization as Ideology," *Diplomatic History* 10, no. 3 (1986): 238; Dudden, *Japan's Colonization of Korea*, 15, 62–63.

42. Bowden, *Empire of Civilization*, 34–36.

43. Anderson, *Japan and the Specter of Imperialism*, 86–95.

44. On this point, see also Hill, *National History and the World of Nations*, 39. Another example is the apply-anywhere universalization of liberal political economy versus the relativizing tendencies of List's theory of "national economy."

45. On the normative dimensions of nationalist thought, see Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World*, 10–11. A recognition of the normative force of universalized concepts such as nation is missing from Erez Manela's impressive *Wilsonian Moment*, which tends to treat anticolonial nationalists' "appropriation" of Wilson's arguments for self-determination as instrumental and even opportunistic. See Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 61–62.

46. The final sentence of the essay indeed traces a reluctant passage from a generalizing to a relativizing use of the concept: "For the relevant future, there will be no universal civilization, but instead a world of different civilizations, each of which will have to learn to coexist with the others." Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (1993): 49.

47. Samuel Moyn shows the hostility of state-oriented national liberation movements to ideas of human rights in chapter 3 of *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 2010). On a recent, fitful clash between generalizing and relativizing universalisms at the transnational, national, and subnational levels, see Gesine Krüger, "Moving Bones: Unsettled History in South Africa and the Return of Sarah Baartman," in *Unsettling History: Archiving and Narrating in Historiography*, ed. Sebastian Jobs and Alf Lüdtke (New York: Campus Verlag, 2010), 233–50.

48. Werner and Zimmermann stress the importance of adjusting the objects, categories, and schemes of research through continuous "pragmatic induction" ("Beyond Comparison," 46–48). Gary Wilder's *The French Imperial Nation-State: Negritude and Colonial Humanism Between the Two World Wars* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), esp. 5–6, 25–29, provides an impressive example of defining scale according to specific topics.

7

Globalizing the Intellectual History of the Idea of the "Muslim World"

CEMIL AYDIN

In the scholarly writings on the global history of the last two hundred years, we see special attention given to universal and global values, such as the ideas of sovereignty, nationalism, national rights, international law, and human rights. Various agencies of the United Nations and different international associations function on the assumption that certain ideals, legal concepts, principles, and values have both global appeal and legitimacy. This recognition of the globality of certain norms raises the question of the origins of these values, which takes us to the debate about Eurocentrism. Most globally recognized values can be traced to European intellectual history. A better account of the history of globalization and international history revised this question about Eurocentrism by emphasizing the agency of non-Western intellectuals and historical actors who were universalizing the normative values associated with "the West" at the same time as they were challenging Western imperial hegemony. Studies of the intellectual history of reformists, nationalists, and intellectuals in Asia and Africa are now indicating a kind of non-Western seizure of European universalism, a sort of subaltern fulfillment of the Eurocentric values that led to modern internationalism, and associated norms such as national self-determination, cultural rights, racial equality, and even human rights. In this new