

LIFE WORK 1923

YASUSHI NATSUKI

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The second edition of that book, dedicated to your beloved in 1923, the year you remarried at the age of 75 and then went to heaven. It is a book that has had a strong influence on my life, even though "A Treatise on General Sociology" has been almost 100 years in the making. Dedicated to Madame Jeanne Regis, this book is as thick as a dictionary. I read both the Italian and French versions in the original. I wondered why you shifted your focus from the study of economics to the study of general sociology. As I read this book over and over again, that question was gradually resolved.

The first edition of "A Treatise on General Sociology" appeared in 1916. This is the same year as your friend Saussure's "Lectures on General Linguistics" was published.

I would like to know what kind of conversations and exchanges the two of you had in Lausanne and Geneva, Switzerland. I am interested in the fact that two people who were at the pinnacle of economics, sociology, and linguistics are considered to have been your friends.

The general equilibrium theory you inherited from your mentor deals with the equilibrium of systems of economic values. I understand that your general sociology is the extension of this theory to the equilibrium theory of social systems. And I think there is a common thread of equilibrium of values in that general linguistics deals with the synchronic value equilibrium of language and its diachronic evolution.

You are sometimes criticized for having been a pioneer of fascism. And there have been papers written about the impossibility of your theory of freedom. But we know that from your youth you loved and defended freedom as much as anyone.

One of the reasons you shifted the center of gravity of your research from economics to sociology is the illogicality of human action. Even speculators who behave rationally will sometimes be driven by emotions and moods, bullish or bearish, to buy and sell stocks. You said in "Manual of Political Economy" that the study of economics must one day be grounded in the logical and experimental methods of psychology. Modern economics has created the field of behavioral economics with psychology.

People cannot be discounted as being as rational as economics assumes. Real people are more integrated and diverse. You have named it social heterogeneity.

You criticized the imperfection of the human spirit, saying, "The imperfection of the human spirit is increasing the field of science." There is no other to truth."

You said so at the end of your “Lectures in Political Economy”.

Perhaps it is because we are imperfect human beings that we are able to take a diverse and comprehensive view. You pointed out that humans are socially heterogeneous and therefore have areas where we cannot understand each other. But this is how your life’s work is still being read across time and space.

Dear Prof. Vilfredo Pareto

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著 Yasushi Natsuki

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