

A DIARY OF THE WRITING, DECEMBER 1993-JUNE 1994

The first draft: December 1993 to January 1994 (20.12.93-9.1.94)

I have a planning sheet dated 20th December 1993 which sketches out how I thought I might structure the essay.

My plan was as follows.

What happened: *its importance and surprise?*

1. *Link of industrialization and homeostatic pattern - Malthus and Boserup (eds).*
2. *Shape and relationship - positions.*
3. *Not cause but **allowed**.*

How happened?

1. *Mortality - perennial, epidemics, sanitation: patterns and reasons for in England and Japan.*
 2. *Fertility: pattern and reasons for in England and Japan.*
- Proximate (reasons) and longer term and structural (reasons).*

Conclusions.

On Thursday 23rd December we went north to Dent for Christmas. After arriving there I sketched out a piece entitled 'Thomas Malthus in England and Japan'. My plan was now as follows.

Thomas Malthus in England and Japan.

1. *The world as Malthus saw it in 1798 - first edition of 'Principles'.*

The vicious circle of positive checks. An outline model. No possibility of escape.

Modern confirmation:

*Ancien Regime Europe }
Asia and Ancient Civilization} - High-Pressure regimes*

*High mortality }
High fertility } - and effects on economy.*

If continued, path of misery.

2. **But** *travelled in Norway and Switzerland and read about England - signs of the escape.*

3. *Consequences if escape could be maintained...
- **Economic growth** - thus prediction **if** escape from 'Law', then wealth; or inversely any wealth due to suspension of law.*

4. *But how could he have tested as societies?*

*'One case a coincidence - two a connection'.
Japan as economic demographic miracle.
Malthus' impressions seem to dampen.
Research on Japan seem to dampen association.*

5. *More recent work - incredible figures.*

6. *The pattern **confirmed**.*

7. *How escape? - accidents of history - mortality - why?*

8. *How escaped? - fertility control - how and why?*

9. *Conclusions against Malthus confirmed - a tendency, which societies can confirm...*

From this plan it appears that I was starting to see the value of the Japanese case as a test of the supposed links between industrialization and demography. This plan would later form the basis for two chapters of the final book called the 'Malthusian Trap' and 'Two Escapes' and partially into the chapter on 'Fertility'. It posed the **problem** of how and why Japan and England escaped from the Malthusian trap.

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After taking Christmas day off, the diary on Boxing day continues. *'Started **writing** my piece on population in Japan. Exciting to be starting another piece of writing - for which I seem to have been gathering material off and on for months. Starting with mortality; quite startling how low it was in Japan - even lower than England.'* I think it is around this time that a key change occurred, and one which I hardly noticed but set me off on a few tracks. In earlier versions, and in the first part of the typed section under 20.12.93 called 'A Comparative Essay in the Population of Japan and England', I was still concentrating on my two elder themes - the relations between economic growth and population patterns, for which Japan was a very interesting second case, and my speculations on the curious **fertility** patterns of England and Japan.

But on page 5, I start for the first time really, to look at the 'Mortality patterns in England and Japan'. Drawing on the **Cambridge History of Japan** and particularly Jannetta's book on epidemics in Japan, which had a major influence on me at this time, I noted again the absence of war, famine and epidemic disease. I summarized Jannetta, for instance, to show the absence of most major epidemic diseases in Japan. I noticed afresh the importance of such things as customs relating to the boiling of water and sanitation. In embryo, the original sketch was now expanding fast to include mortality.

I even included an appendix entitled 'Sanitation, mortality and morbidity' which largely consisted of long quotations from Edward Morse about the peculiar Japanese sewage system and methods of disposing of toilet excrement. I also noted similar themes in **Silk and Straw** and Kaempfer. The absence of animals was already noted as important. A second appendix dealt in a preliminary way with abortion and infanticide. A number of these ideas were also briefly touched on in a piece written on 22nd December, before even leaving Lode, entitled 'Further thoughts' which noted the relative absence of warfare, famine and epidemic disease in Japan and also low levels of endemic disease.

In the week between Sunday 26th December and Saturday 1st January 1994 I wrote very fast, on the computer, but using slips, gathering together these themes - which now included mortality as well as

fertility. What was achieved is well described in my diary entry for 1st January. Apart from editing seven short films in 1993 in Nepal and sorting out computer database problems with Michael, *'I have had a very successful week getting all I hoped to get done and more. Wrote, in very rough form, about 28,000 words in 7 days on population in Japan. Some useful stuff I believe.'*

It would appear from the print-out that the themes covered included the relations of population and economy, mortality and fertility, in an expanded form. The mortality section is perhaps most interesting as a new departure. It was starting to absorb the influence of the massive work by Wrigley and Schofield. Along with Jannetta, Morse and McKeown, it should be noted that Wrigley and Schofield's work was a major influence at this time for it set out the parameters for England, as Jannetta and Morse did for Japan. And of course, Malthus was behind all of them. This draft has much longer sections on war, famine and the low mortality of England and Japan. I also has quite a lot of anticipation of the work on dung and animals.

A rapid over-all frame **had** been made, but I was still thinking in terms of a long essay - perhaps like the one on law, in two parts, for when we returned to Lode on Sunday 2nd January I wrote 'Looking forward to another writing spree, to finish off the section of population this week if possible.' The next day wrote in the diary. *'A useful writing day working on re-write of mortality chapter. Bits go well, but still uncertain how to fit it together - to general argument.'* Obviously by Wednesday I had moved on to fertility and to show how ideas were springing up and exciting both me and being discussed with Sarah, on Wednesday the 5th Sarah noted - *'Alan had a great thought today in relation of how Japan's population level was kept so low. Birth spacing - 3 years usually, he thinks may be linked to the lack of milk from animals, so children were breastfed longer. Marriage, he thinks, may well have been seen solely for procreation, not sex. Geisha provided the romance, prostitutes the sex...women producing children between 23-33 so only ten years of active childbirth.'* And so on.

By Friday 7th January I seem to have already sensed that the article was turning into something bigger. Under the title 'Death, birth and the economic miracle in England and Japan' I noted the following six chapters.

1. *The puzzle: the escape from the Malthusian world.*
2. *Death patterns.*
3. **Reasons** *for low death rates in England and Japan.*
4. *Birth patterns.*
5. *Reasons for low fertility in England and Japan.*
6. *Some consequences of the pattern.*

In a slight elaboration to the first chapter I suggested the following *'Normal pattern of crisis regimes > Evidence of an escape (the 'English' pattern) > Any other 'Escape-like' pattern? > Japan's pattern of population in general'*. This then led into mortality. It is worth noting that mortality had now become the first topic to deal with, rather than fertility.

Thus by the end of that week, what had started as a long article had turned into a sketch for a book. On Sunday 8th January I described the situation at the end of my writing. *'Have now quickly sketched out the basis of a sort of book - with chapters on population patterns (Malthusian), mortality, fertility, the causes of these and the consequences. Have written about 45,000 words in the two weeks since Christmas and a lot of it on new topics so feel very pleased - but rather shattered!'* I then described the six chapters - the puzzle, pattern of mortality, consequences. I concluded the entry, *'Although it only covers a fraction of the reasons for the emergence of industrial capitalism, it does seem important and bounded. So we will see how it proceeds.'*

The following day I worked further and noted the 'book expanded by another couple of chapters today. Some 60,000 words written already - so with further reading and pruning should be possible to produce something in the next 6 months, I hope.' Obviously I was thinking in terms of a short book on this central theme of demography.

The situation at this point is summarized in my red 'Thoughts' book as follows, under the date 9.1.94, which outlines what I thought I had done and what needed doing, and also elaborates alongside some of the parallel changes in space and organization.

9.1.94 At end of Michaelmas vacation.

A very productive and pleasant vacation in which I did a lot of writing and also enjoyed the company of the family, made a few films and talked to Michael Bryant.

In particular.

*a) Between about 8/12th December re-wrote and expanded the piece on crime and law in Japan to add the piece about Weberian irrationality etc. Though I will have to **shorten** this again for publication in Lloyd Banfield's volume, the longer version gave me some ideas and will be useful at a later point.*

*b) About 16th December started to write what I thought would be **one** chapter of the volume - on Japanese patterns. Before I could do this, had to spend about a week indexing/reading the recent works on Japanese demography. The more I read, the more intrigued I become.*

*I started **writing** on Boxing day and have written about 4 new chapters - comprising about 40,000 words! in last two weeks. Of course it continues the trail I had started elsewhere, but Japan is an excellent intellectual test for my earlier theories. I now have a **framework** of 8 chapters for a sort of book. We shall see how it goes, but at present I have:-*

Popn-int(roduction) - 6,000 - the Malthusian puzzle and the curious demographic patterns of England and Japan.

Popn-mor(tality) - 10,000 - extraordinary mortality patterns, especially Japan - biggest of surprises.

Popn-dea(th) - 3,500 - reasons for low mortality, especially sanitation.

Popn-fer(tility) - 10,500 - very low fertility in England and Japan and mechanism for keeping down - extraordinary...

Popn-bir(th) - 5,000 - rationality of patterns and reasons.

Popn-kin(ship) - 15,000 - R.B. lecture and some additions.

Popn-mar(riage) - 5,000 - marriage partners, sex...effects and causes.

Popn-con(clusion) - 4,000 - effects and economic growth of these extraordinary patters...

*Now, having a preliminary draft of about 60,000 sketched out, will leave it to sink down in my mind for first few days of term - and then have a months reading/thinking to add another 1/3 at next draft, to cut down quotations/trim/improve argument and hopefully by late summer will have a reasonable draft...And when I get stuck, can turn to other possible books, including: **Encounters** - of which about 5/8 has been completed - add De Tocqueville, Weber, A. Smith.*

***Methods** - of which about 6/8 completed - needs tidying up etc.*

So, hopefully 2/3 of the book will be done by the time we go to Nepal, God, health etc. willing. Will see which is possible to finish. Have made a very snug writing place, back in the main barn - opposite Sarah. Always have a bolt hole upstairs if necessary. But here I have all my materials. I

*have put another small filing cabinet next to my desk. And I also have a marble table on other side, with my computer system, printer etc. Feel **very** fortunate...Wonderful books, peace, Sarah's support and help. Could not be more fortunate. Now to create something excellent over the next 9 months*

On that same day I drew another sketch plan of the flow of the argument. The **problem** was seen to be the complex relations between the 'Economic Miracle' in the West and the Malthusian marriage pattern, which were clearly linked as both cause and effect of each other. The **pattern** to investigate was divided into two halves. The mortality pattern, which was itself determined by geography (islandhood) and 'culture' (e.g. hygiene/nutrition) and the fertility pattern, determined by politics, religion, economy, kinship, marriage. Thus the shape of the enquiry was fixed.

The central theme of the investigation at this point could be summarized as follows: The **normal** tendency is for increasing negative feedbacks to occur as human populations build up. These are the Malthusian 'positive' checks of war, famine and disease. How had the two islands of England and Japan somehow managed to escape from this tendency, an escape which was to have such profound effects and appeared to lay at the root of modern industrial civilization.

SEE THE VERSION AS IT STOOD ON 8TH JANUARY: IN 13 PARTS

* * *

Lent term 1994 (10.1.94-12.3.94)

In a sense I had now reached the base camp, or first halt. The main influences of a **direct** kind were my previous lecturing on population, my book on **Resources and Population** and **Marriage**, my article on 'Modes of Reproduction'. The new data which was inter-acting with these previous writings was particularly in relation to Japan, the work of Jannetta, Hayami, Thomas Smith, Hanley, **The Cambridge History of Japan**, visitors and in particular Morse and **Silk and Straw**. This made me aware of some considerable oddnesses about the population pattern in Japan, and in particular the low mortality and fertility. None of this work, except Morse and Hanley gave any real clues as to what the **causes** of the oddness was. It was still largely a mystery. In relation to England, the major new set of data were my first proper reading of the massive work by Wrigley and Schofield on the 'Population History of England'.

As so often in this story, there is then a hiatus, a period of reflection and data gathering, which coincides usually with a teaching term. Our Diary and my 'Thoughts' book suggest that I was doing reading during the term, and revising the long review of the **Cambridge History of Japan**, which was an essential back-drop to the demographic work. At the end of January I had ideas of a short book incorporating this review and my piece on Jacobs and the Radcliffe-Brown lecture, but this did not develop. My diary notes some of the reading - a re-reading of Isabella Bird, Griffis' **Mikado's Empire**, for instance, and, more tangentially, De Tocqueville's **Democracy in America**. On Sunday 30th January I noted that *'Tomorrow I hope to start a revision of my chapters on the curious Japanese demographic pattern...'*

On 31 January I noted on a loose sheet:

*Poverty, involution etc. - cul-de-sac
Technological cul-de-sac*

*Obvious from Griffis/Bird etc. how **poor** Japan was by European standards in 1870s. This may have been largely due to the intersection of population/technology/ecology. A rather poor soil/high population densities/not much use of any kind of energy except human - even animals - let alone wind/water/coal etc. Absence of all those technological improvements in England on which I lecture - water mills, wind mills, improved horse traction etc. In other words, Japan was trying to pull itself up by sheer hard work and **social organization** - by human effort alone, whereas England went through a number of technological revolutions which gradually put at its disposal a vast amount of non-human labour. Japan looks much more like Geertz: model of commercial/agricultural involution, even down to backward steps of using hoes again instead of ploughs. The world of **Silk and Straw** is a thousand light years away from that of English laziness of the same period. Why?*

- a) Few natural resources - soil etc.*
- b) No use of animal power*
- c) Curiously no use of **wind** power - cogs - no grain - **rice**.*
- d) Curiously no use of water mills*
- e) No use of coal etc.'*

Although some of this is exaggerated, it suggests new ideas that were starting to strike me.

On 1st February I typed out the following 'Possible Plan'.

'DEATH, BIRTH AND THE ECONOMIC MIRACLE; A COMPARISON OF ENGLAND AND JAPAN.

1. The Malthusian trap.

This would set out the desperate world as seen in first edition of Malthus' work and Adam Smith's 'Wealth of Nations'. The Malthusian model predicted no escape from agrarian misery etc. More recent work has both confirmed his model, but also suggested a refining - the Chinese and 'West African' models.

*2. The first escape. Malthus' second model - and the English case. The possible consequences - the Wrigley and other theories concerning the **effects** of the demographic pattern.*

Two major problems:

- a) Is there a necessary link?*
- b) If there is, what caused the demographic pattern?*

How test? Need a case where there is

- a. a commercial and industrial revolution of an unusual kind*
- b. entirely separate - not American etc.*

3. The case of Japan: the second escape.

Its separate economic development etc.

Its excellent demographic records (reconstitution etc.)

Now a lot of new data (Camb. Hist. etc.) What do we find?

The outline pattern and its believed consequences.

But this makes us press even more towards the causes...

4. Mortality patterns compared.

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5. *The causes of low mortality.*

6. *Fertility patterns compared.*

7. *The essence of fertility - rationality.*

8. *The causes of this rationality; relations of the family and marriage.*

9. *Conclusion: the patterns fit, the outcome similar though the mechanisms different. Similarity and difference. the necessary and the sufficient. Other desiderata etc.'*

This is along the same lines as the previous writing. It centres the analysis on the relations between industrialization and demographic patterns, and uses Japan as a way of testing the links.

The following day, 2nd February, the plan had become a little more elaborate, with various chapters sub-split. In particular chapters 4 and 5 had now become three chapters titled 'Crises - war and famine', 'Crises - epidemics', - Perennial disease'. Likewise the chapters on fertility were now four, titled 'Fertility rates and biological determinants', 'Marriage and sexual patterns', 'Birth-control - including abortion'. While the mortality section would alter fundamentally, this already laid down, broadly, the shape of the fertility section. I ended this plan with the admonition, *'keep tightly to 80,000 words.'*

The following day another plan set out a 'Model of the Great Escape'. It specified the trap - high natural fertility of humans, the law of diminishing marginal returns, contradictions between economic efficiency of large populations and the rise of mortality which came with higher population densities. This was the 'high equilibrium trap' which had hit India and China and most of Europe in the early modern period. I then noted that the 'demographic transition model' which saw high mortality as falling first and later fertility, was a red herring. Among other things it depended on factors which were not likely to be true. It had to argue either that there were chance and random changes in viruses, which no-one could prove or even seemed likely, or that industrialization was powerful enough to lower mortality. I thought this was unsatisfactory because *'(a)No plausible reasons for mortality fall (b)It meets none of the theoretical model of Malthus/Smith - all their iron laws the same...'*

I then outlined 'The new theory'. This was Malthus' specification of **another** model, the preventive check as opposed to the positive check. Wrigley and Schofield had confirmed his hunch for England. But, I wondered, was this 'Accidental' or what were the reasons for it? I finally noted that in 'The Eastern escape: Japan', there was a 'similar pattern'. I then headed a possible section entitled 'Reasons and Dynamics - or Contours of the Escape'.

I was obviously thinking about the problems alongside other reading and the progress is recorded in a Diary entry for Saturday 5th February.

'A week when I started to revise/re-write the book on mortality, fertility in England and Japan. Think I now have a structure of sorts - some 11 chapters, parts of each of which are drafted to a total length of 40,000 words. Feels a reasonable argument, but a lot of detail to fill in. Started on this today when I read 4 books on demography...' I was still reading Griffis, **Mikado's Empire**. The following day 6th February, I noted *'I continued to skim through books on population etc. to see what there is bearing on my theme. A few bits and pieces - but nothing to suggest either that my big idea has been either anticipated or refuted.'*

Clearly the threads were being followed and I already had the feeling that I was on to a 'big idea'. I was now going through that stage where one scouts around to see if the idea is either destroyed by other evidence, or has already been well explored by others. This is a stage which often leads to the

death of a book, when either or both of the above things happen.

A revealing entry on 12th February shows the tensions in academic creativity. We went north to Dent for Sarah's mother's birthday and I wrote, *'Feeling rather tired. Think I have been over-doing things - trying to do serious writing during term. So will relax a bit and concentrate more on teaching etc. and just do some reading to the end of term and leave writing to the vacations. Have the **framework** for two books worked out in my mind, so don't feel so panicky.'* The next day I read a Ph.D. thesis and book on Japan by Maraini and started to speculate about writing yet another, different, book on *'The origins of modernity and the comparative method'*.

A week later (19.2.) *'Feeling rather tired - with a busy week ahead. Seem to have been snowed under with things and hence unable to get on with any writing for a week or so.'* I had clearly already forgotten my resolve to relax! At this point I finished reading Griffis and *'Will now read Morse's big book on Japan which Sarah has bound beautifully for me.'* It was long out of print and we had had to xerox it. This book is probably the single most influential work in relation to **Savage Wars**, alongside Malthus. The following day I mixed leisure with Department business, and *'felt virtuous if a little frustrated that yet more days passed without getting on with my Japanese work.'* On 23rd February, Ron Greenhill came and we went into the details of building the 'Morse house'.

The following Saturday (26th) I reported a tiring, busy, week, *but 'still reading Morse's marvellous **Japan Day by Day**.'* The following Saturday 5th March, it was the same story. Lots of administration and teaching. *'Don't seem to have any real time for my own work - which is a pity as I feel all sorts of ideas about Japan welling up. Hopefully they will pour out in vacation.'* This frustration and tension, as I half-realized, is probably quite productive, leading to **bursts** of energy, like a loosened spring, after teaching, which is often what is needed.

One useful event that week was that I had been to a meeting on Japanese demography at the Cambridge Group. A number of leading English, American and Japanese demographers were present, including Saito, Dyson, Emiko Ochiai and one or two from Oxford. After listening to them, I was able to report *'The Japan meeting on Thursday, however filled me with renewed enthusiasm as it was clear that I am well ahead of the field.'* Now reading Watson's **Double Helix**, it is clear that these conferences are very important, which moves so quickly, as a way of finding out the latest rumours, findings, hunches. Just as I was beginning to find out through a literature search that I was not anticipated, likewise I was able to find out from this meeting that the ways in which my ideas were moving had neither been anticipated, nor were they impossible.

At the end of the conference I gave a short summary crystallizing the discussions and adding my ideas, which was a sort of test - and because one needs to lay down a **marker**. I was gratified that the very sharp demographer from London, Tim Dyson, who has worked on Indian demography and was one of those who had attacked, very cogently, my 'Modes of Reproduction', came up afterwards and said my summary was 'brilliant'. Since it ran contrary to almost everything that was said in the Conference he wondered whether it was **true**! I promised to let him know one day!

On Sunday 6th March, I *'managed to skim read a large number of the background books for my next burst on population in Japan and England book. Began to feel excited about the idea of writing - with just one more week of term ahead of me...Feel that I have some worthwhile things to say about demography etc.'* On Tuesday 8th March Ron started to clear the ground for the Morse house, so things were running in tandem.

On Saturday 12th March I wrote, *'Term is over! Another very busy week... Plan to expand and re-write my book on Japanese population. No more lectures to give for 10 months - so hope to get some writing done...Still reading Morse, **Day by Day**!'*

In a sense one can look at the rhythm so far as, Michaelmas Term 1993, some first preliminary thoughts, the gathering of stores and setting out. The Michaelmas vacation as the first, decisive, voyage out into open sea. But, instead of going in the direction in which I thought I would be going, I had been taken by the winds elsewhere. It was clear that I was on a much longer and more difficult voyage than I had anticipated.

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Lent Vacation 1994 (13 March to 14th April)

We went north to Dent at the end of term and on Sunday 13th March I noted that 'I started to get back into my work on the book on population in Japan. Finished reading the excellent book by Morse on **Japan Day by Day**. Still feeling quite tired. The following day I wrote a plan.

'Odd break-through in mortality in these two cases? Why?

*a. **Japan**. No war (island); No famine (market economy, transport, rice, social structure, taxes); few epidemics (cleanliness, island); endemic (cleanliness, manure, animals, clothes).*

*b. **England** (v Holland). No war (island); No famine (market economy, good agriculture etc. High standard of living, related to my work on **Individualism** - taxes, market, social structure etc. Few epidemics (island, housing); endemic (diet, clothing etc.)*

***Consequences**. The uncontrollable, i.e. mortality, **controlled** - leads to problem of fertility - this is something which can be dealt with by **rational activity** - i.e. through human planning and decision - in England through **marriage**, in Japan through a whole set of **techniques**. Link to arguments in **Marriage**.'*

This brief sketch was starting to explore a few of the possible causes of the low mortality in a little more detail. It also noted for the first time the fact that the low fertility was in some ways a response to low mortality. For a very long time the implications of the fact that it had been known for years that England had very late marriage and consequently relatively low fertility had not dawned on me - namely that this was only possible and desirable if mortality was relatively low. Most societies are not in this privileged position.

We returned to Lode on 15th and I summarized the work of the previous term and outlined my plan of the intended book on that day as in my **Thoughts** book.

*'15.3.94 At start of vacation. Amazing how the last six weeks have flown away - with not much done in the way of writing etc., though I have managed a little reading. Time seems to have gone merrily on; postgraduates etc. and latterly on examining. But now, term is ended and I have five weeks before next term with only a few interruptions - including the intellectual one of the conference in Amsterdam. So hope to concentrate on the book on demographic revolution in England and Japan. Further reading suggests that this is a good topic which could draw in quite a lot of other material, and which is in many ways a logical sequel to elements in **Resources and Population** and **Individualism** - on wealth of England and in **Marriage and Love** - on peculiarly restrained fertility in England.'*

I then laid out a possible plan for a twelve chapter book which I might be aiming towards, with a new provisional title.

Death, birth and the miracle of modernity - a comparative study of Japan and England.

PART ONE; DEATH

1. The Malthusian world of death.

The automatic feed-back loop of the positive check, the necessary high mortality. The limits of growth. The nature of Ancien Regime societies in Europe, India, China etc. War, famine and disease. A. Smith et al on the impossibility of any escape.

2. War and famine

3. Epidemics

4. Other illnesses

5. Cities and water born disease and cleanliness

PART TWO; BIRTH

6. The Malthusian world of birth.

The automatically high fertility caused by biology and by the need for counter mortality. The fertility experience of most agrarian societies. Absence of contraception etc.

7. Biological and physiological constituents

8. Mental constraints

9. 'Birth control'

10. Fertility strategies

PART THREE; CONSEQUENCES

11. Some economic consequences - saving, labour, the cities, pattern of population etc.

12. Some social, mental, cultural and other consequences.

Thus the book had a fairly simple structure: the Malthusian trap, the mortality pattern, fertility pattern, consequences. This would expand the previous eight chapters, particularly by giving some separate chapters to the mortality side.

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The Diary records events in the second half of March fairly sporadically. For instance on Thursday 17th March Sarah noted, 'Alan **very** happy, writing on Japan - Ron **very** happy building a Japanese house.' At this point I was reading Morse's **Japanese Homes**, Ron was basing his house on another copy of the same book, and Sarah was reading the biography of Morse. So we decided to call the house 'The Morse House'. My entry at the end of this week notes developments in this very productive week as follows.

Sunday 19th March.

*'Started to expand a chapter on endemic disease on Wednesday and in the last four days have added approximately 15,000 words - the skeleton of four chapters to the **Population** book - on the body, house, dung etc. Amazing to feel it growing and blossoming within me - and very appropriate alongside spring which is budding out all over the field - and the Japanese house which Ron is moving on with. Appropriate that he should be using Morse for design - and I'm using Morse a lot for my book.'*

A plan written on the same day shows how even in four days the shape had become more complex. There were now 17 chapters instead of 12. Endemic disease had been split into five chapters on 'Endemic illness rates', 'Diet', 'Body', 'House', and 'Dung', all under the heading of 'Control of persistent illness'.

At this point about ten days were spent preparing a paper for a conference on the city in Amsterdam. The highlights, apart from Amsterdam itself, were really further long talks with Gerry - who figures throughout this adventure as a very important source of ideas and, shortly, of important books. The conference lasted from 22nd to 27th March and is described in the Diary.

On Monday 28th March I started again. *'Felt rather tired and difficult to concentrate, but made a start at re-writing the chapter on manure, latrines etc. Hope to start in earnest tomorrow.'* By this time I was taking early fragments already written and expanding them. This process whereby a first hunch is expanded is an important one and occurred again and again. It is therefore worth giving an example of how I planned to do this. On 29th March a plan headed 'DUNG' gives the 'old order' of the section:

Currently. *General stuff on sanitation; sanitation in England (privies etc.), fleas, lice and vectors; absence of domestic animals in Japan; manure; conclusion; summary.*

1. *Problems of sanitation and dung-excreta human and animal.*
2. *Unusual sanitation in England - privy - evidence of humans and animals.*
3. *Why? - dirt etc. **Not** for manure - absence of - but fear of dirt.*
4. *Japan - amazingly clean a) Cultural - the cleanliness of toilets etc. b) Absence of animals - effects on animal manure, human manure, the common fly. Consequences.*

Although the above was to be revised numerous times again, it is an improvement, and starts to link together the complex causal chains which are so essential to solving the puzzles I had set myself.

At the end of that week, I wrote as in the Diary.

'Saturday 2nd April.

*Another slice of writing done. Monday recovering from Amsterdam, but started writing properly on Tuesday. Wrote hard all week and learnt a great deal - feel I am exploring new and largely unexplored territory. Strange. One knows the single **facts** - but in writing some chemical change takes place and one sees things afresh. Much like spinning or iron smelting or cookery or pottery. The parts make something **new** in the mind. Hence the pleasure and excitement. Wrote expanded version of difficult chapter on 'Dung' - very important. Then re-did chapters on War and Malthusian world and the long chapter on famine. So, wrote about 15+ thousand words. Feel quite tired, yet pleasantly satisfied!'*

The chapters were now:

1. The Malthusian world of death
2. War
3. Famine
4. Epidemics
5. Endemic disease
6. The Body - inside (diet)
7. The Body - outside
8. House and street

9. Dung

10. The Malthusian world of birth - fertility rates
11. Biological and physical constraints
12. Marital constraints
13. Birth control
14. Fertility strategies
15. The wider context - Japan in an English mirror
16. Economic consequences of population patterns
17. Cultural consequences of population patterns

A plan on the next day shows that the first chapter was changed to 'The Trap' - an account based on 'classical economists and sociologists' including Smith, Stewart, Hume, Ferguson, Robertson, Malthus. The work was now divided into five parts, headed: The Trap, Misery, Disease, Birth, Correlations. 'Epidemics' was put under 'Misery' but all the rest of disease under 'Disease'.

*

On the 3rd April we went to Dent and I read Morse's biography and recorded '*Spent a good deal of time mulling over possible titles for prospective book - 'Life and Decline of Death', 'Health and Illth' also thinking of further sections to add. Nice to be so involved in it all.*'

All this time I was becoming more and more conscious that to proceed further with solving the riddle of the odd mortality patterns I would have to come to grips with the nature and history of different diseases, rather than lumping them all together as I had done until then. On the 4th March I wrote out another of the plans which showed how an unsatisfactory rag-bag of ideas was gradually being shaped into an argument. My previous version of a section on epidemics had the structure:

Introduction, Europe in general, England better, C7 - C11 epidemics in Japan, plague in Japan, typhus in England and Japan, measles in Japan (sea barrier), smallpox in Japan, cholera (and typhoid) in Japan (sea, cordon sanitaire), Conclusions - escaped from, would have expected, McNeill - bubonic plague - last, Wrigley - climate etc.

The new version tried to separate all this into several categories. There was first a basic division between those diseases affected by the environment (viral). These I specified as '*Those diseases which cannot be affected totally by living conditions*' as smallpox, measles, influenza. On the other hand '*Those affected by living conditions and social structure, especially cleanliness, rats, lice, water*' were divided into two major divisions. Those carried by lice/fleas - plague and typhus - and those carried by micro-organisms in the water - cholera, typhus, dysentery. It may seem extraordinary that it was not until my 50s that I began to think seriously about these distinctions and learn something about basic medical causation. But there we are - and it was all fascinating. Other diseases which did not fit in easily, but I noted, were venereal diseases, leprosy, venereal disease, scarlet fever. 'Malaria' was noted, but was surprisingly not placed, as yet, under vector-borne diseases and clearly interested me little as yet.

The following day (4th April) I looked at 'endemic' diseases and again began to shuffle them about. My previous 'old plan' or order had been: '*normal mortality - disease, English statistics, Japanese statistics, various epidemic diseases, accidental deaths, skin diseases, eye, kak'ke (beri beri), catarrh, tuberculosis, venereal diseases, malaria, diphtheria, leprosy, rheumatism, nervous disorders, worms, climate, medical provision.*' This mess was made into a 'New Plan' which started with those diseases causing serious mortality - malaria, tuberculosis, venereal diseases, leprosy, beri beri, diphtheria, accidents. Then those which causes 'Morbidity and pain' were nose/throat (catarrh), eyes, skin, bones (rheumatism), stomach (worms). Finally there would be the statistics, and the causes - or rather 'What it was **not**' which were 'Climate, medical provision'.

We returned to Lode on 6th April. On the 7th April I was beginning to sketch out plans for the whole, now titled 'Illth and Wealth'. In April and May I would re-write version 2, with added material from my 'Topics' database and books in the barn. This version could then be sent to Gerry Martin to read. In June and July I would do further reading and add in further thoughts. I would then re-write in August and September - I would send this to one or two further possible friends and to my publisher. I would think over the book in Nepal and polish every piece. While I was away the quotations would be checked and bibliography assembled. It could be edited finally in December and sent off to the publisher. I include these hopeful thoughts because though the early parts came to pass, everything became slowed down more and more because the subject became more and more fascinating. Instead of a book of the normal kind, I found I was having to land a very large fish indeed.

On Saturday 9th April I wrote, *'I had a good week of writing - two days in Dent and two days here. So far this vacation, although spending one week out of four on Amsterdam conference and several days travelling to Yorks, have managed to write about 50,000 words - thus increasing **Illth and Wealth** from about 40,000 to 90,000 words. A lot of loose ends, but certainly enjoyable to write. Mainly dealt with mortality.'* The number of words is an exaggeration though much of the earlier draft was re-written. The new title reflected a growing interest in Ruskin's concept of 'Illth', which I found in Mumford, and means 'negative wealth'. The following day I *'indexed a couple of books'*, but was *'off to ESRC tomorrow - have a feeling that the blessed period of uninterrupted writing is coming to an end. Am reading the biography of E.L. Morse.'*

*

On Thursday 14th April, with a conference looming on the Friday on new technologies and then term the following week, Sarah noted *'Alan completing Japan book to stage that he can leave it as he will have to concentrate on term next week.'* This is reflected in my Saturday 16th April entry. *'Was feeling tired having finished off yet another draft of **Illth and Wealth** on Thursday. Wrote busily Tuesday - Thursday and by the end had written about 97,000 words in all - about 52,000 this vacation alone. Lots of new ideas, especially on the mortality section. And have worked out a way of creating an elementary loop, so that one was taken back to the start from the end. Really think I may have struck on rich seam with this demographic/practical living angle. Certainly enjoyed writing and starting to research it.'* The image of mining a **seam** is worth noting, as is the continued sense of excitement and the recognition that the project was turning from something which was a **summary** of what I already explicitly **knew**, to something requiring **research**.

Thus by the end of the Lent vacation, the plan stood as follows on 14th April.

ILLTH AND WEALTH

1. Illth (intro)

2. Misery

- i. War and warre (war)*
- ii. Famine and starvation (famine)*
- iii. Epidemic disease (epid)*
- iv. Endemic disease (endem)*

3. Bodies

- i. Inside (diet)*
- ii. Surface (body)*

- iii. *Outside (house)*
- iv. *Dung (dung)*

4. **Passion**

- i. *Birth and biology (fer)*
- ii. *Marriage and sex (mar)*
- iii. *Control of birth (bir)*
- iv. *Heirs (heirs)*

5. **Wealth (con)**

(The above is the plan as at 14.4.93, a draft of some 97,500 words having been written under these heads. The file names are indicated in brackets, each has pn- in front, e.g. pn-war. It would be nice to illustrate with Goya/Breughel/Japanese prints.)

The **loop** argument which I was pleased with was inspired by some of the flow diagrams in Wrigley and Schofield's book, for instance on p.474 I thought it would come near the end and show how the very difficult to explain 'boot-strapping' into wealth would occur. The diagram I drew on 14th April is as follows:-

INSERT DIAGRAM of the loop

A detailed plan of 15.4.1994 which shows each section in each chapter indicates what seemed clear and what was still very puzzling. The chapters on fertility, though needing clarification, were not really a problem, partly because the subject lies closer to the surface of human action, partly because I had already spent so many years developing a framework for coping with this, and Japan while stretching the frame, could be accommodated. Likewise war and famine were subjects which were very important, but relatively easy to explain. The real problems lay in the area of epidemic and endemic disease, whose fluctuations had baffled, and continued to baffle all those from Creighton through to McKeown and Jannetta, who had looked at them.

The problem was to match the various diseases with possible **causes**. Quite early on, probably near the start of this vacation, I wrote down a list of 'Some reasons for low mortality in England/Japan'. This comprised the following: *'diet (what eaten, how prepared), drink, clothing, hair-grooming, housing (including fire), furniture, insect vectors (flies, rats, lice etc.), streets - cleaning etc., dung - animal, dung - human, washing/bathing - e.g hands, face, body etc., climate, wealth and poverty, accidents, survival of fittest, medical provision (doctors, remedies, hospitals), disposal of dead, refuse and garbage, cleanliness of cities.'* At the end of this list I first thought of splitting the analysis into two chapters, diet and disease in England, dirt and disease in Japan.

This very unsatisfactory check-list and equally unsatisfactory division was refined principally as a result of reading Macfarlane Burnett's chapter on 'How infection spreads', dividing diseases into water-borne, viral, contagious, vector-borne. Although not exactly mirroring this, by the end of the vacation I had decided to approach the complex problem of causation by looking at what went on through the food chain (food and drink); through the care of the surface of the body (cleanliness, washing, clothing, work pressure on the body); through the outside environment (housing and public space); through the disposal of excreta and associated problems of flies and rodents.

There were hints at this stage that I would find something interesting. I had a sense of where to look and many of the areas were not ones where people had undertaken sustained research. Yet it was all,

as yet, hints, guesses, glimpses of something which just as quickly disappeared. It was a world full of clues, false trails, jumbled threads. I half-saw things. For instance I sensed that the fact that the English drank little water but a lot of beer, or that the Japanese drank tea for health purposes, was important. But I did not know why or how. In a sense it was as if one had beaten the game into an area of the forest and could hear it trampling around, but could not see it. The next stage was for the beating to proceed and for the game to come out of the undergrowth. This is always a particularly exciting stage in research - I remember it in my first piece on witchcraft. To change the hunting metaphor, one has constructed a net, one can feel something in it, now is the time one starts to draw it to the boat and inspect the catch.

SEE VERSION AS ON 14TH APRIL: 35 PARTS

* * *

Summer term 1994 (14 April to 22 June)

In terms of my earlier metaphor, another piece of open sea had been crossed and I was now in harbour again, re-stocking, checking the rigging, absorbing. At the start of this process, I set out a plan of this kind of work, which shows the kind of thing one tries to do in these alternative periods.

Work on revision of Illth: four weeks of Easter Term 1994.

- 1. Read through identifying/listing areas which need more data/evidence.*
- 2. Check in TOPICS database for any of above, if not already done so and print out findings.*
- 3. Read and re-integrate the three theoretical chapters (Illth, Heirs, Wealth).*
- 4. Integrate into these the views of Scottish philosophers - especially Kames, Smith, Hume, Robertson, Millar on the trap.*
- 5. Read all of Malthus and integrate into above.*
- 6. If any time in Cambridge, follow up some of the references I have there.*

At the end of 4th week of term, read through finally and get two versions xeroxed - one for Sarah, one for Gerry, to read in June and discuss in July.

On 24th April I did a little 'indexing books for the "Illth" book' and was reading Alcock's ***Empire of the Tycoon***. This is worth noting since the invisible, laborious, process of reading, noting, indexing, feeding the underground 'reservoir' of knowledge is hardly ever deemed worthy of comment by academics. But the way this is done and the effort put in here makes the difference between superficiality and depth. I shall later give some examples of this process working their way through. The fact that I now had a sort of net or framework in my mind could now direct me both to the kind of books I wanted to read and what, within them, was of interest. It is an example of that important alternative between active creation - writing - and passive absorption of further information - the bounded and the leaky - which lies behind creativity. Term is a period which encourages/forces a good deal of 'leakiness'.

The following week-end (30.4.) was absorbed with an M.Phil 'virtual reality' day, showing films of

Nepal at Lode, but during the week had managed 'to do some reading - on Hume, Ferguson et al.' This must have been in relation to the question of the effects of war, and Hume's ideas on populousness of nations. The next day I did 'a little light reading on A. Smith and Malthus' and looked forward to more serious work the following week. I was still reading Alcock's **Capital of the Tycoon**.

On 4th May I was working at home and started to explore a theme which would re-emerge later as a full chapter on 'dirt'. It is worth including this as an example of the way in which an idea first proposes itself, to be left dormant for a while, and then elaborating itself.

In a new notebook I had started titled 'Illth - Reading Notes 1', I wrote:

4th May. ***Thoughts/ideas on Illth and Wealth.***

*A theme to be pursued lies somewhere in the realm of an intersection between a) the ideas of Mary Douglas/Tambiah and others on dirt/danger/pollution etc. (i.e. the negative side of her emphasis on purity and order) b) the ideas stemming from Weber on Protestantism and capitalism. For just as important as the constant disciplining/examination of the **soul**, was the same examination of the **body**, through increasing cleanliness etc.*

*This again overlaps with Elias' thesis on the **Civilizing Process**, concerning **manners**, and with Hirschmann on **Passion and Interests**, on the disciplining of the passions. Possibly also Norman Brown, **Life Against Death**.*

*As Kames noted "I have often amused myself with so singular a resemblance between islanders, removed at the greatest distance from each other." (i.246) - re cleanliness of English/Japanese. He then turned away somewhat, but came back, arguing that **commercial** nations make societies clean - as Dutch, English etc. (though he did not know enough about Japan to see it was true there too...)*

*Why, then, are England, Japan, Holland **both** the most commercial/free/'puritan' countries - as Weber et al noted, but also the **cleanest**? What is the connection of dirt/sin/pollution? Why is there such **worry** about dirt? Why is cleanliness next to godliness?*

*A whole host of questions arise in a fascinating but little explored area to do with culture, manners etc. This is the connection which started Schama off on his book on **The Embarrassment of Riches**, though he got side-tracked. Yet he does deal with the connection between dirt/wealth and self-restraint, if only obliquely. A large and interesting theme.*

*N.B. These are such **large** themes, that one needs to make sure that the book, like a fig tree, is contained. It must be finished by end November otherwise it could expand to take in the whole world.*

There is something odd also in the relations between puritanism, anti-ritualism, absence of pollution beliefs and cleanliness.

Roughly, it might be said, Hinduism and most tribal religions are based on a division of the world into sacred/profane, and are deeply saturated by ritual pollution.

*On the other hand, Buddhism/Christianity are ascetic religions (especially the Protestant/Zen forms) which **attack** all ritual/magic and destroy all pollution. On the other hand, paradoxically, rather than overcoming the Devil, he is let loose **everywhere**. Pollution/sin/danger is everywhere - one has to be on constant watch against it. cf Stubbes the Puritan on **constant** war against -*

constant vigilance. Most societies are much more relaxed about these things.

*The unintended **consequence** of all this is that, before medical science had **proved** the connections between invisible entities (microbes/viruses etc) and disease, connected to dirt, the two puritan countries had accidentally and intuitively **hit** on the connection and were taking preventive actions. Hence their very low morality rates.*

*

On 7th May we went up to Dent after a 'pleasant week, with not too much work apart from reading etc.' Up there I read the medical work Dubos **Man Adapting** and Mokyr's **Lever of Riches**, which Gerry gave me.

On 14th May I reflected on the past week. *'Have spent much of the week reading for my book on Illth. Managed to do quite a bit of reading, despite what seemed to be rather a lot of meetings. Work goes well - though gnawed by anxiety feelings - centred on Ph.D. standards and examinations.'* It was during this term that I spent a good deal of time scouring the books and runs of journals in the 'Cambridge Group' for anything relating to my theme. Having a lot of the recent literature, and a number of obscure publications, concentrated in this way in a pleasant place like the **Cambridge Group** is extremely important and helpful. As mentioned before, it is very difficult to know, when striking out on a 'new' path, whether one is doing anything **new**, or whether it has all been done elsewhere. Also, one can only rest on the shoulders of **numerous** others who have done the hard, detailed, research. Any book, as I say in the preface, is in many ways an orchestration of the work of others. This period in the summer of 1994, once I had laid down the grid for searching, was a very important phase in which I sounded more deeply the 'state of the art' and went through the secondary literature in a fairly systematic way, xeroxing what was needed, and then, later indexing it all, much of it into the computer.

On Sunday 1st May I wrote a paper on 'Absences and Telescopes' for a seminar at Oxford - some general thoughts on methods of comparison which hover in the background of all my writing. I was also 'reading a book on travellers in Japan' - of which I have a number! The following week I let Sarah see part of my work for the first time. She comments in the diary on the difficulty of knowing how much intellectual input there should be at an early stage. Young, forming, ideas are very delicate plants - they can easily be killed off by a logical argument, or lack of interest, by a reader. On the other hand, one longs for **some** sort of feed-back and sharing. So Sarah wrote, *'...started to read Alan's work this afternoon - difficult for him and me to know how much to discuss at this preliminary stage - would appear to have two aims, which are compatible - 'Illth and health' or 'Illth and wealth'.* This perceptive remark resurfaced later when parts of the book were cut out on the grounds that they fitted under the **second** of these headings - i.e. as a later volume on wealth, economy, technology etc.

The various bits of reading and re-planning which occurred the following week-end are summarized thus.

Friday 20th May.

*'Quite a pleasant week where I managed to do quite a bit of reading on Japan etc. Sarah bought me a three volume edition of **Kaempfer** - lovely to have.'*

Saturday 21st May.

*'A rather wet day. Did some reading - very rich **Kaempfer** and started **Lafcadio Hearn**. Then Sarah and I acted as stewards for an Oxfam walk. After lunch went to collect 20 types of herb thyme from Jane Renfrew. She very kindly took us to see Malthus' library in Jesus - touched one of the herbs (Annie Hall) against Malthus' copy of **Kaempfer** - so now have a plant which has*

touched Malthus' hand! We planted by the path - so it will wind through beds of thyme.'

Sunday 22nd May.

*'Continued with Kaempfer and other Japanese reading - very pleasant. Xeroxed Elgin's **Embassy to Japan**. Re-planned my writing somewhat - dividing the possible book **Illth and Wealth** into two possible books - to be accompanied by two others on **Comparative Method** and essay on institutions.*

At this point it looked as if the book was getting too long. We went away for a short trip to Oxford to give a talk and to Hay, during that week between end of lecturing and exams, and when we returned, on 28th May I wrote in the Diary, 'Managed to buy a few useful things'. It will be interesting to see **what** [see purchase book XXX] for these excursions to book-shops throughout the project were, in many ways, a very necessary part of the process. Once one finds a new seam, it is very easy to run out of rich materials - the Cambridge Group, Haddon, Social and Political Sciences, Kings, and even University Library each have their value - and limitations. Above all, they often don't have those quirky, off-centre sort of books that often provide the most important clues. Furthermore, many of the important books are old and out-of-print and therefore if one wants to have the book **at hand**, as one usually does, then a good second-hand book-shop is extremely useful - and sometimes **crucial**.

Also such a trip is very refreshing. Sarah has now read a little of my early draft on **fertility** and her comments were already valuable and led, with the refreshment of a trip away, to the new plan of splitting the book into two parts, which would lie alongside other parts, as outlined in my **Thoughts** book.

The thoughts I had at this time, preceding a diagram which is in the **Thoughts** book and shows a 6-volume work in contemplation are:

29.5.94. Thoughts before examining.

Have just come back from a nice trip to Oxford to give a talk and to Hay. Have also been reading a good deal more and absorbing Sarah's preliminary comments. Two major versions, at least, have now become established.

1) *There is now an enormous amount of extra material under 'Bodies' and hence it would appear best to divide the book into **two** books. One would be on **demography** - basically the Malthusian structure re-analyzed. The second would be on **technology** and particularly the technology of the body - i.e. medicine, public health etc.*

2) *Sarah feels that I need to introduce people to **why** England and Japan and also their main features. That is indeed true. Consequently it might be a good idea, to link all the different works through a common introduction.*

*

The following week-end we went up to Dent, by way of a book-shop, as I marked scripts. As Senior Examiner, my attention was elsewhere. I felt very tired and edgy, which I put down to exams. On the way back we bought various things for the garden and I noted that Sarah '*obviously going into gardening in a **large** way. The Morse house now all painted and looking very sweet.*' I remarked that it was '*Odd that we always feel exhausted when we **arrive** at Dent, and feel fresh when we return here.*'

The following week I was involved in examinations, but on Saturday 11th June I wrote: '*Finished my*

*marking on Wednesday, so was able to make a couple of visits to the Cambridge Group to do reading Thursday/Friday. Am gathering a lot more material - but will pull up drawbridge at end of the month and start another version then. Good to see Gerry on Tuesday and he was his usual thoughtful and very supportive self. Feels I am heading toward a general theory of innovations - at least what constitutes 'fertile ground' for reception of innovations'. On the Sunday I 'sat and read in the Morse house. A **very** pleasant place to work in.'*

On Monday 13th June, Sarah notes one of the potentially interesting and important lines of investigation I began to pursue for the first time. '*Alan here too, finding great benefits occur in tea which may be significant - namely as an antiseptic.*' On Wednesday 15th June, Ron finished the Morse house - an outward symbol, as I wrote earlier, of Morse's influence. I was at home 'happily reading'. On Friday 17th June we met the Saito (leading demographer) family socially at Peter Laslett's and liked them very much.

At the end of the week, despite the fact that two days were absorbed by a particularly heavy examining effort, I was able to note on Saturday 18th, '*did **manage** even to do some work in libraries and Cambridge Group last week - so the background reading coming on.*' I further noted, as had Sarah, the tea idea - one of the very few occasions when specific ideas are noted. '*An important week also since I first established the medical content of **tea** - and the way the phenol acid in it could have acted as a medical ingredient counter-acting various parasites etc. Will pursue thesis.*'

Thus ended the summer term and a period of reading and reflection.