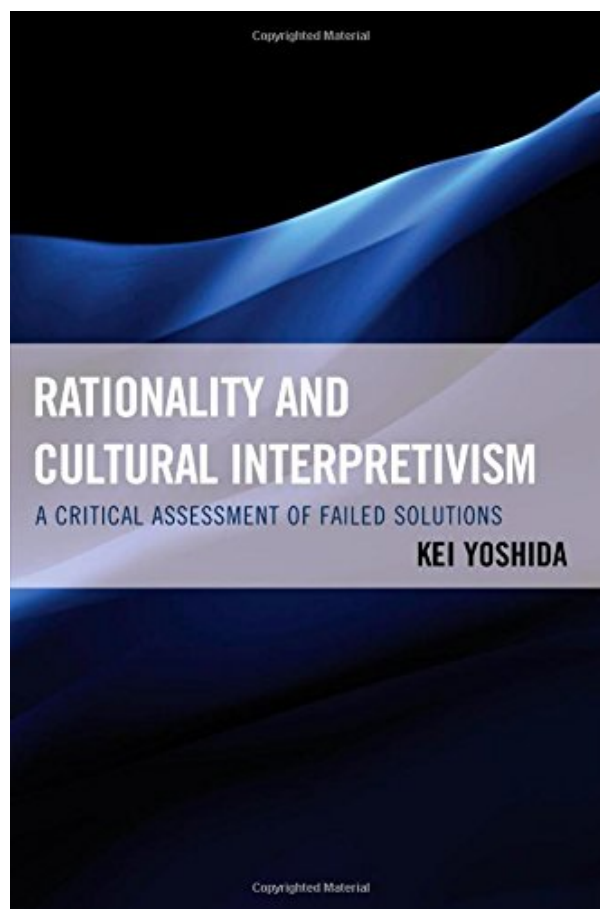
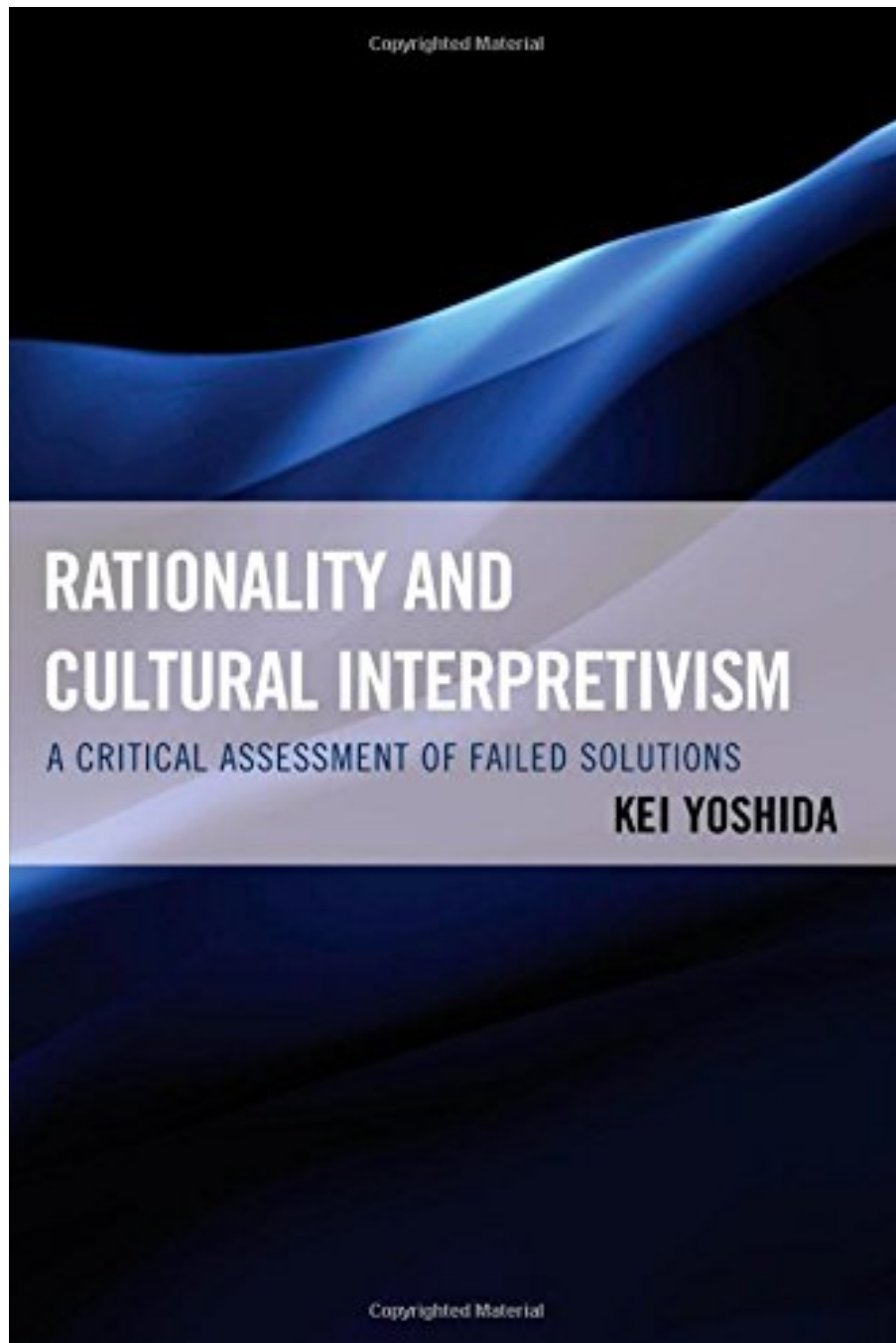


**RATIONALITY AND CULTURAL
INTERPRETIVISM: A CRITICAL
ASSESSMENT OF FAILED SOLUTIONS BY
KEI YOSHIDA**



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Review

In the chapters dealing with specific interpretivists, Yoshida succeeds in highlighting the tensions here. Ultimately, he argues that interpretivists find no satisfactory stable nonrelativist position. . . .[T]here is much to admire in his discussion of particular interpretivists. He clearly characterizes at least central elements of their various positions and highlights commonly worthy misgivings.
(Metascience)

This is an important and challenging book because the author seriously engaged with two bodies of literature that are rarely treated between the same covers. These are the literature of anthropology and cultural studies and the literature of critical rationalism. . . .[In the book] Yoshida advanced the discussion in an exciting and novel manner . . . This book deserves a wide readership across the full range of the social sciences, humanities, philosophy and methodology in the human sciences. Interpretivists should appreciate the effort that the author has made to come to grips with their literature. . . .This is a remarkable work of scholarship.
(Studies in Critical Rationalism)

The debate over the rationality of other cultures has continued and branched in different directions since its high point in the 1960s, and is overdue for a critical survey. Kei Yoshida provides just this: a nuanced philosophical analysis of the main figures and of the issues between them from a strongly argued Popperian point of view. (Stephen Turner, University of South Florida)

Anthropologists have long confused their liberal and tolerant values with a rudderless and amoral relativism. Kei Yoshida looks at prominent case studies and their protagonists and exposes this confusion for what it is. He shows that rational, scientific discussion of other societies is fruitful and unproblematic, and that a liberal and tolerant attitude to the mores of others need not be linked to an unrestrained relativism. Yoshida's ringing defense of Enlightenment values is wholly convincing. All students of ethics and of anthropology will enjoy

and benefit from this book. (Ian Jarvie, York University)

Kei Yoshida has provided a comprehensive Popperian refutation of the claim that cultural interpretivism—in all various disciplinary forms—operates with an account of rationality that is sufficient for making sense of the full range of human thought and action. It will be an invaluable research tool for those interested in the conceptual debates that have helped to define the frontiers of the more humanistic side of the social sciences for the past half-century. (Steve Fuller, professor of sociology, University of Warwick; author of *The New Sociological Imagination*)

Kei Yoshida critically assesses five different theoretical approaches to cultural interpretivism and conclusions on rationality. The book reveals the need for a cogent solution to the problem of rationality and urges social scientists not simply to interpret symbolic systems' or agents' intentions but also to explain the unintended consequences of human actions.

About the Author

Kei Yoshida is project lecturer at the University of Tokyo.

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Rationality and Cultural Interpretivism: A Critical Assessment of Failed Solutions critically assesses cultural interpretivism by scrutinizing five different proponents of it and their solutions to the problem of rationality. The book examines the works of Peter Winch, Charles Taylor, Clifford Geertz, Marshall Sahlins, and Gananath Obeyesekere and their contributions to the so-called rationality debate in the philosophy of the social sciences. This debate began with Winch's criticism of Edward Evans-Pritchard and has become one of the central debates in the field since 1960s, continuing as a controversy between Sahlins and Obeyesekere.

Kei Yoshida reveals the need for a cogent solution to the problem of rationality. He identifies two main problems with previous theories: first, that they exaggerate the differences between the natural and the social/cultural, and hence they also exaggerate the differences between the natural and the social sciences; and second, that they ignore important social science problems, particularly outcomes from the unintended consequences of human actions. Yoshida urges social scientists not simply to interpret agents' intentions or symbolic systems, but also to explain the unintended consequences of human actions.

Still entangled in positivism, cultural interpretivists claim that the social sciences differ from the natural sciences and thus reject any unity of method. Yoshida argues that we need to overcome the mistaken positivist image of science in order to develop a more fruitful philosophy of the social sciences. The analysis presented in this book will be of value to students and scholars of social epistemology, philosophy of science, philosophy of the social sciences, and the social sciences themselves, as well as anyone interested in the philosophical problem of rationality and relativism.

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