Beck's risk society

Urlick Beck is well-known for his notions of risk society, reflective modernity, and the distinction between scientific vs. social rationality.

1 Class society vs. risk society（階級社会とリスク社会）
class society: the problem is poverty, wealth distribution　（富の分配）
risk society: the problem of safety; risk distribution（リスクの分配）

there are overlaps between the two paradigms, but they have differences.

2 definition of risk(p.21)　リスクの定義
 systematic way of dealing with hazards and insecurities induced and introduced by modernization itself. 近代そのものによって引き起こされ導入されたハザードや不安を処理する体系的な方法　[this definition does not make much sense. see Campbell and Currie p.151 キャンベルらが言うように、リスクは対処されるべきものであって対処そのものではない。]
threatening force of modernization(p.21) (are there no risk before modernization?)

Reflexivity (p.19) modernity is about itself. [Maybe in the case of risk, the problem and solution are both created by the modernity.]

3 Five characteristics of risks in modernity(pp.22-24)
(1) systematic and often irreversible harms, generally invisible, based on causal interpretation, only exist in terms of knowledge, open to social definition and construction (不可逆な危害、不可視性、因果的解釈への依存、知識との関係でのみ存在、社会的な定義や構築の対象となる)
(2) some people are more affected than others -> social risk position; however, there is a boomerang effect that breaks up the pattern of class and national society.　（リスクの影響を多くうける人とあまりうけない人がいる。しかしリスクを生み出したものにリスクが帰ってくるというブーメラン効果もあり、階級社会や国家社会の不平等とはパターンが違う）
(3) there are losers and winners on risk　（勝者と敗者の差がある）

(4) risks cannot be possessed like wealth. One can only be afflicted by risks. knowledge is important　リスクは所有できず、ただ被るだけ。知識が重要になる。

(5) what was until now considered unpolitical becomes political; political potential of catastrophes（これまで非政治だったものが政治的になる。　カタストロフィーの政治的潜在力）

4 Scientific vs. Social rationality (p.29) 科学的合理性と社会的合理性

science's monopoly on rationality is broken.

Scientific rationality on risk refutes itself　科学的合理性は自らを否定
-based on speculative assumptions　思弁的仮定に依存
-strictly speaking, probability statements can never be refuted by actual accidents.　厳密な反駁ができない。確率的な言明は現実の事故によって反駁されることがない。
[these points apply to any scientific claim; strict refutability is unreasonably high standard. and scientific claims on risks can be refuted in a more realistic sense. See Campbell and Currie p. 158]
- we need ethical points of view to discuss risks meaningfully.　リスクについて意味のある議論をするには倫理的視点が必要。

social rationality　社会的合理性
catastrophic potential is central.
"no matter how small an accident probability is held, it is too large when on accident means annihiliation." pp. 29-30　どんなに事故の確率が小さく見積もられたとしても、事故が人類の絶滅を意味するなら、その確率は大きすぎる。
[if Beck is claiming that probability does not count at all, his claim is unreasonable. "it is possible that an accident in a hydroelectric power plant could cause an electrical chain reaction that electrocutes everybody in the world… But it is reasonable not to be worried about such possibilities, and nobody is , because they are too improbable to be concerned with" p. 164 of Cambell and Currie]

"social movements raise questions that are not answered by the risk technicians at all, and the technicians answer questions which miss the point of what was really asked and

what feeds public anxiety." p.30

[this observation is very important and fueled the development of STS.]

5 multiplicity of definitions　（リスクの定義の多角性）p.31

conflictual pluralization and multiplicity of definitions of civilization's risks [definition here means something different from philosophical or mathematical definition; maybe characterization is a better word.] 文明の引き起こしたリスクの定義の対立的な多元性と多角性

"Every interested party attempts to defend itself with risk definitions, and in this way to ward off risks which could affect its pocketbook.] あらゆる利害関係者が自分のリスク定義を擁護しようとし、そうすることによって自分の財布に影響を与えるようなリスクをとりのぞこうとする

many people are related to single risk (p.32)
farmers, fertilizer industries, authorities
-> importance of the notion of system.
 "one can do something and continue doing it without having to take personal responsibility. "　[it is unclear which direction Beck is heading. Is he claiming that such irresponsible behavior is a good thing? should we accept the idea that the system itself takes the responsibility? Or should we abandon the concept of system?]

risks have 'future' component: "risks have something unreal about them" (p.33)
anticipation, rather than actual damage, can cause action in the case of risk.

risks are goods to be avoided, whose non-existence is implied until canceled. "in dubio pro progress" (p.34) リスクは存在しないということが否定されない限りはないものとみなされる。「疑わしきは進歩の利益に」(in dubio pro reo, 疑わしきは被告の利益に、のもじり）

6 Globalization (p.36)
- poverty is hierarchic, smog is democratic. (p.36(貧困は階級的だがスモッグは民主的

food chains connect practically everyone on earth to everyone else -> "They [modernization risks] possesses an inherent tendency towards globalization" p.36.

social boomerang effect: risks catch up with those who produce or profit from them.

New social inequality arises, especially when risk position and class position overlap. (p.41)
examples: villa Parisi; Bophal

political vacuum (p.48)
"the dangers grow, but they are not politically reforged into a preventive risk management policy"

from solidarity of need to solidarity motivated by anxiety. p.49

"I am hungry!" to "I am afraid !"
can the anxiety rational?

7 free summary
To summarize freely:
- our society distribute risks along with wealth.
- there are many differences between risk distribution and wealth distribution.
- what complicates the issue is that risks are imperceptible, and subject to various interpretations.
- moreover, scientific rationality does not seem to be the only rationality that applies. social rationality that try to avoid catastrophe regardless of the probability seem to make sense.
- here we have the problem of conflict between different characterizations of risk.
- However, rich people who try to benefit producing risks to others cannot escape risks. Boomerang effect exists.
- Risk is globalized, and we need a risk management scheme at a global level, which does not exist yet.