Review of: "Historical evolution of culture, mind, and language: Considerations basing on Everett's study upon the Pirahã with great interst."

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Transmission and Competition of symbols, Language and Culture between Two Civilizations

I read Oesterdiekhoff's (2023) article *Historical evolution of culture, mind, and language: Considerations basing on Everett's study upon the Pirahã with great interst*. In fact, I knew nothing about the Piraha, reading this article enables me to know Everett's study upon the Pirahã. This is the most significant contribution of this article.

Because my long-term research interest has been concentrated on the main theme of his article, namely *Historical evolution of culture, mind, and language,* in this paper, I will first explain the transmission of culture from the perspective of cultural psychology. Then, I will compare the differences between China's "ideographic script" and the Western "phonetic script" to illustrate one of the distinctive features of China's ideographic script, which is its facilitation of connection with ancient cultural traditions. Furthermore, this paper will use a fable mentioned by the Ming Dynasty philosopher Wang Yangming as an example to demonstrate that within the Chinese cultural tradition, not only does an individual's daily experiences reenact the developmental process of civilization, but the development of an individual's life also recapitulates the developmental history of the ethnic group.

In contrast, within modern Western culture, there is a disconnection between "modern thinking" and "primitive thinking." The developmental direction of the "ego" is aimed at separating as much as possible from "the Self." Finally, based on this comparison, the paper will speculate on the potential outcomes of the competition between these two civilizations.

Keywords: ideographic characters, phonetic characters, "ego-Self axis," ontogeny, phylogeny.

I. The Significance of Symbolic Representation

The birth of mythological and religious symbolic representation can be traced back to the moment when humans began to reflect on their place in the natural world. Approximately sixty thousand years ago, humans started to pay attention to astrophysics. Human culture evolved from pure animistic beliefs and totem worship, progressing through stages of worshiping giant stones, the moon, and the sun. Around ten thousand years ago, agriculture and animal husbandry methods were developed, leading to the realization that celestial bodies, numbers, plants, and animal life followed certain laws and recurring rhythms. These discoveries were recorded for the benefit of future generations, gradually giving rise to polytheism, monotheism, alchemy, moral philosophy, and natural science.

The Birth of Symbolic Representation

Jung believed that symbolic representation shares a common origin. They are all derived from the shared structures or collective habits within the human brain during its evolutionary process. A more comprehensive explanation is that enduring myths and symbolic systems are likely assimilated and absorbed because they fulfill the needs of archetypes, involving both archetypal structures and cultural influences.

Symbolic images, like ordinary objects, do not inherently possess any meaning; their meaning is bestowed by people. Whether symbolic representations can manifest their vitality depends on how individuals consciously approach them. This is the key to psychological well-being and personal happiness. In a world devoid of meaning and value, people become sick, decadent, and despondent. Such individuals need the "transfusion" of symbolic representations. Every culture has a repository of symbols. The secret of psychotherapy lies in enabling patients to access resources from this repository, thereby obtaining the "transfusion" they need. The crucial point is that this resource repository is not located on the main thoroughfare but concealed within *the Self.*

A truly living symbol, in the eyes of an individual, is a symbol that can represent matters that are speculated upon but not yet known. It has the power to engage the unconscious and endow or enhance the meaning of life. In his work "Liber Novus," Jung extensively argues that "the symbol is a psychological mechanism for transforming energy" (Jung, 1952). Symbolic representations enable individuals to engage in thinking with vibrant imagery, allowing psychic energy to shift from lower to higher levels. This meaningful energy empowers symbolic representations to influence self-awareness, guide one's orientation, and open new pathways beyond the current situation. The experience of sudden enlightenment in the process of psychoanalysis arises from the transformation of this energy.

The Life Cycle of Symbolic Representation

Jung emphasized that symbolic representations have the characteristic of independent existence and go through their own life cycle of birth, flourishing, decline, and death. A symbolic representation is only alive when it is filled with meaning. Once people find alternative ways of expression that better satisfy their needs than the previously accepted symbol, the original symbolic representation will die. Dead symbolic representations are nothing more than labels continued out of convention. Therefore, it is unlikely for the ego consciousness to invent living symbolic representations by its own will. Symbols created in such a manner cannot possibly contain more than what individuals deliberately put into them. Symbolic representations in every culture can survive or perish due to personal growth or historical evolution. Symbolic representations that were vibrant in childhood often lose their magic as one grows older, and the same applies to cultural symbolic representations. For example, the cross used to be the most powerful symbol of Christian faith, but for most people today, it no longer inspires religious devotion.

 I. Cultural Implicit Learning

Jung believed that the collective unconscious, as the repository of archetypes, is innate. However, many studies in cultural psychology have shown that the substantive content of culture is acquired through implicit learning. Looking at the

history of human development, there was a long period before the use of language when symbols served as the means of communication. However, after humans began using language, it became the most important carrier of culture. As individuals learn language and its usage in various contexts within their life world, they also unknowingly learn the cultural traditions embedded in language.

The Genetic Method

Soviet psychologist Vygotsky (1896-1934) advocated for the genetic method, which argues that the study of human psychological development should not only focus on individual ontogeny but also consider phylogenetic analysis of social history.

Vygotsky (1927/1978) believed that individual development is rooted in society, history, and culture. When studying the psychological processes of humans, it is essential to consider the historical conditions and processes of the entire society and culture. Ontogeny focuses on the changes involved in the overall mental development process from birth to death. Culture, on the other hand, encompasses the cumulative artifacts created by the entire species throughout its history. It serves as a medium and a unique characteristic of human (mental) development. Various tools used by humans, the creation of different forms of art, and the use of diverse languages all fall under the category of cultural artifacts. In this sense, culture represents "history in the present." Language, as the medium of the mind, its development, and its generational transmission, production, and reproduction are significant features specific to humans.

Regarding phylogenesis, Vygotsky believed that the distinction between humans and animals lies in the emergence and development of higher mental functions. To understand the differences in the evolutionary history between humans and other higher primates, one must study the emergence and use of language or writing, the creation and invention of various tools, and changes in labor forms. This line of research involves the entire history and development of humanity and culture.

The Intersection of Historical Time

Under the influence of Vygotsky, cultural psychologist Cole (1996) argue that adults' past cultural experiences and limitations are transferred to infants through the process of socialization, becoming another cultural condition for their development. In other words, adults create an interactive environment with infants based on their own culturally constructed world. Only humans with culture can go back to the "culture past" and project it into the future. They then bring this conceptual future back to the present, forming the socio-cultural conditions for new members. Conversely, the cultural medium allows humans to project their past into the future of the next generation. This perspective enables us to find continuity in the psychological processes between generations through culture.

Cole (1996) presented two diagrams to illustrate how cultural traditions influence individuals. In the first diagram, the bracketed "Child" represents the child (see Figure 1), and the vertical line represents the moment of birth when they are already influenced by five different times:
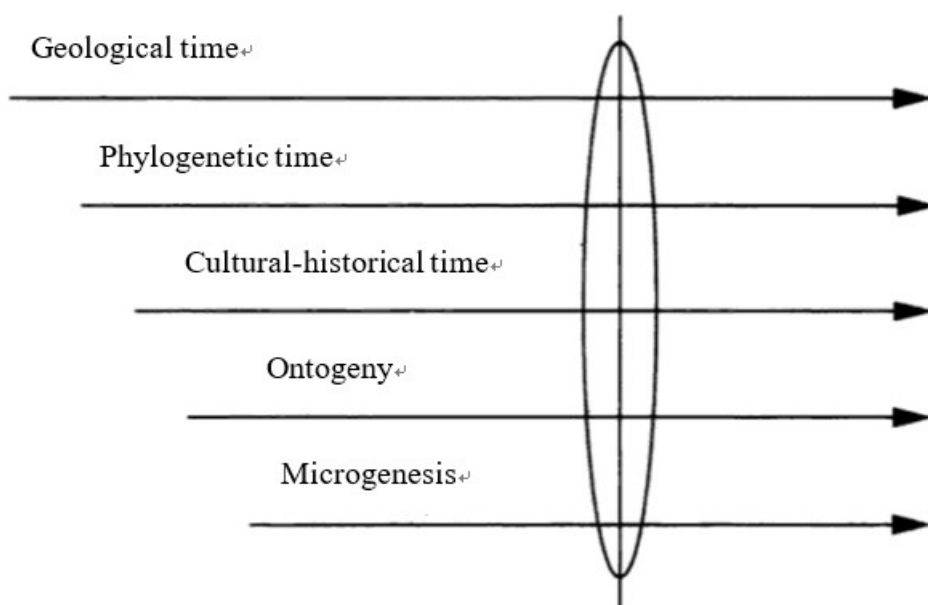
Figure 1: How Culture Transforms from the Ideas Held by Parents into the

Organizing of Interaction in the Child's Environment

(Adapted from Cole, 1996: 68)

(1) Geological time: The history of the Earth since ancient times, often divided by geologists based on significant events that have occurred on Earth.

(2) Phylogenetic time: The evolutionary history of a population with a common ancestor.

(3) Cultural-historical time: The developmental history of a specific cultural group.

(4) Ontogeny: The individual's developmental history, typically referring to the process of conception, birth, growth, complete maturity, and eventual decline and death.

(5) Microgenesis: The relationships between different parts within an individual, often not within the individual's awareness. Scholars' ideas or explanations regarding these relationships are referred to as "microgenesis." In the context of this discussion, it refers to the microgenesis between the individual's consciousness, personal unconscious, and collective unconscious at the time of birth.

As human beings, we are inherently relational beings (Gergen, 2009). No one can exist in isolation. In addition to this, Cole (1996) presents another diagram illustrating how cultural traditions are transmitted to the next generation through intergenerational interactions. In Figure 2, two ellipses represent the "Parent Generation" and the "Child Generation" with their respective consciousness. The range of concepts they can understand when exploring the external world. When the "Parent Generation" describes events that have occurred in history using language (1), their concepts often involve

"phylogenetic time." However, when they pass on such events to the "Child Generation" in order for them to anticipate the future (2), the range of concepts that the "Child Generation" can comprehend is often limited by "cultural-historical time" (3).
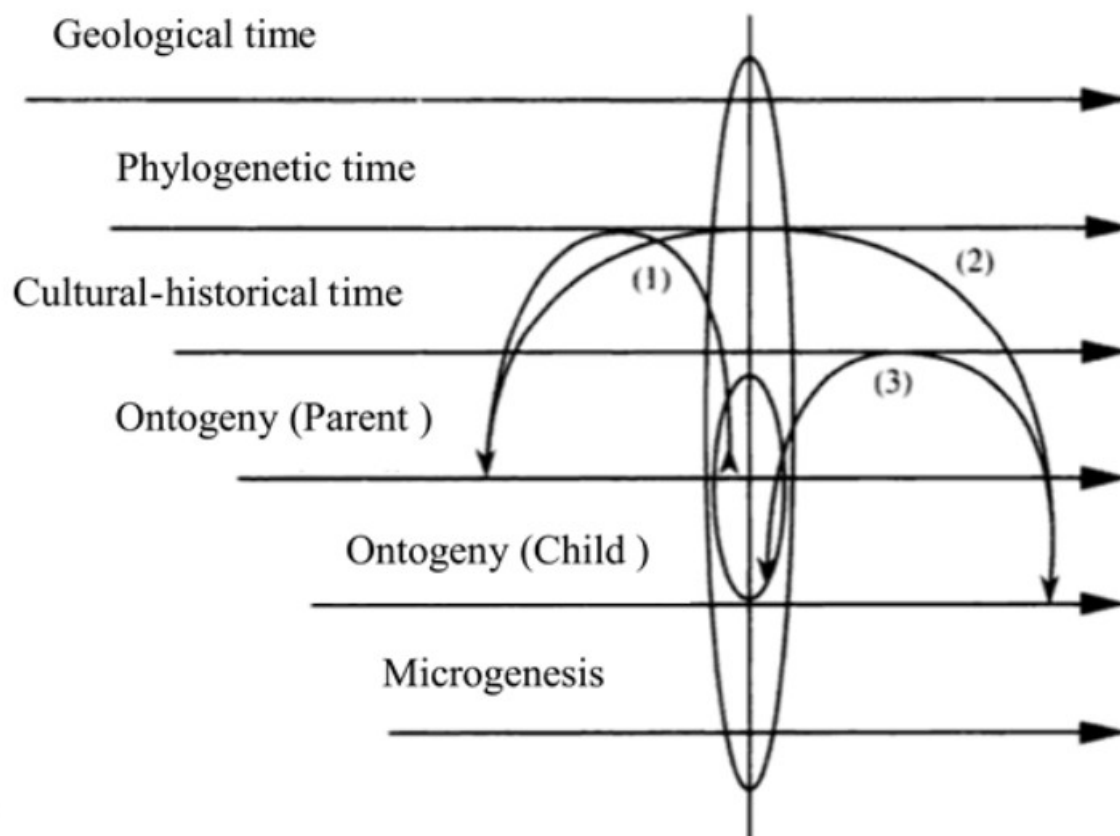
Geological time

Phylogenetic time

Cultural-historical time

Ontogeny (Parent)

Ontogeny (Child)

Microgenesis

(1) (2) (3)

Figure 2: How Cultural Traditions are Passed on through Interactions between Generations (Adapted from Cole, 1996: 68)

Culture's Learning

Looking from the perspective of Figure 1, language is the most significant carrier of culture. The formation of any language system is influenced by multiple temporal sequences, including geological time, phylogenetic time, and cultural-historical time. As long as people continue to use a particular language, they will unconsciously be influenced by its culture.

Taking Jung's theory of the "collective unconscious" into account, Jung believed that the "archetypes" that constitute the collective unconscious are innate. However, these "archetypes" are merely empty "a priori formal structures". When people learn to use a particular language, they also acquire the cultural products embedded within it, thereby forming the substantial content of their collective unconscious.

I. Cultural Systems on the Eurasian Continent

With the cultural system approach advocated in this article, we can consider the issues of the origins and development of several major civilizations from a relatively macro perspective. In the late 19th century, German scholar Max Müller (1879-94), who compiled the fifty-volume *Sacred Books of the East*, categorized the existing religious and linguistic systems on the Eurasian continent into three major systems: Semitic, Aryan, and Turan in his work *Introduction to the Study of Religion*. (Müller, 1873)

Semitic System

The Semitic system primarily refers to the Arabs and the Jewish people who speak Hebrew, including many ethnic groups in West Asia and North Africa. Early Babylonians, Phoenicians, and Canaanites practiced polytheistic religions but later developed strict monotheistic beliefs. The Old Testament, specifically the Book of Exodus, records the account of Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt. In addition to the biblical narrative, historical records of Egypt reveal that during the time of Pharaoh Akhenaten in ancient Egypt, King Amenhotep IV vigorously promoted a monotheistic religion centered around the sun god "Aten" (also known as Aton or Atum). Sigmund Freud (1939), the founder of psychoanalysis, suggested in his work *Moses and Monotheism* that Moses, the national hero of the Jewish people, may have been a trusted minister of Akhenaten. After the failure of religious reforms in Egypt, Moses found followers among the Jewish people, imparted sacred commandments to them, and led them to escape from Egypt, which eventually led to the formation of a heterodox sect, namely the religion of Jesus Christ, known as Christianity.

The Aryan lineage and Greek mythology

The ancient Aryan people lived in regions around the Caspian Sea and the Caucasus, leading a nomadic and pastoral lifestyle. They later diverged into different ethnic groups such as the Germans, Greeks, Romans, Vandals, Teutons, Celts, and Slavs. Today, the people of these countries predominantly follow Christianity, which originated from the Semitic people. However, historically, the various religions within this system created polytheistic beliefs filled with poetic imagination. Among them, Greek mythology had the most significant influence.

The Greeks viewed their gods as similar to themselves, possessing various character weaknesses. They were envious and selfish, active and greedy, and ambitious. They would engage in irrational behavior driven by passionate desires. The only reason they were worshipped was that they represented the unknowable mysterious world and had the power to control the destinies of mortals.

Greek religion did not establish systematic doctrines nor produce a pure canonical scripture. They sought favor and assistance from the gods through prayer and sacrifices. While Indian religion had a Brahmin priestly class and the Vedas as their scriptures, it still could not impose strict regulations on the actions of its believers.

The Greeks believed that comprehensible forces could to some extent control their own world of life. Universal moral arguments had to be completed through philosophical speculation. Individuals were free to follow their own inclinations in the spiritual realm, without feeling guilty or self-reproachful about their moral condition. Therefore, Müller believed that the gods of the Aryan people had distinct personalities, and the Greeks had to first break away from superstitions or undergo

philosophical struggles to shift towards monotheism. This stands in sharp contrast to the obsessive monotheism of the Semitic people and the divination system and nature worship of the Turanian people. As a result, the greatest contribution of Greek mythology to humanity lies in their keen insight, active intellect, and ever-changing imagination, providing an endless source of inspiration and creativity for future generations.

The Turanian Language and Beliefs

The Turanian system mainly refers to the agricultural and nomadic ethnic groups living in East Asia, including the Mongols, Manchus, Xiongnu, and Turkic peoples, among others. The Han Chinese people are also classified within this category. Max Müller, a renowned Orientalist scholar of the late 19th century, made a division of the Chinese language that few linguists today would agree with. However, from a religious studies perspective, his classification holds some merit.

Müller believed that the religions within the Turanian language family commonly held the belief in the immortality of the soul and worshiped the supreme "Heaven" with a blurred personality. Consequently, their religious character lacked emotional color. For example, Chinese religion places great importance on the details of rituals and emphasizes the inner emotions of ritual worship, but the objects of worship lack distinct personalities. In their pantheistic system, the dominant deities such as the Sky God, Earth God, Sun God, Thunder God, Mountain God, and River God are all like this. There is no underlying principle connecting these deities, making it difficult for them to develop captivating mythology.

I. Language and Writing in Chinese Culture

It's important to acknowledge that the classification and ideas presented here are based on Max Müller's perspective from the 19th century, and some of his theories have been subject to criticism and revision in modern scholarship. From a linguistic perspective, classifying Chinese characters as part of the "Turanian language family" is actually quite unusual. Chinese characters are the only logographic writing system currently in use in the world, and they are fundamentally different from most phonetic scripts. Phonetic scripts, such as those based on alphabets, directly represent spoken language and can be written as they are spoken.

Logographic writing system

Chinese characters, on the other hand, are ideographic and do not have a direct phonetic correspondence. Each character represents a meaning or concept and is formed by combining visual elements called radicals and phonetic components. While the phonetic components in Chinese characters can provide hints to their pronunciation, there is no necessary link between the sound and meaning of a character.

The majority of Chinese characters are classified as "semantic-phonetic" characters. While they are composed of both semantic (meaning) and phonetic components, the relationship between the sound and meaning of a character is not always straightforward. The use of phonetic components helps in distinguishing similar-looking characters and provides clues to their pronunciations, but the overall structure of Chinese characters is primarily based on meaning rather than sound.

The unique nature of Chinese characters as a logographic writing system has contributed to their longevity and the preservation of Chinese culture and history. They offer a rich and flexible means of communication, allowing for the expression of complex ideas and the preservation of cultural heritage.

Ideographic writing systems, such as Chinese characters, originated from pictograms that represented natural phenomena by imitating their shapes. To overcome the limitations of depicting concrete objects, the "Six Categories" (Liùshū) character creation method was developed to represent abstract concepts. The six categories include "Pictograms," "Ideograms," "Compound Ideograms," "Phono-semantic compounds," "Transferred meanings," and "Loan characters."

Mastering Spoken Chinese

The "Six Categories" allowed Chinese characters to fully symbolize the language system. However, unlike phonetic scripts, where learning the language enables one to grasp most of the writing system, mastering spoken Chinese does not automatically grant proficiency in Chinese characters. Essentially, learning to speak Chinese requires a separate process of learning Chinese characters, as Chinese language and characters are two independent systems. Phonetic systems, such as Zhuyin and Pinyin, can assist in learning pronunciation, but they cannot replace the function of characters.

Chinese characters are monosyllabic and have many homophones, making the learning of their pronunciations more challenging. However, characters provide a means of disambiguating meanings and conveying complex ideas that cannot be achieved solely through phonetic scripts. Therefore, while phonetic systems can aid in pronunciation, the function of characters remains essential in the Chinese writing system.

During the reign of Emperor Qin Shi Huang, when China was unified, there was a decree to "standardize the carriage tracks and unify the script." This meant unifying the writing system, but not the dialects. As a result, a single Chinese character can have different pronunciations in different dialects. This is completely different from phonetic scripts where the writing and pronunciation are closely aligned. As a consequence, Chinese characters and the Chinese language developed as two independent systems, and the evolution of the characters diverged from the spoken language. From oracle bone script to seal script, clerical script, cursive script, regular script, and running script, while the calligraphic styles changed, the basic meanings of the characters remained consistent. The artistic beauty of calligraphy also became a unique form of visual art for Chinese characters.

Unity and Diversity Coexisting

Lin Gu Fang (2023) pointed out that the Chinese character culture system exhibits the characteristics of "unity and diversity coexisting." "Unity" refers to the fact that Chinese characters enable a shared and distinct historical lineage and cultural core. "Diversity" arises from the complex geographical structure and diverse humanistic aspects of China. The cultural differences between different regions in China often surpass the variations observed among countries within the same language family in Western Europe.

Lin suggests that within the cultural system of Chinese characters, while "dialects" demonstrate a diverse development trend, "Mandarin" (Guānhuà) exhibits the same "unity" as the written language. Scholars who understand Mandarin have a "broadened perspective" and can travel everywhere, becoming the "elite rulers" during the imperial period of China. Similarly, Chinese opera can be divided into "Mandarin opera" and "dialect opera." Classical operas like Kunqu, Peking opera, are performed and spoken in Mandarin, while dialect operas like Yue opera, Cantonese opera, and Gezai opera are popular within their respective dialect communities, which imposes limitations on their time and space.

In terms of cultural heritage, the principle of "writing the same script" (shū tóng wén) in Chinese characters allows the written language to transcend the temporal and spatial changes of the spoken language, providing it with stability across time. As a result, people in different eras and contexts in China can access the same classical tradition. This is why many modern Chinese individuals are still able to directly read texts such as "Records of the Grand Historian" (Shǐjì) from two thousand years ago or even earlier works like the "Analects" (Lúnyǔ).

European modern civilization is built upon the foundation of Christianity and Greek culture. Despite having a unified core belief system, it has fragmented into numerous countries, each using its own phonetic writing system, which cannot be used by modern Western individuals either to read classical Latin characters or to "experience" the classical works. In such a cultural system, the individual "ego" is fundamentally separated from its cultural tradition. We can take two examples to illustrate the distinct differences between these two cultural systems.

I. The Recapitulation of the Chinese Phylogene

In the traditional Chinese cultural heritage, the *I-Ching* (Book of Changes) holds the position of being "the foremost among all classics." In the book *Knowledge and Action: Social Psychological Interpretation of Chinese Cultural Tradition,* it has been pointed out that the Chinese cultural traditions of Daoism, Confucianism, Legalism, and the Martial School all originated from the *I-Ching* (Hwang, 1995). They constitute the "objective mind" within the collective unconscious of the Chinese people.

According to legend, Confucius once sought knowledge of ritual from Laozi, and his teachings centered around *benevolence* (*ren*). Confucius' disciple, Mencius, extensively expounded on the concept of *righteousness* (*yi*), while Xunzi advocated for *propriety* (*li*), thus forming an ethical system of "*ren-yi-li*." Legalist thought focused on "*law*, *technique*, and *power*," and later, there emerged the philosophy of the Martial School. This cultural tradition represents the dialectical development of Chinese culture, where later thoughts critically inherit and creatively develop earlier doctrines. In the words of Laozi, "The master leads by the *Way*; afterward, *virtue* follows. *Virtue* lost, *benevolence* follows. *Benevolence* lost, *righteousness* follows. *Righteousness* lost, *propriety* follows" (Tao Te Ching Ch. 38). We can further elaborate that "*propriety* comes before *law*, *law* lost, *technique* follows. *Technique* lost, *power* follows." If even *power* fails, then resorting to warfare becomes inevitable.

The development of the Daoism, Confucianism, Legalism, and Martial School thoughts during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods represents the secularization process of Chinese culture, from the sacred to the mundane. Following this sequential development is what the Chinese refer to as "going along with the ordinary" (*shun ze fan*).

Daoist thought teaches people to "return to simplicity" and "return to the ultimate," aspiring to reach a state of being "in union with the Dao," which can be called "going against the ordinary" (*ni ze xian*).

The Recapitualation of Phylogeny in an individual's Ontogeny

Under the influence of the cultural traditions of Daoism, Confucianism, Legalism, and the Martial School, the individual development process almost precisely reenacts the historical development of their ethnic group. Even within a single day, individuals may go through different stages of the "Dao, Confucianism, Legalism, and the Martial School." Wang Yangming (1472-1528) once spoke inspiringly:

Within a single day, one experiences the world of ancient and modern times, but people fail to see it. In the clear and serene night, ignoring and disregarding, free from thoughts and worries, with a calm and peaceful mind, one enters the world of Emperor Xi Huang. In the early morning, with a clear mind and a harmonious atmosphere, one enters the world of Yao and Shun; before noon, amidst the interchange of rituals, in an orderly and dignified manner, one is in the world of the Three Dynasties. After noon, as the spirit gradually fades, with disturbances and complexities, one is in the world of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods. Gradually, as night falls, all things fall into rest, and the scene becomes desolate, one is in the world where people and things disappear. Scholars who trust in their inner conscience and are not disturbed by external influences always strive to be individuals above Emperor Xi Huang (Wang Yangming, Instructions for Practical Living, Volume II).

The "world of Emperor Xi Huang," "world of Yao and Shun," "world of the Three Dynasties," "world of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods," and the "world where people and things disappear" that Wang Yangming referred to correlate broadly with the realms of life addressed by the five schools of thought, namely Daoism, Confucianism, Legalism, the Martial School, and Buddhism. Even in today's Chinese communities around the world, which have increasingly transformed into industrial and commercial societies, reflecting on Wang Yangming's statement, "Scholars who trust in their inner conscience and are not disturbed by external influences," seems even more relevant.

Applying the conceptual framework from the book *Knowledge and Action* (Hwang, 1995), the individual described in the text, upon waking up in the early morning, experiences a state of "clear mind and fresh spirit" and interacts with family members, possibly employing Confucian concepts to create a scene of harmonious and dignified "world of Yao and Shun." In modern industrial and commercial society, various organizations constantly rise and fall, and most people find themselves involved in different organizational settings. At work, in the workplace, leaders of certain Chinese organizations may use Legalist principles to manage their organizations, attempting to create their "world of the Three Dynasties." Both within and outside the organization, its members may engage in strategic behaviors inspired by the Martial School, maneuvering and competing with others, thus creating scenes reminiscent of the "world of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods." After finishing work and returning home, in the "world where all things fall into rest, and the scene becomes desolate," they may "return to simplicity" and enter a state aligned with Daoist or Buddhist ideals, striving to be individuals above Emperor Xi Huang.

The Development of Body, Mind, and Spirit Throughout Life

Wang Yangming's analogy illustrates that individuals who inherit the Chinese cultural traditions may, in a concrete and subtle manner, reenact the historical development of their civilization within a single day. Moreover, such an individual's lifelong development process may also recapitulate the historical development of their civilization.

Using the three-dimensional "Mandala model" described in Hwang's (2018) psychodynamic model of Self-nature, the "individual" referred to by Wang Yangming should have already experienced the "realm of desires" during childhood and entered the adult stage of the "realm of form." They have matured in the aspects of body, mind, and spirit and can apply the practical wisdom derived from the Chinese cultural tradition to interact with different individuals in various domains of life.

As they enter the "realm of formlessness" in old age, they may attempt to maintain the balance of body, mind, and spirit through practices such as Qigong, Tai Chi, and Neidan derived from Daoism. Alternatively, they may seek spiritual solace through practices such as Zen meditation, Buddhist rituals, and recitation of scriptures. When these efforts are no longer effective, the cultivation practices of Buddhism or Daoism can help them face the inevitability of life with equanimity and "return to formlessness." Just as Zen Master Zhikan said, "Let go and move on, the ancient road is smooth." Therefore, the individual development process (ontogenesis) concretely and subtly recapitulates the historical development of their **civilization** (phylogenesis).

I. Primitive Thinking and Modern Thinking

In Western culture, there is also a study that explains how an individual's lifelong development in relation to the historical development of their ethnic groups. In the book *The Geography of Nowhere: Finding One's Self in the Postmodern World* by Eberle (1994), the various aspects of difference between primitive thinking and modern thinking are analyzed. Based on his comparisons, Stevens compiled Table1.

Primitive vs Modern Thinking

	PRIMORDIAL MIND	MODERN MIND
Ego–Self axis	short and compact	long and attenuated
Cosmic location	central	peripheral
Relationship to Nature	subjective participation 'participation mystique'	separation, objectivity
Concept of time	rhythmic and circular	progressive and linear
Reality	the world of the spirit	the world of matter
Moral values	absolute	relative
Life	eternal	finite
Attitude to myth and ritual	essential	futile

Table 1: Comparison of Primitive Thinking and Modern Thinking (Adapted from Stevens, 1995: p. 324)

 In primitive thinking, humans are placed at the center of the cosmic order, living in close communion with nature. Time is perceived as rhythmic and cyclical, and the spiritual world is seen as the true reality. Absolute moral values are accepted, and life is believed to be eternal. Myths and rituals are considered indispensable for physical and mental well-being. In contrast, modern thinking situates humans at the periphery of the universe, with a detached and non-emotional relationship with nature. Time is understood as linear and progressive, and the material world is considered the true reality. Moral values are relative, and life is seen as finite. Myths and rituals are seen as irrelevant to modern life.

Ego-Self Axis

During individual development, primitive thinking gradually transforms into modern thinking, and the ego gradually emerges from the "ego-Self" axis. Figure 3 illustrates the horizontal ego-Self axis, representing the developmental process from birth to maturity. (a) represents primitive thinking, and (b) represents modern thinking. Initially, the ego is only a latent part within the Self. Later, the ego gradually develops and differentiates from the Self, with the vertical line

representing the essential connection that maintains the integrity of the personality. The diagonal lines indicate the degree of alignment between the ego and the Self at various stages of development.
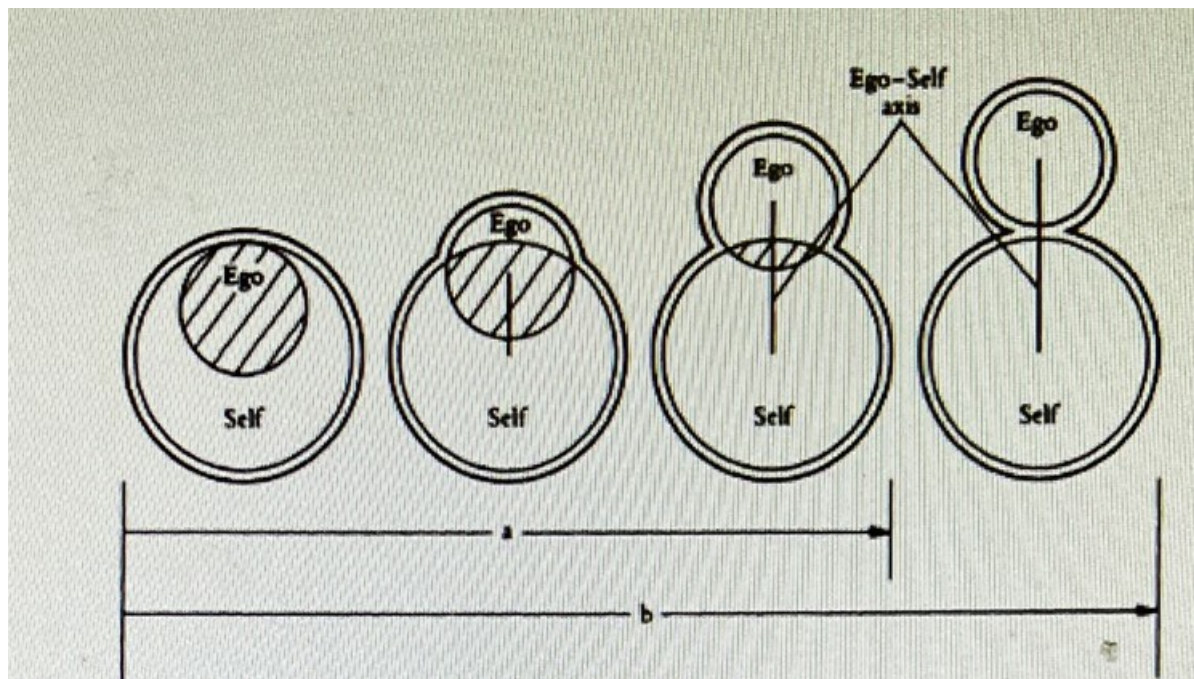

Figure 3: "Ego-Self Axis Diagram" (Adapted from Stevens, 1995: p.323)

According to Stevens (1995), from a Jungian psychology perspective, a mentally healthy and mature individual must maintain good communication between the ego and the Self. Jung stated in his autobiography that throughout his life, his "Persona" (first personality) was always ready to make way for his "Shadow" (second personality), which refers to this idea. The "Four Functional Aspects of the Individual Subject" diagram (Figure 4) and the "Complete Ego Model" (Figure 5), drawn by Jung, both focus on the "ego" as the "subject," representing the developed individual, while the "Self" is submerged and not explicitly depicted in the diagram.
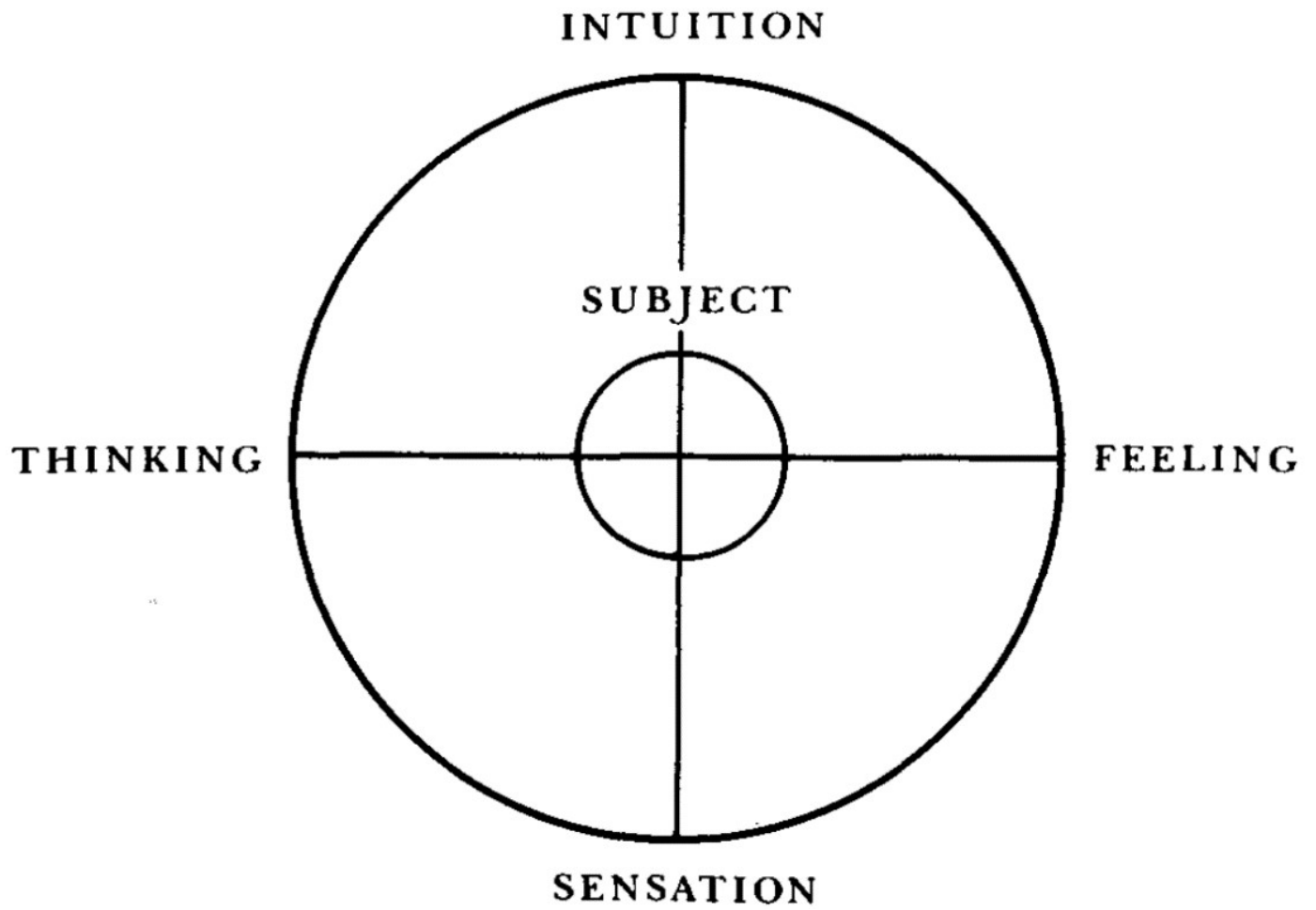
INTUITION

THINKING　　　**SUBJECT**　　　**FEELING**

SENSATION

Figure 4: Four Functional Aspects of the Individual Subject
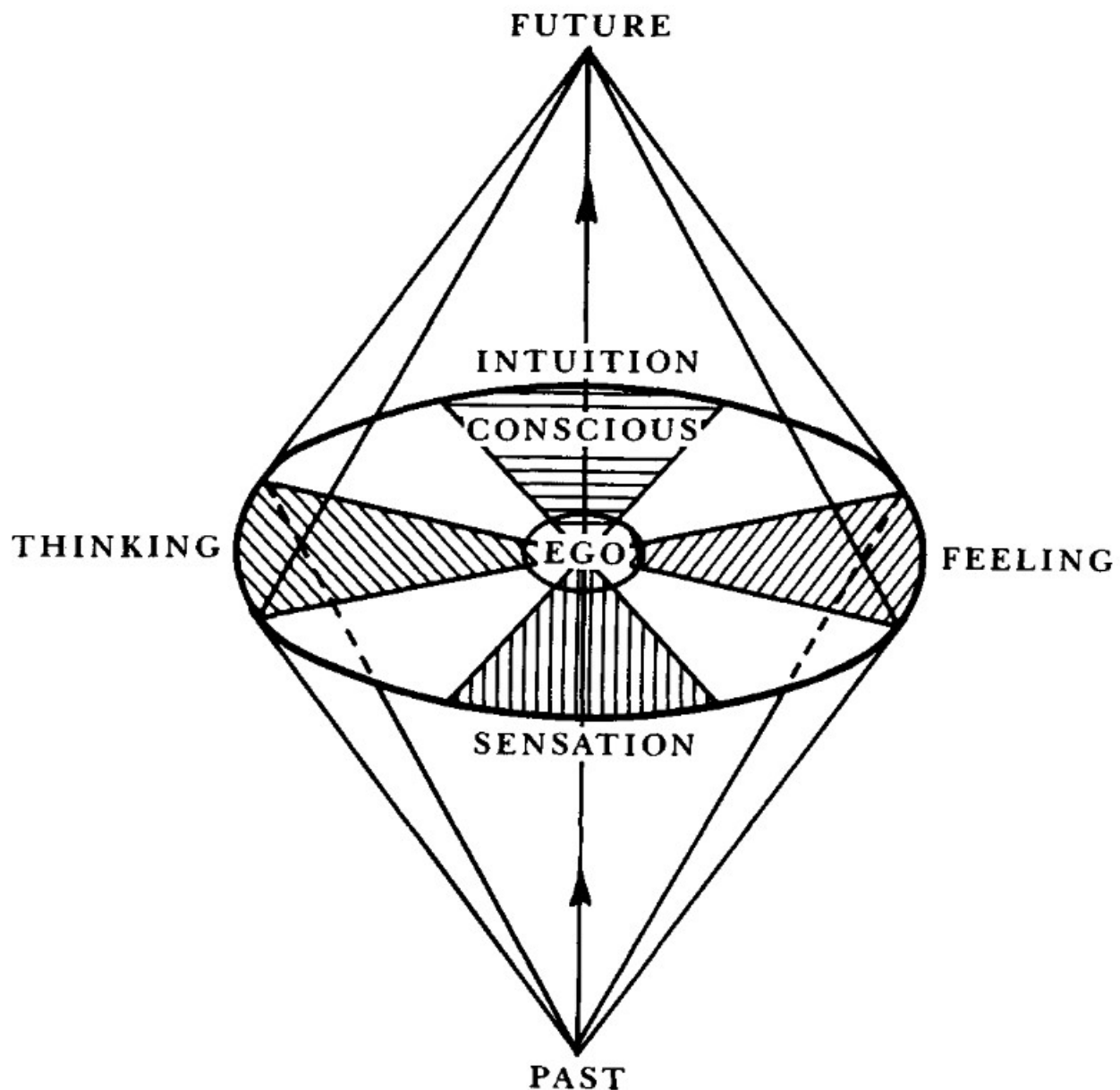
Jung, 1973, p. 123

Figure 5: Complete Ego Model Jung, 1973, p. 127

With increasing separation from the Self, the ego lost its innocence and became heroic, ceased to be earthbound and learned to fly. Stevens (1995) warned that this is an extremely hazardous occupation. The Judeo-Christians viewed man's escape from the primordial ancestral environment as a 'fall', for they saw it in moralistic terms as a defiance of the Law of God. But the modern secular view is quite contrary: it sees it as a rise from unconsciousness, an ascent from darkness. It should be noted that Jung's concept of the "capital Self" aligns with the Confucian concept of "Self-nature" discussed in traditional Chinese Confucianism. This concept, inspired by external Buddhism, became one of the main topics of *A Scientific Interpretation of Song-Ming Neo-Confucianism* and is a focal point of analysis in this book.

To put it more clearly, in Chinese society, the reenactment of the traditional Chinese cultural traditions of "Daoism, Confucianism, Legalism, and Military" on a daily basis or throughout an individual's life exhibits enduring resilience and is

not merely the "Primitive Thinking" described in Eberle's theory. Even the Book of Changes (I Ching), which serves as the root of Chinese culture, has not dissipated over time. This is the focal point of discussion in this article. The conclusion section will further analyze the fundamental differences between Western and Chinese civilizations based on the arguments of this article.

I.   Conclusion: Century-long Marathon

The theory proposed in this article can be used to explain the current cultural confrontation between China and the West. Since the Qing Dynasty announced the abolition of the imperial examination system in 1905, Chinese schools at all levels have adopted a Western-style education system. They have translated Western textbooks and important books into Chinese for use in the education system. From the perspective of cultural transmission theory by Cole (1996) (see Figure 2), the knowledge transmitted from the "older generation" (teachers or professors) to the "younger generation" (students) in the Chinese education system is largely derived from Western civilization. However, due to the use of "ideographic characters" by the Chinese people, their language contains traditional Chinese values. Even after shocks like the "Cultural Revolution," social scientists can still easily observe the influence of traditional culture in the Chinese-speaking world (as seen, for examples, Chang, 2010; Herrmann-Pillath, Guo & Feng, 2021; Ruan, 2017).

When a Chinese student graduates from school and enters any social institution to work, they are actually using Western knowledge as a tool to serve their own Chinese values. This is what Zhang Zhidong, one of the four famous ministers in the late Qing Dynasty, advocated as "Chinese learning as the essence, Western learning for practical use."

Until today, Chinese students have learned, from their early academic years, to eagerly acquire "advanced" knowledge originating from the West. In contrast, Western students do not face any systematic pressure requiring them to learn either Chinese language or Chinese culture. In section IV of this article, we compare and analyze the Chinese "ideographic characters" with the Western "phonetic characters." This comparison suggests that once the knowledge carried by Western "phonetic characters" is translated into Chinese, it can be easily absorbed by Chinese intellectuals. On the other hand, the knowledge carried by "ideographic characters," even when translated into "phonetic characters," is not easily understood by Westerners.

After China's rise, the Chinese government established "Confucius Institutes" in many Western cities to promote Chinese culture. However, prior to the deterioration of Sino-US relations in 2019, some Western scholars had already accused these institutes of promoting China's ideology and deliberately excluding other perspectives. As the ancient Chinese military strategist Sun Tzu once said, "Know yourself, know your enemy, and you will win a hundred battles." In this "century-long marathon" of competition, if there is a significant disparity in knowledge between the competing parties, who will come out victorious (Pillsbary, 2015)?

Kishore Mahbubani, an ethnic Sindhi from India, served as Singapore's Permanent Representative to the United Nations. In his book *Has China Won? The Chinese Challenge to American Primacy*, he points out that Chinese civilization is the oldest continuous civilization in the world. When a powerful and resilient civilization regains its strength, it possesses an unparalleled energy. The United States is not competing against an outdated Communist Party but against the world's

oldest and most powerful civilization. When the United States views the CCP as the "Chinese Communist Party," it commits a fundamental error of understanding. In the eyes of many objective Asian observers, it is actually operating as the "Chinese Civilization Party." The leadership style in China focuses on revitalizing Chinese civilization rather than globally promoting communism. To achieve this goal, the leaders recruit the nation's brightest elites to join the Communist Party. Let us wait and see who will win the century-long marathon.

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