Editor’s Note
Southeast Asian Identities: The Case of Cambodia
J. Randall Groves
Civilizations: Which Constitutes Africa’s Most Effective Choice?
Tseggai Isaac
Essay: An Observation on the Universal Significance of Western Civilization
Laina Farhat-Holzman
The Paradox of Thinking and the Unthinkable
Walter Benesch
From Globalization Waves to Global Civilization
Andrew Targowski
Karl Renner on Stability, Change, and Service in Entire Legal Systems
Joseph Drew

Book Reviews
Robert D. Kaplan, The Revenge of Geography
Charles Trautmann, India: Brief History of A Civilization
James DeMeo, Saharasia
Peter Benjamin Golden, Central Asia in World History
William F. McCants, Founding Gods, Inventing Nations

Call for Papers
ISCSC
International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations
https://ojs.lib.byu.edu/spc/index.php/CCR
Editorial Board

Editor-in-Chief
Joseph Drew
josephdrew4920@verizon.net

Senior Editor and Manuscript Editor
Laina Farhat-Holzman
lfarhat102@aol.com

Editor
Connie Lamb
connie_lamb@byu.edu

Book Review Editor
David Wilkinson
dow@ucla.edu

Associate Editor
Dario Fernandez-Morera
fkalokagathos@aol.com

Peer Review Editor
J. Randall Groves
grovesj@ferris.edu

Technical Editor
Thomas Rienzo
thomas.rienzo@wmich.edu

Prof. David Rosner
President, International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations
drosner@mcny.edu

Scholarly Senate of the Former Presidents of the ISCSC

Prof. Andrew Targowski
Prof. Michael Palencia-Roth
Prof. Wayne N. Bledsoe
Prof. Shuntarō Itō Praesis Honoris Causa per Totam Vitam

Electronic Version:
https://ojs.lib.byu.edu/scr/index.php/CCR/

Copyright © 2014 by the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations. All Rights Reserved.
This document is protected under copyright laws and international copyright conventions. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted by any means in any form, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the express prior written permission of the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations. For additional information write to:

The International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations
Prof. David J. Rosner
President, ISCSC
Metropolitan College of New York
431 Canal Street, New York, NY 10013

Published by and copyright © 2014 by the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations. All rights reserved. Subscriptions: US $50/year for individuals and $60/year for institutions; add $4 for foreign subscriptions. Cost for a life subscription is $500. A number of back issues are available on request, at $50 each.

Submissions

The Comparative Civilizations Review publishes analytical studies and interpretive essays primarily concerned with (1) the comparison of whole civilizations, (2) the development of theories and methods especially useful in comparative civilization studies, (3) accounts of intercivilizational contacts, and (4) significant issues in the humanities or social sciences studied from a comparative civilizational perspective.

By “a comparative civilizational perspective” we mean (1) the use of evidence from more than one civilization (the various national traditions of the modern West being regarded, in this respect, as constituents of a single civilization) and (2) a method likely to throw new light either on the origins, processes, or structures of civilizations or on the problems of interpreting civilizations.

This is a peer-reviewed journal. Please submit your papers in MS Word, Times Roman 12 font, as an email attachment for the reviewer’s consideration. Be sure to include on your paper itself your email address and your academic affiliation and position, or note that you are an “independent scholar.” Send your paper to Dr. Laina Farhat-Holzman: lfarhat102@aol.com.

ISSN: 0733-4540
ISBN: 978-0-9835126-3-9
# Table of Contents

**Editor’s Note** .................................................................................................................. 1

**Southeast Asian Identities: the Case of Cambodia**
J. Randall Groves ........................................................................................................... 9

**Civilizations: Which Constitutes Africa’s Most Effective Choice?**
Tseggai Isaac ............................................................................................................... 26

**Essay: An Observation on the Universal Significance of Western Civilization**
Laina Farhat-Holzman ................................................................................................. 47

**The Paradox of Thinking and The Unthinkable**
Walter Benesch ............................................................................................................ 51

**From Globalization Waves to Global Civilization**
Andrew Targowski ...................................................................................................... 73

**Karl Renner on Stability, Change, and Service in Entire Legal Systems**
Joseph Drew ................................................................................................................. 90

**Book Reviews** ............................................................................................................. 106

Robert D. Kaplan, *The Revenge of Geography: What the Map Tells Us About Coming Conflicts and the Battle Against Fate*
Reviewed by Laina Farhat-Holzman ........................................................................... 106

Charles Trautmann, *India: Brief History of A Civilization*
Reviewed by John Grayzel .......................................................................................... 113

James DeMeo, *Saharasia, The 4000 BCE origins of child abuse, sex-repression, warfare and social violence in the deserts of the old world*
Reviewed by Laina Farhat-Holzman ........................................................................... 116

Peter Benjamin Golden, *Central Asia in World History*
Reviewed by Connie Lamb ......................................................................................... 118

William F. McCants, *Founding Gods, Inventing Nations: Conquest and Culture Myth from Antiquity to Islam*
Reviewed by Tseggai Isaac .......................................................................................... 122

**Call for Papers** ............................................................................................................ 127
Editor’s Note

As avid readers surely know by now, the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations is a vibrant organization. Arising from a UNESCO conference in Austria, it has endured for over a half century, appearing in different forms and on a variety of continents. Among the many achievements of the ISCSC have been exciting and challenging discussions and debates, annual meetings, and a stream of publications, all on the nature of civilizations.

One method that we can use to gauge the persistence of the ISCSC’s focus of concern is to read the annual Call for Papers and official statements by leaders. The Call for Papers are issued annually, these days, prior to the meetings and they tend to guide the next annual conference while helping to shape much of the intellectual pathway ahead for the discipline of comparative study of civilizations.

I begin here by going back to CCR’s Issue #11 (1984), produced thirty years ago, dated 1985. It is a book entitled Civilizations East and West and was published as a memorial volume for Prof. Benjamin Nelson, a founder of the ISCSC and its president from the inception of the organization’s American branch on December 29, 1971, to the spring of 1977. As noted by Vytautas Kavolis, Nelson took “a particular interest in involving comparative civilizational studies with all of the most vital intellectual developments and the most perplexing predicaments of the life of the time.” Thus, one of his last public lectures was entitled “The New Science of Civilizational Analysis: Vico, Mauss, Weber and Today.” As E.V. Walter wrote in his essay on Nelson,

In the 1970s, Nelson's scholarly interests converged in working out civilization analysis, a discipline that would seek the common ground of the humanities and the social sciences in studying symbolic designs of the largest scale as active forces in their social settings.

In the same issue, Dr. Kavolis, the subsequent ISCSC president, wrote an article entitled Nelson’s Legacy of Comparative Studies. In it he quotes from Prof. Nelson embarking on this new direction:

Recently ... I have become curious about several questions related to my growing interest in the comparative study of civilizations and of intercivilizational relations. Does the concept "conscience" give us any clue as to some of the differences in the distinctive patterns of development in various parts of the world? What are the relations between the structures of conscience and the tumultuous sociocultural processes of the 20th century across the world? ... it is necessary to work one's way back through questions of this sort if we hope to work toward a basic foundation for sociology, history, and psychology and anthropology.
We are now obliged to do a massive amount of work to get anywhere near these questions.

Nelson said that “It is only as we see the civilizational complexes in the crucibles of intercultural process that we can perceive the distinctive thrusts and patternings of different civilizational and societal structures.” There were two promising approaches:

... describe ways of studying all sociocultural processes and issues within a distinctive civilization-analytic perspective which proves preferable on general intellectual grounds (comprehensiveness, depth, compactness) to existing horizons and approaches in history, anthropology, sociology. The comparative depth-historical study of process and pattern in civilizational perspective offers great advantages over current varieties of structuralism, structural functionalism, schematic Marxism, phenomenology, inductivist empiricism, and so on.

Nelson spoke of the “comparative historical differential sociology of sociocultural process and civilizational complexes” and of “a polyphonic depth history and sociology of cultural expression and experience.”

-----

A decade later the association and its journal had changed a tad, retaining some of the original motivating orientation but also branching out. For example, in the issue of Spring, 1995, key articles were on the following topics:

- **Louis Dumont on the National Variants of the Modern Ideology: II** (by Leonidas Donskis)
- **The Ethnic Chameleon: Bakhtin and the Bai** (by Lucien Miller)
- **Christianity and the Uniqueness of Japanese Religious Mentality** (by Don Sull Choi)
- **The Historical Study of Mental Images** (by Olavi K. Fält), and
- **On Civilizational Worldviews** (by David Richardson).

And there was a section called “Forum.” In this we find an article by Arthur Iberall entitled *A Characteristic 500-Year Process-Time in Cultural Civilizations*. Plus, there was *A Response to Iberall*, written by Robert Holton.

Prof. Iberall noted at the beginning of this article that he had been making “contributions, from the point of view of a social physics, to this social science community concerned with civilizations” for 16 years. He began to highlight the findings of his study of a 500 year time scale for culture-civilizational processes as follows:
1. Physics is concerned with the laws of movement and change in all material-energetic systems. Man as an organism and organized into Society is such a system.

2. All such physical study revolves around some form of the primitive triad of matter, space, and time. We elect space, time, and action (action: the energy-time product devoted to activities) as a form suited to both simple and complex physical systems.

3. Physics can deal both with the processes within systems at the level of individual units (i.e., 'atomisms'), or at the level of extensive field collectives of such units (i.e., 'fields'). Further, it can connect these two levels.

4. Throughout the entire universe, one finds a hierarchical (in the present instance meaning nested) ordering of atomism and field, from a so-called field vacuum of fluctuations, through so-called fundamental particles, through atoms-ions-molecules of our immediate experience, through matter-energy associations within galaxies (comprising gas clouds, dust clouds, stars, planets, planetesimals), through galaxies, up to and perhaps through our universe to other universes.

5. Of course, in examining the case of a social physics, we easily surmise that we are concerned with an extensive hierarchy and heterarchy of processes and forms.

Next, this “social physics” approach of Dr. Iberall was analyzed by Robert Holton of the Flinders University of South Australia, a Corresponding Editor of the journal. He praised the ambitious and important argument of Iberall as a heroic attempt to maintain that the conceptual and theoretical repertoire of physics can be used to explain social processes, more specially the emergence and duration of civilizations. In so doing, he was going way beyond “Comte’s earlier attempt at social physics, drawing on the recent physics of complex systems.”

But he isolated what he thought were the major problems with Iberall’s paradigm:

He sets no limits as to the usefulness of the theories of physics. The author extrapolates from his success in explaining aspects of material culture (such as population density and the energy parameters affecting social action) to all aspects of human culture. There is a huge leap in faith here typical of theories that it is believed will in time explain everything.

The theoretical framework is biased to materialism and against the symbolic domain. To be convincing it would have to explain language and other symbolic systems, but comments on this are not forthcoming. I do not accept that because physics may explain aspects of material culture in a non-metaphorical manner, it can therefore explain all aspects of social organization.
Perhaps this is the language that Nelson would have used were he to comment on Iberall’s approach. At any event, the focus on the organization had now changed from investigation within the social sciences to innovative argumentation as to the validity of other lines of theory seeking to explain divergences and similarities in civilizations.

As time passed, the topics sought for debate and discussion at the annual meeting perhaps led inevitably to a gradual distance developing, a departure from the initiating ideas of Nelson (broad social and historical science) and Kavolis (culture in historical context) through the suggestions of Iberall (social physics) to futures research and contemporary social problems.

Thus, in the Fall issue, 2007, a Call for Papers was included as an orange-colored flyer tucked in between pages 66 and 67. This Call for Papers gave as the topic of the forthcoming conference the following:

**Civilizations in the Americas and Around the World: Past, Present, and Future Exploring Multiculturalism in Globalizing Civilizations**

Chairing the program committee for that conference was the well-known American physicist Stephen Blaha. Like Dr. Iberall before him, Dr. Blaha had spent years working on the intellectual connections binding physics, mathematics, computer science, and history together.

The first set of suggestions addressed “Civilization of the Americas.” Sought were papers on such topics as the following: Collapse of Indo-American Civilizations, Interplay of Civilizations and Cultures in Canada and the United States, Huntington’s Clash of Civilizations, Canadian Multiculturalism and the Culture of Nowhere, and Muslim Integration into the Americas and Europe.

The second set of suggestions was labeled “Asian, Islamic, African, and European Civilization Topics.” It called for studies on the Efflorescence of Islam in the West, Religious Wars and Social Collapse, the “Decline” of Western Civilization, and Multicultural Feminism vs. Western Feminism, among other suggested areas for research and discussion.

Finally, the organization sought papers on “General Civilizational Topics.” Among the most intriguing: “Sparks Flying” – Current Hot Topics; Workshop on Retarding/Reversing the Decline of Civilizations; Workshop on the Possibility of the Conscious Design of the Development of a Civilization; and the “Contributions of Civilizationalists – Toynbee, Wittfogel, Braudel, Needham, Landes, Diamond, McNeill, Frank, Victor Hanson, Barzun, Ortega y Gasset, and Vico.”
Before the last conference commenced a welcome and introduction to comparative civilization was offered by Dr. Laina Farhat-Holzman of California. She and her team selected as the topic for 2013’s conference: How Will Rapid Global Changes Transform Civilizations?

As the conference began, she proposed in her future-oriented welcome what she envisioned as the road ahead for scholarship in the field. Many of these ideas for futures research would constitute a solid research agenda for the discipline, she indicated..

Dr. Farhat-Holzman outlined issues that lay ahead:

Our theme for this conference is a bold one for us because it involves prediction rather than historic analysis. As comparative historians, we are far more familiar with the past and present than the future. But the warning signs are already out there: that our world is being transformed by technological leaps of such daring that we must try to look for pitfalls and try to imagine remedies for the problems we see coming.

We are seeing changes in how we communicate, how we work, how we worship, threats to the continued existence of the nation state, and in our very numbers. We may be seeing a transformation from population explosion to population implosion, changes that can affect everything.

In work and the home, our civilizations have moved from the majority in farming and home industries to manufacturing and ultimately to communications technologies and service industries. The invention of robotics has implications for all sorts of human endeavors, both for good and for ill. One concern already seen is the lack of jobs for working class people resulting in the demise of marriage and stable family life.

The Nation State, which has changed human governance from authoritarian and imperial to participatory, is facing alternate systems of regional governance that will change how we identify our civilizations. Could there be in the future an enlarged United States that includes Canada and Mexico? Or could we break up into geographically comparable regions that could become new nation states? China and Russia face the same problems.

Will space travel affect how human beings think and worship? How will the new brain sciences affect health, crime and punishment, genetics, and once again, religion? What new energy resource will replace everything from human labor, the horse, steam, electricity, and hydro-carbons and how will those changes affect nation states and world economies?
As a separate issue, we are also examining the great dispersions of people around the world, diasporas both voluntary and involuntary. How are strangers in a strange land surviving? Where do they do well and where do they do ill?

We are merely touching the surface of these contemplations at this conference, but it will be an exciting start. I would like to see this process continue into our next conferences, and would really like to hear from more medical doctors, lawyers, and other professionals—even astronomers—who would jump in to explore the future of civilization in the face of such scientific leaps into the unknown.

Welcome to you all, and we hope that you have a stimulating conference and that you make many new friends on this journey.

---

Now, in the year 2014, the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations has a new president: Dr. David Rosner of New York. A philosopher, he led a team which has prepared the Call for Papers for the forthcoming June conference to be held at Monmouth University in West Long Branch, New Jersey. The selected topic: Can Collective Wisdom Save Civilization?

He began his Call for Papers as follows:

Jonathan Lear, in his book *Radical Hope* (2006), wrote:

“We live in an age of deep and profound angst that the world itself, as we know it, is vulnerable and could break down...We are confronted with global warming, nuclear conflagration, weapons of mass destruction...and even the demise of civilization itself...events around the world – terrorist attacks, violent social upheavals...have left us with an uncanny sense of menace. We seem to be aware of a shared vulnerability that we cannot name.” (p. 7)

What is the way out of this deep sense of contemporary crisis? What exactly is “wisdom” and how can wisdom be promoted on a global level to deal with a number of serious crises now facing the future of civilization? What have been some different definitions of wisdom? This is an ancient topic, but how can it be specifically applied today? What, if anything, can be done to solve these problems collectively?
Some applications may be (but are not limited to) the following questions:

- What exactly is human nature and how is this relevant to civilizational futures?
- What are some possible solutions to overpopulation and the related problems of over-industrialization, resource-depletion and environmental degradation?
- What are some possible solutions to the problem of inequality, economic and otherwise?
- Why do a few have so much while so many have so little? Do rich nations have any responsibilities to the poor ones?
- Is capitalism really working today? What did the “occupy” movements signify?
- Why are many Western economies currently floundering? How have technological advances (especially increasing automation) contributed to the current jobs crisis?
- Does material accumulation really bring happiness? Why/why not?
- Is humankind naturally prone to conflict or cooperation? How are organizations like the United Nations faring with regard to international responses to regional problems?
- What is a Utopia? Dystopia? How are these terms relevant today?
- What roles do utopias and dystopias play for the future of society?
- Have our leaders run out of inspiration? Is fear now the main rhetoric?
- In the 20th century, humanity saw the rise of several grand ideologies: communism, fascism, liberalism, etc. We also saw the dismantling of many of the institutions built on these grand visions. Have today’s leaders given up on grand visions?
- Is narrow self-interest and small scaled-down retraction now the trend? If so, what are the implications of this? Is this ‘realpolitik’ or just the politics of disillusionment?

And of course, papers concerning all questions relevant to civilizational studies are also welcome! These could include:

- Studies of great civilizationalists, e.g., Spengler, Toynbee, Sorokin, Quigley, etc.
- Analyses of particular civilizations and/or comparative studies of civilizations.
- Decline and progress of civilizations.
More than a half century has passed since this society commenced its studies. How may we measure the changes in this discipline? As I have tried to show, one way is through such indicia as these Calls for Papers and suggested themes, all intended to guide scholarly research.

Is there a uniting golden thread of continuity in these writings, these broad aims and goals? When we look at the half century of work, do we find there a sense of coherence and direction, a visible trend or trends, pattern and meaning, advancement? Perhaps.

But if we inquire as to the value of the body of scholarship that the men and women who have analyzed and written on comparative civilizations over the period since 1961 have produced, and if we ask whether there is a future bursting with opportunities for research in comparative civilizations, the response to both queries must be clear, positive and unequivocal: Yes, without a doubt.

See you at Monmouth University this summer!

Joseph Drew
Editor-in-Chief
Southeast Asian Identities: the Case of Cambodia

J. Randall Groves
JohnGroves@ferris.edu

This paper is one of a series of studies on cultural identity and world civilizations. The focus of most of these studies has been on the civilizations of India, China and the West. These civilizations are arguably the dominant cultural foci in the world, the centers of cultural gravity. Adjacent to these dominant or “core” civilizations are cultures such as the Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese which orbit the Chinese core, and the cultures of Southeast Asia, such as those of Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Indonesia, which orbit the Indian core. The rough pattern in both cases is of the peripheral cultures being swept up in the expansion of a powerful set of narratives out of the core and into previously unoccupied narrative space. In this paper I focus on Cambodian identity and explore how the cultural interaction between core and periphery functions to produce the Khmer cultural identities that waxed and waned in Cambodia over the centuries.

The concept of identity used in this paper is not essentialist. Studies of identity are not quests for essences. They are exercises in the narrative organization of facts about the thing identified. These facts may not present a consistent or even single identity. Identities are constructed retroactively, narrated into existence. As I have shown elsewhere, identities are like “narrative centers of gravity,” a term I borrowed from Daniel Dennett. Dennett applied the concept to the self, but it is equally applicable to various kinds of identities, historical biography, nations and civilizations.

Cambodian identity sits in a cultural space between China and India, which constitute cultural centers of gravity pulling Cambodia into their cultural orbits and their identities. China and India are two culture generating goliaths that overwhelmed nearby cultures, especially if those cultures had not already advanced far beyond shamanism and animism into narrative myth. This was the case with Southeast Asia. Before Southeast Asia had a chance to develop its own set of narratives, Indian narratives stepped into the void and were never dislodged once there. As Southeast Asia grew out of Shamanism and animism and began “narrativising” their worldview, they found a world already narrativised nearby in India. With such a complex and complete set of narratives at hand, Southeast Asia simply adopted the Indian narratives of Hinduism and Buddhism.

This was true of the Khmer people of Cambodia. Indic culture connected Cambodia to the Vedic worldview and thus to the Indo-European mythic complex. This influence indicates that Cambodia has a set of narratives in common with not only India, but also with the Mediterranean and European cultural worlds. In spite of the exoticism, from a Western point of view, of the wondrous artistic achievement of the civilization of Angkor, the mentality of Cambodia has very deep connections with large parts of the rest of the world.
Cambodian identity has several layers. It consists of an ancient shamanism, animism and ancestor worship. Cambodian culture was about to move to the stage of narrative myth but was stopped short by the introduction of Indic ideas. Instead of indigenous ideas developing a cultural narrative of their own telos, they are instead merged into externally introduced narratives. Burial mounds become Buddhist stupas, “and the tree spirits, blithely integrated into Buddhist observance, turned into Sotapan, followers of the Buddhist teaching who were set on to the path of salvation.” These Indic ideas with the remnants of earlier animism tagging along provide the foundation for Southeast Asian thinking.

The Cambodian civilization of Angkor, then, has deep connections in mythic history because of its adoption of Indic culture. But a civilization like the Cambodian is more than a simple extension of Indic culture. It borrows Indian narratives, to be sure, but they are instantiated into the Cambodian context in a unique fashion. Cambodian identity comes partly from the specific area of Angkor, around contemporary Siem Reap, where the rhythms of the Tonle Sap river produce an enormous bounty. This bounty produced the economic surplus to finance the building of the monuments of Angkor. The economy of the Mekong not only enables monument and state building, daily life follows the rhythms of the Mekong river with contributions from the larger Indian ocean context of monsoon-structured world trade.

There is also the larger geographic identity of connectedness with all of the Mekong River regions, Viet Nam, Laos, Thailand, Burma. At this level, cultural exchange between core and periphery can piggy-back on the river trade of the Mekong. The next level of connectedness and therefore identity, comes from a larger framework that includes Indonesia, the Indian Ocean trade and cultural network, which overlaps with the area one would call “Indic,” but one which had economic and cultural intercourse with Islam, which was an important presence in the Indian Ocean.

We will therefore proceed with a conception of Cambodian identity that is multi-layered and historical. We will conceive of Cambodian identity as connected to

1) Its shamanistic and animistic pre-history,
2) Its borrowing of Indic culture, which connects Vedic, Hindu and Buddhist (and therefore Vedic) myth and religion with the previous animism and structures narrative framework as indelibly Indic,
3) The rhythms of the Mekong River as provided by the periodic reversal of the flow of the Mekong tributary, the Tonle Sap river, into the Tonle Sap Lake,
4) The economic rhythms of Indian Ocean trade and its monsoons that bring from all over the world.
5) A political identity marked by early conflict with its local neighbors, the Chams and especially the “Tiger and the Crocodile,” Siam (Thailand) and Vietnam respectively, and, more recently, with distant but internationally active European powers, particularly France and the United States,
6) Maoist philosophy and its descent into the political terror of the Khmer Rouge,
7) Chinese influence, and lastly,
8) Key personalities: Suryavarman, Jayavarman, Sihanouk and Pol Pot.

This paper will focus more on the dominant Indic aspect of Cambodia and its connection to its geographic reality, but China has played a significant role in Southeast Asia as well. J.D. Legge writes: “That influence was felt directly through almost a thousand years of Chinese rule in Viet Nam, but its effect was felt beyond that. Chinese trade was carried on throughout the region as a whole, and Chinese political dealings with Southeast Asian kingdoms extended as far afield as the Indonesian archipelago.” China has also played an important role in the recollection of Cambodian cultural memory, since many of the written sources come from China. The most important account is probably that of Zhou Daguan, with his *Record of Cambodia: The Land and its People*.

All this is not to underestimate all the small things that make up Cambodian identity, which may be, collectively, as influential on daily life as those listed above. One cannot, for example, travel to Southeast Asia without being impressed with the abundance and quality of fruit. Henri Mouhot, the first European to see Angkor Wat, wrote in his diary that,

“The fruit here is exquisite, particularly the mango, the mangosteen, the pineapple, so fragrant and melting in the mouth, and what is superior to anything I ever imagined or tasted, the famous ‘durian,’ which justly merits the title of king of fruits. But to enjoy it thoroughly one must have time to overcome the disgust at first inspired by its smell, which is so strong that I could not stay in the same place with it.”

These layers constitute the identity of Cambodia, from the lived reality of the taste of local fruits to geographic location, to socio-economic reality, to folk tales, to borrowed and altered Indic high culture to important personalities. Civilizations are constructed retroactively in an act of narration. Civilizational identities are therefore simply interpretations of a set of facts about the civilization for one purpose or another. These groups of facts can be organized in many ways, depending upon one’s purpose. The purpose of the organization given above is to produce a provisional characterization of Cambodian identity. The usefulness of this conception is that it enables us to compare it with other civilizational identities, which, in turn, helps us understand both human mentality in general and the differences between sets of cultural mentalities.
When one surveys Cambodian history, one is inevitably drawn to its high point, the civilization of Angkor. But Cambodian identity from a civilizational perspective is not exhausted by a discussion of Angkor. I will also put this past civilization into perspective with the history of Cambodia up to the present, with a particular emphasis on the relatively recent (by historical standards) horror of the Killing Fields of the Khmer Rouge. In broad outline we speak of Pre-Angkor Civilization, Angkor Civilization, Post-Angkor Cambodia, the French Protectorate, the Sihanouk era, the Khmer Rouge Era and the Post-Communist era to the present.

Pre-Angkorian society was rice-based, but not yet the centralized hydraulic society with a large work force and bureaucracy that Angkor was to become. The two kings most responsible for Cambodia’s cultural greatness in the Angkor period were Suryavarman II (1113-1150), who built Angkor Wat, and Jayavarman VII (1181-1218), who built the Bayon of Angkor Thom, although there were several who contributed to the artistic heritage of Angkor to a lesser degree.

Angkorian civilization did not last long after Jayavarman VII, so the effort to produce these monuments may have exhausted the civilization, although it may have been just a matter or relative weakness with regard to the invaders, the Chams and later, the Thais, who conquered Angkor. Angkor did not officially end until Ponha Yat abandoned Angkor and moved the capital to Phnom Penh, but the empire was never the same after Jayavarman VII, the last king to build grand monuments.

When Angkor declined, it meant the loss of the hydraulic, bureaucratic and monumental society that Angkor had been. Post-Angkor society had a different form than Angkor society. John Tully writes, “it seems that a different kind of social and economic system had supplanted the old model.” The capital was moved from Angkor to the Quatre Bras region, the monument building ceased and the state-directed public works fell into decline. By the mid-17th century, Angkor Thom was deserted and the jungle overgrew most of the monuments of the Angkor era. This era is also characterized by the loss of land to the Thais, including Siem Reap itself, and Cambodia was buffeted on all sides by stronger rivals.

It is in the 1850s that the French explorer Henri Mouhot becomes the first European to see Angkor Wat. Local rivals of the Khmers eventually give way to the European encroachment into Cambodia, and France establishes a Protectorate in 1867, which lasts until 1946. Cambodia is granted independence in 1953, at which time it becomes a kingdom under King Norodom Sihanouk. The Khmer Rouge government rules from 1975-9, and nearly destroys the country with a murderousness borne of ideological fervor. The Khmer Rouge gives way to a conquering Vietnamese army in 1979 and in 1993 elections bring a Cambodian government to power.
The subsequent history of Cambodia is marked by misrule and corruption with most of the perpetrators of the killing fields left unpunished. This history of early greatness followed by weakness and then horror marks the trajectory of Cambodian history. Given the amount of time between greatness and horror, there is little connection between the two societies, which were completely different.

Angkor was animated by the culture of India, Hinduism and Buddhism, while the Khmer Rouge was the perverse result of a country caught between superpowers, with a history of colonialism, and in the grip of a strict application of the ideology of Marx, Lenin and Mao, which was learned in France by some advanced students from Cambodia. So there was no causal connection between the greatness and the horror, simply a connection in place and memory. But this connection in place and especially memory allows us to consider them together, to narrate, as the Cambodians themselves have done, a connection between Angkor and the present.

Finally, there are the personalities. Suryavarman II, Jayavarman VII, Sihanouk and Pol Pot are by a wide consensus the most important personalities in Cambodian history. Suryavarman was the leader who built Angkor Wat, a Hindu temple dedicated to Vishnu. Jayavarman had the Bayon built. Those accomplishments alone would establish their importance in Cambodian history, but they did much more, not only culturally but militarily.

Sihanouk is a larger than life figure in Cambodian politics after the French Protectorate. Whatever one thinks of Sihanouk and his political maneuvering, there is no doubt that he was the central figure between the Protectorate and the Khmer Rouge era. And then there is Pol Pot, a man who will go down in history as the leader of one of the worst regimes in world history.

Angkor civilization left an artistic legacy that counts as one of the greatest achievements in world history, an achievement any people would wish to claim as their own. The fall of such a civilization can only be termed a tragedy in such a people’s understanding. Cambodia never again reached the level of cultural accomplishment or social stability, and this long-term instability made it open to the cataclysm of the Khmer Rouge. Cambodian history thus leaves us with two tragedies. The fall of Angkor was the first tragedy, but it was destined to be outdone by the second, the tragedy of the killing fields.

The characterization of Cambodian history as tragic is not new. David Chandler gave his account of Cambodian history since 1945 the title, “The Tragedy of Cambodian History.” Another way to think of Cambodian history is that it enters world history twice, once in greatness, once in destruction. Cambodian history has a Janus face. It presents both artistic genius and maniacal evil. Neither, of course, is true of Cambodia.
today, which merely wallows in a permanent state of corruption and need for international assistance.

Cambodian identity is thus a narrated composite of historical memory and socio-economic and geographical influence. But why look at Cambodia this way? What does it gain for us? Comparative Civilizationists see the world differently than area specialists. For area specialists the goal is to arrive at a picture of their particular area in all its diversity and uniqueness. For comparativists, any picture of a given area must be drawn in terms of how it fits with the rest of the world and over the course of its history. We incorporate into our comparison the historical dimension, changes in the world’s civilizations over time. The trick is, of course, doing this without losing the accuracy and sophistication of area studies.

The two approaches give us different kinds of methodology, and ultimately, different ontologies. Certain properties of civilization emerge only in comparative context. The specialist is most attuned to the diversity of an identity, while the comparativist is more interested in the balance of similarities and differences between a civilization and all other civilizations. This description of this balance gives us a set of properties that is beyond the purview of the specialist. These are the properties that concern the comparative civilizationist.

The first thing to note is that area specialists often disagree. When this happens, the comparativists learn the arguments of both sides and decide for themselves which is more convincing. Even better, however, is keeping as many of the various perspectives in play as possible, especially since comparativists should temper their adjudications of arguments in proportion to their own mastery of the given area. But how does one carry on such a balancing act? A civilizationist cannot paper over the differences among area specialists. When we appropriate the work of area specialists for our purposes it is important for us to carefully represent the dialectics of disagreement. Interestingly, this dialectic often proves more valuable than a monolithic account anyway.

From the historical perspective, Angkor looms as the most important of the societies that have inhabited the area of Cambodia. What is Angkorian identity in the context of Cambodian civilization? Angkorian identity is ultimately the collection of true statements one can make about the civilization of Angkor. What do we know about Angkorian civilization? Quite a lot, really, but there is much that we “know” that is contested, and what is contested lies right at the heart of what is meant by Angkorian Civilization.

The first question that arose in the early literature on Southeast Asia relevant to comparativists was the extent of indigenous and external contributions to the culture of the area. George Coedès’ early work set the stage for this argument with his claim that
the Angkor Civilization of Cambodia was an extension of a larger “Indic” civilization centered in India. He downplayed the indigenous contribution.

The second question concerns the proper division of study. Should we speak of Angkorian Civilization? Cambodian Civilization? Mekong Civilization? Southeast Asian Civilization? Indic Civilization? This question is related to the first. My answer to this question is to combine these influences into an overall historical identity. Which part of this identity we refer to will depend on the questions we ask of it.

Charles Higham, taking issue with Coedès on the first question, argues that the answer to the second should be Angkor Civilization, thus asserting the uniqueness of Angkor Civilization not only as part of Asia or Southeast Asia, but within the Mekong Valley. Discussing the tendency to ignore the indigenous Cambodian contribution to the monuments of Angkor, Higham writes, “Many uninformed guesses were subsequently offered as to the nature of the monuments and their origins, virtually none of which gave credit to the Cambodian people.”

Higham is an archaeologist who is less interested in the art and religion than in an accurate description of the archaeological evidence, which he does rather well. It is not surprising that these artifacts give a more unique picture of Angkor than we get from an analysis of its art and religion. Higham makes a point of emphasizing rice cultivation as key to Angkor civilization. He is convincing in arguing that rice production governed the everyday forms of life in large parts of Cambodia. But the parameters of rice production and consumption are dependent on the Mekong’s ecological geography, which makes rice production so significant.

Many parts of India were equally dependent on rice, however, so the comparativist is less interested in this aspect of Cambodian life. Higham is opposed to the idea that Angkor, the civilization of Cambodia responsible for the temple complexes in Siem Reap, is best characterized as an Indic civilization or part of a larger Indic civilization. He wishes to understand Southeast Asia on its own terms rather than in terms of its relation to the culture of India. This is a reasonable position in its own context, but it is less useful for determining Angkor’s and later, Cambodia’s identity.

Higham is surely correct that Angkor is unique in many ways, but he misses much of what there is to say about Angkorian Civilization at the level of comparative civilization because he resists what he regards as an “outsider” perspective. And this is as befits an archaeologist. For comparative purposes, however, Higham spends too little time on the stories portrayed on the walls of Angkor Wat and Angkor Thom for the comparativist because this is where we see the importance of Indic mythology.

It is the stories on the walls of the Angkor monuments, particularly Angor Wat and Angkor Thom, that account for the deep connection between India and Angkor.
Angkorian culture reached a pinnacle of greatness rarely matched before the modern era, but the essence of that greatness was more “Cambodian” to Higham than it was to that great interpreter of Southeast Asia, George Coedès, who emphasized the Indianization of Southeast Asia.

In support of Coedès’ interpretation, the stories of the *Ramayana* and other Indian texts we find on the walls of Angkor Wat tell us a great deal about Angkor. Notice that every god, demon, bodhisattva or monster mentioned or portrayed on the walls of the various Angkorian temples is Hindu or Buddhist. A large percentage of the inscriptions are in Sanskrit. While they do exist, there are very few artifacts that indicate a purely pre-Hindu/Buddhist narrative, idea or image. There is thus ample evidence for the Indic interpretation of Angkor.

Narratives that have been rationalized over the centuries tend to be more appealing than non-rationalized narratives, and so this put native narratives at a competitive disadvantage with Indic narratives. The abstraction achieved by the rationalization of language is equally important. If we consider the linguistic character of Mon-Khmer, but also Tai and Cham, we find a paucity of abstract terminology. “Khmer is a remarkably concrete and down-to-earth language, and thus poor in abstract terms, which it has been constrained to borrow from Indian languages.”

The import of Indian abstract terms into Khmer brought with it Indian myth, philosophy, art and religion at the cultural moment when Southeast Asia moved beyond shamanism into myth and religion. Once these abstract terms were incorporated, Southeast Asia could borrow the mythic narratives of India, and we see these Indic narratives on the walls of Angkor Wat. A quick glance at the stories displayed on the walls of Angkor Wat, which I have inspected personally, makes a strong case. Here is a list of the stories on the walls of Angkor Wat:

- The Battle of Kurukshetra (Mahabarata)
- The Battle of Lanka (Ramayana)
- Army of King Suryavarman II
- Judgment of Yama
- Churning of the Ocean Milk
- Victory of Vishnu over the Demons
- Victory of Krishna over Bana
- Battle of Gods and Demons
- Two scenes from the Ramayana

All these narratives are Hindu except those portraying the army of Suryavarman, which was just a glorification of the king. This exception to the thoroughly Indic nature of the temples, the descriptions or portrayals of battles of Angkorian kings, particularly against the Chams and Thais, is hardly a clear exception. These inscriptions and pictorials are
sometimes right next to Indic narratives; I believe in an attempt to ennoble them and provide connectivity between Cambodian and Indian religious and mythic culture.

We also know that Angkorian crowning rituals were a centerpiece of an Indic legitimation process for the kingly order. Further, the Chams and Thais were themselves carriers of Indic civilization, so the variation in the rule of the particular groups did not change the mythico-religious background. Critics of the Indic thesis, such as Higham, argue that Indic culture was brought in by elites for their own purposes rather than being a society-wide adoption of Indic culture. While this may have been true in the beginning, Indic culture eventually becomes the dominant narrative set of Cambodian culture among all social classes, a dominance that remains to this day in spite of the near civilization-ending actions of the Khmer Rouge. To summarize just how much influence India had upon the civilization of Cambodia, let’s consider Michael D. Coe’s list of what Indianization brought to the region:

- The Hindu religion, its mythology and cosmology, its ritual and the cults of Shiva and Vishnu
- The Sanskrit language
- Buddhism
- The Indic (Brahmi) writing system, stone inscriptions and palm-leaf books
- The Hindu Temple Complex, and an architectural tradition of brick and/or stone based upon Gupta prototypes
- Statuary representing gods, kings and the Buddha
- Cremation burial
- Rectilinear town and city plans
- Artificial water systems, including rectangular reservoirs and canal systems
- Wheel-made pottery

This is a not-insignificant list. In fact, it is testament to the profound influence of India on Cambodia. Every single god, goddess, demon, bodhisattva and so on that we see on the walls of Angkor Wat and Angkor Thom is a Hindu or Buddhist character. The architectural styles are Indic. We also see it in the worldly practices such as water systems and town plans. Even non-cultural practices were borrowed, such as water control, writing and burial.

The same is true of the ruins of Burma, Laos, Thailand and, to a lesser extent, Viet Nam, with its closer proximity to the other narrative behemoth, China. As we saw above, the only other people portrayed at Angkor Wat or Angkor Thom were the king and soldiers fighting battles. So not only were the architectural and sculptural styles derived from Indian predecessors, so were many secular practices.
While we have emphasized Cambodia’s cultural connection to India, we should not think that these religions develop unchanged in the Southeast Asian context. The Hinduisms and Buddhisms that took hold in Southeast Asia are genetically related to the Hinduism and Buddhism of India, but there are doctrinal, social and artistic differences between Angkorian and Indian culture.

The pre-Angkor adoption of the Hindu religion seems to have acquired Hindu myth more than Hindu social arrangements. Nor did it adopt the Indian practice of coinage—Cambodia remained a barter economy until the coming of the French. So although Angkor absorbed the myth of India, its social structure and its economy were its own. Although it is far too simple, it is tempting to say that Southeast Asia is India without caste. “A kind of Brahmanism without India’s strict rules of caste and society, flourished in some of the Indian colonies, and Hindu deities supply the iconography for a good deal of Southeast Asian art.”

The caste system, so central to Hinduism in India, was a non-factor in Southeast Asia. Yes, the Brahmins claimed and received special status; indeed, the origin story of Angkor concerns a Brahmin from India marrying a Khmer princess. But Khmer society was not organized into the four castes. One can argue without too much exaggeration that Hinduism without caste is quite a different Hinduism.

On the other hand, it is testament to the power of Indian religious and cultural ideas that they were so influential in spite of being separated from their connection to caste. The reason caste did not move out of India is that caste in India was certainly more a result of contingent historical events -- like the Indo-European conquest of the Indian subcontinent and the attempt to maintain status distinctions after assimilation -- than it was a result of a theological rejection of Indian social practices. Indic culture entered Southeast Asia through elites borrowing Indic culture for the legitimation of elite rule rather than as a result of colonization or mass religious conversion.

Mary Somers Heidhues writes, “This reception of Indian influences is all the more remarkable when it is realized that there was no known colonization of the area.” And De Casparis and Mabbett write, “it is now generally thought that the influence of Indian civilization, including religion, should mainly be attributed to endeavors by some Southeast Asian elites to assimilate important elements of Indian culture.” This Hinduism without caste is distinctive of Southeast Asia and thus an important component of Cambodian identity.

It is important to note that Khmer appropriation of Hindu mythology was selective. The Churning of the Ocean Milk plays a prominent role in Angkorian myth, and several stories from the Ramayana are featured. This subset of Hindu stories gives Cambodian mythology much of its content. Given this overlap in narrative content, one could argue
that we should jettison our concept of India altogether when we study the culture of South and Southeast Asia.

The borders of “Indica” are much wider than any political border that characterized any Indian state. Khmer temple styles, although unique in important ways, are continuous with Hindu and Buddhist temples in India and elsewhere in the Indic world. If we compare temples from India, Burma, Thailand, Indonesia and Cambodia, we see overwhelming similarities. All are based on the myth of Mount Meru. All have the shapes that ultimately derive from the Buddhist stupa or the Hindu temple or a combination of the two.

This is not surprising since the same artists sometimes worked on both Hindu and Buddhist temples. All have many stylistic similarities linked to deeper meanings of the architecture. This creates difficulties in accurately identifying the referents of temple sculpture. Specialists sometimes determine whether a temple is dedicated to a particular god by the direction the temple faces. Facing east, for example, may indicate the prime god of worship at a given temple. But there are many exceptions, so other evidence is used. The results are often inconclusive as we see even in the case of the famous Bayon.

The Bayon has many interpretations and these vary to such an extent that specialists often just accept a certain Hindu/Buddhist indeterminacy regarding the face towers of Bayon. But this ambiguity, Coedès argues, is actually reflective of the syncretic nature of Angkor myth. The faces on the Bayon towers, so utterly iconic, are not representationally singular; they are available equally to the Buddhist, Mahayana or Theravada; Hindu; Vaishnaivite; or Shiite.

It is probably true that the builders did have just one interpretation in mind, but as the years have gone by and the faces were embraced by several sects with their own substitute referent for the image, the faces themselves lost anything like a definite referent. But this indeterminacy of interpretation gives us yet another hint of the character of Angkor. Angkorian culture is syncretic. When Hinduism and Buddhism enter Southeast Asia the two religions are not always kept separate. A monument like the Bayon of Angkor Thom has relief sculpture from both Hindu and Buddhist traditions. It also mixes the Hindu sects, at one point even worshipping the combined Shiva and Vishnu as a different god, Harihara.

This combining of different sects even extends to the borrowing of sculptural techniques. The bronzes of Angkor include one of the Buddhist Maitreya with extra arms, like a Hindu god. There is no Indian scriptural basis for the extra arms; it is an artistic innovation by Cambodian artists who probably worked on bronzes of both religions. Angkor civilization’s synthesizing nature combined notions from both
religions to cross their representation. Cambodia also let Chinese culture influence their bronzes.

“There should be no hesitation in making the case, for instance, that the shift in Cambodia (and Thailand) from Buddhist images in which only the right hand performs a significant gesture to those in which the two hands have equal importance was directly due to Chinese influence.” Cambodia and Southeast Asia generally was subject to a Buddhist “pincer movement” as one strain, typically Theravada, arrived from India via Sri Lanka and Burma, as well as a southern maritime route via Indonesia, and another, primarily Mahayana, arrived via China, which, in turn received its Buddhism via the Silk Road, where it picked up Greek and Persian influence among other influences. “Thus the two jaws of a giant pincer meet in this area (Southeast Asia).”

A civilization is more, however, than the sum of its cultural narratives and symbols. It is also reflective of the geography it inhabits, which constitutes the third layer of identity listed above. The Mekong river is so productive that it would be surprising if it did not produce some significant high culture. Civilizations require a rather significant surplus, and the Mekong and the Tonle Sap provide it.

The Tonle Sap Lake is the most productive lake in the world, even out-producing the North Sea. It was probably inevitable that some monarch would turn to monumental architecture with such a surplus available to those who could gain control of it; it was just a matter of which Mekong river kings would spend his riches on doing so. This is not to say that there is no variation in Southeast Asian climate and ecology. Higham’s account in his magisterial *Early Cultures of Mainland Southeast Asia* makes it clear that there was significant variation across Southeast Asia. This variation, however, does not undermine the claim that the Mekong and especially the Tonle Sap Lake area yielded a surplus that could be had by whoever was the strongest at any given moment in Southeast Asia.

Higham widens the focus a bit when he focuses on three rivers, the Mekong, the Red River, and Chao Phraya instead of the single river, the Mekong, which is at the core of my thesis. By including the two other rivers Higham takes in a wider area, Southeast Asia as a whole rather than just Cambodia, and there is surely value in conceiving of the three rivers as a set. However, Cambodia’s Tonle Sap Lake and its regular and predictable annual flooding make its surplus greater than that produced by the other two rivers, and thus Cambodia was most likely to end up with the greatest monumental architecture.

My perspective toward Angkor Civilization is that it is best seen as the highpoint of the Indic civilization of the people living around the Mekong River, but with wider connections to the Indian ocean and its monsoon rhythms. Mekong Civilization is culturally Indic, which means the most of its governing narratives are borrowed from
India. While Mekong Civilization has its own economic, political and social logic, a result of the ecological conditions along the Mekong, its religion, art and architecture are Indic.

The Mekong River provides the daily rhythm of life in Cambodia while India provides the cultural superstructure. It is the combination of this daily rhythm with Indic culture that produces what we now call the civilization of Angkor. The Mekong river was the central organizing principle of Southeast Asia the way the Tigris-Euphrates was in the Middle East, the Yangtze and Yellow rivers in China, and the Ganges and Indus rivers were in India. Several groups at different points in history dominated the area fed (literally) by the river and the Tonle Sap lake.

Looking at the civilization of Angkor as a stage in Mekong Civilization is the same sort of geographical approach Braudel used so well on the Mediterranean and that many scholars have used on the Atlantic Ocean and the Silk Road. Trade routes and especially rivers are particularly good organizers of civilizations. The Mekong River provides the local geography of Southeast Asian culture, but it is the yet wider context of Indian Ocean trade that is the broadest context relevant to understanding Cambodian identity. Mekong culture only becomes complete with reference to the larger geographical context of the Indian Ocean. The Mekong “pulse” is, of course, related to the interaction between the Mekong River and the Indian Ocean, primarily through the rhythm of the monsoon.

Because of this wider framework, we can get a better sense of the cultural identity of Indic civilization by looking at Borobudur/Prabanam, Ayutthaya, Bagan and Angkor Wat/Angkor Thom temple complexes. These four temple complexes are testament to the viability of the concept of an “Indic” civilization stretching from India proper to Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, southern Viet Nam and Indonesia. Interestingly, Indian culture traveled as much, if not more, by sea than it did by land. It is most likely that Indic culture followed the paths created by the Indian Ocean traders. In fact, the Indonesian complex containing Borobudur and Prabanam in Indonesia, which of necessity came by sea, was actually 300 years earlier than the Angkor complex.

A key aspect of Indic civilization in Cambodia is the (sometimes not-so-peaceful) co-existence of Hindu and Buddhist artistic and religious traditions. Hindu and Buddhist temples were often being built in the same area and around the same time. Borobudur, a Buddhist temple complex and Prabanam, a Hindu complex were both built within a few miles of each other in the 9th century, Prabanam being a Hindu response to the Buddhist Borobudur. The same is true of the Cambodian complexes of Angkor Wat, a Hindu temple complex, and Angkor Thom, a Buddhist work, although they were a bit further apart in time.
The locations of Borobudur, Ayutthaya, Bagan and Angkor Wat give us a larger geographical framework, the Indian Ocean trade network, within which to understand Angkorian civilization. Once we see Indic civilization layered over four different cultures we become clearer about what it means to be Indic. It also enables us to see how the variations between the four locations reflect the range of Indic expression. The fact that Angkor was one of several states over a large area that had Indic (Hindu or Buddhist) artistic traditions is probably the most important fact about it for the comparative civilizationist.

So should we speak of Angkorian Civilization? Cambodian Civilization? Mekong Civilization? Southeast Asian Civilization? Indic Civilization? Do any of these have more reality than others? When it comes to this sort of question, it is best to go with operationalism. We use the term that is most useful for us given the questions we are asking. If we are looking at Angkor in all its uniqueness, then Angkorian Civilization works best. If we are interested in the breadth of artistic styles and religious motifs, then Indic Civilization would be better. If we take a larger geographical view, a compelling perspective is the one that organizes Southeast Asia around the Mekong River and the Indian Ocean.

If we add in the various political groups that dominated the Mekong area at one time or another, we get a picture of a single contested and very productive land. The Khmer, Thais, Laotians, Chams and Vietnamese all had turns dominating the region. The fall and disappearance of Angkor civilization came with the rise of its rivals, the Thais, Chams and Vietnamese. From this perspective Angkor Civilization becomes one phase of a series of phases of emergent high civilization. Angkor is generally considered to be the greatest of the various political entities to dominate the Mekong, but it was not the only one.

Throughout Southeast Asian history the Mekong River is the primary engine of trade and commerce for Cambodia, Viet Nam, Laos and Thailand. The Mekong’s source is in China, which makes great use of the river. As far back as the pre-Angkor period we see that the Mekong Delta facilitated the trade between the interior of Southeast Asia and Indonesia (Java) and South Asia, thus connecting Angkor to the whole of world trade. The Mekong is the economic beating heart of Southeast Asia.

But civilizations exist in time, and Cambodia goes through significant changes in the modern era. It is with this fact in mind that I consider the meaning of Angkor, the Mekong and Indian ocean trade in the context of later Cambodian history as well as the tragedy of Cambodia’s Year Zero. With the fall of Angkor we have a period of disunity and subordination to the other Mekong regional powers until the French arrive. The colonial period, in turn, gave way to the Kingdom and eventually the cataclysm of the Year Zero, the rule of the Khmer Rouge that issued in the killing fields.
The question of the connection of the Khmer Rouge to the earlier history of Cambodia is one of cultural rejection and civilizational suicide. The cultural losses of the Year Zero were profound. The Cambodian version of the Chinese cultural revolution was just as, if not more, horrific than the original Chinese version. Cambodia lost a significant percentage of its population while attempting to rid the country of its “decadent” prior culture, which meant the loss of most of its elites and intellectuals. Ideologically, the rise of the Khmer Rouge marks the introduction of Chinese communist ideas that, in turn, originate in the Marxist thought of the West. One can say without exaggeration that this borrowing was a disaster. While the earlier incorporation of Indic culture gave rise to great cultural accomplishments, the introduction of Western ideas in the form of Marxism proved horrific. This is not to elevate India or denigrate the West. It is simply to note that Cambodia ended up with one of the more pernicious Western ideologies and that the result was terrible.

For contemporary Khmers, the overwhelming historical fact was the rule of the Khmer Rouge. The Khmer Rouge is responsible for two million deaths. The Khmer Rouge came into power five years after the 1970 coup that deposed Sihanouk. Lon Nol, the leader who took over after Sihanouk, never stabilized the country and faced a determined Khmer Rouge insurgency. In 1975, the Khmer Rouge take Phnom Penh and begin the systematic destruction of the country in the name of Maoist re-education. Decimating the educated and moneyed classes, forced emptying of the cities for the sake of an ideal rural purity, wrecking the economy by, among other things, eliminating money and wrecking agriculture with reckless disregard of agricultural science, the country is quickly reduced to a shell of its former self.

Pol Pot also suppressed religion, particularly Buddhism and Catholicism, and engaged in ethnic cleansing. Rarely in human history has a culture tried to remake itself so quickly and with such disregard for the pain and suffering caused. Countless books and films have addressed the horrors of that time, and the rule of the Khmer Rouge ranks as one of the worst periods of governance in world history. Nearly every single Cambodian knows of family members and friends killed, tortured or starved by the Khmer Rouge. Such collective memories make a permanent mark on the psyche of a nation.

The theme of Cambodian civilization can then be summed up with two words: Greatness and Horror. It is a compelling irony that the same area of the world can reach the heights of civilization and at a different time, descend into a horrific episode of genocidal destruction followed by endemic corruption. Cambodia was not the first country to descend from the heights of civilization to the depths of genocide--Germany is just one example that this has happened more than once, but we can hope it is the last.
The combination of Cambodia’s geographical predicament with the cultural connections it entails along with its history of greatness and tragedy gives Cambodia a very unique identity. It is Angkor Wat and Hinduism. It is Angkor Thom and Buddhism. But it is Tuol Sleng and stacks of skulls too. Cambodia is an Indic culture that picks and chooses what parts of Indian culture it will adopt, but it is mostly Indian culture that it adopts. Cambodia is subject to the monsoons of the Indian Ocean and the annual reversal of the flow of the Mekong. Cambodian economics are the economics of the Tonle Sap lake, the Mekong River and the Indian Ocean. This is Cambodia big and small, beautiful and horrific with a greatness that was sullied by the killing fields, but never eliminated. The temples of Angkor remain the biggest attraction in Cambodia, as they should, but the suffering and death that took place in that beautiful realm will always tarnish the story of Cambodian civilization.

Bibliography


Civilizations: Which Constitutes Africa’s Most Effective Choice?

Tseggai Isaac

tseggai@mst.edu

Introduction

We tend to believe that civilizations are positive and that what is civilized is not coarse or pedestrian. Civilizations empower and ennable human beings, because a civilized social or political environment is a reflection of an enlightened mind. Civilizations can be seen as higher levels of a harmonized state of affairs (Targowski, A. 2009: 85-89).

However, if there is any drama to be demonstrated at the dawn of the 21st century, it is the absence of any meaningful transformation of the world to a higher level of civilization than was the case in the 20th century. This is particularly so with respect to the underdevelopment into which many Third World states have fallen.

Civilizations are judged by their capacities to create enduring legacies from which other societies can learn to elevate themselves. In medieval Europe, divine rule reduced the rights of citizenship to a subservient status. The words of the ruler constituted unquestioned law; opinions of citizens were immaterial, and decisions of the ruler were arbitrary and capricious while the liberties and rights of the citizens were crushed beneath the heel of the ruler’s ambitions.

But European civilization travelled a long distance as it has evolved into the current democratic culture where citizens reign supreme. Today, the state occupies its loftier space at the behest of the citizenry, and rulers arise from the conciliatory consensus of the citizenry. Tyranny is in retreat as European states inch toward democratization.

Why did some civilizations, such as that of Egypt, assume specific qualities and develop as they did? What are the inherent characteristics that made them evolve and flourish into awe-inspiring civilizations? The answers to these questions may be found in the character and historical experiences of the regions within which specific civilizations arose. The challenge for scholars is to craft methodological and theoretical approaches that are free from cultural biases and provincial prejudices.

Even primitive societies are not created in a void. They began by creating means for securing existence and finding effective ways to solve problems. And in the process of solving challenges, societies create differentiation of labor, consistent rules, routinized approaches to conflict resolution, and institutions of varying capacities to ensure their continuity. Scholars have argued these are important characteristics in the stages of civilizations.
Theorists of political development take their cue from Aristotle. They believe in the organic metaphor of the stages of civilizations. They argue that civilizations begin with conception and progress to birth, growth, and maturity, and they then reach a terminal decay. Scholars group civilizations according to the cultural, political, linguistic, and aesthetic legacies that they mustered in their time (Toynbee, 1946; Quigley, 1979; Sorokin 1959; Modelski, G. 1972). The organic metaphor process is clearly described by Quigley as involving seven phases of civilization: these he characterizes as mixture, gestation, expansion, age of conflict, universal empire, decay and invasion (Quigley, C., 1979: 146). Historians and sociologists also subscribe to the organic metaphor analogy.

Targowski identifies eight civilizations, with 16 subcategories. These parallel those identified by Quigley, but Targowski is a globalist who shares the idealist school’s temperament. He counts on human “wisdom” assisted by the skillful manipulation of information technology to generate endless possibilities for a peaceful global civilization. This article will defer the definition of civilization in favor of an analytical approach that focuses on the behavior of societies as expressed in their domestic and global political aims as indicators of their civilizations.

The central task of this work is to consider what civilization is best for Africa to consider today. The thesis is that past civilizations have been influenced by the political systems that penetrated and directed their organic and natural heritage.

To understand civilizations we should first identify factors of civilization that have triggered the rise of civilizations. The term is used here to mean the societal and environmental circumstances that brought peoples, communities, and societies together. Factors of civilization include the capacity of specific communities that evolved into interactive processes enabling the integration of social, psychological, political and economic intents and habits that are normalized as literary, scientific, artistic, legal, and administrative components for an orderly pattern of developing and progressing as a civilization.

Thus, factors of civilization refer to the scientific, socio-political and cultural ingredients that launch a specific civilization. In attempting to understand the rise and decline of civilizations, it is also critical to observe the political methods of the societies, and the level of effectiveness and efficiency of political centralization.

The political and social values that inspire citizens to the articulation of their civilization arise directly from their political system. Ideology as a political belief also plays an integral role in determining the birth, growth, and maturity of civilizations. Institutional legitimacy, capacity in governance and societal coherence within the borders of a sovereign state are essential for the creation of a civilizational identity.
Historical narratives supported by detailed analytical interpretations integrating the culture, language, and artistic expression of the society, as well as the challenges and experiences of governing institutions, are aspects of the factors of civilization. They indicate the broad spectrum of the civilization’s trajectories.

For the purpose of this work, those areas where political scientists have crafted their debates to explain possible avenues for global peace and conflict resolutions seem to fit nicely with the theoretical constructs of historians.

**Civilizations through the Lens of Political Theory**

Let us first consider political science approaches that are regarded as impartial and replicable in their analytical perspectives. As we study areas such as cultural commonalities, political ideology, and the democratic values of freedoms that are essential for harmonizing the values of civilizations, political theory seems to be more amenable to the theoretical and methodological positions fruitful for civilizational analysis.

Within the field of international relations theory, the realists and the idealists stand out as sharing common perspectives with historians, sociologists, and anthropologists in their characterization of civilizations. The perspectives of both the realist and idealist schools can contribute to the analysis of civilizations. Which approach proves most useful for societies that may seek to emulate thriving civilizations?

Realism envisions a global atmosphere of restlessness. Restlessness is a harbinger of “the Anarchic Society” (Bull, H. 1966). At the same time, it can create a balance of power where peace is maintained by states that can defend themselves but cannot hope to be dominant enough to initiate hostilities. It buys time for a civilization with sound cultural attributes to flourish and for those civilizations that may be toxic and detrimental to freedom, equality, and universal justice to be exposed for their anti-human rights values.

The world of realism is a world of “uneasy” peace and a testing ground for civilizations to be sorted out on the basis of their compatibility with Natural Rights. The realist-idealistic perspective is further categorized into low and high politics.

- Low politics deals with domestic politics and the workings of the political system where members of civil society interact with the state to generate policy inputs.

Aspects of low politics include the formulation and implementation of public policies, their impact on society, and the ideological and cultural basis that sustain political participation from the grassroots level to the national stage.
Values, beliefs, ideas, and attitudes -- elements of political culture -- form the factors of civilization and civilized societies are measured by the virtues of their political culture and the visuals of their accomplishments.

- Taking the analysis further, the capacity of the political environment to permit and tolerate democratic practices based on individual and collective choices is a reflection of low politics. The more democratic a society is, the more its domestic politics will reflect the civilizational values aspired to by those who lack them.

Civilizations are dynamic. They evolve and progress driven by the strength and creativity of their societies. The inner strengths of civilizations are visible in the political and cultural foundations that originally spawn the civilization’s beginning.

The establishment of governance with political and socio-economic rules and laws are the ultimate indicators of great civilizations. These requisites affect the nuclear family, the village, the community, and the administrative and associational routines that had established the identity of the society. They, among many other variables, form the components of low politics.

Low politics are directly related to civilizational characteristics of societies. More than to high political capacities, the qualitative aspects of civilization are expressed in low politics including, but not limited to, the management of such domestic affairs as political culture, socialization, constitutional provisions, contestation politics, balancing multiparty party systems, and pluralist interest group politics. By contradistinction, high politics offers the testing grounds for the state’s capacity to survive in the competitive arena of the realist game of one-upmanship.

The challenges of war, peace, diplomacy, alliances, balance of power and deterrence, and global economic relations are areas of high politics for which the state must maintain credible diplomatic resources to navigate successfully.

Comparing the realist and idealist perspectives, the realists are more vocal and aggressive in the promotion of their civilization without surrendering ground in the realms of low politics. Realists are provincial and isolationist on matters of low politics and expansionist on matters of high politics. This is critical in the sense that the postulate stands the test of objectivity at the positions where realists of diverse ideological faiths converge and markedly contrast to the cosmopolitan, liberal, and inclusive posture of idealists.
Communists, Nazi fascists, capitalist imperialists, and Islamic jihadists are starkly clear as they seek to dominate areas beyond their borders. All of them are realists, but they differ in the sense that, at least until recent years, Islamic jihadists were restrained by political Islam in its secular applications by such Middle Eastern Republicans as Kemal Ataturk and Gamal Abdel Nasser (Bill, J and Springborg, R. 1999).

The realist perspective is flexible and may be applied in many parts of the globe. It defines rigid and conservative ideologies in the liberal Judeo-Christian tradition as well as in those civilizations that do not share common political, historical, and social background. Both are rightists, both are traditionalists, both are hegemonic and expansionist.

Ideologically-driven civilizations such as Islam look at the world from a universalistic perspective and aim to expand their influence on the basis the civilizational factors created from their own beliefs. Similarly, communists express their factors of civilization in dogmatic exclusionary manner. Liberalism, Islam, and communism: which bears the prospects for alleviating the broad maladies of the Third World in general and Africa in particular?

**Realism**

The realist and idealist schools stand as protagonists when they consider human behavior as a catalyst for war or peace. The realists are particularly vocal and assertive on several fronts. In the first place, they are traditionalists. In their high mindedness with respect to the defense of the state, the realists are rigidly dedicated to tradition as an authentic factor of civilization. They resist changes that they consider to be deviations from the original factors of civilization that witnessed the birth of their civilization. Their resistance to change is due to the prospects of imminent cultural decay that are bound to ensue if and when low politics are infiltrated with ideologies, beliefs, or cultural attitudes that are not based on the first principles that brought the liberal state to its lofty democratic heights.

Additionally, the realists as traditionalists are uncompromising and dogmatic. They stand firmly as immovable defenders and bastions of the state in its classical, traditional, and sacred characteristics. They view the state as a macrocosm of their whole civilization. The rise or decline of their civilization is contingent on the vitality and survival capability of the state. In a global setting where each state is a master of its own destiny, a state must “necessarily seek safety by relying on its own power and viewing with alarm the power of its neighbors” (Dougherty, J. E. and Pfaltzgraff, Jr. 1981: 87). Accumulation of power and tailoring diplomatic and geostrategic goals for the protection of the state in order to protect the civilization is the declared commitment of the realist tradition.
Another area where the realist school is distinctive is in the area of law and order. Realism is traditional and conservative in the application of legal, statutory, and religious rules and practices. It aims for the empowerment of a heroic and valiant state, but also one that upholds a tempered culture of democratic tolerance as well as a “world of law, where the strong are just and the weak secure and the peace preserved.” To ardent realists, the preservation of the “first principles” is considered as the best safeguard for the preservation of traditional civilization, because civilizations atrophy when their branches are not nurtured by their roots. Essential to upholding traditional tenets is the realization that administrative and legal innovations are better safeguarded by a state that can exploit scientific and technology breakthroughs and innovations to ensure the survival of its civilization.

Ever since the end of the dark ages, realists in the Western tradition have always been eager and willing to embrace technological innovation. Civilizations thrive on their merit in the global competition for technological innovation and scientific breakthroughs that could serve as resource input for the survival and sustenance of the civilization. Technology adds values and leverage to civilization. The state at the top of the global hierarchy where order and cohesive global aims are unpredictable, yet needing the assertive stand of a confident and dominant civilization complemented by the rich outputs of science and technology will survive. It will stand as a torch bearer of the type of civilization it deems is its own to uphold and, on realist terms, convinced that its civilization embodies the ultimate truth.

**Idealism**

Let us now turn to idealism.

The idealists in global politics are utopians, the optimists of the global political environment. They are partakers, forward looking, cosmopolitan and well meaning. They advocate for a state whose diplomats and statesmen are willing to maintain harmonious relationship without second-guessing the motivation of their interlocutors. They argue for the peaceful settlement of disputes without worrying about the stigma of being accused of pacifism or regarded as permissive by real or potential adversaries.

Arnold Toynbee was a prominent idealist. He suffered criticism for faulting Western Civilization on its realist rigidities, for putting its ideals forward as a panacea for global ills. He objected to the militancy of the realists when he condemned their theory as a “cardinal sin.”

Even though Toynbee may have been reticent in exceptionalizing Western Civilization, it is doubtful that he refrained from crediting it for its dedication to Natural Rights. It appears, based on his stated misgivings about Western Civilization, that he may have been displeased by the realist tendencies of mixing the defense of the state’s mundane
deeds of colonialism with the defense of civilization. To him, the state is a regimented entity always braced to do battle when battle must be enjoined, but it also must keep peace as a priority and opt for diplomatic options when prudence demands it, according to Alfred Milner in his “reminiscence” of Toynbee.

Idealism such as his, he always felt, could only justify its existence by energetic devotion to the good of mankind. . . .Nothing was more abhorrent to him than apathetic mysticism. He would have repudiated the name of mystic. His faith, however transcendental, was a rational faith and he would prove it by being as sober, as practical and as effective as any rationalist Utilitarian.

Quincy Wright was another idealist. He recommended a prudent and low-key state unmoved by the prospects of hostilities as long as skillful diplomats and statesmen diligently sought peace. According to Wright,

Conflict, as noted, may be physical, biological, or philosophical, as well as social. International conflict may exhibit all of these characteristics. War is fought on the military, economic, propaganda, legal, and political fronts. Armies, like physical entities moving toward one another, seek to occupy the same place at the same time, each attempting to annihilate or capture the other. Generals, like game players, seek to devise and carry out strategies which will out-calculate the enemy’s response with a minimum of cost and risk of defeat and a maximum probability of victory.

Wright pointed out that the realist’s single-minded preoccupation with the task of mobilization is a reflection of geopolitical developments that were allowed to escalate. Lack of diplomatic commitment, misperceptions, and miscalculation of events often lead to piecemeal escalation of hostilities. Invariably, hostilities are indicators of diplomatic incompetence or political recklessness.

Realism and High Politics in Geopolitical Perspective

Realists who utilize the theory of international relations are vigilantes and in the vanguard at the same time. They are perpetually preoccupied with high politics as they envision a world of hostilities where power and might determine the survival of states.

In the world of the realists:

[I]nternational behavior is totally self-regarding. Considerations of expediency alone determine policy. No rights whatever are attributed to other members of international society. Moral scruples have no admissibility at all. The assertion of self-interest by means of the instrumentalities of power is wholly untrammeled. At the other pole lies an absolute idealism. Here all policy is
directed to self-abnegation and the subordination of all self-regarding claims totally to the claims of theirs” (Taylor, T. 1979: 29).

This approach places the realists at the center of the global arena not necessarily to aggress and foment crisis, but to prevent aggression and disruption to the first principles of a civilization.

According to Hans J. Morgenthau, the primary focus of the realist school is the promotion and defense of national interests. National interests are subject to threats of potential adversaries. The uncertainties of the “security dilemma” force states to envision an ever-present danger which they must be ready to confront.

Robert Jarvis’s analysis makes the security dilemma clearer in its historical contexts of colonialism. He observed:

In order to protect themselves, states seek to control, or at least to neutralize, areas on their borders. But attempts to establish a buffer zone can alarm others who have stakes there, who fear that undesirable precedents will be set or who believe their own vulnerability will be increased. When buffers are sought in an area empty of great powers, expansion tends to feed on itself in order to protect what is acquired, as was often noted by those who oppose colonial expansion.

The central focus of the security dilemma is lack of trust. States do not have faith in each other. They must increase their security, because their adversaries will also be prompted to increase theirs. This leads to enhanced defense expenditures on all sides. It results in the security dilemma -- a vicious cycle of uncertainty perpetuated by fear. Fear takes hold of the state of mind of the governing elites.

Is There A Practical, Edificatory Scale Measuring the Value of Civilizations?

The realist school in the United States was tested during the Cold War. The precarious balance under the bipolar system between NATO and the Warsaw Pact was capable of sparking nuclear holocaust. Mutual assured destruction preserved the balance of power under the security dilemma. British and Western European scholars opposed totalitarianism and braced for a joint affirmation of Western Civilization’s resilience but equally aggrieved Eastern European scholars responded with their own sense of history and political experience.

In Eastern Europe, the rampages and the onslaught caused by totalitarianism and fascism drove prominent scholars away from Eastern Europe, forcing them to settle in American and British universities and research institutions.
Amongst the outstanding modern scholars of the realist school, whose ideas garnered widespread acceptance among policy makers during the Cold War years, were Hannah Arendt, Reinhold Niebuhr, E. H. Carr, Hans J. Morgenthau, George F. Kennan, and Raymond Aron. They conducted outstanding research, invigorated NATO’s scientific aptitude in negotiations with their theories of deterrence, and preached realist paradigms in the defense of Western civilization. Intellectuals such as Henry Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezinski served as outstanding advocates for a strong American power and they defended Western civilization.

These scholars represented authoritative voices of the realist school at the critical period when the balance of terror was at its most precarious hours. They expanded the analytical horizon of international relations theory, enriching the field in its technical capacities, but also wedding the ideology of liberalism to the realities of realism. They brought liberalism and realism together as tools for the analysis of global alliances, international law, the balance of power, deterrence, decision-making, diplomacy and negotiations.

The totalitarian states -- and their intellectuals – stood in stark contrast. They exhibited sanctimonious attitudes and violent intolerance against opponents at home and dogmatic allegiance to the fascist and communist lines. Totalitarian systems rely on blind allegiance and deadly fanaticism to compensate for the glaring weaknesses of their systems. The totalitarianism of Hitler, Stalin, and Mao each had their own scholars, intellectuals who apparently felt at home in the thick of the totalitarian onslaught. Hitler even brought to the fore scholars who rationalized the Nazi plan of exterminating whole races and groups based on irrational and racist postulates.

As millions of their fellow citizens perished, Russian, Chinese, and other communist scholars abdicated their intellectual responsibility. They chose to endorse the worst human rights abuses, perpetrated to strengthen a “civilization” that would reveal itself in a totalitarian and supremacist world. The ideological fervor of these scholars was superficial, but the theoretical rationalization that had been put forward to justify the systemic and sweeping abuses of human rights were described as ways for introducing “a new man” and a new civilization.

Unfortunately, similar tendencies prevail today in many parts of the world.

Two Contending Civilizations and Their Implications for Africa and the Third World

What civilizations offer models for Africa and the Third World today? Western and Islamic civilizations are both extrovert civilizations. Given the idealist-realist differences noted above, both are realist. Yet both foresee different and competing outcomes. In their diplomatic pursuits, they will reach out to other states if they
calculate the endeavor will elevate their strength. Extrovert civilizations breach
diplomatic and general interests of the status quo in order to conquer and spread their
civilization.

Liberal realists expect a global system hospitable to the ideals of individual freedom. They believe any civilization that does not give utmost regard, respect, protection, and priority to the will and conscience of the individual is far short of being called a civilization. Civilizations are not only the general image, culture, behavior, and deeds of a society; they are also expressions of civilized behaviors far removed from the tendencies to barbarism. Individual freedom of conscience, action, and untrammeled liberty for the citizen are virtues of civilizations.

Advocates of the Islamic Civilization, however, do not separate secular from sacred. They assert that Islam is supernatural, complete, and perfected in its ancient text. The laws and the examples set by its founder, the Prophet Mohammad, would work, they believe, if only societies would embrace the faith and accept its communitarian edicts while abandoning individual autonomy and freedom (Allawi, A., 2009).

Which of these two options constitutes the best choice for Africa and the Third World? Which will equip them to recover and extol their own civilizations?

The Islamic Option

Islamic realism struggles for a universal Islamic state. It is the Caliphate to which all inhabitants of the earth are to submit. It favors a totalitarian state guided by religious texts and by the testimonials and character witnesses of its founder’s disciples.

This is in stark contrast to the liberal tradition. The liberal realists of Western Civilization yearn for the predominance of Natural Rights. Islamic realism does not subscribe to Natural Rights; it deems Natural Rights as antagonist to Quranic and Sharia law. Islam means submissive to a unitary authority that will dictate quietude and abnegation of individual rights before the collective state.

Islam is hegemonic. As a faith it seeks a single global community, one that is to be governed by a global government. Based on its authoritative texts, Islam sees a global governing state, an Islamic state. With the Umma, the global community of believers, we arrive at the religious supra-state. Every believer of the Islamic faith in all corners of the world, regardless of nationality or ethnicity, is obliged to belong. As to the rights of full citizenship, only the community of Muslim believers is acceptable.

The ultimate fulfillment of Islam’s divine purpose would be the caliphate. It symbolizes Allah’s purpose of an Islamized universe. It is defined functionally as the dar al Islam, meaning the abode of Islam, the abode of peace. It is also a fighting force battling non-
Muslims everywhere in order to bring them to the Islamic fold. It is a valiant warrior, always armed to do battle against the *dar al Harb*, the war zone inhabited by unbelievers or infidels.

Further, all those who do not believe in Islam are type-caste as unbelievers. The calling of every Muslim is to undertake active and passive jihad to expand Islam by converting followers from the *dar al Harb*. Even Christians and Jews are regarded as unbelievers, although they are to be treated with tolerance.

The state of Islam, according to the interpretation of Islamic scholars, is a state of peace. To maintain its strength and guarantee its eternal survival, Islam must wage relentless struggle, seeking to expand its writs and its territorial reach by breaching the borders of the non-Muslims. Bernard Lewis describes authentic Islam as it is envisioned by its fundamentalist followers. According to him:

- As the Muslim fundamentalists see it, the community of Islam has been led into error by foreign infidels and Muslim apostates, the latter being the more dangerous and destructive. Under their guidance or constraint Muslims abandoned the laws and principles of their faith and instead adopted secular—that is to say, pagan—laws and values.

- All the foreign ideologies—liberalism, socialism, even nationalism—that set Muslim against Muslim are evil, and the Muslim world is now suffering the inevitable consequences of forsaking the God-given law and way of life that were vouchsafed to it.

- The answer is the old Muslim obligation of jihad: to wage holy war first at home, against the pseudo-Muslim apostates who rule, and then, having ousted them and re-Islamized society, to resume the greater role of Islam in the world.

- The return to roots, to authenticity, will always be attractive. It will be doubly appealing to those who daily suffer the consequences of the failed foreign innovations that were foisted on them.

Just as a Christian fundamentalist would look for a hegemonic Christian state that would exert its dominance over the world in accordance with the teachings of Christ, the fundamentalist Muslim yearns for an Islamic state of the type established by the Prophet Mohammed and his successors. These were the first born of the faith, the Caliphs, otherwise known as the Rightly Guided.

Whereas Christianity no longer represses the secular world totally and is now generally removed from acting as a state on political and spiritual matters, Islam in its orthodoxy
is at unity with the state. True Muslims are fulfilled when there is a caliphate state and the orthodox and authentic teachings of Islam are elevated as governing laws and rules. Transforming earthly ways of life to replicate heavenly visions here on earth is a daunting task, particularly when aspects of the texts may prove to be impractical or irrational, due to man’s inability to measure Allah’s intent. Establishing ordered, civilized, and harmonious living in societies where the elites claim to read Allah’s mind and to speak on His behalf encourages cultism. Cults rely on earthly means to hoodwink and beguile their followers into false hopes and delusional aspirations.

Justifications for Institutional and Civilization Legitimacy of Islamic Civilization and Western Civilization

Western and Islamic civilizations both consider of their own values superior to those of the competition. They both use ideology to justify the legitimacy of their civilizations. In the end, both Western and Islamic civilization exhibit attitudes that are self-centered, and both are unafraid to take risks in order to maximize their power and influence. They are both convinced of the rightness of their ideals, of the correctness of their actions, and of the superiority of their cultural and civilizational foundations.

Islamic Justification and Legitimacy

Islamic Civilization is dynamic in the sense that it exhibits an assimilative and hegemonic character when it demands unconditional submission to Islam and rejection of other civilizations with all of their values. The justifications used to validate the Islamic Civilization are scriptural. They are based on the Quran, with a hint of the Talmudic laws and rules. The inviolable rights of the individual in the Islamic civilization are subject to the ordinances, limits, and guidelines of the Quran and the supportive anecdotal narratives, such as the Sharia and the Hadith.

Islam in its scriptures observes universal equality of all Muslims with two exceptions: non-Muslims and women. In practical terms, the Islamic Civilization is hierarchical.

In historical fact, however, Islam has had to equivocate in the process of integrating the variegated ethnic groups, sects, and doctrinal differences the faith has confronted. Thus, Islam has failed to consolidate its various ethno-linguistic components, as is visible in the Middle East where the Arabs foster nationalist sentiments which no amount of scriptural injunction is able to cure. The Egyptian, Saudi, Yemeni, Gulf, Syrian, Iraqi, North African Arab and Maghreb Muslims have a lot of scriptural commonalities that could have brought them together as one Umma, one people united in faith and entrenched in Islamic politics. But in a practical sense, they are far from united as Arabs, Muslims or both.
The Arabs of Mecca and Medina, as the founders of the faith, have implicitly assumed a position of seniority relative to other converts to Islam. The first followers or converts from Mecca, the Prophet’s birthplace, were known as the Muhajirun: companions or fellow sojourners. The Muhajirun were those who undertook the initial struggles that overcame persecution, who demonstrated valor in frequent battles, and who came out victorious to rule over Arabia and far beyond. They were the first converts to Islam, the first persecuted, the first to preach the Prophet’s teachings, and the first to sacrifice their lives on the mission of spreading the message. They were the firstborn of Islam with special privileges that were not available to those converts who joined the community of believers at subsequent periods.

The converts of Medina were known as the Ansars – helpers, facilitators, welcoming hosts of the persecuted Prophet and his Muhajirun/companions. Before their conversion to Islam, they were tightly knit Jewish clans who practiced Old Testament and Orthodox Judaism. Through pressure, persecution, and maneuvers by the Prophet himself and his followers, they were converted to Islam. The manner of their conversion and integration to the fold of the Muhajirun was traumatic and humiliating. As new converts to Islam, the Ansar were equal in faith but junior in governance of secular and religious affairs.

The same is true for other converts. All believers that are not from the inner circle, who are outside the Prophet’s community of origin, remain outsiders. The status of Muhajirun was an exclusive birthright for those who began the revolution and began spreading the faith.

Thus, in keeping with the Prophet’s example and tradition of living and teaching, the traditional precedence of the Arab’s undeclared implied prestige prevails today, even though the overt verbal, assertion about the message is the professed commonality and equality of all believers under the umbrella of the faith.

Similarly, women fall under a separate category. Scripturally, the Islamic text is equivocating. At times the scripture implies a subordinate status for women. On the other hand, it is equally implied that women are scripturally categorized as a special class of Muslims. Their role is purely feminine, uniquely designed by Allah on the basis of gender attributes that may appear unequal, but fit for a role that is scripturally ordered and defined. This classification of women’s spiritual identity is translated into political inequality. There are legal, social, and political differences; women fare worse than men. Since this inequality is scripturally sanctioned, Islam sees no reason to equalize the extant inequalities women face.
Institutionalization and Islam

Islam as a panacea for civilizational decay, as a solution that can bring civility, unity, equality and justice, may be inferred from its history and from the institutional practices of its administrative functions. Islamic history is replete with internal and regional wars. Any Third World or African region adapting Islamic practices in order to establish political, religious, ethno-linguistic and social harmony is bound to encounter the same rough and restless trajectories that Islam has encountered throughout its history. Its embedded legal and religious foundations are unbending, unable to adapt to political and religious circumstances where equality of faith and citizenship in the community of the Umma is extended to all regardless of confessional or ideological differences.

The pattern of dividing followers into class and gender categories is an aspect of Islam that was absorbed throughout its activist and extroverted history. At times, the inequality between the Muhajirun, the Ansar and non-Arab Muslims boiled to the surface. This was particularly so while dividing and allocating war spoils. The precedence of establishing social and political hierarchy yet maintaining religious unity became an historical and continuing source of crisis for Islam.

It was intensified during the succession dispute when Ali, the Prophet’s son-in-law, wanted to democratize and equalize the divisive practices. He was murdered by the founders of the Umayyad Dynasty (661-750 A.D.) from Mecca, the birthplace of the Muhajirun. The Umayyad and the Abbasid (750-1519 A.D.) dynasties were the first global caliphate empires. They emerged at the end of the 7th century and were defeated by the Mongol and Ottoman invasions (Kennedy, p. 82-199).

The political division that had surfaced after the Prophet Mohammed’s death was never settled. Its effect was a violent legacy where conflicts are resolved by explosive outbursts of violence and bloodletting. Three of the Prophet’s immediate successors, “the Rightly Guided” or Caliphs, were murdered in succession disputes. All of the Arab states in the Middle East today share the same language, the same ethnicity, the same history, and the same religion. The hierarchy that is embedded in the founding of the Islamic Civilization at its beginning prevails today to preclude the emergence of a united Arab or an Islamic state. Thus, Islam as a civilization combining religion, politics, and military affairs has not found the means to balance the administrative aspects of its claim.

Western Justification and Legitimacy

Like Islam, originally Western Civilization and Western democracy did not tolerate equality. Over time, Western Civilization’s rigidity with respect to race or gender inequality was weakened by relentless revolutionary campaigns for “liberty, equality
and fraternity.” In this sense, what Western Civilization offers in its liberal realist expressions offers more hope to Third World and African societies than the tumultuous prospects that can be expected from the embrace of Islam.

Western Civilization’s aspirations are derived from the principles of Natural Rights. The inviolable rights of the individual and the universal equality of all human beings is the fundamental teaching of Natural Rights. Even though the meandering path to universal equality traverses rough terrain, the aspiration for universal freedom must be fulfilled in order for Western Civilization to maintain its integrity as a democratic one. The irony of the realist-idealist dichotomy is that, in the final analysis, the aspiration of Western Civilization, over time, can be transformed into an idealist trend. At the highest reach of its internal and practical maturity, Western Civilization will be egalitarian. Its low politics are tolerant, because its key institutions are designed for the maintenance and promotion of universal equality and justice.

The core values of Natural Rights on which Western Civilization is founded are the practical and ideational elements of liberalism. Western democracies made claims to these core values ever since the philosophies of Adam Smith, John Locke, Thomas Hobbes and Rousseau were translated into a functional system of government by Washington, Adams, Jefferson, and Madison in their founding of the American Republic. It was stillborn in the destructive turns and diversions of the French Revolution of 1789. French political culture oscillated between Voltaire’s advocacy for popular tyranny and Bonaparte monarchism that had roots neither in royal blood nor in the sanctity of popular will.

At its most ardent state of realism, the psychological state of mind of Western Civilization is combative, territorial, and militant in order to preserve and to safeguard democratic rights. Orthodoxy and steadfastness are seen as means to democratic ends by which the citizen is empowered in a political environment of civility. More than the idealists, the realists will reflect the orthodoxy of liberalism in its purest form while the idealists will tend to attenuate democratic values when they extend their tolerance even to anti-democratic forces. The problem is that it is the realists who struggle to guide and steer Western Civilization to the utmost reach of its maturity: they are dead-set to use power and aggression to reach the zenith of undisputed power.

When faced with an equally determined adversary with a different ideology or religious-political belief, realists will resort to power and abandon all idealist dreams. Realists entertain a dogmatic attitude, believing that Western Civilization with its principles rooted in Natural Rights constitutes the only way to sound governance and an equitable role of citizenship irrespective of socio-linguistic, religious, or economic differences.

In Western civilization, orthodox adherence to natural rights overrides orthodoxy in faith. Even though Biblical scriptures are used to justify the legitimacy of natural rights,
Biblical orthodoxy to entrench undemocratic religious rules is never condoned in liberal states. This has opened up wide the pathways to democratization, human rights, abolition of slavery and women’s rights. The virtues of a faith, in this case, Christianity, are modified, interpreted, and rendered adaptable for the ingrained spirit of progressivism.

Traditional realists express their ideology as an element of Judeo-Christianity. It is argued that Western Civilization supports a progressive and evolving faith that enables societies to outgrow their shortfalls and to curtail the destructive effects of life unanchored in tradition. It has enabled individuals to channel their aspirations via measures that aim for the maximization of a fair, just, equitable, and peaceful political system.

During the medieval era, European societies internalized into their consciousness, the liberating spirit of Christianity. According to Fredric Cheyette:

Christianity and the remains of classical learning reached everywhere, touching the poor and illiterate, as well as kings and prelates. To villagers, these two influences eventually provided the lever for prying a modicum of independence from their lords. To the inhabitants of the fast-growing towns, they provided the “civic spirit” whose origin and influence (offered) a justification for a life that was neither clerical nor knightly” (Cheyette, F. L., 1968: 9).

This illustrates the enlightening and the liberating values of the liberal tradition and also reveals the secularization of the sacred basis of the liberal tradition. The liberal revolutions such as the 1688 revolution in Great Britain and in subsequent decades in the United States and in France contributed to abandoning spiritual rule in favor of the secular political state. The liberation of the mind was delegated to the secular political sphere while the religious and spiritual nature was left up to the individual.

In the seventeenth century, the prospects for democratization and quests for human liberties became tangible through the writings of Locke, Hobbes, Montesquieu, Rousseau, and the ultra-secular atheist, Voltaire. Democratic systems began to appear with the rise of economic growth and industrialization. The more industrialization progressed, the more freedom, liberty, and economic well-being expanded. These developments were spinoffs of the tenets of democratic culture that had put the individual at the forefront within the writ of a democratic state (Voeglin, E. 1997:205-207).

With the widespread endorsement of democratic philosophies, liberal states reflecting popular will thrived in pluralist and contested political environments. They maximized
the factors of civilization by leaving the door open for debates where differences of opinions and policy disagreements could be discussed and debated democratically.

Liberal systems are not perfect. Their histories are not without human rights infractions and they cannot be exonerated when their legacy of colonialism and slavery is recalled. Nonetheless, even when slavery, gender discrimination against women, and colonialism were manifestly practiced, the liberal tradition foresaw eventual democratization, and the development of democratic routines always aimed at the most equitable political systems where the lines of ethnic, religious, and sectional differences would be erased.

So, Which Option for Africa?

The substantive and ideological contrast between Western Civilization and Islamic Civilizations is stark: there are differing ultimate visions. They share some commonalities in their aspirations, even though the results they anticipate are vastly different. Both are activist and transformative, with built-in rules to spread their influence as vigorously and widely as possible.

But they do differ. African totalitarianism, Chinese mercantilist imperialism and Islamic centralism without individual freedom reflect the difficulties facing African civilization.

African civilization is a multifaceted expression of unique identity that has been overlooked ever since the beginning of colonialism. Before colonialism, moreover, Africa’s history and civilization was not clearly understood by Western scholars.

To begin with, European explorers arrived in Africa after African civilizations such as those of Egypt, Nubia, Ethiopia and the Northern African “Bible Belt” of St. Augustine’s parishes had all expired into antiquity.

Second, the passivity of Africa is like no other continent in the catalogue of civilizations. Asian civilizations can boast of the factors of civilization represented in the technological and industrial transformations of Asian societies. They possess the educational infrastructure to safeguard their civilizations and integrate their ancient traditions with the modernized aspects of their current national characteristics. Africa is as old as Asia and Europe, older, but its requisite resources that would articulate African civilizations are anemic.
The Best Choice and the Rationale:

In the long run, civilizations evolve ideologies. These become guides for national action and driving forces of factors of civilizations. The ideological trend that is emerging to influence African societies is a competition: totalitarianism or liberalism.

The totalitarian ideology is represented in Islamic universalism and in Chinese communism. Nearly all totalitarian ideologies in their dogmatic features exhibit sanctimonious attitudes and intolerance. Taken to the level of blind fanaticism, they can be barbaric and self-aggrandizing with nothing to contribute to the democratization of societies or to the enshrining of systems of universal equality and justice.

Hitler’s Fascism and Stalin and Mao’s totalitarianism shared such characteristics. They justified their systemic and sweeping abuses of human rights as ways of introducing “a new man” and a new civilization.

Unfortunately, in Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia, the spirit of totalitarianism has been persistent since the early 1960s, when decolonization was still ongoing. It is now being reinforced by Chinese ventures for resources accumulation. The Chinese used to accuse the West of exploiting the Third World but they are now exploiting Africa in far more extensive and debilitating ways. As they do so, they provide economic rationalization for African dictators to refrain from the liberal ideology, because, they argue, democratization is a fiction that has no basis in reality.

This antidemocratic line of ideological reasoning arises even amongst homegrown political elites; they badmouth democratic institutions designed to protect human rights. It is never for any lofty deeds and superior accomplishments that they disparage Western Civilization. It is often out of frustration. The inferiority of the totalitarian ideology and ideals is obvious to all. They criticize democratic civilizations now, ignoring, as President Kennedy said, that “those who foolishly seek power by riding on the back of the tiger, end up inside.”

If Chinese totalitarianism and the political culture of tyranny are bound to undermine African civilization, the Islamic inspiration does not have any visible testimonial either. What about Islam is adaptable or provides a hopeful vehicle for rejuvenating African civilization? Islam does not neglect civilization in those areas that it conquers. Islam actively works to remove it and replace it with its own symbols. Islam is an activist and extrovert civilization that demands total devotion by abandoning the elements of all preceding civilizations, doctrines, or cultural artifacts.

Any civilization that does not agree with Islam does not have the legitimating claims to exist. If and when there are civilizations and cultural artifacts that may complement or
support Islam, they are not needed, because Islam is all-sufficient, a complete order of heavenly and earthly life.

Western economic imperialism and the misdeeds of colonialism did inflict damage on Africa and the rest of the Third World during colonial times. Those abuses were subjected to the corrective and restorative virtues of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). This is a testimonial to a civilization that has looked back at its history and made amends and vowed to not repeat its transgressions. Often, totalitarian systems would rather look at the past centuries and simply vituperate against liberal democracy to justify themselves. They consider the secular ventures of colonialism as well as the missionary campaigns that accompanied colonialism, as collaborative, damaging acts of Christianity and colonialism.

But it was far from collaboration. A careful review of history tends to show that most missionaries were prohibited from evangelizing and proselytizing by the colonial powers, particularly in Islamic societies. Even today, European, Australian, and North American societies restrain their religious institutions from proselytizing.

**Conclusion**

Western Civilization constitutes an evolving identity of cultural, political, and social factors that have built-in capacity to adapt to the highest forms of democratization. Clearly, it stands out as a best option for African societies to adapt in order to rejuvenate their civilizations. The difficulties that they are bound to experience as they attempt to rediscover their civilizations are those which threaten the vital sinews of the Western civilization itself.

From the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution forward, Western civilization has utilized science to rationalize politics and religion. The result has been phenomenal industrialization, economic prosperity, and democratization. Industrialization appears to be phasing out and a “post industrial” phase is creating new challenges.

The ability of the Western industrialized societies to progress and to correct socio-economic and political ills must be credited to their civilization. We can look at their stellar achievements in material riches as well as at the decay and the toxicity they may experience when their commitment to the principles that catapulted them to the heights diminishes.

Scholars foretell of societies decaying when they become negligent, reckless in their devotion to their civilizational heritages and legacies. Oswald Spengler asserted that “Immense superiority . . . is enjoyed for generations . . . by those states which manage a tradition longer than others.”
This is particularly true of the liberal democracies whose good intention to correct gender and racial inequalities have created ripple effects, arousing anti-traditional value, anti-family, and anti-nationalist convictions and shaking the very foundations that support the edifices of Western Civilization.

One of the significant characteristics of civilizations is their transferability. The influences they can project onto other societies that possess their own unique civilizations are immense. This is particularly evident on matters of low politics. Political participation, individual rights, community freedoms, social and religious tolerances all flourish in environments of liberal traditions. Accountability, rule of law, and predictable institutional functions as factors of civilization enhance national wellbeing.

Africa -- of all the options available today, look to Western Civilization. Countries which need inspiration, that desire to rejuvenate vital attributes, make the best choice when they opt for the democratizing values of Western Civilization. Remove totalitarian tyranny and introduce universal freedom for all of African societies, now!

Bibliography


During the youth and women’s revolutions of the mid-1980s, we heard attacks on Western Civilization, particularly about the traditional educational focus on the great figures of Western history. It became chic to call all of our progenitors, the likes of Shakespeare, Socrates, and our Founding Fathers, “Dead White Men.” Academic institutions and the popular media hastened to get on board, deeming Western Civilization overblown in importance (at a minimum) and deserving of obliteration (at best).

The new feminist movement trotted out its injured pride, based on women having been ignored in history and abused for centuries (all of this true). Then the various denizens of identity politics weighed in with the outrage that their particular ethnicities were not given a proper place in the textbooks or in society itself. This also had some truth in it.

However, this was a case of tossing out the baby with the bathwater. The “dead white men” who created the wonders of the modern world’s Western Civilization gave us values that benefit those very women and minorities in a way rarely found in any other civilization.

What appears to be unique in Western Civilization is the recognition of the individual, not just the king. We have this heritage from ancient Greece and even before that, from the earliest Indo-Europeans, the ancestors of most Europeans and Persians. It is also a heritage from one ancient tribe, the Hebrews, ancestors of the world’s Jews, and continued into the development of Christianity. Even in today’s world, the idea that individuals matter, that they can be judged as virtuous or bad, that they can play a serious role in their own governance, is still revolutionary. In the cries around our world today for “freedom,” the idea of freedom does not include responsibility nor does it include women and children, who are too often seen as property, not individuals.

The dead white men of Ancient Greece gave us the first glimmer of democracy and the birth of philosophy (a system outside the bonds of religion). They gave us the individual (the very concept missing in most of the rest of the world’s social orders). The Roman dead white men gave us a model of written law, secular law separate from religious law, still the basis of how we regard justice. The dead white men of the medieval Catholic Church gave us contract law and the distinction between religious and secular rule.
They also gave us academic independence, a right not enjoyed by much of the developing world today. Priests and popes did not rule kingdoms. In the 13th century in England, our dead white ancestors took on a tyrannical king, King John, and forced him into recognizing power-sharing in a document called the Magna Carta.

Dead white men gave birth to the Scientific Revolution that, from the moment the telescope was invented, rushed to refine, invent, and explore all other aspects of our world. When the telescope was given as gifts to the other great civilizations of the 17th century (Ottomans, Moghul Indians, and China), none of those empires found science worth pursuing.

Dead white men came together to create and fight for a United States of America, that, for all its faults, has mechanisms for self-correction, a division of powers among administrators, legislators, and judges, and a process forever enlarging the participation of its citizens. We are still a work in progress.

Dead white men addressed the horrors of black slavery, something that still exists in Islamic Civilization, particularly across North Africa, which has a much longer history of slavery than Europe. This slavery began with Egypt and flourished in the Muslim world even at a time when early Christianity had abandoned the practice. The dead white men came to it later, and slavery never quite sat well with them.

Dead white men abolished slavery; first, English Quakers; next a Tsar in Russia; and finally under Abraham Lincoln’s leadership during a civil war that nearly split the United States permanently.

Dead white men gave in to the clamor of Women’s Suffrage in 1920, and from then on shared power and participation with women. In many parts of the world, this is still inconceivable, and contrasts starkly with practices that horrify us in the West.

An examination of current Afghan culture is illustrative of what the polar opposite of Western Civilization can be. According to the San Francisco Chronicle, Sunday, May 19, 2013: “Afghanistan: Religious lawmakers block women’s rights legislation.” Conservative religious lawmakers in Afghanistan blocked legislation aimed at strengthening provisions for women’s freedoms, arguing that parts of it violated Islamic principles and encouraged disobedience.

This fierce opposition highlights how tenuous women’s rights remain, even a dozen years after the ouster of the hardline Taliban regime, whose strict interpretations of Islam once kept Afghan women virtual prisoners in their homes.
Khalil Ahmad Shaheedzada, a conservative lawmaker for Herat province, said the legislation bolstering women’s freedoms was withdrawn shortly after being introduced in parliament because of an uproar by religious parties who said parts of it are un-Islamic. “Whatever is against Islamic law, we don’t even need to speak about it,” Shaheedzada said.

Afghanistan’s Law of Elimination of Violence Against Women has been in effect since 2009, but only by presidential decree and never enforced. It is being brought before parliament now because lawmaker Fawzia Kofi, a women’s rights activist, wants to cement it with a parliamentary vote to prevent its potential reversal by any future president who might be tempted to repeal it to satisfy hardline religious parties.

The law criminalizes, among other things, child marriage and forced marriage, and bans baad, the traditional practice of exchanging girls and women to settle disputes. It makes domestic violence a crime punishable by up to three years in prison and specifies that rape victims should not face criminal charges for fornication or adultery.

The child marriage ban and the idea of protecting female rape victims from prosecution were particularly heated subjects, said Nasirullah Sadiqizada Neli, a conservative lawmaker from Daykundi province. Neli suggested that removing the custom---common in Afghanistan---of prosecuting raped women for adultery would lead to social chaos, with women freely engaging in extramarital sex safe in the knowledge that they could claim rape if caught.

As a woman, now with the power to fully participate in my governance and with the ability to study and participate in every human enterprise, I feel my debt to the dead white men who produced Western Civilization. This is no small gift for me----nor is it of negligible importance to the rest of our world’s civilizations. There is not one of the world’s civilizations not influenced enormously by the civilization that our ancestors created.

The great advances in science and medicine are major contributions of Western Civilization, advances that have doubled our lifespan in just one century. The invention of contraception, for example, has lengthened the life of myriads of women who, without it, would have been destined for early death, as they are in many places in the world, because of unremitting childbirth. Giving women some control over their biology has enabled them to be as productive and free as the great men who produced our civilization.

The new findings in astronomy, for example, have sent us out on the next voyages of discovery, a capability that will cause much rethinking of our ancient religions. The concept of the divine will be infinitely enlarged by these discoveries.
The rapid advance of brain science will finally determine what differences there are between male and female brains---and will throw into a cocked hat our notions of human responsibility, crime, and punishment. Our justice systems will never be the same.

Western Civilization has elements unique to it that are not intrinsic to any other of the great civilizations: the sanctity of the human being in the concept of human rights, sanctity of private property, attempts at universal education, attempts at a justice system that works at fairness, and enormous and continuous creativity in arts and industries.

If there is any doubt about the universality of Western Civilization, we need only watch the celebrations of the New Year, our New Year, around the globe. We need only note that the time zones and latitude demarcations used globally are Western in origin. The global language of international air travel is English. Imagine the chaos if it were up to everyone and anyone to select their own language.

Although there are still some holdovers from the dead end of the hippy social revolution who defame the dead white men, they have not yet produced themselves anything worthy of defending. The movement to dethrone Western Civilization has not succeeded in making its case. The proof is that the world votes with its feet; those who can flee to the West do so.

I salute the “dead white men” who gave us all of this.
The Paradox of Thinking and The Unthinkable:

An Axial Age Update For Modern Civilization Studies Through A Synthesis of Chinese Aspect/Perspective Philosophy With Hans Vaihinger’s Philosophy of “As If” And His View Of Knowledge as “Fictions.”

Walter Benesch
wbenesch@alaska.edu

I would introduce my discussion of the metaphysical and epistemological paradoxes associated with thinking the unthinkable in philosophy, science, and religion as it has been effectively identified by three 20th Century philosophers. The first philosopher is a historian of Chinese Philosophy, Professor Fung Yu-lan:

Since the universe is the totality of all that is, therefore when one thinks about it, one is thinking reflectively because the thinking and the thinker must also be included in the totality. But when one thinks about that totality, the totality that lies in one’s thought does not include the thought itself. For it is the object of the thought and so stands in contrast to it. Hence the totality that one is thinking about is not actually the totality of all that is. Yet one must first think about totality in order to realize that it is unthinkable. One needs thought in order to be conscious of the unthinkable just as sometimes one needs a sound in order to be conscious of silence. One must think about the unthinkable yet as soon as one tries to do so it immediately slips away. This is the most fascinating and also most troublesome aspect of philosophy.

The second philosopher is a physicist, John Archibald Wheeler:

…in the quantum principle we’re instructed that the actual act of making an observation changes what it is that one looks at. To me, this is a perfectly marvelous feature of nature…. So the old word observer simply has to be crossed off the books, and we must put in the new word participator. In this way we’ve come to realize that the universe is a participatory universe.”

1 Hans Vaihinger (1852-1933) was a German philosopher who constructed his own “Philosophy of As If” or fictions. Vaihinger clearly saw the utility value of fictions in all intellectual endeavors. However, the problem is that once one has accepted fictions and myths in philosophy, religion, science, one tends to forget that these are fictions and treats them as absolute truths. As he noted again and again, the facts of one age are the fictions of later ages. If one can view absolutes as useful fictions, then one can modify them or adopt others without conflict.


3 Paul Buckley and F. David Peat: Conversations in Physics and Biology, University of Toronto Press, 1979, p. 53-4
The third philosopher is Nobel physicist Erwin Schroedinger who emphasized that there are no longer any identities which proclaim their reality apart from human consciousness:

…we are faced with the following remarkable…situation. While the stuff from which our world picture is built is yielded exclusively from the sense organs as organs of the mind so that every man’s world picture is and always remains a construct of his mind and cannot be proved to have any other existence, yet the conscious mind itself remains a stranger within that construct. It has no living space in it; you can spot it nowhere in space.⁴

The paradoxes to which these philosophers refer arise in perceiving and conceiving and in synthesizing attending (attention) and intending (intention) in experiencing.

The first example from Professor Fung Yu-lan occurs in a process tradition in which a discussion of “thinking” as processing is not reducible to an abstract thought/thing/name. This is the point of the opening lines of the Tao te Ching. This is a tradition without a linguistic ‘existential identity principle’ which might seem to isolate a particular term or thought apart from the process of thinking and naming, e.g. exists/existence.⁵ This impossibility can be illustrated in two propositions by Hui Shih in the 4th Century BCE: “A chicken has three legs.” “The wheel never touches the ground.”⁶

The second example occurs in an object tradition which is “substantively based” and one in which identity was historically equated with an abstraction of the verb “to be” as “exist” or “existence” which corresponded to the real or res as thing. As Parmenides insisted in the 5th Century BCE, there is but “…one word by which to express the [true] road: Is. …Surely by now we agree that it is necessary to reject the unthinkable, unsayable path as untrue and to affirm the alternative as the path of reality and truth.”⁷ Other examples of absolutes connected to concepts of identity and existence are provided by Aristotle’s “three laws of thought” and the synthesis of Aristotle’s categorical syllogistic with classical physics and biology as well as monotheistic theology.

⁵ A.C. Graham: The verb “to be” is one of the most striking peculiarities of the Indo-European group, performing a variety of functions which most languages distinguish sharply. The metaphysical roles which it raises have been important through the history of Western philosophy, from Parmenides to the Existentialists. Classical Chinese deals with the various functions of “to be” by means of at least six different sets of words and constructions, several of which have functions outside the scope of “to be” Studies in Chinese Philosophy and Philosophical Literature, SUNY Press, 1986, p. 323
⁷ Wheelwright, Philip The Pre-Socratics “The Eleatic School” Macmillan, N.Y. 1985, p.97
Physicists and biologists in the 20th Century have begun proposing that terms like “exist” and “existence” are meaningless or without reference. The physicist Sir Arthur Eddington suggests: “It is a primitive form of thought that things either exist or do not exist; and the concept of a category of things possessing existence results from forcing our knowledge into a corresponding frame of thought.”

And Sir Arthur’s colleague, the English Physicist James Jeans notes: “The old philosophy ceased to work at the end of the nineteenth century, and the twentieth-century physicist is hammering out a new philosophy for himself. Its essence is that he no longer sees nature as something entirely distinct from himself. Sometimes it is what he himself creates or selects or abstracts; sometimes it is what he destroys.”

In relating these ‘identity paradoxes’ in the following paper, I would propose a comparative synthesis of Chinese process philosophy with the As If philosophy of the 20th Century German Philosopher, Hans Vaihinger—using Vaihinger’s analysis of the nature and use of fictions in philosophy, science, mathematics, theology and in the construction of political and social institutions. Such a synthesis offers a practical approach to the sources and nature of paradox, East or West, and treats paradoxes as useful fictions.

Section One: Process Philosophy Of Levels, Aspects And Perspectives
In The Chinese Tradition

Minding as Attending and Intending.

To facilitate the understanding of both Vaihinger’s and the Chinese views, I would propose that one consider thinking as a continuum consisting of two related but different aspects: attending and intending or attention and intention.

An illustration of this distinction is made whenever we try to relate ‘act’ and ‘intent’ in terms of individual behavior, e.g. in courts of law. Both terms, attention and intention, are derived from the Latin tendre which means to stretch. Tendons, for example, in the body are essential for physical stretching.

Attention (attentus, pp of attendere) means the act of applying the mind to or stretching toward an object, thought, or sense observation. Intention (intentus, pp of intendere) means stretching at understanding, connotation, significance, volition. I would refer to this internal stretching at as minding. Consistent with the Confucian philosopher, Hsun Tzu 4th Century BCE, I would propose that we can view minding/mind as empty, unified and still, i.e. the possibility of minding is never reducible to any specific

---

8 Ibid
9 Sir James Jeans: The New Background of Science, Ann Arbor Paperbacks, 1959, p.2
thought, name, symbol intention or attention. Attempts at such reductionism are the source of many paradoxes like that of Socrates knowing that he did not know, or the liar’s paradox—I always tell lies, or the name (ming) that can be named is not the name (ming) from the Tao te Ching.

Minding as Aspect and Perspective

In the term aspect, two related but different ideas are associated: The first is implied in its root meaning of ad (to), and specere (to look), that is, to look at or toward. The second meaning is implied when we use the term to indicate the specific empirical color, texture, smell, tone, taste, etc., that is sensed.

Minding is interpreting of aspect into concept and context. Interpreting and awareness of interpreting is then minding as perspective. For example, a bad-tasting medicine regarded from the aspect of its taste, is bad; regarded from the aspect of its ability to cure, is good. Good and bad, like all adjectives in Chinese, reflect the perspective of an observer who uses them.

The term perspective combines specere with the prefix per which means through or throughout. Thus a perspective is seeing through. Neither of these terms is separable from the other in aspective/perspective knowledge. Knowledge is a synthesis of aspects of knower with aspects of the ‘known’ with aspects of the knowing processes. This mixture is the source of a knower’s perspectives on his/her knowledge. It is especially important to note that we do not see things or wholes, only sense aspects, although identity as a whole, a thing, a concept can be used in minding to interpret and identify the aspects which are actually sensed. The idea of aspect would also seem to suggest an openness to sensing, i.e., an awareness that in sensing one has sensed certain but not other aspects of the sensed experience.

Chinese Philosophizing As Aspect/Perspective

One of the aspects of traditional Chinese philosophizing is the fundamental presupposing that human beings are aspects of nature. Nature itself is a continuum and human beings are that aspect of the nature continuum which is aware of nature as changing dynamic process. Thus, naturing as human minding is capable of perspectives upon naturing in science, philosophy, religion, and art. Any observation or description/definition of the world reflects at least two aspects of the world: (1) as that particular aspect of experience which is its focus, and (2) as an aspect of the world as the ‘possibility of focusing and observing’.

In the words of the Neo-Confucian philosopher Wang Yang-ming, speaking of the principle of nature: “What is called your mind is that which makes seeing, listening, speaking, and moving possible. It is the nature of man and things; it is the Principle of
This view is quite different from that of Plato and Aristotle and monotheistic religions which see human beings as in nature but not of nature, for a special un-natural spiritual essence had been inserted into their natural and physical bodies.

The Chinese aspect/perspective tradition presupposes the world is a cyclic, flowing process of aspects in which orderly change is the way of Yin and Yang. As a result, objects do not possess aspects; they are aspects of naturing and minding. The idea of aspect/perspective is perhaps most clearly expressed in the first chapter of Tao te Ching:

The Nameless (having no name) is the origin of Heaven and Earth (Naturing) The Named (having name) is the mother of all things. (Minding) Therefore let there always be non-being so we may see their subtlety, And let there always be being so we may see their outcome, The two are the same.  

In the last Chapter of the Chuang Tzu, (c. 399 – 295 BCE), one finds the following criticism of his time: “…the world is in great disorder, the worthies and sages lack clarity of vision, and the Way and its Virtue are no longer One. So the world too often seize upon one of its aspects, examines it, and pronounces it good. But it is like the case of the ear, the eye, the nose, and the mouth: each has its own kind of understanding, but their functions are not interchangeable. In the same way, the various skills of the hundred schools all have their strong point, and at times each may be of use. But none is wholly sufficient, none is universal.”

The Chinese philosophical tradition evolved a view of the universe as a naturing—minding process continuum. Different philosophers and schools emphasize various aspects and perspectives within this continuum. According to the 4th Century BCE Confucian philosopher Hsün Tzu: These emphases create dichotomies which then as distinctions can become obsessions.

The ten thousand beings are only one corner of the Way. One species of being is only one corner of the ten thousand beings. The stupid man is only one corner of one species. He himself believes that he understands the Way, though of course he does not. Shen Tzu could see the advantages of holding back, but not the advantages of taking the lead. Lao Tzu could see the advantages of humbling oneself, but not the advantages of raising one’s station. Mo Tzu could see the advantages of uniformity, but not those of diversity. Sung Tzu could see the advantages of having few desires, but not those of having many.

10 Wang Yang Ming: Instructions for Practical Living (Wing-tsit Chan trans), Columbia University 1964, p. 80  
13 Burton Watson (trans) Hsün Tzu, Basic Writings, Columbia Univ. Press 1966, p. 87-8
The variety of aspects and perspectives is reflected in Chinese views of language and symbols. Prof. Fung Yu-Lan in his discussion of the *Chuang Tzu* explains that from the Taoist perspective:

> The sounds of man consist of the words (*yen*) that are spoken in the human world. They differ from such “sounds of earth” as those caused by the wind, inasmuch as when words are said, they represent human ideas. They represent affirmations and denials, and the opinions that are made by each individual from his own particular finite point of view. Being thus finite, these opinions are necessarily one-sided.

Yet most men, not knowing that their opinions are based on finite points of view, invariably consider their own opinions as right and those of others as wrong. “The result,” as the *Ch’I Wu Lun* says, “is the affirmation and denials of the Confucianists and Mohists, the one regarding as right what the other regards as wrong, and regarding as wrong what the other regards as right.”

One of the perspectives on different aspects of the *naturung—minding process continuum* with which philosophers of the *Warring States* period would agree is that language is a useful tool, a matter of convention, but certainly not the natural or mental experiencing to which terms refer. As the *Tao Te Ching* notes in its first chapter, having no name is the origin of heaven and earth while having a name is the mother of all things. And Hsün Tzu wrote “Names have no intrinsic appropriateness. One agrees to use a certain name and issues an order to that effect, and if the agreement is abided by and becomes a matter of custom, then the name may be said to be appropriate…. Names have no intrinsic reality.” (This is a Chinese version of the modern insight that ‘universals’ have no ‘existential import.’)

Combining these views of the nature and limit of language with the different perspectives of the various schools on aspects of the *naturung---minding process continuum*, Chinese philosophy has evolved a ‘continuum logic’ of aspects and perspectives on levels. This continuum logic begins with the unthinkable and unspeakable whole or totality beyond all distinguishing and then proceeds with levels of ‘having name, knowledge, and understanding’ emphasizing minding and having a name as separate aspects of naturung, but ends at its final ‘knowledge’ level with a return to the unthinkable totality with which it begins.

This continuum *philosophy*, rather than focusing upon value dichotomies, relates aspects of experiencing on different levels with perspectives upon them.

---

15 Burton Watson (trans) *Hsün Tzu*.... *P. 14*
Aspect and perspective represent levels of awareness and reflection upon experiencing of naturing and minding. The terms in Chinese which are usually translated as existence or being are *wu* and *yu*. *Wu* in Chinese, however, means *not having* and *yu* means *having*.

These two ideas of having and not having are the key to the meanings of both aspect and perspective.

And this philosophy of *aspects and perspectives* relates the multiple aspects of minding and naturing in sequential levels of having and not having. Each of the levels in the logic both follows from the levels before it and leads into the next level—ultimately returning to the level of the un-nameable whole.

**Summary Of Chinese Aspect Perspective Philosophizing**

1. Nature (ing) is a process. Opposites are complementary because they are aspects of the total process and thus flow into one another, produce one another, complete one another.

2. Human minding comprises a unity with nature (ing) and is both an aspect of nature (ing) and a source of the self-recognizing of nature (ing), just as in nature (ing) minding recognizes itself. *The world appears to mind as aspect and mind appears in the world as perspective.*

3. As a consequence in the unity of nature and mind three kinds of distinguishing in experiencing are manifested:

   a. Those distinctions which come into being as aspects of the changing world. The 10,000 things are in this sense aspects and not separate identities as some philosophers and scientists presuppose.16

   b. Those distinctions which come into being as aspects of human minding. These are impressions of and thoughts about the infinite distinctions of which the restless mind is capable.

   c. Those distinctions that come into being by way of the mind’s use of symbols. These are the distinctions which permit us to stabilize and store our experiencing, preserve the answers to our questions and name the world into compartments, categories and relationships.

16 “The ten thousand things are really one. We look on some as beautiful because they are rare or unearthly; we look on others as ugly because they are foul and rotten. But the foul and rotten may turn into the rare and unearthly and the rare and unearthly may turn into the foul and rotten. So it is said you have only to comprehend one breath that is the world. The sage never ceases to value oneness.” Burton Watson: *The Complete Works of Chaung Tzu*, Columbia U. New York, 1968 p. 236
4. Implicit in these three assumptions which connect the distinguishing mind to the unity of a naturing of 10,000 aspects is an inferential process of aspect to perspective to knowledge to understanding to attitude to action/response. In this sequence an aspect is always accompanied by a perspective which becomes an aspect until action/non-action response follows

An Aspect Perspective Process Logic Of Levels\textsuperscript{17}

**Level I: Naturing and Minding as a Process Continuum of aspects and perspectives**

This is the level of the ultimate presuppositions of a tradition and its original views of the unity of nature and mind (naturing/minding) as the context of the whole of human experience. The aspects of Tao that are identified before distinguishing from minding will be reflected in the perspectives developed in the other levels:

**Level II: Minding versus Naturing as a Process Continuum of aspects and perspectives**

This is the level where distinguishing and distinctions arise which reflect the theories and assumptions that have been involved in distinguishing minding from naturing in order to analyze and/or know and talk about nature—e.g., as yin and yang, or in aspects of metaphysical, epistemological, axiological, and ontological contexts. Here perspectives on distinguishing reflect possibilities for distinctions as aspects of experiencing.

**Level III: Minding as a Process Continuum of Intending and Attending aspects and perspectives**

This is the level where minding, using the distinguishing contexts and assumptions of level II as a foundation, establishes relevant intentions and attentions in various disciplines, and value fields with their corresponding technologies, methodologies, and categories for focusing intentions and attentions in observing, exploring, and controlling human behavior and relating it to nature in philosophy, the natural and social sciences, and religion

Level IV: Minding as a Process Continuum of Knowing and Understanding knowledge and wisdom aspects and perspectives

On the fourth level, the other three levels merge as aspects of knowing and perspectives into understanding within the spectator/participant contexts created by these levels, i.e.,

I. The context of an ultimate view of the totality of nature/mind;
II. The contexts created by the presuppositions which were used to distinguish mind from nature and to provide the possibilities for mind’s contemplation and knowledge of nature: for example: yin/yang, metaphysics-epistemology-axiology-ontology;
III. The contexts created by the application of I and II in conceptual and perceptual experiences of nature as aspects and perspectives in intending and attending in the sciences, philosophy, religions, etc.

On this level too, via the contexts established on Levels II and III, the human intellect or minding acquires knowledge within a combination of five aspects of experiencing:

(1) knower, interpreter, explainer;
(2) the known, interpreted, explained;
(3) the process of knowing, interpreting, explaining as in applying methods, testing, experimenting, observing;
(4) the knowledge, interpretations, explanations that emerge in statements, sacred texts, papers, statistics, etc., that can be distributed and published; and
(5) the fifth aspect is the aspect of understanding on this level whereby the intellect reflects upon and develops perspectives into the inter-relationships of the other four aspects.

Aspect # 1: The context of the knower-observer: … What perspectives, experiences, intentions, assumptions, and potential interpretations from levels II and III do observers bring to an event or object, which will influence their intentions and attentions? Are there personal intentions and conditions that are relevant, for example, attitudes toward race, gender, profession, etc.? How aware are observers of their theories and concepts and how these can influence the ‘conceptualizing’ that arises in observations?

Mencius, applying this perspective in an ethical sense, argued that “Men must be decided on what they will not do, and then they are able to act with vigor in what they ought to do.”

18 Legge: *The Works of Mencius*, Book IV a, VIII, p. 310
The importance of this self-awareness is illustrated in the *Creation of the Gods*, a Ming novel dealing with the fall of the Zhang to the Chou. One of the most effective weapons in the Chou arsenal was the Topographical Diagram of the Kingdom. This was a magic map which once one had entered it seemed to reproduce all of one’s inner thoughts in the external world. If one thought of a mountain, it appeared, etc. The Zhang General, Yuan Hong, was tricked into the map which his spirit filled with his memories and desires. The map-trap was then rolled up and taken to headquarters where the general, captured by his own illusions, was put to death.\(^{19}\)

To the degree that past experiences and intentions influence and determine present observations and interpretations, every observer enters the Topographical Diagram of the Kingdom. It is essential that one be aware of the contexts that this paradox creates.

**Aspect # 2: Context of the known-observed...** Since every event or object represents emphasis and focus upon limited aspects within a totality of potential characteristics and causes, what were or are the relevant and irrelevant aspects and characteristics of the observed that one accepts or rejects? Under what conditions and in what circumstances is/was the observed event or object experienced? What was included or excluded in terms of circumstances and characteristics...and why? Are there relevant connections to other observations which are being considered or ignored? For example, one of the Buddhist theories of observation is that ‘one sees what one sees by not seeing that which surrounds what one sees. The focus of the observer or knower is limited, but it is critical that one remember that these limits are arbitrary.

As Chu Hsi noted in his discussion of the totality of the Principle of Heaven and Earth, “nothing exists in isolation...”\(^{20}\) And Yang Wang-ming cautioned his disciple that ‘useful’ and ‘useless’ will determine what we ‘see’ when we look at weeds and flowers.\(^{21}\)

**Aspect # 3: Context of knowing-observing processes...** In addition to the senses, what techniques, methods, instruments are employed in observing and how do these affect observing? For example, to measure a phenomenon means to introduce some sort of measuring device, whether as instrument or statistical method. A class being tested is not a class not being tested. What limits to observing are incorporated in or determine the act itself? How do direct versus indirect knowing and observing relate? Which is given preference?

---

\(^{19}\) *Creation of the Gods* 2 volumes (Gu Zhizhong trans.), New World Press, Beijing, 1992, volume II, p. 399


\(^{21}\) Wang Yang-ming, pp. 222-3
The problem with distinguishing, as Hsün Tzu warned, is that it in turn can lead to obsession. Mencius might ask if the observer in observing is ‘forcing’ that to appear which she/he wants to see that is helping the rice to grow, as in the case of the man of Sung who pulled up his rice helping it to grow. It is with this aspect of the knowing and observing process that one must be aware that distinguishing creates distinctions and not the other way round.

Aspect #4: Context of the ‘knowledge—observation product’: Since it is the knowledge as ‘observation’ or ‘explanation’ that is symbolized and communicated, it is important to consider what linguistic, categorical and/or cultural constraints will determine the expression of the observation. This aspect is a categorical and/or conceptual synthesis of #1, #2 and #3. This level combines syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. To what degree is the ego of the observer included or excluded in the symbolized and verbalized observation? Is the observation to be expressed in a combination of natural and artificial languages and if so, how will the languages used and their structures inter-relate and influence what is said or written---this question is particularly relevant to the uses of statistics and polls.

As Albert Einstein cautioned: “As far as the propositions of mathematics refer to reality, they are not certain, and in so far as they are certain, they do not refer to reality.” What are the purposes of our observations and to whom are they to be communicated?

One of the most fundamental concerns within the history of Chinese philosophy is with the rectification of names, that is, making sure that the terms that are used in communication are agreed upon. This means, of course, that meaning is relative to the user and the listener. There is no correspondence of name to thing; rather, there is correspondence to linguistic agreement: “The Way has never known boundaries; speech has no constancy. But because of [the recognition of] ‘this,’ there came to be boundaries.”

For Chuang Tzu these were left, right, theories, debates, divisions, discriminations, emulations, and contentions. And Hsün Tzu emphasized that “Names have no intrinsic appropriateness. One agrees to use a certain name…and if the agreement is abided by and becomes a matter of custom, then the name may be said to be appropriate. Names have no intrinsic reality.”

Aspect # 5: Context of the perspectives upon #1 - #4. It is as this stage where, as Chu Hsi suggested, the student must first of all know how to doubt in order to reflect and

22 Hsun Tzu, Basic Writings, Burton Watson trans., Columbia University, 1963, p. 122
24 Herman Weyl, Philosophy of Natural Science, Princeton Univ., 1949, p. 135
25 Complete Works of Chuang Tzu, Watson trans., pp. 43-4
26 Hsun Tzu, Basic Writings, Watson p. 144
question, because “People who do not doubt simply have not devoted themselves to concrete practice. If they have concretely practiced, there must be some doubts.”

With the fifth aspect, the knower, observer, and/or interpreter begin reviewing the inter-relationships of the first four aspects. For example, does the observed take priority over the observer? Does observing alter the observed and thus the observations? How do the observations verbalized and conceptualized relate to the observed and influence observing? What was included or excluded in observing? What was included and or excluded in symbolizing the observation? How do name and named relate in their origins? What are the most important definitions involved in stating the observation? What terms remain indefinable in stating the observation? What pre-conditions were placed upon observation by stated and unstated assumptions of the observer and/or the condition and circumstances of the observed?

The function of the fifth aspect of the knowing process is to provide an understanding of the basic perspectives and questions at the level of immediate experiencing which will carry reflexive self awareness back into the other levels of the logic and finally to the unity of naturing and minding at Level I. At this level of continuum logic we begin to discover and understand the experiential paradoxes and problems of the human intellect as both spectator and participant in the world. Here we become aware of the priorities that we accept and or assign and the influences that these have in turn upon our claims to knowledge and understanding.

The Danish Physicist, Niels Bohr, seems to have summarized the critical function of this level with its five aspects: “Scientific research in many domains of knowledge has indeed time and again proved the necessity of abandoning or remolding points of view which because of their fruitfulness and apparently unrestricted applicability, were regarded as indispensable for rational explanation.” The French Anthropologist, Georges Devereux, in his Ethnopsychoanalysis, seems to have had the same objective in mind: “The simple fact is that a human phenomenon which is explained in one way only is, so to speak, not explained at all ...and this even---and, in fact, chiefly---if this phenomenon’s first explanation has made it perfectly comprehensible, controllable and foreseeable in terms of its own specific frame of reference.”

---

27 Wing-tsit Chan, *Chu His & Lu Tsu-ch’ien Reflections on Things at Hand...*, p.85, 94
28 Niels Bohr, *The Philosophical Writings of...,* volume II, Ox Bow Press, Woodbridge, Conn, pp. 67-8
29 Georges Devereux, *Ethnopsychoanalysis*, University of California Berkeley, 1978, p. 1
Section Two: Hans Vaihinger And Fictions: ‘As If’ In Philosophy, Science, Mathematics, Religions

The Axial Age
Aspect and Perspective Versus Greek Principles of Identity

That which facilitated the transition from sensing to static concepts and fixed identities in Plato’s *Eidos* and Aristotle’s *Categories* was the presupposition of the *existence* of an unchanging reality of things and/or ideas (*res*). This Greek view was later coupled with a belief in a monotheistic deity who created ‘things’ and ‘identities’ into existence by naming them. This view is quite different from that found in the *Tao te Ching* where *wu* (having no name) is the origin of Heaven and Earth, and *yu* (having name) is the mother of the ten thousand aspects.

The Greeks of the Axial Age were concerned with the relationships of what they considered to be the *real* versus what they believed to be the *apparent world around them*. Their *Axial Age* assumptions outline in great part the context within which Western philosophy, science and theology developed from the Greek Pre-Socratic philosophers of the 6th Century BCE to the 17th Century CE. It was within this context that Vaihinger developed his theory of fictions and his philosophy of ‘As If’:

I. There is a difference between the apparent world of our sense experience and the essential or real world that is the source of appearances and sensations. One does not change, the other is constantly changing. The Greek/European tradition within which object logics arise assumes it is this real world that is abstracted into concepts that correspond to what we call reality---matter, atoms, time, space, soul, personality, behavior, etc. This reality is verbally expressed in our axioms and definitions. The word real comes from the Latin *res* which means thing. The father of both modern philosophy and science, Thales of Miletus, asked in the 6th Century BCE “What are things really?” His answer was “water,” which seemed to be able to change appearances but remain the same in essence. Thales’ contemporary, Democritus, believed things were composed of irreducible particles or atoms. Pythagoras believed the essence of reality was number.

II. Genuine knowledge is of the real, is always true and does not change, just as the real does not change. Opinion is always related to appearances and can be true or false depending upon verification consistent with definitions/axioms.
III. **The human intellect or soul is *in* the world but not *of* the world.** It is inserted into the body from outside the physical realm and so is capable of knowing things as they really are.\(^{30}\) Plato believed that the soul existed prior to coming into the body and was already possessed of innate and absolute knowledge of the *forms* of reality. After the soul was born, these innate forms would enable it to recognize and *conceptualize ideas from* sensations. Aristotle in his *On the Soul* maintained that the mind or reasoning capacity was an independent substance, pure thinking placed in the body by God and so was unaffected in its reasoning by changes in sensation or body.\(^{31}\)

IV. **The identity of things corresponds to human concepts of things and to their names and categories in language.** This was expressed in the Greek tradition by Parmenides of Elea who lived in the 6th Century BCE: “Thinking and the object of thought are the same. For you will not find thought apart from being, nor either of them apart from utterance.”\(^{32}\) Thought and being are the same.

V. **All value dichotomies are based on the absolute and qualitative distinction between ‘existence’ and ‘non-existence’, ‘something’ and ‘nothing’. This qualitative distinction is applied to ‘things’, ‘thought/concepts’ and ‘language/names/categories.’** As Parmenides of Elea suggested: “There [is] but one word by which to express the [true] road: Is.” “Necessarily therefore, either it simply Is or it simply Is Not. Thus our decision must be made in these terms: Is or Is Not. Surely by now we agree that it is necessary to reject the unthinkable un-sayable path as untrue and to affirm the alternative as the path of reality and truth.”\(^{33}\)

VI. **Axioms and definitions are self evident truths.** As Aristotle said, such definitions are so true that they cannot be proved nor do they need to be proved because they are true.\(^{34}\)

These assumptions are evident in Plato, Aristotle, Euclid, as well as Western philosophical, scientific, and religious traditions since Plato and Aristotle. Thus, if two individuals disagree they cannot both be right. The correspondence theory of truth holds that to tell the truth is to say that what is is what it is, to tell a falsehood would be to say that what is isn’t or that what isn’t is. This is the basis for distinctions between objectivity and subjectivity. And it is expressed in the literalist approach to theological texts which in Alexandria combined Greek philosophy with monotheistic theology.

---

\(^{30}\) Aristotle, *On the Soul* II (ii) 413b, (W.S. Hett trans.) Harvard University, 1957, p. 77  
\(^{31}\) *Ibid.* I (iv) 408b, p. 49  
\(^{33}\) *Ibid.* “Parmenides”, p. 97  
\(^{34}\) Aristotle, *On the Soul*, op.cit. III. (vi) – (vii) 430b - 431b, p. 175-179
The deity is now the author of names and naming---as Thomas Hobbes suggested in the 16th Century.35

Of all the Pre-Socratic Greek Philosophers, Heraclitus would seem to have been closest to Lao Tzu and to share a quite similar metaphysical-epistemological-ontological synthesis in common with Taoist philosophers.

- For example: Fragment #21 “You cannot step twice into the same river, for other waters and yet others go ever flowing on.
- Fragment #112 “To be in agreement is to differ; the concordant is the discordant. From out of all the many particulars comes oneness, and out of oneness come all the many particulars.
- Fragment #117 “People do not understand how that which is at variance with itself agrees with itself. There is a harmony in the bending back, as in the cases of the bow and the lyre.”36

It was for these and similar propositions that Heraclitus has been rejected by much of the Western philosophic and scientific tradition and excluded from discussions of classical categorical logics. As Aristotle wrote in his comments on Heraclitus:

Supporters of the theory of Forms were led to it by means of Heraclitus’ argument concerning truth, in which he holds that whatever is perceived by the senses is in a state of flux. [Accepting that much of his argument these philosophers go on to argue] that if there is to be a science of anything, there must be other entities in nature besides those perceived by the senses, inasmuch as there can be no science of what is in a state of flux.37

By the time of the death of Aristotle in 322 BCE, Athens had fallen to Macedonia (339 BCE). When Alexander died of a fever in Babylon in 323 BCE, many of the independent, quarrelsome Greek cities had come under the influence of the empires and kingdoms he left behind. In this Hellenistic period, the entire Mediterranean was a Greek sea, with famous cultural centers outside of Greece proper at the museums of Pergamum, Cos, and Alexandria. In matters of religion and philosophy, the Hellenistic world fluctuated between belief in the arbitrary decisions of Tyche, the Goddess of fortune, and the deterministic laws of fate.

36 Wheelwright Op.cit. “Heraclitus” p. 69. “Although this Logos is eternally valid, yet men are unable to understand it --- not only before hearing it, but even after they have heard it for the first time. That is to say, although all things come to pass in accordance with this Logos, men seem to be quite without any experience of it.”
37 Ibid, “Aristotle”, p. 80
Hans Vaihinger and the 19th-20th Century

Hans Vaihinger (1852-1933) was a German philosopher who began his university studies at Tubingen in theology and Greek philosophy. He was early interested in Plato’s ‘innate ideas’ and interpreted these as basic myths.

From this early interest in what he considered the myths of philosophy, religion, and science he constructed his own “Philosophy of As If” or fictions. He clearly saw the utility value of fictions in all intellectual endeavors –however, the problem was that once one has accepted fictions and myths in philosophy, religion, science, one tends to forget that these are fictions and treats them as absolute truths. As he noted again and again, the facts of one age are the fictions of later ages. If one can view absolutes as useful fictions, then one can modify them or adopt others without conflict.

Before we discuss Vaihinger’s philosophy, we want to look at that amazing time in which he lived at the end of the 19th Century and the beginning of the 20th. We will start with the historical, scientific, theological and philosophical changes and political revolutions with which an educated individual at the time would have been aware.

Christian dogma after the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) and other religious conflicts that followed in England and on the Continent had given way to a sense of religious tolerance and skepticism. French, American, and Russian Revolutions had replaced monarchies. The emperors of Russia, Germany, and Austria had been exiled or slain. In international relations, the First World War, 1914-1918, had demonstrated the destructive possibilities of modern technology.

In mathematics, Plane Geometry had become an “n-dimensional logic” and not the science of real space. In biology, evolution had supplanted divine creation. In physics a world of forces, particles, waves, and ultimate indescribability had replaced classical models of causality. As the English physicist, Paul Dirac, wrote in 1933:

“The classical tradition had been to consider the world to be an association of observable objects moving according to definite laws of force, so that one could form a mental picture of the whole scheme. … It has become increasingly evident, however, that nature works on a different plan. Her fundamental laws do not govern the world as it appears in our picture in any direct way, but instead they control a substratum of which we cannot form a mental picture without introducing irrelevancies.”

Hans Vaihinger was a product of this age. Born into a Protestant family, he had a teacher who read the Hindu *Mahabharata* with him and so acquainted him with the myths of gods and rituals of Hinduism. And he began comparing these myths and gods with those of Western monotheism looking for similarities and differences.

- He read Herder and other historians of his time, who viewed history as a human project without a divine plan.
- He began to apply Darwin’s theories to the evolution of ideas as myths.
- From Hume and Kant he realized that what philosophers call ‘reality’ is a projected ‘fiction’, and that a ‘real world’ is unknowable.

To all of these experiences he brought his understanding of Plato whose *eidos* or ideas he interpreted as fictions. He saw the fictions of science and philosophy and religion and politics as pragmatic and useful, but also felt it was critical to see them as fictions which reflected a way of thinking at a time – but not a fixed reality and so they could be changed without violence if more useful interpretations emerged in time.

This idea of fictions became the basis of his philosophy of *As If*.

### Section Three: Hans Vaihinger: *The Philosophy of ‘As If’*

Vaihinger’s *The Philosophy of As If* and his analyses of *scientific fictions* are based on his views of the nature of *thought, thinking* and *mind*:

Scientific thought is a function of the psyche. By the term psyche we do not understand a substance, but the organic whole of all so-called mental actions and reactions: these never come under external observation but have to be partly inferred from physical signs partly observed by the so-called inner sense.

Psychical actions and reactions are, like every event known to us, necessary occurrences; that is to say, they result with compulsory regularity from their conditions and causes. If we would compare psychical process with some group of external phenomena, the physical and in a narrower sense mechanical processes are less suitable than the functions of the organism. This statement is confirmed by the fact that so-called empirical utility is found in the psychical functions as well as in the organic functions of the bodily sphere.

This utility is manifested here as there in a ready adaptation to circumstances and environment; in the maintenance of a striving and successful reaction of the physical or psychical organism to external impulses and influences; and in the adoption and acceptance or the repulsion of new elements.
In the psyche there takes place not merely a mechanical play of ideas but the movement of ideas (which) fulfils to a great extent the demands of utility in its continual modification. All psychical processes are useful in the sense mentioned; above all the so-called theoretical processes of apperception.

Scientific thought consists in such apperception-processes and is therefore to be considered from the point of view of an organic function. Vaihinger explains this psychical aspect as more than a container into which sensations are poured or a passive mirror that merely reflects rays according to pure physical laws.

Rather, the psyche appropriates and changes what it can use and apply to its own processing. The word fiction comes from the Latin fictus, past participle of fingere, which means to shape or to fashion or to feign.

Thus a fiction would be the basic mental actions and reactions which shape all interpretations of sense stimuli, emotions and ideas of physical events. Vaihinger emphasizes that this organic function of thought proceeds mostly unconsciously. 

...Consciousness receives no external stimulus without molding it according to its own nature.... The psyche is an organic formative force which independently changes what has been appropriated, and can adapt foreign elements to its own requirements as easily as it adapts itself to what is new.

The mind is not merely appropriative; it is also assimilative and constructive. In the course of its growth it creates its organs of its own accord in virtue of its adaptable constitution, but only when stimulated from without, and adapts them to external circumstances....Just as the physical organism breaks up the matter which it receives, mixes it with its own juices and so makes it suitable for assimilation so the psyche envelops the thing perceived with categories which it has developed out of itself.

An excellent summary of the changes in physical and social science consistent with Vaihinger’s philosophy of ‘As If” is provided by the French anthropologist, George Devereux in this discussion of Henri Poincare’s theory of ‘explanation’:

According to Henry Poincare, if a phenomenon admits of one explanation it will admit also of a certain number of other explanations all as capable as the first

40 Ibid. p.7
41 Ibid. p. 3
one to elucidate the nature of the phenomenon in question. I for my part specify that in the study of Man (but not only in the study of Man) it is not only possible but mandatory to explain behaviors already explained in one way, also in another way, i.e. within another frame of reference.\textsuperscript{42}

In his analysis of what he calls the “\textit{Law of the preponderance of the means over the ends},” Vaihinger suggests that while thinking and knowledge are limited to experiencing and arise only as a means to life and survival of the body/mind combination, both the physical and psychical natures continue to evolve in what becomes a preponderance of means over ends where the original survival purposes or ends are replaced and/or exceeded by evolution of the means to ends. Sports and athletic competitions in general might be a good illustration of the physical means over ends – which lead to both specialized developments of physical organs, muscles, bones, and even body shapes---as well as new forms of sport-related injuries.

For Vaihinger, the mental evolution of means over ends is particularly relevant to his analysis of science as fictions and the philosophy of as if where original questioning related to immediate survival is replaced by increasingly abstract metaphysical questioning as to the origins of the universe, purposes of human existence, life after death, and nature of… questioning.

It is in the dynamic and changing attempts at answering the purpose of and nature of questioning that ‘science as fictions’ evolves in historical times and cultural spheres in philosophies, sciences religions, etc.

Everywhere I found evidence that an original means working towards a definite end has this tendency to acquire independence and to become an end in itself. Thought which originally serves the purposes of the will and only gradually becomes an end in itself was the most obvious special case of a universal law of nature that manifests itself in new forms always and everywhere, in all organic life, in the processes of the mind, in economic life, and in history.\textsuperscript{43}

Questions in various language systems may still be formulated in traditional syntactic structures; however the semantic meaning or content changes and as a consequence questions may seem meaningless at different times and their answers if any both true and false or neither true nor false, etc. These over time can become the most basic \textit{metaphysical, epistemological, axiological, ontological} questions in science, religion, philosophy, etc, e.g. was there really a big bang, do gods really exist, what is the purpose of my/human existence?

\textsuperscript{42} Devereux, George: \textit{Ethnopsychoanalysis,} University of Calif. Press Berkeley 1978, p.1

\textsuperscript{43} Vaihinger: \textit{op. cit. p. xxx}
This limitation of human knowledge seemed to me now to be a necessary and natural result of the fact that thought and knowledge are originally only a means to attain the Life-purpose so that their actual independence signifies a breaking-away from their original purpose; indeed, by the fact of this breaking loose, thought is confronted by impossible problems which are not merely insoluble to human thought … but problems which are utterly impossible to all forms of thought as such. 44

Two examples of an awareness of this breaking loose might be found in the opening lines of the Tao te Ching, in reference to Tao and Ming, and in the three propositions of the Greek Philosopher Gorgias in his text Concerning Not-Being: “first that nothing exists, secondly that even if anything existed it could not be known by men, and thirdly that even if anything could be known by anyone it could not be communicated to anyone else.” 45

Vaihinger stresses the practical value of the questioning and answering which poses insoluble or relative answers for this very nature of their formulation, and asking and answering as fictions is the basis for the further development of the psyche in all ages and intellectual areas and disciplines.

As Physicist Bruce Gregory in his Inventing Reality stresses, “…physics is only indirectly about the world of nature. Directly, it is talk about experimental arrangements and observations. Given a particular experimental arrangement, physicists can predict the outcome of certain measurements. There is nothing arbitrary about these outcomes... Nor is there anything arbitrary about the predictions. What is not given to physicists by nature, but rather is invented by them is what they say about these outcomes, the language they use to talk about nature. If physicists try to step outside the scheme of experimental arrangements and observations to envision what sort of independent mechanism in the world ‘really’ produces these observations … they enter a blind alley from which nobody as yet escaped.” 46

The Enumeration and Division of Some Important Scientific Fictions

Vaihinger offers an extensive list of as-if fictions that the psyche uses in the physical and social sciences, philosophy, economics, political and juristic systems to explain and define both sensing and the sensed world of experience, and he suggests that a combination of generalization and isolation of aspects are frequently used in the creating of these fictions. Symbols and languages also facilitate this process:

44 Ibid. xxxi
Words are fruitful aids in the fixation of general images. They help the abstract type which thereby gains a new kind of clarity, a sensuous support by means of the audible word. But no perception covering, let us say, the word tree can be shown to exist. We either perceive a green or a barren tree, a high or a low one, etc. The word tree, on the other hand, designates something that appears in all the perceptions of a tree but which cannot be further determined…

Vaihinger stresses, however, that abstract and general ideas must be distinguished from one another. Concepts like goodness, color, smoothness, equality are abstract ideas, for the properties in question are separated by isolation from what he calls concrete things, but they do not constitute independent qualities of objects. On the other hand, stone, plant, pine-tree, ship are general ideas that are formed by generalization from the experiences of particular phenomena.

This differentiation is one of principle but only of principle, for in practice the two operations of isolation and of generalization almost always occur together. For the sake of clarity in exposition, however, it is expedient theoretically to keep these two types rigidly apart.

According to Vaihinger, the fictions the psyche uses in its digestive processing of explaining and interpreting experience are expressed in sciences, mathematics, religions, and philosophies as analogies, definitions, axioms, tautologies, etc. “These are syntheses of image and abstraction which are incorporated into systems of deductive and inductive reasoning e.g.: artificial classifications, juristic fictions, analogical fictions, fictional constructs in mathematics, ethical fictions, etc.”

Conclusion

As was suggested in the Forward, the 19th and 20th Centuries mark a shift in the physical and social sciences from the axiomatic and materialistic objectivism of the Greek philosophers of the Axial Age toward a dynamic process view of both nature and knowledge. This is a view which is much closer to the views of many traditional Chinese philosophers of the Axial Age. This shift has been accompanied by a realization of the implicit necessity of accommodating the ‘mind of the observer’ as an aspect of the ‘nature of the observed’ in the process of observation within what Wheeler calls a participant/spectator universe.

This shift not only challenges the mechanistic presuppositions of classical physical science; it also requires a flexible epistemological methodology for accommodating the

47 Vaihinger op.cit. p.206
48 Ibid. Vaihinger’s listing of and exposition of ‘fictions’ is far more extensive than the materials included here and the reader should consult the As If (p 17-77) for a more thorough catalog and discussion
rapidly changing theories of nature in physical and social science. It is this *flexible methodology* that can be provided by Hans Vaihinger’s “*Fictions of Science and the Philosophy of As If*” that replaces absolutist and naïve empiricism with the concept of ‘fictions’ which as syntheses of minding and naturing can be molded and modified as human understandings of perspective and aspects of experiencing evolve.
From Globalization Waves to Global Civilization

Andrew Targowski
andrew.targowski@wmich.edu

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this investigation is to characterize the impact of Five Waves of Globalization. These five Waves of Globalization have involved the world-wide flow of goods, money, information, and people with scope and intensity such that the progress of history has been altered. The waves emerged in the last 500 years and impacted the world’s major civilization, itself a complex of compatibly interactive entities of society, culture and infrastructure within a large frame of territory and time, usually embracing several nations and centuries or even millennia.

As the result of these five waves, what we can label the Global Civilization is emerging in the 21st century. Its religion, society and infrastructure will be defined and associated repercussions noted. It is a very rare case when we can observe the rise of a new civilization during our own lifetime. However, this is the case with Global Civilization, a new civilization now replacing Western Civilization.

THE IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION WAVES UPON CIVILIZATION

The 500 years of the intensive and consistent process of globalization of the world may provide the following conclusions:

- Globalization waves were triggered by a global-minded elite which is and was able to control global economic strategy and political policy.
- In the last 66 years (1947-2013) humans have been facing four different globalizations.
- *Pax Americana* and *Pax Sovietica* have been both ideologically confrontational and globally minded.
- *Pax Consortia* and *Pax Virtualiziana* have been both economically-politically confrontational and oriented to humanity worldwide.

Some generations have been experiencing all these four globalization waves with many challenges and all kinds of problems.

The last 500 years of Info-Communication Technology (ICT) development transformed the global elite from a colonial to an information orientation. This should be promising from a humanistic point of view, particularly in ideological confrontations of the single global society (Financial Elite) and global virtual society (Meritocratic Elite).
In Table 1, these global waves are compared and assessed.

### Table 1. The Comparison of Globalizations in the Last 500 Years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WAVES</th>
<th>GUIDING DIMENSION</th>
<th>EXECUTABLE DIMENSION</th>
<th>TECHNOLOGICAL DIMENSION</th>
<th>SOCIETAL DIMENSION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I-Pax Portuganna 1500-1837</td>
<td>Henry the Navigator</td>
<td>Portuguese Empire Based on the Best Ships and Needs for Spices and Luxury Goods</td>
<td>School of Navigation (Information technology)</td>
<td>Christian Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II-Pax Britannica 1837-1914</td>
<td>British Royalty &amp; Government</td>
<td>British Empire Based on the Best Ships and Needs for Raw Materials and Markets for Industrial Goods</td>
<td>Telegraph, Telephone, Steamships</td>
<td>Colonial Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV-Pax Consortia 1989-2000+++</td>
<td>Stateless Consortia Financiers, CEOs</td>
<td>G8 and Party of Devos Off-shore Outsourcing</td>
<td>The Internet, Long-distance Airlines and Ships</td>
<td>Upper and Low Classes Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V-Pax Virtualiziana 2000+++</td>
<td>New Information Elite</td>
<td>Global Virtual Nation and Government</td>
<td>The Internet</td>
<td>Global and National Virtual Societies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1 illustrates the 500-year long process of developing these five Globalization Waves, resulting in the transformation of the world via the formation of two new horizontal civilizations at the dawn of the 21st century: the Global and the Virtual Civilization.
THE ENABLING FACTORS OF GLOBAL CIVILIZATION

Technological Advances In Transportation And Communications Technologies

Technologies provide the infrastructure for globalized operations. Table 2 illustrates the decreased costs of transportation in the last 160 years (1830-1990). Table 3 shows how the costs of communication and computers declined in the last 40 years (1960-2000).

During the first and second waves of globalization, technology provided incredible productivity in making and moving things. Today, technology is driving the productivity of information itself.
Table 2. Transport Costs, 1830-1990

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Ocean Transport Wheat, Percent of Production Cost</th>
<th>Ocean Freight 1920 = 100</th>
<th>Average Air Transportation Revenue per Passenger Mile (in 1990 US$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>79</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>76</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 3. Communication and Computer Costs, 1960-2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>60.42</td>
<td>1,869,004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>41.61</td>
<td>199,983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>6.32</td>
<td>27,938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>7,275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Info-communication Technology (ICT) triggers a shift in the postindustrial society’s *modus operandi*, which is based on new key features (Bell 1981):

(1) the shift from a goods-producing to a service economy,
(2) the increasing reliance on theoretical knowledge, and
(3) creation of a new “intellectual technology” based on computers and other smart machines.
Manuel Castells observes that “what has changed is not the kind of activities humankind is engaged in but its technological ability to use as a direct productive force what distinguishes our species as a biological oddity: its superior capacity to process symbols.”

ICT technology does not replace agriculture and industry but rather optimizes them. It leads towards the informatization of the Global Society, which by connecting all of us makes us the Global Open Society. Like the symbiosis of humans and machines, the emerging Global Digital Consciousness provides cognition and external memory systems that support the Global Civilization and vice versa.

Hence, the Global Digital Consciousness is composed of:

- infosphere (computerized info-communication systems composed of databases, applications, and networks)
- cyberspace (the Internet and Web applications)
- mediasphere (radio, TV, cable)
- mindsphere (global ideas generated by previous global spheres)
- cybersociety (using e-communication and presence).

The Globalization Index, which breaks globalization down into its most important component parts, indicates that the “most wired” countries in the world are beneficiaries of globalization. The Globalization Index tracks the movements of money in terms of investments and business transactions in the era of “electronic capitalism”

Manufacturing Outsourcing from Western Civilization to Oriental Civilization

In the 1980s, developed countries began to outsource manufacturing to countries with cheap labor. As a result, poor countries broke into global markets of manufacturing goods and services. Their export of manufactured goods and services rose from 25 percent of total export in 1980 to more than 80 percent by 1998.

The most successful countries in this trend are Brazil, China, Hungary, India, Poland and Mexico, and another 20 countries. They, with 3 billion people, reached a level of growth 5 percent higher than developed countries.

The rest of the developing world trades less at the beginning of the 21st century then it did in 1980, which means that 2 billion people are still marginalized (mostly in Africa), with some countries even showing negative growth.
In more successful, developing countries, the poverty level decreases. The total number of poor people in rural China alone was reduced from 250 to 34 million over the years from 1980 to 1999 (Stern et al 2002).

**Lowering Tax Barriers**

The recent reduction in average tariffs has been highest in South Asia, from 65 percent in the early 1980s to about 30 percent in 2002. In the same period, Latin America, East Asia and the Pacific lowered tariffs from 30 percent to 15 percent; Europe and Central Asia went from 15 percent to 10 percent, and the most industrialized economies dropped their tariffs from 8 percent to 5 percent.

Only in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa were tariffs maintained at consistent percentages, at roughly the 20 to 25 percent levels that existed in 1998 (World Bank 2001). Countries like Ethiopia and Uganda liberalized trade significantly, nonetheless.

Average tariffs in rich countries were low, but they maintained barriers in exactly the areas where developing countries have a competitive advantage: agriculture and labor-intensive manufacturing. The cost of protection by rich countries -- paid for by poor countries -- is at the level of 100 billion US$ per year, which is twice the size of aid from the Northern to the Southern hemisphere (Stern et al 2002).

**Power of Global Financial Elite**

The last few decades, since the 1970s, and particularly since the 1980s, have seen the rapid rise to prominence of the financial sector of the U.S. economy and of global capitalism in general; the system’s center of gravity has shifted from production to finance.

The result has been a massive growth of the financial system, one in which a debt squeeze-out never quite occurs, leading to bigger financial crises and more aggressive state interventions.

As this process proceeded near the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st, more and more exotic forms of financial innovation arose. This included all kinds of futures, options, derivatives, and swaps, along with the growth of a whole shadow banking system off the balance sheets of the banks.

The repeal of Glass-Steagall in 1999, although not a major historical event in itself, symbolized the full extent of the deregulation that had by then largely taken place. The system had become increasingly complex, opaque, and ungovernable.
As a result, a whole new era of dominance by financial conglomerates arose, and the world witnessed the onset in 2008 of the Great Financial Crisis (Foster and Holleman 2010). Data from the Forbes 400 show that speculator capitalists had become increasingly dominant in the U.S., displacing, as a class, industrial and petroleum capitalists. In addition, the speculative basis of American and global capitalism brought a greater risk of instability to the fore.

Some scholars argued that the dominance of the financial elite over the U.S. and, thus, the Global Economy, has been exercised through various power elites, drawn directly from the capitalist class itself and from its hangers-on, those who come to occupy strategic positions in corporate and government circles. The concept of “the power elite” was introduced in the 1950s by sociologist C. Wright Mills, and it was subsequently developed by others, notably G. William Domhoff, author of the controversial book, *Who Rules America?* For Domhoff, the power elite is “the leadership group or operating arm of the ruling class. It is made up of active, working members of the ruling class and high-level employees in institutions controlled by members of the ruling class.”

**Power of Global Corporations**

In 1952, General Motors CEO Charles Wilson famously said that "What is good for General Motors is good for the country." During the past decade and a half, General Motors and other global corporations have obtained much of what they claimed was good for them. They have succeeded in obtaining trade and investment liberalization policies that provide global firms considerable new freedoms to pursue profits internationally. They have also persuaded many governments to take a hands-off approach to corporate monopolies, claiming that mega-mergers are needed for firms to compete in global markets.

Of the 100 largest economies in the world, 51 are corporations; only 49 are countries. This assertion rests on a comparison of corporate sales and country GDPs prepared by the Institute for Policy Studies in 2010. To put these facts in perspective, we would note that Royal Dutch Shell was in 2012 bigger than Argentina; Wal-Mart was bigger than Austria; Toyota was bigger than Pakistan; IBM was bigger than Slovakia; and Apple was bigger than Morocco.

Global corporations in our era exercise their power in ways beyond their economic competence. They operate strong election campaign contribution arms and are constantly engaged in lobbying. The exact amount spent on these activities is not known, but of the Top 200 firms, 94 maintain "government relations" offices located on or within a few blocks of the lobbying capital of the world along Washington, DC's K Street Corridor.
Tax Avoidance As Another Symptom of the Power of Global Corporations

While company-specific data on tax avoidance inside and outside the United States does not exist, the trend towards lower corporate tax burdens is also evident internationally.

According to the OECD, over the past two decades the share of total taxes made up by corporate income taxes in the industrialized OECD countries has remained about 8 percent, despite strong increases in corporate profits. The non-governmental organization attributes this decline in tax rates to the use of "tax havens" and intense competition among industrialized countries as they attempt to lure investment by offering lower taxes.

WHY GLOBAL CIVILIZATION?

The fourth wave of globalization leads towards the emergence of what can properly be entitled Global Civilization because it meets the general criteria of civilization (Targowski 2004). A few examples follow:

- Global religion -- since Western Civilization has been transformed into Global Civilization at the dawn of the 21st century, Christianity (Protestantism and Catholicism) has been replaced by the global religion, which is reflected in the belief that business is the omnipotent power and it should control society for its benefit. What is good for business is good for society.
- Human entities are composed of certain segments of societies for 8 autonomous civilizations -- Western, Eastern, Islamic, Japanese, Chinese, Buddhist, Hindu, and African.
- Culture has a global character, which means that similar patterns of behavior are practiced (de facto by certain segments of those societies only) in those autonomous civilizations, for example “English” language, professional and student dress codes, music, movies, food and drinks.
- A Global Infrastructure of information via the Internet and Global Area Networks and of material via transportation, finance, and business reaches every autonomous civilization and integrates them into an emerging Global Society and Global Economy. Furthermore, there are many international organizations (for-profit and non-profit, official and unofficial) such as the United Nations, UNESCO, GATT, the World Trade Organization, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and NATO that create the Global Infrastructure of Regulations.

Global Civilization is not another autonomous civilization, one which can be called vertical. Rather, it is horizontal and it penetrates autonomous civilizations, as shown in Figure 2.
Some critics may say that the reach of Global Civilization in the least developed autonomous civilizations is yet very modest (for example, a small number of users of the Internet or telephones). On the other hand, this reach is observable and known in those civilizations, whose elites are active, substantial participants in the Global Civilization.
HOW GLOBAL CIVILIZATION IS IN THE PROCESS OF GLOBALIZING OTHER CONTEMPORARY CIVILIZATIONS

Using the Comparative Approach

Figure 2 intuitively exemplifies the perceived degree of globalization taking place in eight contemporary civilizations in the 2010s. The most globalized of these is the Western Civilization, which has almost already transformed into the Global Civilization. It happened because Western Civilization is the key trigger of globalization as it attempts to achieve more growth of its saturated economy.

The Japanese Civilization is far advanced in the process of transformation into the Global Civilization, since Japan accepted in the 19th century a strategy of modernization à la Westernization. The Meiji Restoration -- also known as Renovation, Revolution, Reform or Renewal -- was a chain of events that restored imperial rule to Japan in 1868 under the Meiji Emperor. This period lasted from 1868 to 1912 and was responsible for the emergence of Japan as a modernized nation in the early twentieth century. After World War II Japan democratized its political system and Americanized its economy, becoming the leader of advanced manufacturing goods in electronics and cars today.

- The Eastern Civilization (Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldavia, Armenia, Georgia, Romania, Bulgaria, and Serbia (not Greece, which is Orthodox but as the exception belongs to Western Civilization) is modernizing and globalizing today, depending on a given state’s policy.
- However, due to political obstacles such countries as Russia and Belarus are trying to restore the Russian Empire. They are led by strong nationalism, based on the common enemy, which is wrongly (but purposely) perceived - the political West or Global Civilization.
- Countries such as Georgia, Moldova, and Serbia are in the process of associating with the European Union, which is far advanced in the transformation into the Global Civilization. Romania and Bulgaria are already members of the European Union and westernizing/globalizing fast.
- Only Ukraine is caught at the crossroads between the Eastern and Western Civilizations. In the fall of 2013 Ukraine’s President Viktor Yanukovich refused to sign a proposed association agreement with the European Union. Instead, he opted to sign an agreement with Russia, which provided a 15 billion dollar loan for Ukraine at specially lowered prices (RIA Novosti-12.19.2013). However, pro-EU Ukrainian demonstrators and riot police continue to clash in Kiev, the president of the country fled, and Russia is now annexing the Crimea. If Ukraine stays with Russia it will deepen its nationalistic attitude against the West; however, at the same time it will be globalizing à la “Russian Mother.”
• The Chinese Civilization is the largest beneficiary of globalization since as the result of this process, it became the World Factory. Its young generation is Westernizing quickly but the political leadership does not want to modernize via Westernization. It is doubtful whether this civilization will transform fully into the Global Civilization in the foreseeable future.

• The Hindu Civilization is modernizing, Westernizing and globalizing to become the World IT Laboratory. English is one of two official languages of this civilization, which helps tremendously the process of obtaining economic benefits from globalization. On the other hand, due to remarkable social and economic inequality in this civilization, it is doubtful whether it will ever be able to transform into Global Civilization.

• The Islamic Civilization is “oiling” the process of globalization and profiting from it. On the other hand it is refusing to modernize and Westernize, except for its elite. Even the promising Arab Spring in the 2010s has shown, as in Egypt, that it can be a path backward rather than forward. Some of its countries, such as the United Arab Emirates, beat all world records in rising the most modern of cities (such as Dubai). Qatar, with its super modern city of Doha, benefits from global tourism and finance, but the social system is extremely far from Western Civilization’s policies.

• The Buddhist Civilization is strongly religion-driven, although its religion tends to support a secular lifestyle. It has such intellectually meaningful dogma that many Westerners switch to Buddhism. It is very doubtful that Buddhist values will be replaced by values of global business ever.

• Finally, the African Civilization has its elite educated in Western/Global Civilization but due to colonialism in past centuries, it is the victim of Westernization and of contemporary globalization, a new colonialism. Nowadays, Africa is a battle ground between Christianity and Islam, being in the meantime taken by Chinese businesses and their values driven by Chinese faiths. Therefore, today Africa is tempted by globalization but it is not able yet to transform into Global Civilization.

Table 4 compares contemporary civilizations and their abilities to globalize and transform into Global Civilization.
Table 4.

The Comparative Status of Contemporary Civilizations in Terms of Their Ability to Become Participants in Global Civilization in this Century

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CIVILIZATION</th>
<th>Globalization Impact</th>
<th>Key Factor</th>
<th>Status of Global Civilization</th>
<th>REPERCUSIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>IT triggers Globalization</td>
<td>Global financier</td>
<td>Global Civilization Dominates Western Civilization</td>
<td>Economic Decline and Possible Correction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
<td>IT triggers Globalization</td>
<td>Global Corporations</td>
<td>Global Civilization is Second Layer over Japanese Civilization</td>
<td>Economic Stagnation and Possible Correction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>Depending on Country</td>
<td>Business and/or De-Sovietization</td>
<td>Rather Globalization than Global Civilization ever</td>
<td>Status Quo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>IT triggers Globalization</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Rather Globalization than Global Civilization ever</td>
<td>Controlled Globalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Rather Globalization than Global Civilization ever</td>
<td>Spontaneous Globalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic</td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>Oil Export</td>
<td>Globalizing Elite</td>
<td>Arrested Globalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhist</td>
<td>Very Weak</td>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td>Globalizing services for visitors</td>
<td>Anti-globalization policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African</td>
<td>Confused</td>
<td>Natural Resources</td>
<td>Globalized as by-product of Global Business’ Activities</td>
<td>Confused policies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it is shown in Table 4 Global Civilization is essentially what might be labeled Western Civilization 2.0. It is accepted today by the Japanese and Hindu Civilizations.

What is the future of Global Civilization? Is it limited to being Western Civilization 2.0? Or, due to several profoundly negative changes that it carries, such as a diminishing middle class and a technological assault upon the labor force, will it shift into reverse gear? Or is it really good for the World Civilization to break with diversity and move to one and only one kind of a civilization? The near future should provide several substantial answers to these questions.
GLOBAL CIVILIZATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

At the end of 2nd Millennium, two civilizations -- the “Western-West” and the Japanese -- were at the level of saturation. This pushed them to external expansion, leading to the creation of the Global Economy. From the end of World War II until 1973, the United States experienced sustained economic growth. But at the beginning of the 21st century, the U.S. with a saturated national economy began to depend on outsources in order to assure sustainable growth.

Outsourcing provides growth to the American national economy without the creation of new jobs. This process is being copied by other states of the Western-West Civilization. Of course, the reaction of the victims of globalization is strong and loud. It looks like workers of the Western-West Civilization are not satisfied with the rise of Global Civilization, but stateless consortia and some developing countries are.

Almost every product or service market in the major economies of the World Civilization has foreign competitors. Increased foreign competition is in itself a reason for a business to globalize – in order to gain the size and skills to compete more effectively (Yip 1995).

The global competitors today are mainly Americans, Europeans, Japanese and Chinese. Therefore, the Global Economy is only possible because it is supported by Global Infrastructures. These infrastructures support:

- global communication (the Internet, Global Area Networks),
- global transportation,
- global finance activities,
- global scientific knowledge (principles, rules, and laws defined in a given science/technology) creation and dissemination, and
- global management practices, even global peacekeeping (with less success).

The architecture of the Global Civilization is shown in Figure 3. Global Civilization today is controlled by an invisible power, a force composed of global financiers and banks, stateless corporations, outsourcing CEOs, the G7, the IMF, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization and global religion, culture and infrastructure.
Global Civilization can be defined as follows:

*Global Civilization is a large Global Society living in integrated horizontally whole or partial spaces of contemporary, autonomous civilizations as a fuzzy reification (invisible-visible) which is not a part of larger one and exists over an extended period of time.*

*It specializes in inexpensive labor and differentiates from other civilizations by developing its own advanced global cultural system driven by electronic communication, a global business religion (super-consumerism, wealth & power-driven), and a sharing of the same knowledge (principles, rules, and laws defined in a given science or technology plus wisdom (good judgment and choice)).*

*It is a system that relies upon complex urban, agricultural infrastructures, and others such as industrial, information ones. It also progresses in a cycle of stages such as rising, growing, declining and falling.*

*However, at the dawn of the 21st century it is in the rising stages of that cycle.*
CONCLUSION

At the dawn of the 21st century, the IVth Wave of Globalization has been transforming Western Civilization into Global Civilization. Thus, Christianity has been replaced by a Global Religion (under the form of business religion), while Global Information and Transportation Infrastructures have become very popular solutions to global communications as well as moving materials, goods, and people.

Eventually the Global Society is becoming a visible, strong entity developing Global Culture as distinctive similar patterns of behavior are increasingly practiced around the world.

This worldwide transformation is reflected quite visibly in rising huge financial inequality among globally specialized businessmen and workers (without college degrees in Western Society, structurally unemployed and unlikely to be re-employed unless they get good professional degrees).

For example: In the U.S. out of 155 million members of the labor force, about 120 million will likely not be able to pursue the so-called American Dream. Furthermore, their plight supposedly is their own fault.

In addition, the mass media and political leaders continue to maintain that what is good for business should be good for society.

The number of people attending church, Christians in Western Europe particularly, is declining dramatically. Average Westerners are more attracted by consumerism. All the values related to this transformation are provided by business. Some state that business does not possess overwhelming power and it can be controlled by the democratic process of politics. However, practice shows that, through its lobbyists, business opposes any regulations planned by politicians and required by the electorate against the interests of big business.

Global Civilization is of an integrative and horizontal character. It penetrates formerly autonomous civilizations either entirely (like Western Civilization) or partially (like Japanese, Chinese, Eastern or Hindu Civilizations). At the beginning of the 21st century, we have seen Western Civilization almost totally transformed into Global Civilization, while traditional Western Civilization declines.

The Japanese and Hindu Civilizations today are modernizing through Westernization, becoming Globalized or Westernized 2.0., but they still retain their strong traditional civilization character. Civilizations such as the Chinese (financed through being the World Factory, the largest outsourcer) and the Eastern (financed through oil export) are modernizing very impressively and refusing being Westernized. Nonetheless, they are
globalized through intensive trade development reaching all corners of the world. Their traditional civilizations and values, much like the Japanese and the Hindu, are retained, however.

Some insist that globalization and Global Civilization is a long-awaited solution enabling the diversified human race to grow as One Family with One Government. However this view neglects the new golden rule: diversity when united can lead to a totalitarian, ineffective, and corrupt world government.

Global Civilization is not stoppable, in my judgment, since it is driven mostly by the very strong desire felt by the new Global Elite to increase its wealth and via the drive to improve the economic condition of undeveloped and developing nations. In addition, the relatively free flow of ideas and people are both welcomed by the new Global Elite composed of media, intellectuals, and some politicians who control the global mindset of people.

One reason that there are no obvious signs of a slowing down the process of globalization is that the anti-globalization movements are too weak to threaten the Global Elite.

However, in the long-term Global Civilization will not prove sustainable, since it consumes strategic resources (oil, gas, uranium and color metals) in an accelerated manner. Eventually the human race will not be at the level it has attained today. One must hope that mankind’s ability to develop more effective knowledge and technology will help solve social problems that we face today. But it is evident that technology alone cannot solve huge, looming problems of overpopulation and planet degradation.

Only human wisdom is capable of that.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


Karl Renner on Stability, Change, and Service in Entire Legal Systems

Joseph Drew
josephdrew4920@verizon.net

A century ago this year, World War I broke out, and one of its most dramatic results was the breakup of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Onto the world stage burst a social theorist and lawyer named Karl Renner, the first Chancellor of the democratic Republic of Austria. Then, after World War II, he almost singlehandedly re-created a newly-freed Austria as a democratic country; for his labors, he was elected the first President of the new Central European democracy. Today, Renner is known widely as the father of the country. His bust is found in front of the parliament, and the location is called Dr. Karl Renner Ring (Street).

Renner should also be known as a pioneering expert on the theory of law and as the man who was able to adapt and modernize legal theory and practice, reconciling democratic socialist and advanced capitalist views of law. He enabled us to see that law could serve as an instrument of human betterment and that socialists, democratic socialists, could thrive and lead in an anti-communist Western world.

The comparative study of law and legal systems across civilizations owes much to his pioneering work. Both in his reformulations and applications of legal analysis and in his systematic generation of a theory of the development of modern society, Renner ranks among the greats in the history of social science-based jurisprudence.

In addition, he developed theories of past, present, and future class structures, means of domination and conflict, and the levels of integration and conflict of norms and institutions in a series of works fundamental to modern European social thought. And he made both the ideas of Legal Positivism and socialist sensibilities workable and compatible within a completely democratic framework.

In scholarship he helped bridge the gap between widely varying positions, just as in politics he led Austria into a restructured social and political system totally based on freedom and amenable to Western traditions and cultures yet accepted by almost all political parties.

The scholarly Renner can be seen as two writers.

- The “young Renner" concentrated on the exegesis of socialist theory and was concerned particularly with the relationship between law and society.
- The “later Renner" brought forth, long before Mills, the concept of the "service class" and maintained that the peaceful evolution of this class as a “working class" would culminate in a harmonious, almost one-class society.
The theoretical, young Renner dealt with the relationship of law and economics. The intellectual father of socialism, Karl Marx declared as a fundamental principle of socialism that law was one of the elements of the "normative superstructure." As such it merely reflected the “material base” of society, which is to say, economics. This was where Renner’s thought began. The principal work of Dr. Renner dealing with the subject, and the only one of his major works available at present in the English language, is called The Institutions of Private Law and their Social Social Functions. The original German language work, published in 1929, is entitled Die Rechtsinstitute des Privatrechts und ihre soziale Funktion.

Renner Was Grounded In Marxian Thought …

Thus, his early works should be seen as a critique of the basic writings of Karl Marx. Marx, like many capitalist theoreticians of today, claimed that economics underlies all other visible parts of life; it constitutes the motor of history.

Marx famously asserted in the Preface to A Contribution to The Critique of Political Economy that “the economic structure of society (is) the real foundation on which rise legal and political superstructures and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness.”

Further, Marx stated in the same passage that “the distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, esthetic or philosophic -- in short, ideological -- forms in which men become conscious of the conflict and fight it out.”

Starting from this view of the basic relationship between one part of the superstructure, law, and its “real foundation”, economics, Renner began to develop his systematic analysis. But, as a lawyer in Central Europe, he was also a Legal Positivist. Law was a long-lasting coherent entity.

In the end, Renner wound up breaking new ground, finding for socialists and democrats a set of solutions that Marx himself might not have greeted happily but which worked. Today, vast numbers of Europeans and others are social democrats; their views of law owe much to the reformulation of socialist thought as cast by Karl Renner.
But He Changed The Implications of Marxist Thought on Law and Society

Renner did not blindly accept all of Marx’s ideas, especially the theoretical Marxian notions concerning the relationship between property and class conflict. Property since the Middle Ages has constituted a basic institution of law and it is central to how individuals relate to one another. Marxist theory maintained that property was a basis of conflict between adversarial classes, most recently, between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

Renner, however, felt that in the century or so since the “bourgeois revolution,” the class structure of European society had changed a great deal, becoming more complicated than Marxism had anticipated and necessitating an innovation in Marxist thought.

The new social structure of Europe in the post-feudal world “puts alongside the capitalist, who owns and functions, the other one who owns but does not function...what is more, it also produces the non-capitalist who exercises capitalist functions, who, therefore, does not own but (who) functions as a capitalist.” (From Renner, *Die Wirtschaftsals Gesamtprozess und die Sozialisierung*.)

Ralf Dahrendorf, the late eminent German-British social philosopher, was a Free Democrat German political leader, head of the London School of Economics, Member of the British House of Lords, and author of the monumental work *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society*.

He studied the thoughts of the young Renner, a man whose career was similar in many ways to his own. He observed that by labeling the controlling manager as a capitalist, Renner had separated successfully class conflict from its Marxian root. Thus, Dahrendorf pointed out, private property and the assertion that a society based on communal property is a classless society lose their traditional meanings. (Ralf Dahrendorf, 1959, p. 84.)

This, I think, informs much of the contemporary analysis of elite leadership and the significant sociological question of “who rules?” in advanced industrial society. In a sense this development has been viewed by an entire succession of theoreticians, from the Industrial Revolution on. Writers from Comte and Saint-Simon to Weber, from Pareto and Mosca to Michels and Schumpeter and Pirenne, form James Burnham to Raymond Aron and T.B. Bottomore, from C. Wright Mills to William Domhoff, to Digby Baltzell and to Suzanne Keller. All have worked in the vineyard that Renner ploughed so productively, enabling analysis of an old query in a reformulated and more productive vein – old wine in a new bottle.
And in many ways, Renner changed permanently the meaning of socialism, certainly for Europe. What, he asked, is socialism? Socialism, in his definition, was “an urgent demand for a human society that acts in freedom and in full consciousness, that creates its norms in complete independence.”

Renner wrote that in modern times what he called “complementary institutions” were displacing “principal institutions.” That is to say, property -- private property -- has been supplemented in the modern era “by complementary institutions which take over its real (I would say, original) functions.” (Renner, p. 295.) Moreover, complementary institutions of public law had forced private institutions of law into the background.

To Renner, “private law,” meant that which is being transformed, addressing thus the ownership of land and movable property, contracts, mortgage and leases, and marriage and succession. By contrast, “public law” referred to that type of law dealing with the organization of the state or of local governmental bodies.

Renner argued that the state is moving ahead to administer and to regulate these new and formerly private areas, so that “new norms are made year by year in increasing numbers in the form of statutes, orders, and instructions of the administrators of the state.” (Renner, p. 297.)

Thus, increasingly, “owners” were being deprived of the technical disposal over their property. Did the owner of a railway station have the right to deny potential passengers access? Or stop trains leaving “his” station for some destination? No. The common will had now, from the point of view of the law, subjected property, and other institutions of private law, to its direct control via the government.

By this analysis Renner shattered Orthodox Marxism’s view of “the real foundation” and “superstructure” and he also departed from traditional Marxist notions of the institutions of private law. The “general will of society” had become the new ruler, taking the place of the "full capitalist" who formerly had prevailed with an iron hand, part of a dominant class in the earlier days of industrial society. Renner argued that the law was gradually becoming objective, following the norms of society as a whole and not of a ruling class. The revolution, therefore, recedes in Karl Renner’s thought into the background, melts away. Rational, objective government -- serving the will of the people -- makes it unnecessary.

"The general will defines the aim for society and thereby for the economy, and all functionaries pass over from the service of a master to the service of the whole.”
So, Renner found that “economic democracy supplements political democracy.” Dahrendorf says that “this, of course, is Rousseau versus Marx -- a contest that produces some fascinating results... from the separation of ownership and control, the extension of citizenship rights and quality, the institutionalization of class conflict, and the emergence of the ‘new’ middle class.”

Renner infers the arising of two large and non-antagonistic social classes: a service class and a working class. As a result, “Renner’s theory of class structure has many traits which appear well compatible with the changed realities of post-capitalist society and which it will therefore be useful to bear in mind.” (p. 95.)

**Renner Also Modified the Ideas of Legal Positivism**

As a lawyer from a poor family born, raised, and trained on the European Continent, Karl Renner was educated in the positivist school of law; he was to become in his adult life also a significant modifier of it. The school of thought known as Legal Positivism developed in eighteenth and early nineteenth century Continental Europe. It was, as Friedman writes in *Legal Theory*, “a jurisprudential reflection of the age of liberal capitalism.” (Friedman, pp. 148-9.)

Legal positivism asserts that there is a logical consistency to the system of laws as a whole. There is one immutable body of legal norms; it exists *sui generis*, constituting what Durkheim would call “a social fact.” It is almost impossible to eliminate social facts. For example: the Roman Catholic Church exists as a social fact, even though no one present at the founding of the church still remains in it. A social fact is like a hotel; people come in and people go out, but the structure remains permanently.

The existence and content of law of course depends on man’s social existence – law is socially constructed *ab initio*. But whether or not a given norm is legally “valid,” and thus whether it forms a legitimate part of the law of that system, depends on its sources, not its merits, said Renner. As a legal positivist, he had to emphasize the stability of legal forms. But he also saw and described the greatly changing economic and social conditions of post-Industrial Revolution Europe, changing much more rapidly than feudal Europe ever had. How to square this circle?

As a legal positivist he could declare the legal norm (of property, for example) continually existing but he could also, in an innovative break, note that this norm existed “indifferent to its social function.” It could, in fact, serve new functions, new purposes.
Renner thus agreed with legal positivism’s basic assertion that the forms of law don’t change, but he concluded that their functions did. Therefore, the economic effect (is) extraneous to the definition of a legal concept. “Institutions such as property, contract succession by inheritance, are ‘neutral, ‘colorless,’ and ‘empty frames.’ They are neither ‘feudal’ nor ‘capitalist’ nor ‘socialist.’ Their juridical analysis cannot teach us anything about their social or economic effect.” (Renner, Introduction, p. 2.)

As the famous nineteenth century English jurist and expert on legal positivism, John Austin, said, “the existence of law is one thing; its merit or demerit is another. Whether it be or be not is one enquiry; whether it be or not be conformable to an assumed standard, is a different enquiry.”

A later British jurist, Oxford’s Professor of Comparative Law, Otto Kahn-Freund, noted in a discussion of the role of legal positivism in Renner's writings that “The absence of major legislative regulations which affected the economic system engendered an atmosphere in which the normative framework of society appeared to be stable and its conceptions fixed.” But then:

“The First World War administered a mortal blow to the conceptual Utopia. The events that followed, inflation and catastrophic unemployment, gave it the coup de grace.”

“The concepts of property and of contract were thrown into the melting pot, when the institutions of private law, like their counterpart, the laissez-faire economy, proved unable to safeguard the life and expansion of society.” (Renner, p. 37.)

Legal positivism did not develop in or dominate the Anglo-Saxon schools of law. Rather, as Max Weber noted in Economy and Society, it was a form of rationalization of the law which, since the rise of Romanist university education, had remained a characteristic of thinking in Central Europe.” (Renner, p. 15. From Weber's Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft, p. 509.)

In Continental law, the thought processes were influenced by natural law and oriented toward a systematic structure of rights and duties. We may say, wrote Renner, that it rested upon general principles. In Anglo-Saxon law, we deal with “a method of argument whose primary preoccupation is with remedies, not with rights; with procedural form, not with juridical substance.” (Renner, p. 15.)

Renner nonetheless modified this Continental legal positivism: While in Anglo-Saxon countries a change in legal norms might occur and then be followed by judges' altering of rigidities in the law to meet the new norms, on the Continent such had not been the case. There was only one answer for legal positivists: legislative relief.
Karl Renner greatly admired the work of the American Supreme Court justice, Oliver Wendell Holmes. Holmes, writing in *The Common Law*, said that the growth of law is logical in form. “The official theory is that each new decision follows syllogistically from existing precedents.... The very considerations which judges most rarely mention, and always with an apology, are the secret roots from which the law draws its juices of life. I mean, of course, considerations of what is expedient for the community concerned.” (From Holmes, pp. 35-36.)

This is Holmes's celebrated “paradox of form and substance in the development of the law” and one which Renner followed.

How did Renner square the second circle, the one between Marxist dogma and legal positivism? How, given all the profound social, economic, and political changes he observed in Europe, could he explain away the fundamental Marxist assertion that it is the economic foundation that is central; law is a mere part of the superstructure that reflects economic reality?

Easy. He argued that there is a time lag between the transformation of the underlying, foundation, the (economic) system, and the development of changes in the law (the superstructure). During the lag “norms which at an earlier period of history may have been a true mirror of social relations, “may cease to be an adequate expression of factual conditions.” Renner concluded that the state should not legislate morality, as we would call it today, for vast changes in the legal system would not bring about revolution in the substructure or in the way we live. To Renner, only evolution could do this.

Marxism is based on a “dialectical” approach to the movement of history, a development built on Hegelian thoughts and methods. This involves the clashing of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. The so-called "dialectical" method that the innovative Marxist Renner said he employed in his analysis, however, was actually based on at least two levels of sophistication.

- First, he utilized the notion of a “factual substratum” and a “normative superstructure.” This for him "probably represents the Marxian method," Dahrendorf drily observed.

- Second, as a legal positivist, he worked with a “discrepancy between the normative content of the law (which is static) and its social and economic function (which is dynamic).” (Renner, p. 7.)
Prof. Kahn-Freund observed that for Renner "the legal institution is (seen as) a rigid abstract … of crystallized imperatives …” and as Renner wrote in his works, there are few disappearances of institutions of law. Legal institutions do not fade away, losing all their functions totally. Rather, they experience a transformation of functions.

This is the heart of Renner’s legal, jurisprudential innovation.

Renner wrote of the impact of economic forces and consequent social changes upon the functions of legal institutions. He asked: How it is possible that a legal institution, for example “property,” can mean the same thing in 1750 as it does in 1900, and yet, in the latter year, it can produce economic and social effects almost opposite to those it did back in 1750?

How can one account for the functional transformation of a norm which remains stable? he asks, in essence. “What, in particular, is the technique used by a developing capitalist society in order to adapt precapitalist and early capitalist legal conceptions to the needs of high capitalism without changing these conceptions themselves?”

“How does society use the institutions of the law, what does it ask of them, how does it group and re-group them? How does it put them to new services without transforming their non-native content? How has property been able to become the legal framework of a capitalist economy?” (Renner, p. 1.)

**Renner’s Reformulation of Continental Law**

Renner started his study of law and its change with history. “It will be our task,” he wrote, “to show that the historical development of the law, and the growth of individual laws and their decay, flows from the disparate development of legal and economic institutions; also, that the change in the social functions of legal institutions takes place in a sphere beyond the reach of the law and eventually necessitates a transformation of the norms of the law.” (Renner, p. 52.)

A legal institution “regulates the factual relationships of living beings and successive generations; it regulates facts which are in a constant state of flux and it is, like law in general, nothing but one aspect of the subject matter which it governs.” (Renner, p. 53.) The special work of legal institutions is “to serve as cogs in the mechanism of the production, consumption and distribution of the social product.”
Yet society and law evolve. Are legal institutions like natural phenomena and subject to the laws of nature? The Western World had experienced the advent of Darwinian science within his lifetime, although I have not read of Renner acknowledging this. But he surely did ask himself, basically, what forms of law were best adapted to the new social environment.

At first, says Renner, we might think that there is an analogy between the laws of nature and the rules of law; the former control the relations among natural objects, the latter regulates the affairs of men. Both seem to operate as superhuman powers. The world “would seem to be divided into a realm of reason and a realm of nature, the first governed by rules of law (side by side with the rules of morality) and the second by laws of science.” (Renner, p. 45.)

Yet, says Renner, when we switch from a discussion of natural to human legal systems, we note that the indicative voice changes to the imperative.

“Every norm in its indicative form assumes a fetish-like character, akin to a law of nature, transcending the individual, superhuman, even divine. If the norm is resolved into imperatives directed to the individual and telling him ‘you ought’ ‘you ought not,’ ‘you may’ ‘you can,’ … it appears immediately less unnatural, though still not acceptable as self-evident.

The analogy between the law of nature and the legal system is now meaningless, for nature knows neither controlling common will, nor an individual will that is controlled.” (Renner, p. 46.)

Renner grandly surveys history. “The ancients usually spoke in direct imperatives when they recorded their norms in stone and metal, on papers and parchment, e.g., the codes of Hammurabi, the Mosaic Decalogue, and the Twelve Tables of Rome.”

“Such imperatives are the elements of the legal order. They are addressed to the individual and claim his obedience. Aiming at the will, they limit or enlarge, break or enhance the individual will and hence confront it as an extraneous will.”

“This relation of will is fundamental to the law; there is no mystery about it, nothing metaphysical, supernatural or divine. From the psychological and physical aspect, the highway robber who attacks the wayfarer in the wood with the alternative command of ‘your money or your life,’ attempts to impose his own will upon that of another person in the same way as the law seeks to impose its own authority, with its instant readiness to apply civil sanctions or with the threat of punishment and criminal sanctions.”
How the authority of another person (the “heteronymous will”) is imposed upon the wishes of an individual (the “autonomous will”) is a matter of common experience.

“There is, however, this mysterious difference: that in modern times all law is laid down, in the name of all the citizens, by the state, conceived as an entity. Instead of one man’s will prevailing over the will of another, the common will is regarded as imposed upon that of the individual. How the common will arises -- for it is clearly not the volonté générale-- is one of the fundamental problems for jurisprudence.” (Renner, p. 47.)

He uses this conundrum to vitiate, attenuate, or simply put, to alter dramatically, the most fundamental Marxist dogma about the “superstructure” within which law resides, and about the movement of history.

As Man Changes, Law Changes

Some formerly felt, however, that legal institutions are given per se, that they remain unchanged, even if man and matter continually undergo change. Renner responds to this Scalia-like “originalist” objection.

At first, the answer seems to be in the affirmative, for “right must always remain right.”

For centuries, the law was considered divine, immutable and constant, like the deity itself. The mere idea that man should engage in an attempt to change the law was considered blasphemous. Even one who came into this world to change the whole order of humanity believed himself in duty bound to say that he had come not to destroy the law but to fulfill it.

For thousands of years all change in the law was carried out in the belief that men had at last arrived at the right interpretation.

The thesis that man can create the law has gradually been accepted, at first in the form of state parliamentarianism within the narrow confines of the various countries.

Today, every school child knows that parliament exists in order to make laws. But we can still not explain satisfactorily how it is possible that parliaments can obtain a right to legislate; if it is accepted that parliament makes all laws by virtue of the constitution, the question remains, who gives them the right to legislate?

Indeed, these are most controversial questions. Parliament exercises its rights to make laws in the name of the community. It is a mere organ, it is argued, through
which society expresses itself. But it is still obscure exactly how society makes its new laws. (Renner, p. 54.)

Renner explains.

“We can only develop a complete theory of the law if we supplement positive, legal analysis with an investigation of the two adjoining provinces, the origin and the social function of the law. These three, together, form the whole of legal science." (Renner, p. 54.)

If legal institutions are not related to the rules of nature and they do not remain rigid over time, to what, then, is their real content related? Legal institutions have a two-fold nature, Renner believes, according to their constituent norms on the one hand, and to their social significance on the other.

“Both can and must be taken into consideration. From the lawyers' point of view legal institutions are norms or imperatives molded into assertions, printed or written on paper, more or less adequately expressed. Their existence compared with that of men of flesh and blood is as insubstantial as that of railway shares compared with the permanent way or rolling stock of a real railway, or that of treasury notes compared with real bars of gold.” (Renner, p. 52.)

Renner argues that social life is complex in character. “It is not so simple that we can grasp it, open it, and reveal its kernel like a nut, by placing it between the two arms of a nutcracker called cause and effect.” (Renner, p. 56.)

The economic and the social functions of legal institutions make up a single process. According to Renner, “a legal institution is a composite of norms. If in the change of economic systems it has remained constant, but its functions have increased, diminished, changed, or disappeared, then we speak of a change in the functions.” (Renner, p. 75.)

For example: “Let us consider the vestals that had to keep the fire ever burning on all the hearths of the community. We may well imagine that as long as they existed, the sum total of the laws relating to them remained unchanged and the relevant norms remained constant. With the discovery of flint and steel, however, all economic functions of the vestals were taken over by a substitute. Here we should be entitled to say that an economic revolution -- the discovery took place in a sphere outside the law -- deprived the legal institution of its social function, made it redundant, and led to its final abolition.” (Renner, p. 75.)

The reverse can be true, as well.
We may imagine that a legal institution retains its function and economic significance, though the norms which make it up have been transformed. Imperatives may have been added, taken away or altered, yet the essence will have remained of what was commanded. This, too, is neither unthinkable nor unhistorical.” (Renner, p. 75.)

We can see in legal development the transformation of the legal norms and thus of the functions. But the function is, nonetheless, necessary for society.

However much the functions of legal institutions may change, no function can remain unfilled permanently without involving the destruction of society itself. If a function is no longer served by one legal institution, another must be substituted for it; there is no vacuum in the legal system.... Legal institutions can, within certain limits, take each other’s place. As a rule, however, new institutions are required. (Renner, p. 76.)

And this is central for comparative law and civilizational studies: “The organic character of the legal order is the fact that the totality of legal institutions existing at a given time must fulfill all general functions. This means that the law is an organized whole determined by the needs of society. Every legal institution, as part of it, is more or less closely related to all others; and it is its function, not the content of its norms, which makes for this connection.” (Renner, p. 76.)

The line of argumentation, I think, is quite like the Functionalist school of American sociology, the articulation of whose elements arose at Harvard and Columbia a half century later.

**Four Theses on Change in a Legal System**

In his sociological analysis of functional change Renner develops four theses on the relationship between law and economics, i.e., societal development. We see how far he has moved Marxist thought from *A Contribution to The Critique of Political Economy* in these four theses.

Renner believes that he has shown -- in his analysis of the legal institution *par excellence*, i.e., property, that “while there have been extensive alterations over a short period of time,” this “drastic transformation” has not been accompanied by “noticeable modifications of its legal structure.” Hence, he generates the first thesis:

**Fundamental changes in society are possible without accompanying alterations of the legal system.** (Renner, p. 252.)
Next, the existence of society depends upon a determined, historically conditioned legal order. This legal order does not cause social change but neither does it prevent changes in the underlying infrastructure, either. The essential character of the social process as preservation and reproduction of the species undergoes continual change while the form of the law is constant.

Thus, the second thesis:

**It is not the law that (usually) causes fundamental economic (or social) development.** (Renner, p. 252.)

Third, Renner argues that we might feel ready to conclude that the legal superstructure is absolutely independent of its economic foundation or that changes in the legal system come from non-economic sources. This is not quite true, Renner argues, and hence the third thesis:

**Economic change does not immediately and automatically bring about changes in the law.** (Renner, p. 253.)

The fourth and final thesis is the basis for much of the theory he later developed more extensively and for which he was so vilified by many orthodox Marxists. Functions of legal institutions, he has shown, change only gradually, and imperceptibly, “like the growth of grass, according to the law of all organic development. Thus, the change of functions can be recognized only at an advanced stage and only by historical comparison. It can be recognized only when it has matured.”

This thesis, then, is:

**Development by leaps and bounds is unknown in the social substratum, which knows only evolution, not revolution.** (Renner, p. 253.)

How very far had mainline, once revolutionary, socialist thought progressed in the near century from Marx to Renner, in the period during which the many peaceful, gradual solutions to the age-old clash of property with labor became evident.

Renner does not believe that the law can, _ipso facto_, command new behavior. Any valid law can be changed, he says, yet it does not itself change society or bring about social evolution. There are external limits to the "efficacy" of norms -- laws can only command people, not nature. Also, laws can be addressed to individuals, not groups. Finally, the law can express its commands only through the instrument of human beings. Law aims at “the control of the organic texture of nature, of the interconnections among men, and between men and matter.” (Renner, p. 256.)
A final example of social change is given. Renner considers the reward to public servants in the early Middle Ages. A vassal then was given an office and land. Later on, in the Middle Ages, trade and money became more important, so salaries were paid. The office became less important and was abolished (i.e., “the nobility”) in the bourgeois revolution. In the course of time the intention of the original norm “is no longer achieved. In fact, the trend of development due to economic laws which are inherent in the substratum is more powerful than the power of the law.” (Renner, p. 259.) So Renner warns against what he calls the “Archimedes law of the Lawyer.” This translates as: “give me the lever of legislation and I shall move the world.” (Renner, p. 259.)

Why? Because legislation cannot totally change reality. In the following sentences it seems like he is directly disabusing Marx of the latter’s dogmatic rigidity.

Even if the dispossessed classes ran a successful revolution today, he argues, tomorrow the same individual would have the actual detention of the goods. Were the state to abolish all private ownership, he says, property would retain all its functions and it would still have the same social effects as private property had generated. “So, the new law would have failed and the faith in legislation would be shattered as an illusion. The agrarian constitution of contemporary Russia is an irrefutable proof of this argument.” (Renner, p. 260.)

Thus, Renner has shown that the functions of the law and of legal institutions have changed quantitatively and qualitatively over time. What is needed now is simply for social scientists to examine the place that legal institutions occupy in society.

Renner writes: “A lawyer may be interested in it during his leisure hours, but he must not allow this interest to intrude upon his work anymore than the botanist as such may be concerned with the economic use to which others put the plants he studies under the microscope.” (Renner, 2.) Questions of the social effect of legal norms transcend the legal structure. However “interesting these social repercussions may be to the lawyer as a sideline, they are the province of the economist and the sociologist.” (Renner, p.248.)

The “job for jurisprudence today is to investigate the political and economic forces which make laws and become norms, i.e., the practical, sociological causes of them.” (Renner, p. 297.)

Renner sums up his work on this matter. “The legal expert who has accompanied us in our observations will have made the surprising discovery that law and economics, though appearing to be indissolubly bound together, if considered as static at any given moment, yet undergo unequal development in the course of history. Contradictions and contrasts emerge, and their mutual relations are seldom reversed.
Thorough examination of the vast field presented by civil law for inductive investigation soon leads to the discovery of common characteristics within this dialectical development. It thus becomes possible to read its laws from these facts.” (Renner, p. 251.)

So what Renner did was to transform increasingly obsolete socialist thought about law into a set of concepts thoroughly acceptable to democratic people – a much more accurate formulation, I think, than both (a) outdated orthodox, rigid Marxian and (b) Andrew Ure-type high capitalist statements about the relations between the economic foundations of society and the legal reflections of them.

He showed that the structure of law is such that countries cannot easily legislate what societies have not yet accepted. The practices generated by society precede the codification legal institutions provide; a social fact, the institutions remain, but just as hotel guests come in and go out, so, too, the service the institutions of law provide changes over time.

In a sense, Renner modernized, vindicated, and legitimated socialism for the West by making it a more true reflection of reality; underlying social causation exists, he argued, and law only reflects that supposed foundational reality. But on the other hand, it is also Marxism stood on its head, because at the level of superstructure legal institutions persist even in spite of changes in the basic underlying, causal foundation (whether it be a Weberian “ideational” or a Marxian “material,” economic one, or both). One might ask: which is foundation and which is superstructure? And does economics really form the basis of history, the pattern and meaning of our times? Or is Max Weber correct – do both “ideas” and “material factors” – plus other considerations – move history? And why must there be a social revolution when evolution will better serve the needs of the entire population?

Renner the politician led his country from monarchy through to a republic based on democratic socialism which would meet the dreams of the people yet be thoroughly compatible with Western democratic ideals; much of Austria's enormous economic success in this post-war era came as a result of his prodigious efforts. Much of the European Union’s success, likewise, arises from this reformulation of democratic social thought.

Not long after the Nazis were finally destroyed, Renner was able to convince all allied occupying powers, both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., to accept Austrian “neutrality” and withdraw from the country, way before this was the case in Germany. So, too, in his intellectual life he led the way from conflict-based Marxist starting points to more widely accepted conclusions; he directed his political theory to the development of classes, now social classes, that would not be antagonistic but instead cooperative; and, finally, he provided a much admired theoretical basis for understanding the changing
nature of law and its relationship to society, offering an advance on the fundamental and rather static assumptions of both Marxism and Legal Positivism.

With good reason, textbooks on law and society rank Renner alongside Durkheim and Maine. This eminent thinker surely is worthy of attention by comparativist scholars in their attempt to understand the complex relationship between law and society both worldwide and through the years since mankind surrendered the hunter/gatherer way of life and adopted civilization.

References


Die Wirtschaft als Gesamtprozess und die Sozialisierung. (Berlin, 1924)


See also, 0. Kahn-Freund, "Intergroup Conflicts and their Settlement," British Journal of Sociology, V, September, 1954.
Kaplan, Robert D., The Revenge of Geography: What the Map Tells Us About Coming Conflicts and the Battle Against Fate Random House, 2012

Reviewed by Laina Farhat-Holzman

It is apparent when one looks at a map of the world that geography matters. The people who live in the oxygen-thin altiplanos (the Himalayas and the Andes) have a different relationship with their natural world than those who live in jungles or deserts. Island natives have a different relationship with the sea than those who have never seen great bodies of water. However, the modern world is divided by man-made boundaries into nation states that, if they have geographic integrity, are easier to govern than those cobbled together out of often-contrasting geographies. We are learning this to our pain in today’s conflicts.

Robert Kaplan, a journalist-historian, has a constitution that permits him to travel, often on foot, across the globe in some of the world’s least savory territories. In one of his books, From the Ends of the Earth, he began a trek from West Africa, living on quinine and bottled Coca Cola, all the way to the borders where China meets Central Asia. He walked, hitched rides from truck drivers, talked to urban cabbies, and asked questions based on his keen curiosity.

This man knows the geography of the earth---on the ground---probably better than any other geographer alive today. His book is a summary of what he has learned from his many treks and voluminous reading. Kaplan is also one of the world’s best geopolitical experts; his suggestions and advice are taken seriously by political and military planners.

In this book, Kaplan demonstrates how geography plays an enormous role in explaining current conflicts, conflicts that those ignorant of history do not recognize as not new at all. Beginning with the great Greek historian and traveler, Herodotus, Kaplan provides us with summaries of the most influential geographers, masters of an art that has somehow declined from its heights in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Kaplan is no geographic determinist. He never claims that geography is the only factor in how human beings organize their lives; there are always powerful individuals, cultures and religions, and the effects of earth-bound events (volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, prolonged droughts, sudden global cooling), and the effects of choices, often bad ones, that human societies make.
However, geography is always there as a backdrop for human history. To ignore it is to make decisions that can doom actions to failure.

**Scholars and Visionaries**

*The Revenge of Geography* reviews in some depth the scholars and visionaries who enriched the scholarship of history with the addition of geography: W. Gordon East (1902-1998); Nicholas J. Spykman, who wrote in the 1940s); John Keegan, who noted that America and Britain could champion freedom only because the sea protected them from the land-bound enemies of liberty; Herodotus, the great geographer of ancient Greece; William H. McNeill; and Marshall G. S. Hodgson, who made geography an important part of history. Hans Morgenthau, a practitioner of geopolitics, defined realism for the present age.

Kaplan’s discipline is the intersection of geography and politics. In its negative state it treats geography as the only determinant of politics. Sir Halford J. Mackinder wrote a single essential article, “The Geographical Pivot of History,” *The Geographical Journal*, London, 1904. His thesis is that Central Asia, forming the Eurasian Heartland, is the pivot on which the fate of great world empires rests. Mackinder’s point is that out of that heartland, traveling both west and east, the grasslands people affected both European and Chinese history. “Man and not nature initiates, but nature in large measure controls.”

Nicholas J. Spykman, who founded the Institute of International Studies at Yale in 1935, said that history is made in the temperate latitudes where moderate climates prevail. Sub-Saharan Africa and the Southern Cone of South America matter today, but they cannot have the effect on world issues that the northern zones have. The Nazis distorted this view to equate racial mental ability with geography.

**Europe**

Kaplan’s book next explores the geographic realities of Europe and explains why the various regions have had such different historic experience. This very elaborate interface between land and water, and the fact that Europe is protected from---and yet accessible to---a vast ocean has led to maritime dynamism and mobility among Europe’s peoples, and contributed to an intense range of landscapes inside Europe itself. Although Europe is a mélange of strikingly different human communities with a history of outbreaks of power politics from antiquity to almost today, Europe is also an idea.

Geography explains much. When the Warsaw Pact broke up, the former captive countries advanced economically and politically almost exactly according to their positions on the map: Poland and the Baltic states, Hungary, and the Bohemian end of Czechoslovakia performed best. Balkan countries did the worst. Despite the Nazi and
Soviet impacts, the legacies of Prussian, Habsburg, and Byzantine and Ottoman rule are still relevant.

**Russia**

Russia is a case in which geography looms very large indeed. Russia comprises a vulnerable landmass that has suffered catastrophic invasions from its very beginnings, leaving its rulers understandably paranoid.

Russia is the world’s preeminent land power, extending 170 degrees of longitude, almost halfway around the globe. Russia’s principal seacoast is in the north, unusable for most of the year. Russia is insecure, as all land powers are. Forever dissatisfied, Russia needs to expand or risk being conquered instead. Russia’s flat expanse has no natural borders and affords no protection.

Russia’s geography is more important than its history. Russia, severely cold, lies north of the 50th parallel (Canada is at the 49th). “Harsh seasonal cycles, a few, distant rivers, and sparse patterns of rainfall and soil fertility controlled the lives of the ordinary peasant; and the ebb and flow of nomadic conquerors often seemed little more than the senseless movement of surface objects on an unchanging and unfriendly sea.” This made for a landscape of anarchy, in which every group was permanently insecure.

**China**

Unlike Russia, which is a giant land power with little access to oceans, China has the Pacific Coast, as well as land access to central Asia. (The US has three oceans.) While Russia lies north of 50 degrees north latitude, China lies to the south of it, as does the U.S. China’s various latitudes equal those of the U.S. (from Maine to the Florida Keys).

In the U.S., rivers run north to south, early opening much of the country in those directions. China’s rivers run west to east. Until the Chinese built a north-south connecting canal, they couldn’t fully develop their country; the canal made it possible. The US east-west transcontinental railroads had a similar effect, an illustration of human effects on geography.

China, a demographic behemoth with the world’s most energetic economy for the past three decades, is, unlike Russia, extending its territorial influence much more through commerce than coercion. They have already extended into Mongolia (both Inner and Outer) in the quest for vast natural resources. The Han population is already moving in and may overwhelm the natives.
China’s next extension lies in the Russian Far East. China will move into that area if it can, and as Russia loses population, this seems inevitable.

**India**

India’s geographical dilemma is that it is a pivot state, a Rimland Power, according to Spykman. Located in the center of the Indian Ocean littoral, it is critical for the seaward penetration of both the Middle East and China. What is essential for the U.S. is to understand India’s highly unstable geopolitics re: Pakistan, Afghanistan, and China.

India has a geographical logic, framed by two seas and by the mountainous Burmese jungles to the east and the Himalayas and Hindu Kush to the north and northwest. India is internally vast, but it lacks a singular nursery of demographic organization (such as the Wei Valley and lower Yellow River in China).

The Ganges does not provide enough of a platform for the expansion of a unified Indian state. India’s various other rivers divide not unite it. The Ganges is Hindi-speaking; the others are not.

We cannot overlook the role of hot tropical climate on ambition and the need for organization of resources, unlike the temperate zones of China and Europe. India has been subject to perennial invasions, much rarer in China, and lacks the cultural unity of China.

**Pakistan**

Pakistan is home to four ethnic groups, mutually hostile: Punjabi, Sindhi, Baluchi, and Pashtun. Islam technically unifies it, but in reality does not. Without the Punjab-dominated army, Pakistan could not exist as a polity. Being Muslim is not enough to keep ethnic hostilities at bay. India has handled such problems better.

India is the birthplace of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism. Zoroastrians, Jews, and Christians also have lived in India for millennia! India accepts this reality and celebrates it; Pakistan does not. This is why India is stable and Pakistan is not.

**Afghanistan**

With a life expectancy of 44 years, literacy rate of 28 percent (much less for women), and with only 20 percent having access to potable water, its urbanization only 30 percent, Afghanistan does not have much going for it. Out of 182 countries, Afghanistan ranks next to last on UN Human Development Index.
Kaplan compares the relative success of our occupation in Iraq and the obvious relative failure in Afghanistan, which has much to do with geography and socio-geography. Afghanistan could disappear from the maps of the future with the Pashtuns having either a country of their own or a larger Pakistan. Then the rest of Afghanistan might return to its roots as eastern Iran.

The Iranian Pivot

William McNeill noted that India, China, and Greece all lay “on the fringes of the ancient civilized world, protected by mountains, deserts, and sheer distance.” They all suffered invasions, but not enough to disrupt their innate cultural character. The invaders were largely horsemen and because they were culturally less developed than the ancient civilizations, they were ultimately absorbed.

In the space between these great civilizations was the parched temperate zone of the Afro-Asian landmass, from North Africa to the margins of western China, the Nile-to-Oxus. But this area has a pivotal influence on each of these civilizations.

The Iranian Plateau has only one country, Iran. 74 million, 2-1/2 times that of Saudi Arabia. Population growth is well under control. Turkey has the same low population growth and a higher literacy and a stable agricultural economy and is more industrialized than Iran. Turkey does not have oil; Iran is No. 3 in the world.

Arab World

The Middle East is characterized by a disorderly and bewildering array of kingdoms, sultanates, theocracies, democracies, and military autocracies. This is one densely packed axis of instability. The region contains 70 percent of the world’s proven oil reserves and 40 percent of its natural gas reserves. These states are prone to pathologies of extremist ideologies, crowd psychology, overlapping missile ranges, and profit-driven mass media. Except for Korea, nuclear proliferation is more of a factor in the Middle East than in any other area. There is also a youth bulge with 65 percent under the age of 30. Between 1995 and 2025, the populations of Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Syria, the West Bank, Gaza, and Yemen will have doubled.

If the Iranian Greens ever take power, Iran, because of its strong state and dynamic idea, would have the means to shift the whole groundwork of the Middle East away from radicalization, thus providing political expression for a new bourgeoisie with middle class values. Despite all its advantages, the suffocating clerical rule of Iran hinders its international progress. Iranian Technicolor has been replaced by grainy black and gray.
If the Shah had not been toppled, Iran could by now be like South Korea. The Shah’s regime was open to reform; the Ayatollahs are not. Iran could indeed become a major empire of sorts, doing good in the world, if the ayatollahs disappear.

Turkey (Former Ottoman Empire)

The Iranian plateau is a major pivot in the Greater Middle East (and is completely one country); the Anatolian land bridge is likewise, and is also completely one country, Turkey. One would have to go from Egypt to the Atlantic to equal in power Iran and Turkey together, with a population of 150 million, more than all 12 of the Arab states.

Both countries are agricultural and industrial, with tech know-how. Both could produce nuclear weapons if they wanted, which the Arabs cannot. Turkey, like Iran, has an enormous cultural influence in the Balkans, the Black Sea coast, Ukraine, southern Russia, the Caucasus, and the Arab Middle East. And it seems stable.

The aggressive energy that characterizes the leaderships of Turkey and Iran has for decades been absent in the Arab world. But as time passes, the geographies of Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Syria, and other countries will reassert themselves. Tunisia and Egypt are ancient clusters of civilizations. Libya and Yemen are but vague geographies, whose statehoods were not established until the 20th century.

Iraq

Iraq has never been left alone. Mesopotamia cuts across one of history’s bloodiest migration routes, pitting man against man and breeding pessimism. Mesopotamia was a constant victim of occupation from as early as the third millennium BCE. From Persia to the Mongols and the Ottomans, Iraq has been a tragic victim. Its geography is also fragmented. The fragility of the social order has always been part of Mesopotamia. Only a ferocious dictator could manage it.

Syria

Geography and history tell us that Syria, population 20 million, will continue to be the epicenter of turbulence in the Arab world. Aleppo in the north is a bazaar city with greater historic links to Mosul and Baghdad than to Damascus. When Damascus is down, Aleppo prospers. Aleppo’s souks are dominated by Kurds, Turks, Circassians, Arab Christians, Armenians, and others. Damascus, however, is the world of Sunni Arabs.
Today Syria is a ghost. After Syria breaks up, there might be a new Alawite mini-state (with part of Lebanon). It will become the target of Islamists (wanting revenge). What could save Syria would be a world of multiple ethnic and religious identities united by commerce, such as Aleppo already has.

A weakened Syria could mean emergence of Beirut as the cultural and economic capital of Greater Syria. But with the Shiites of Lebanon and the Sunnis of Damascus, Greater Syria could become far more unstable.

**America’s Future**

Kaplan believes America pays far too much attention to the Middle East and China and not enough to Mexico, our nearest neighbor. He has long contended that what is south of us is far more important than what is across the world. The only danger comes from ignoring danger from the South (Mexico and South America), as Rome ignored the north, the Germanics.

“Truly, Mexico registers far less in the elite imagination than does Israel or China, or even India. Yet Mexico could affect America’s destiny more than any of these countries.” Mexico, together with the United States and Canada, comprises the most crucial of the continental satellites hovering around Mackinder’s World-Island.

**Conclusion**

Kaplan certainly makes his case that foreign policy must not overlook geography if we are to understand the nature of a country and its geopolitics. We could have avoided some of the mistakes we made in trying to occupy both Iraq and Afghanistan, both terribly different from our occupations of Germany and Japan after World War II. America will also do well to consider his geopolitical advice on not overreaching and not ignoring our need to help Mexico. We need a successful country on our border, which he thinks will eventually result in a country made up of the U.S., Mexico, and Canada.

Kaplan has done what I as a woman could not do: he has walked, hitched rides, traveled on rickety busses, across some of the most uninviting backwaters of the world, suffering only from his malaria medicines and too much bottled Coca Cola. However, he has almost never talked to women in such places. I think Kaplan has been traveling in such places too long: his remarks about Israel appearing sterile and too orderly upon coming there from Jordan reflect the danger of going native. Order and cleanliness are not sins. But Geography still lives.
Charles Trautmann, India: Brief History of A Civilization
Oxford University Press, 2011

Reviewed by John Grayzel

Charles Trautmann’s _India: Brief History of A Civilization_, is a relatively short (223 modest-sized pages) book that succinctly presents a chronological account of Indian history from the first appearance of urban civilization in the Indus Valley through the creation of the modern nation of India. It is written with clarity and a clear logical flow of events. Trautmann’s background as both a historian and anthropologist is reflected in his smooth weaving of historical occurrence with accompanying commentary on the social and religious beliefs and practices of the different times, places and groups. There is a small number of accompanying black and white illustrations of maps, items and persons that give a minimalistic visual awareness of the subject matter under discussion. Though few in number, they are important, as the book is particularly suited as a text for those knowing little or nothing about Indian history.

All in all, it is an appealing introductory text and could deservedly find a significant place as not only an introduction to, but also a reference for, a larger course. Since Trautmann says he specifically wrote the book for his students in an introductory course this is not surprising and he has largely succeeded in what he set out to do. There is nothing startling, no grand theory, and no controversial claims, only a clear presentation of distilled and well-connected information.

There are, however, two significant gaps in the work. The first is the absence of significant discussion of Dravidian culture _per se_ and its ongoing impact on the larger Indian “Hindu” civilization. This is surprising since Trautmann has written on the Dravidians, so it must be presumed he is well informed as to the past and present importance of the presently over 225 million Dravidian speakers stretching from the South of India into Pakistan and across to Sri Lanka and to the West into the present State of Maharashtra. That he so neglects them and starts with the Indus Valley mainly as a background to the invading Aryans, Turks, Mughals, Hun, and Europeans, follows the pattern of classic Indian studies that has long personified the adage that it is the victors who write history.

In fact, Trautmann’s account brought to my mind a long forgotten book by the well-known Indian writer Nirad Chaudhuri, _The Continent of Circe_. In that work Chaudhuri, in a rather severe fashion reminiscent of V.S. Naipaul’s _India: a Wounded Civilization_, basically looks upon India as a wastebasket filled by successive European invaders who, like Ulysses’ sailors lured by the call of the sorceress Circe onto her island only to be subsequently transformed into pigs, were attracted by the Indian sub-continent only to be turned into degenerates by the realities of its environment. Chaudhuri, who can’t find enough nasty to say about almost everyone, is far more entertaining but far less...

https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/ccr/vol70/iss70/15
consistent and credible than Trautmann, and one would be warned not to take too seriously everything he says. His work is anything but an appropriate introduction to India, yet it has one thing Trautmann lacks – a true flavor of India. And it is here that one must question the appropriateness of Trautmann’s title: A Short History of Indian Civilization.

Trautmann gives two definitions of civilization, one a “quality” of a group, the other “a way of life.” What Trautmann’s book provides is a chronology of events accompanied by selective insights into the concurrent “ways of life.” What he almost entirely neglects is the qualitative aspect that really gives each civilization its uniqueness.

To cite just one example: Trautmann briefly describes the Hindu Kingdom of Vijayanagara. Vijayanagara existed for several centuries in South Central India and was an important military power and a center of trade between the Portuguese and Tamil India to the east. However, every empire and every civilization has trade, rulers, war, religion and an economy. Neither these elements nor how they unfold are its civilization. Its civilization is as much a matter of “flavor” as “facts”. Thus Vijayanagara’s capital is today known as Hampi and is a UNESCO World Heritage site. Its preservation is unique, as the Kingdom was betrayed and the capital deserted in a day, and its ruins remain frozen in time. If you look down upon them from the surrounding mountains you see magnificently planned expanses with buildings made of the surrounding stones in an array of structures that seem to emerge from their immediate geomorphic surrounding. If you descend into the remains you can sense the dynamic that must have been “Vijayanagara” life as you view the stretch of structures, markets, palaces, temples, strung as beads on parallel pulsating cords.

In fact, if you go to the main temple and hit one of its mighty columns it produces a clear vibrating note. Then you discover each column produces a note different from the others. Suddenly you realize that the entire structure is actually a musical instrument. You suddenly realize the building is actually a polyphone. You wonder what type of civilization would produce so extraordinary an instrument? The answer that springs to mind is: “only Indian civilization.”

So it is with Indian civilization past and present. It is a civilization of the senses: sights, sounds and colors. Colors, like the spectrum of people that run through streets during Holi all tinted fluorescently from dyes that have been thrown at each other; or like the weave of its saris, the music of its sitars, the hours of speculation of its philosophers, the pungent aromas and spices of its food. These, far more than its history, are what makes something Indian, rather than French or Chinese or Polynesian, and these are what Trautmann unfortunately neglects.
One cannot understand Indian civilization solely as a monochrome. You understand more of the deep essence of Indian civilizations watching the finger motions of Balinese dancers or the story of the Ramayana as portrayed by Javanese shadow puppets than by looking at a map with names of political entities on the Indian sub-continent or pictures of assorted historic figures.

Exactly why Trautmann so ignores the aesthetic of India is a mystery. One might surmise it was from a desire to keep his work short but this isn’t the case. In fact, I was originally attracted to the book to see how anyone could write a history of Indian Civilization in so few pages. Yet Trautmann finds pages of space to write extensively of Islamic history, not only in India, but also in Arabia. Thus, he finds space to give a miniature exposé on the chronology and trajectory of the Middle East from the time of Mohammed through the Abbasid dynasty. All interesting details, but all largely irrelevant to Indian civilization.

In the end what Trautmann has written is a fine short introduction to North and Central Indian History from the Indus valley civilization to the present. It is an admirable work for that purpose. At the same time, it is not an introduction to Indian civilization as a civilization nor to all that has been the wonder of that civilization, from before the Aryans to the present, let alone the possible emerging future. Trautmann presents the outline of the rainbow of India but the work itself is a little too monochromatic to deliver on everything the title promises.
James DeMeo, Saharasia,
The 4000 BCE Origins of Child Abuse, Sex-Repression, Warfare and Social Violence in the Deserts of the Old World,
Revised Second Edition
Natural Energy Works, 2011

Reviewed by Laina Farhat-Holzman

This book is a brave attempt to do a big-picture study of human history that addresses a question: do the violent, oppressive cultures that stretch in a belt from North Africa through the deserts of Central Asia derive from a drastic climate change? This is a geographer’s question, and DeMeo is a geographer. He proposes that a great climate change that we know happened, the great desiccation of 4,000 years ago that came with a returned Ice Age, created havoc for the human societies living in that swath of the earth.

We already know that the Arabian Peninsula was once a great watered grassland with rivers and teeming with game; we know that the Sahara Desert was an inland sea, and we know that what would be today’s Asia Minor, Persia, and Afghanistan were forested. Central Asia was a vast grassland that was host to herds of wild horses. People who live in such fruitful places are not in a daily struggle for survival.

What happens to the societies that had been living in such lands of plenty when almost overnight (in geological terms) these regions become desiccated, setting communities fleeing for their lives? Could such a thing have happened and could this be responsible for some of the most oppressive human societies ever devised, even today?

In the 1950s, a psychiatrist, Immanuel Velikovsky, tracked ancient mythology around the world and controversially proposed that the earth had experienced an enormous astronomical cataclysm (a near collision with Venus) that left us forever traumatized. Velikovsky’s work is fascinating but as yet not accepted scholarship because there is no solid proof for his idea of a “collective unconscious.” DeMeo is also an outlier in the world of academic scholarship, but his huge book, now further enlarged with new archeological findings, is provocative, and he provides a continuing stream of new findings about the prehistoric world.

Deserts are not a comfortable habitat for human beings. Tribes must keep on the move to find food and water, and they are in constant conflict with other tribes, fighting over these scarce resources. Life under such duress requires the fierceness of male unquestioned leadership. These societies are harsh and uncompromisingly nasty, as we see today in this same great desert crescent.
The most provocative argument in DeMeo’s work is that before the great desiccation, human beings lived in more humane groupings, often led by women; that they were more egalitarian; and that they were more sexually permissive. This is an idea that has great currency today within feminist groups, and while it may be true, there is no evidence that such matriarchal groups were always so benign. Anthropologist Margaret Mead was deceived by Samoans into believing this, although it was not true. Polynesian society was not benign.

DeMeo is correct that the societies living in the great deserts today have customs and behaviors that are among the worst of all human arrangements. They are authoritarian, male dominated, belligerent, wedded to vengeance, violently suppressing of women, child abusing, and practitioners of violent surgical practices inflicted on children of both sexes. (Think of Tribal Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Chad as examples of the worst.)

DeMeo notes that this testosterone-poisoned desert culture had an effect throughout the world, particularly in the treatment of women and children. But nowhere was it ever as severe as in the desert regions, and nowhere else has it remained as resistant to any remedy.

It is difficult for us to look into the distant past and see exactly how it was. We often romanticize or demonize the past, but perhaps as we understand better the flood of current archeology, we might find some important answers to why some cultures have chosen the paths that they have.
For many in the West, Central Asia is a relatively unknown region. What are the boundaries? Who lives there? What is its history? These are questions Peter Golden attempts to answer in this book. Although little is known about this area, it has played a significant role in the world’s history because of its position as a crossroads of trade, migration and conquest. For millennia it has been a bridge between East and West, between China, India, Iran and the Mediterranean lands. In modern times, Russia has greatly influenced Central Asia. It is the meeting ground of many religions - shamans, Buddhists, Zoroastrians, Jews, Christians, and Muslims, among others - as well as multiple languages and peoples that over time created an ethnic mosaic. Its shifting racial, linguistic, political and cultural borders encompassed two interacting yet fundamentally different life ways, each inhabiting different ecological niches: the settled folk of its oases and the nomads of the steppes.

The title of the introduction, “A Layering of Peoples”, provides the theme of the book. The history of Central Asia is complex. Two quotes from the introduction present the enormity of the project to write the area’s history. “Historically, Central Asians had no all-embracing term for the region or its peoples. The ties of clan, tribe, status, locale or religion were the primary components of Central Asian identities, and these were often multi-layered. For its large nomadic population, political delimitations were of little consequence. Control over people brought control over territory” (1). “As the history of Central Asia amply demonstrates, medieval and modern ‘peoples’ are often the product of many ethnic and linguistic layers mixed over time and brought together with no small measure of political calculation, especially in modern times” (7).

Central Asia occupies approximately one-seventh of Earth’s landmass, some eight million square miles. Today, Central Asia covers the land from the Caspian Sea on the west and extending into some parts of Mongolia and China on the east and from Kazakhstan on the north to the borders of Iran and Afghanistan on the south. The author covers the entire history from when people first moved into the Central Asian area (about 40,000 years ago during the ice age) to the present time, all the ethnic and religious groups involved, and the continuous flux of migrations. It is a massive area and timeframe to cover, hence a great challenge for the author. For those not too familiar with the region, the writing is a little difficult to follow because Golden seems to jump back and forth some, although the book is essentially organized chronologically. In sum, however, Golden does an admirable job of writing from both a global and local perspective.
Golden’s book is a volume in The New Oxford World History series, which is divided into three categories: chronological volumes, thematic and topical volumes, and geographical volumes. This book is in the geographical section along with eight other works, some of which also refer to the Central Asia area. This new series is intended to “offer readers an informed, lively, up-to-date history of the world and its people” that is comprehensive, and “emphasizes connectedness and interactions of all kinds – cultural, economic, political, religious and social - involving peoples, places, and processes.” So the series “presents local histories in a global context and gives an overview of world events seen through the eyes of ordinary people.” (Editor’s preface)

The author, Peter Golden, is an obvious expert on the topic. He is a Professor Emeritus of History, Turkish, and Middle Eastern Studies at Rutgers University. He also served as Director of the Middle Eastern Studies Program from 2008-2011. He earned both his Master’s and Ph.D. at Columbia University. Golden is the author of a wide array of books, book chapters, articles and book reviews on Turkic and Central Asian Studies.

Much of what we know about the area of Central Asia comes from archaeological excavations and accounts from settled societies who recorded not only their own activities but also the primitive way of life of the nomads. Chapter one provides an explanation for the evolution of pastoral nomadism and its adoption of low and high technology as circumstances required. The domestication of the horse was a turning point for the nomads. Horses were used for food, their hides were used for clothing and dwellings, and their strength was harnessed for carrying burdens. Another stage of development came with the invention of the compound bow, which revolutionized warfare of the steppe. The nomads were organized into clans, tribes, and sometimes confederations as peoples moved, merged and conquered others. Warfare became their business, a topic discussed at length in chapter two. As commerce and trade developed, a few cities arose, especially along the Silk Road that crossed the Central Asian region. Products flowed across the steppes from east to west and back to the east, with cities along the route later contributing goods themselves.

Chapter two emphasizes the third-century emergence of a new power on the Mongolian steppe, the Xiongnu, and the Chinese response. The Han rulers of China were aggressive toward their northern neighbors. They initiated the construction of the Great Wall and established an era of Han-Xiongnu conflict and diplomacy. China not only traded across the region but also began its own western expansion. To its west, two nomadic powers emerged with important global consequences--the Kushan Empire (derived from the Yuehchi nomads who conquered the Graeco-Bactrian state) and the Huns. The Kushans promoted Buddhism, which subsequently spread across Central Asia into China, while the Huns advanced toward Europe, pushing back the Germanic tribes. Later, Turkic groupings came into the steppe where they joined with other tribes to finally form a new tribal union (33).
Chapter three speaks of the Turks and their successors. It is a time of much violence and conquest; many groups came and went or merged, producing a variety of ethnic and religious groups. Following the fall of the Xiongnu and the Han dynasty of China, the Turkic nomads built new states that stretched from Manchuria to the Black Sea. Although they adopted sedentary administrative structures and were empowered by the silk trade, pastoral nomadism remained important to the Turkish economy and horsepower remained the key to their military might (43). While Turkish armies controlled trade routes, the Sogdians, who were vassals of the Turks, served as middlemen, buying, selling and moving the goods.

Chapters four and five discuss the significance of the silk trade in Central Asia and the arrival of Islam. The focus is on the social and cultural history of the region as it is transformed once again with new peoples, religions, and languages alongside the old. Islam accompanied the Arab wars of conquest in the seventh and eighth centuries, meeting with Buddhism, Nestorian Christianity, and shamanism. Following the collapse of the Turkic Empire, waves of Turks migrated westward to the borders of Irano-Islamic Transoxiana where many became military slaves of the Abbasid caliphs in Baghdad. By the mid-eleventh century, the Seljuk Turks, who had embraced Islam, overthrew their Abbasid overlords and “formed the ethnic building blocks of the Turkic peoples of modern Central Asia” (63).

Chapter six covers once again the story of nomadic steppe tribes joining forces to establish dominance over both settled and pastoral Central Asia with the climax of the “Mongol Whirlwind”. The Mongols swept across the region from the east, conquering and “uniting” various tribes, which at first produced considerable destruction but then led to a space where peaceful intercultural exchange could flourish. Mongols not only facilitated and were active in the great cross-cultural highway but they also acted as filters in the wider exchange process. Chapter seven highlights the preeminence of the Turkic language and Islam in Central Asia, and depicts Tamerlane (Timur-the-lame) as “the last of the trans-Eurasian great nomadic conquerors” (95).

In the early sixteenth century, Central Asians found themselves increasingly wedged between competing empires on their borders. The nomads, who had relied on their skills in horsemanship, archery, and military strategy for mastery in warfare, could not compete against the new “gunpowder empires” that surrounded them. The Ottomans built a Near Eastern empire, the Safavids conquered Iran and made Shiite Islam its state religion, and the Uzbeks transformed Transoxiana into Uzbekistan. Russia advanced into the regions on both the west and east sides, and the Manchus advanced into Mongolia, Siberia, and the borderlands of Muslim Central Asia, eventually dominating the region. New maritime trade routes affected trade in Central Asia in that the types of commodities changed from luxury goods to agricultural products (along with slaves and horses), and the routes shifted from east to west to north to south.
Central Asia ultimately became a Russian link to China. Cultural stagnation accompanied political fragmentation, and Central Asia, once the great center of Islamic learning, became increasingly caught up in tradition and rigid legalism (115).

The last chapter, titled “The Problems of Modernity,” discusses the change brought to Central Asia through Russia’s mass colonization with agriculturalists and its policy to create artificial “nationalities” in their republics. In the 1930s, the Soviets completely transformed Central Asian society through collectivization and sedentarization, killing millions in the process. Although liberated from Soviet rule the new countries of today struggle with ethnic unrest, pollution, economic hardship, and the attempt to establish stable governments. China took over the Uighur area with a claim that it is an ancient possession of China and, like the Soviets, instituted mass migrations, but separatist movements continue in the area today.

Golden’s book features various aids for the reader including a pronunciation guide, a chronology, notes, further readings, websites, acknowledgements, and a good index. Maps are scattered throughout the book and are helpful, but even more maps would clarify visually what the author presents in writing. The pictures and photos are interesting and add to the text. One suggestion is to include a glossary, because there are so many names of places, people, and groups that are scattered throughout that, rather than try to find the term’s previous use, it would be valuable to have a glossary for reference.

There are other books on Central Asia but probably none so comprehensive in time frame, territory or topics. Rather than a conventional national history, Golden places Central Asia into its appropriate historical context as a region of shifting ethnic, linguistic, political and cultural borders. The subject matter of this work is immense and Golden has done a remarkable job in explaining the “layering of peoples” including the tribes, life ways, religions, languages, and movements. He places the entire history of this vast area in a global context. This is a highly scholarly and valuable book for those who wish to learn more about Central Asia.

Note: Some of the text in the paragraphs summarizing chapter content is based on a review of the book by Mary Jane Maxwell in World History Connected, vol. 9, no. 1, Feb. 2012.
William F. McCants,  
Founding Gods, Inventing Nations: Conquest and Culture Myth from Antiquity to Islam  

Reviewed by Tseggai Isaac

William F. McCants’ book is a solid scholarly work. It integrates theological, philosophical, mythological and scientific sources to recount the development of “culture myth” driven by political, religious, and military interactions in the Near East.

The book is small, but it is hard-hitting, rich in details and based on an encyclopedic knowledge of what the author calls “culture myth.” Culture myth is defined as “the origin of arts and sciences.” The author defines arts and sciences as “the disciplines that are learned, that alter humanity’s relationship with nature, and that are commonly associated with complex urban societies” (pp. 3-4). The key components of arts and sciences are philosophy, medicine, and the “exact sciences.” Their utilitarian and aesthetic values constitute elements of civilization, expressed in “carpentry tools, cities, clothing manufacture, farming practices, government, metallurgy, weaponry, musical instruments, religious practices, medicine and astronomy, sports, and transportation.” All had their origin in what the author categorizes as “human inventors” and “divine benefactors.” Collectively they are the foundation of human wisdom and civilization.

The author’s approach to his topic can be analyzed from the perspective of two concepts that he introduces: Protography and its Arabic meaning, Awail. The author defines “Protography” to mean “writing about firsts.” He gives its Arabic rendition as await, meaning the first inscriptions and documents of historical records.

The geographical focus of the study is civilization in the context of its origin in Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Iranian, Greece, and Hebrew traditions. Protographical material explains the pre-Islamic civilizations via the supporting documents McCants deploys. Awail refers specifically to protographical documents written by Iranian and Arab scholars to address the founding of Islamic Civilization.

The emergence of Islamic civilization necessitated identifying the “founding” of the Near Eastern civilization and the antecedent civilizations that had influenced them. Who can be credited with “founding” their divine origin and “inventing” their political formation as nations and empires of dominant stature? McCants answers this question in five well-documented chapters.

The introduction gives highlights and summarizes the evolution of civilizations. The time period is the first three hundred years after rule by the Greeks and Romans over the Near East. The beginning of wisdom is to be found in the “myths” and cultural
“lore” believed by societies to be authentic. The sources from which the author generates his data and references are the myths that provide the ancient narrative of each of these civilizations. “The Mesopotamian myth survived in poems and medicinal texts inscribed in clay tablets, Egyptian myth in paintings and inscriptions adorning funerary structures and other monuments, and Iranian myths in oral traditions” (p. 11).

Chapter 1 (“Gifts of the Gods: The Origins of Civilization in Ancient Near Eastern and Greek Mythology”) discusses stories of civilizations as gifts from gods to mankind. The ancient Mesopotamians, the Egyptians, the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans and the Arabs each had their own myths and cultural beliefs they believed to be uniquely their own, given by their specific gods, who communicated the knowledge to humans. However, when their records and “protographical material” are studied, what each group had considered as theirs alone can be found instead to have been embedded as elements of previous civilizations.

Chapter 2 (“The Beneficent Sky God: Cultural History in the Qur’an”) addresses the prominent role of spirituality in the Quran.

The protographical sources state that the development of “exact science” is contested by the Egyptians, the Mesopotamians, the Persians and the Greeks. Chapter 3 (“Who was First?”) discusses the debate and, in general, credits the Egyptians with origin of numerous discoveries that evolved to become the basis for exact sciences. The Mesopotamians are equally credited with their own vast creativity. The Greeks, the Romans, and the Persians each recount their claim to validate the rich overflow of their specific civilizations, after acknowledging their debt to Hermes, Noah’s grandson from Mesopotamia.

The answer to the question "Who was First?" occurs to Herodotus during his visit to Egypt in 430 BC.

During his trip, he (Herodotus) noticed a number of Egyptian religious practices and beliefs that were similar to those in Greece. He concluded that Greece must have borrowed these from the Egyptians, a conclusion encouraged by the native priests he spoke with (p. 61).

Chapter 4 (“Inventing Nations: Post-conquest Native History of Civilization’s Origins”) is devoted to the ways in which ancient Persian and Greek scholars imparted nationalist spins to their accounts of civilizations.

Chapter 5 (“'The Sciences of the Ancients'”) discusses the Arab civilization and its equivocal position between faith and a secular outlook. The early Arabs are reticent about attributing knowledge and science to mankind. Instead, they argue that the *awail* (primary knowledge) came from Allah as a gift to man through the words of the Quran.
This is similar to the Hebrew and Christian view of sciences, which the Muslims inherited, except that the Muslims also added a heavy dose of local lore and mythology to form the totality of Islamic Civilization. The *await* sources provide a mixed reformatory-and-revolutionary history of Islam.

The “all beneficent Allah” is the giver of all knowledge, but that cannot be translated into material facts articulated in the tangible and visible realities of the Arabian Peninsula where Islam was founded. The Arabs’ gift to the world of civilization is Islam in its orthodox form, unadulterated by the worldly rationalizations of sciences.

The author explains the scientific illiteracy of classical Islam as follows:

The Greeks and the Romans came to the Middle East with learned high culture and the native elites contested it, adapted it or modified it. But the conquering Arabs had no comparable learned culture; consequently, the conquerors and the conquered argued over the next three centuries about the content of not only ‘Islamic’ identity, but also ‘Arab’ identity and scholarship.

As this book demonstrates, the orientation of early Islamic culture was not fixed toward Arabia, and its content drew as much from pagan learning and mythology as it did from religious scriptures. What we know today as Islamic culture is the product of a contested process of self-legitimizaiton in the first three centuries of Islamic era – a process reflected in the mythmaking of the period and whose protagonists drew heavily on the lore of non-Arab and pagan antiquity.” (p. 2)

When the Arabs stormed the Near East and brought their religion, how did they adapt to the civilization that had existed before their arrival? The Arabs were conflicted between religious orthodoxy in the dictates of the Quran and endorsing science as defined by those societies on whose lands they settled through conquest.

Before the Islamic conquest, the Persians claimed their civilization was given to the Persian people. The Persians perceived themselves as qualitatively gifted, ordained to create, facilitate, and administer governmental systems in accord with heavenly order.

The Hebrews claimed that arts and sciences were given to man, the embodiment of God. Ever since Adam was driven out of the Garden of Eden, man was commanded by God to make his living by the sweat of his brow. In his efforts to till the earth, Adam and his descendants adapted the culture of tool making and crafting of instruments to harness the earth and its bounties. Christians, who were also Jews at the beginning of the foundation of Christianity, accepted the Jewish view of science and God.
The pre-Abbasid Arabs remained conservative traditionalists with deep skepticism about non-Islamic ideas. Their conquest of vast lands and ancient civilizations exposed them to cultural and civilizational practices without which they could not maintain their empire. The conquerors divided into two camps over the origin of philosophy, medicine and the exact sciences. Those who had unflinching dedication to the Arabian founding fathers could not be reconciled to culture myths based outside the Quran. By contrast, the Abbasid Dynasties incorporated Persian, Greek and Christian methods of rationality and attempted to harmonize Islam with culture myths rooted in science. The Abbasid Dynasties were positioned in the heart of a cosmopolitan culture that had fostered an environment of enlightenment, intellectual and scientific activity.

The Abbasids succeeded in accomplishing a fusion of Persian and Byzantine exact sciences and sciences of governance. They were thus able to reconcile the sacred and the secular bases of science. “The new dynasty, the Abbasids, styled themselves as model Iranian kings, and since being a good Iranian king meant supporting the translation of scientific texts, they patronized the translation of Greek scientific texts into Arabic (p.120). Abbasid efforts paid off, creating an Islamic Civilization that could articulate its own awaits.

Even though McCants’ book is about the emergence of ancient and classical civilizations, its research focuses strongly on Islamic Civilization, drawing heavily upon ancient Islamized Persian philosophers at the Abbasid court. The author elaborates the extent to which Islamic Arabs contributed to Islamic Civilization and the degree to which Islamic Civilization owes its civilizational material to other civilizations before it. Islam, being the last of the revealed faiths, inherited culture myths from the rest.

However, Islam faced the dilemma of acquisition, incorporation, and rejection. To accept culture myths that were not based on the Quran represented heresy. To reject rational science was also a point of concern with respect to faith and secularism. For this reason, Islam was unable to solve the dilemma until the Iranians abandoned their stellar civilization based on their ancestors and accepted Islam in its Bedouin garb, modified it at the Abbasid Court, and attempted to become its champions, with little success. They paid dearly for conforming to the faith of their enemies, the Sunnis, by jettisoning the far superior civilization of their forefathers.

The answer to the author’s question: “Who was first?” is an unsettled debate. It depends upon whether a Greek, a Roman, or an Islamic scholar is the oracle, showing intellectual and scholarly confidence and loudly claiming the superiority or predominance of his or her civilization.
What appears to be conclusive is the repeated consensus among Greek, Persian, and Abbasid scholars and philosophers to give deference and preference to Egypt as a primary founder and giver of the social and “exact” sciences.

As for the mathematical sciences, classical Greek authors after Aeschylus believed these originated in the Near East, mainly in Egypt. Aristotle, echoing Isocrates, claimed all of them originated in Egypt because the priestly class there was allowed the leisure to pursue them. Herodotus believed that geometry developed out of Egypt land surveying; later authors were only split on whether it was Thales or Pythagoras who had brought it to Greece (p.124).

*Founding Gods, Inventing Nations* is solid scholarly work that will serve as a useful source for research and study. Its detailed footnotes include Arabic, German, and Latin sources, providing added value to scholars with eclectic interests on the “founding” of civilizations.
Can Collective Wisdom Save Civilization?

Jonathan Lear, in his book *Radical Hope* (2006), wrote:

“We live in an age of deep and profound angst that the world itself, as we know it, is vulnerable and could break down...We are confronted with global warming, nuclear conflagration, weapons of mass destruction...and even the demise of civilization itself...events around the world – terrorist attacks, violent social upheavals...have left us with an uncanny sense of menace. We seem to be aware of a shared vulnerability that we cannot name.” (p. 7)

What is the way out of this deep sense of contemporary crisis?

What exactly is “wisdom” and how can wisdom be promoted on a global level to deal with a number of serious crises now facing the future of civilization?

What have been some different definitions of wisdom? This is an ancient topic, but how can it be specifically applied today?

What, if anything, can be done to solve these problems collectively?

Some applications may be (but are not limited to) the following questions:

- What exactly is human nature and how is this relevant to civilizational futures?
- What are some possible solutions to overpopulation and the related problems of over-industrialization, resource-depletion and environmental degradation?
- What are some possible solutions to the problem of inequality, economic and otherwise?
- Why do a few have so much while so many have so little? Do rich nations have any responsibilities to the poor ones?
• Is capitalism really working today? What did the “occupy” movements signify? Why are many Western economies currently floundering?
• How have technological advances (especially increasing automation) contributed to the current jobs crisis?
• Does material accumulation really bring happiness? Why/why not?
• Is humankind naturally prone to conflict or cooperation? How are organizations like the United Nations faring with regard to international responses to regional problems?
• What is a Utopia? Dystopia? How are these terms relevant today? What roles do utopias and dystopias play for the future of society?
• Have our leaders run out of inspiration? Is fear now the main rhetoric?

In the 20th century, humanity saw the rise of several grand ideologies: communism, fascism, liberalism, etc. We also saw the dismantling of many of the institutions built on these grand visions. Have today’s leaders given up on grand visions? Is narrow self-interest and small scaled-down retraction now the trend? If so, what are the implications of this? Is this ‘realpolitik’ or just the politics of disillusionment?

And of course, papers concerning all questions relevant to civilizational studies are also welcome!

These could include:

• Studies of great civilizationalists, e.g., Spengler, Toynbee, Sorokin, Quigley, etc.
• Analyses of particular civilizations and/or comparative studies of civilizations.
• Decline and progress of civilizations.

Please send abstracts via email by May 1, 2014 (300 words) to:

Prof. David J. Rosner
Metropolitan College of New York
ISCSC President and 2014 Program Chair
drosner@mcny.edu
Membership Information

If you are not a member if the ISCSC please consider joining. For a $50 yearly membership fee members receive a one year subscription to this journal, are invited to attend the annual conference, receive the ISCSC Newsletter, and may participate in ongoing dialogues. Membership is open to all interested in civilizations. Visit www.wmich.edu/iscsc for further information and to join the Society.

To Obtain Issues of This Journal

Soft cover issues of this journal may be purchased from Amazon.com, bn.com or from other Internet booksellers. CD and other electronic copies of this issue may be obtained from the H.W. Wilson web site at www.hwwilson.com or the ProQuest website at www.proquest.com. Coming soon to EBSCO Electronic Journals Service.

This issue, and all previous issues, may be accessed, searched by keyword or topic, and read at the following web URL:
https://ojs.lib.byu.edu/spc/index.php/CCR.

We thank the Brigham Young University for providing this service for free to all who are interested in the topics our journal covers.

Upcoming 2014 ISCSC Conference

The 44th Annual Meeting of the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilization will take place June 11 to June 14 at Monmouth University, West Long Branch, New Jersey. The major topic this year will be: “Can Collective Wisdom Save Civilization?”

Please see conference information and the Call for Papers on Pages 127 to 128.