10-1-2004

The Middle Eastern World Picture

David Richardson
paulykdb@cs.com

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/ccr

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/ccr/vol51/iss51/5

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the All Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Comparative Civilizations Review by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.
THE MIDDLE EASTERN WORLD PICTURE

DAVID RICHARDSON, CHARLOTTE NC
PAULYKDB@CS.COM

"I have met one genius—my math professor in middle school. She taught me that logic and imagination should not be conceived as opposites, and what I personally would like to do is to apply a lot of logic to the study of the products of the imagination."


C. G. Jung's ideas center around the understanding that a symbol loses its symbolic power when it is 'attached' to a static meaning. The attached, and therefore static meaning renders an amorphous symbol (like the sphere or the ourobouros) to a mere definition; no longer does it have the ability to be active in the mind as a "transformer of consciousness," free to associate with new experiences and thinking. "Symbolic power" transcends and permeates through all conscious thinking.

...It is important to state that Jung seemed to often see his work as not a complete psychology in itself but as his unique contribution to the field of psychology. Jung claimed late in his career that only for about a third of his patients did he use "Jungian analysis." For another third, Freudian analysis seemed to best suit the patient's needs and for the final third Adlerian analysis was most appropriate.


Nothing is harder to surmount than a corpus of true but too special knowledge; to reforge the traditions of his forebears is the greatest originality a man can have.

--------Clifford A. Truesdell, Mathematical Reviews 12, p. 361.

It is joining logic and imagination that particularly challenged Wilhelm Dilthey at the end of the 19th century in his search for the secret of civilizational Weltbilder, or World Building, for the latter seemed to be very non-logical. Dilthey approached history by the direct experience of Einfühlung, or empathy. Generally speaking, it is a type of sympathy, except it is rarely a pity for another's misfortune and, in fact, is usually an empathy directed toward a non-human object such as a singing lark, a weeping willow, or the tree-covered brow of a mountain.
David Richardson

Dilthey also interpreted history in terms of worldviews of civilizations. He realized, however, that to know a worldview would not disclose history's outcome.

Both he and psychologist C.G. Jung were greatly interested in world pictures. They were aware that tremendous differences exist between the civilizations of such places as the Middle East, China, and India and that of the West. Yet, neither of them believed that the nature of a world picture (Weltanschauung) is capable of being rationally studied.

Carl Gustav Jung knew that Weltanschauung, as Dilthey defined it (in general descriptive terms) is inadequate. Yet worldview, in Jung's, as in Dilthey's opinion, belongs to consciousness rather than to unconsciousness. He added, therefore, a favorite word, "attitude," to depict an element of uniqueness. Dilthey, though, thought of worldview generically, in terms of a "mathematical," or a "metaphysical," or "scientific," or an "ethnic" worldview, something corresponding to a Platonic or Aristotelian form. For though it is a more or less delimited set of descriptive ideas and values, Dilthey could not accurately "fit" a civilization with its worldview as one can fit a foot with a shoe.

Much can be said for the hard-to-define quality of "world picture." The term is difficult to define because, superficially, the intrinsic nature of a world outlook is irrational. Oswald Spengler (1880-1936), a general historian, probably convinced all the leading 20th century historians that worldviews or world pictures are irrational. His name for them was "prime symbols," and he believed their basis is emotional rather than rational and that they could not be clearly understood.

"World picture," in nearly all meanings of the phrase, corresponds to a society, not an individual. The collectivity, as well as individual members, see it. Thus, a public quality characterizes a world picture. So the Chinese world feeling pervaded the design of Chinese homes, and the similarity of their home design is a public fact. Another example that pertains to the Middle Eastern world picture well may be to the point. The Arabic and Hebraic languages (and Sumerian Cuneiform) "clearly yet indistinctly" conveyed much meaning (and thus part of the Middle Eastern world style) in their grammatical and rhetorical construction. That is to say, educated Semitic-language-speaking Middle Easterners knew what they were saying, although they felt or perceived an underlying symbolism in their speech very unclearly. Yet, the same people's personal unconscious could probably have grasped the sym-

https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/ccr/vol51/iss51/5
bolism distinctly.

One speaking Hebrew, Aramaic, or Arabic will consciously speak in a certain way, but with unconscious influences. Such a person’s personal unconscious probably retains the memory that all things are immediately controlled by Yahweh or Allah, and therefore do not exert causality on each other. Things, and the words representing them, are like beads moved about by God. As one reads poetry in clear consciousness and yet dimly grasps it, so we understand something of the Middle Eastern style, confusedly, to be sure. That is, we understand the following indistinctly but in clear consciousness. To these folks, for whom Yahweh or Allah is life (and in humans, their life is their soul), all things depend at all times whether instants or centuries on God in all that they do. They do not depend on each other. [MacDonald: 1965, 28] Here is no Western mechanical connection of entities, or Greek series of causes, and no Chinese harmony of things. God is the great presence in the two Middle Eastern societies and in their shared Weltanschauung. We see it in their histories, such as in the Old Testament.

I can say a great deal about Sumerian, Arabic, and Hebrew with a simple observation of a (once?) typical scene. According to Bernard Lewis, the Arab conceives his society not as an organic whole, compounded of interrelated and interacting parts, but as an association of separate groups—religion, nations, classes—held together only by the ground beneath and the government above. His town is an agglomeration of quarters, guilds, clans, houses, only rarely with any corporate civic identity of its own. [Lewis: 1958, 141]

None of the languages of the Sumerian, Arabic, and Hebraic cultures gracefully supports causal explanations; for none of the societies were interested in causal connection other than reliance of worldly events on God. Their historical accounts are like strings of beads, each tiny unit connected to the other by "and." Usually, verbal particles are used to link together the ideas. [Hankoff: 1980, 10-11] Both languages show a clear rejection of rationalism; it is small wonder that both ethnic groups especially liked poetry.

The proto-absolute divinity of the Sumerian gods and that of the almighty God of Israel was the metaphysic of ancient Sumerians and Jews. It was a philosophy, not of being, but of becoming. This order of divinity existed when the first inscribed tablets were created around 3000 BCE. And living in Iraq, the Sumer-Akkadians, too, were Middle Easterners. Akkadian cuneiform script came into use 2400-2300 BCE, and it was read by scribes and scholars all over the Middle East for
David Richardson

many centuries.

Twenty-ninth century BCE Sumerian ruins, containing cities and public buildings, have already been found. [Frankfort: 1964, in passim] These early cities centered on a shrine, and the shrine was, so to speak, a sacred "manor," while the surrounding city, in effect, was an "estate." An existing god of the city owned the quite impressive temple, the city's land and its produce, and served as a symbol of sovereignty. Temples were not mere places of worship, for record-keepers invented and used cuneiform script. The invention of writing also enabled scribes to make and preserve property records and even law. Henri Frankfort has described the earliest Mesopotamian (Sumerian) cities as having the form of "theoretic socialism," since all the families of the city tilled their plot. Thus, they constituted a "mixed farming" ecumene.

Well developed Sumerian law was one of the origins of the Middle Eastern life style, and the language survived when the Sumerian tongue was no longer spoken.

Two or three thousand years later, in 594-593 BCE, Solon would be adjusting the laws and the class structure of Athens, and thereby giving an advantageous popularity to the first democracy in history. But several traits of democratic society had existed since the fourth millennium BCE, beginning in Lagash and Sumer in Iraq.

In time, the priests' rule of an early city passed from the priesthood to kingship. And, like their predecessors, the kings ruled in the name of the city's god. Interestingly enough, the accession of a king did not establish a dynasty, for kingship was an elective office. Partly because of this custom, early Sumerian city-states became more secular in practice, despite invoking the city's god in its official acts. [Frankfort: 1964, 8] From the time of Sumer onwards, many cities developed their own codes of law. Perhaps by 2000 BCE, in Sumer-Akkad's city-states, most land was owned privately, with ownership determined and preserved in accordance with legislated laws. Other laws regulated banking and trading.

Secular states, thus, existed in Mesopotamia as well as in Greece because some city-states carried on respectable non-religious activities in the light of customs and laws. Such a state had some non-religious controls, intra-city commerce, and external import/export trading. Thus, implicit freedoms existed 4,000 years ago in Lagash city-state, enabling it to be a primitive sort of democracy in which a degree of freedom was made possible by a written code of law, regulating commercial exchanges, ownership of property, and city administration.
Moreover, to the present day, neither in the Sumerian city-state, nor in Greek city-states, nor in Western Christianity, did the secular government absorb the church. Later, Sumeria's once free city-states were taken over by far-flung empires, but international trading never stopped. Babylonian merchants carried out their native methods of business and law and exported their legal system to the lands where Israel and Greece were destined to grow.

Sumer's archives and cuneiform literature were studied by other cultures over a period of centuries. It is noteworthy that this period was almost equal to the 20 centuries in Western Civilization when Greek and Roman scripts endured as "dead" languages. In particular, the Sumerian language, when Sumerian was no long spoken, became the "Greek and Roman" classical literary heritage of Babylonian scholars.

In Babylonia and Assyria, clerks still diligently collected and copied texts in the long extinct Sumerian tongue as late as the first millennium. Cuneiform, evidently, was not too difficult to read by those who wrote in Egyptian hieroglyphics or in Babylonian scripts. Sumerian epics and many other legends, covenants, and achievements, including quasi-historical legal records and formal adjudications, probably influenced many later writers, including those of Judea. Many passages of the Torah and Bible imitate the unscientific sort of historical reason that existed both in Lagash, 2400 BCE, and later, in Sumeria, Akkad, Babylonia, Chaldea, and Assyria.

In the past, a culture’s worldview was unconscious and thus existed unidentified. Not until the 19th century did Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911) discover the traits of civilizational world styles. And he treated civilizational worldviews as the same in kind, as, for example, referring to the “metaphysical worldview,” or to the “French Weltanschauung.” [Dilthey: 2002] Even today, in the beginning of the 21st Century, world styles are understood in much the same way that Dilthey understood them. Thus, a person may examine his or her own clear awareness of a civilizational worldview, and assume that such a paltry consciousness contains the whole world outlook.

Most educated modern Westerners are, as yet, unaware of the matrix of subliminal ideas and intuitions that they have in common. People assimilate a world picture mainly through abundant contacts with the symbols embedded in their civilization and through living with
other persons. The few who are aware of the modern world style do not subscribe to it as if it were a political goal; perhaps they are simply aware of it. But this awareness is the barely perceivable tip of the iceberg. Its underlying bulk exists in the personal unconscious. And probably thus exists for the most part, although the wakeful consciousness is unaware of it. Leading architects infuse their designs with imagery symbolizing key parts of the modern world picture. Great and brilliant physicists can hardly avoid infusing their formulas with a symbol of a central idea or value coming from the world style of their civilization.

Students of science can, for example, know much of the modern world picture from Einstein’s space-image, or from ideas (compatible with Einstein’s theory) contained in the famous architect Frank Lloyd Wright’s house designs or used by George Balanchine in his choreography for ballet. A civilizational life style, properly understood, for example, is today as little known, but is known more easily, than mathematician Christoffel’s tensor calculus, which Einstein used in his relativity theory. Tensor calculus’ matrices are reminiscent of the matrix-like field imagery of China, quite central to China’s Weltbild.

A world outlook is not a summation of popular culture. Yet, the two have overlapping areas, as in Shakespeare’s plays, because they were popular in his lifetime as well as in ours, and in some of Igor Stravinsky’s music. Such sports as football or baseball are not likely to be tied to the global world picture. Yet these games may have a symbolism, whose deeper significance as yet escapes observation. Perhaps the special quality of playing golf in pretty landscapes and the resultant sensitivity of golfers to sites and thus to topology tie this sport symbolically to China’s topological bent and her love of out-of-doors nature, and thus to similar propensities of the modern West.

Egypt’s Entry into the Middle East

Egypt’s civilization was not for several millennia “Middle Eastern,” except in its location. For it was isolated from Arabia and the Fertile Crescent by the desert and by the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea, and by the rain forest from Central Africa. It finally did enter the Middle Eastern Civilization through its conquests in the Middle East. Pharaoh Thutmose III (1490-1436), his son Amenhotep III (1417-1379), and his son Amenhotep IV (Ikhnaton), who reigned 1378-1362 BCE, conquered much of the Middle Eastern ecumene.

It was in the reigns of Thutmose and in that of his son, Amenhotep III, and grandson (Ikhnaton), that Egypt became a military empire. She
embarked on a series of conquests that brought her into close contact with nations and states in the Fertile Crescent, including Babylon and other Mesopotamian kingdoms. Pharaoh Neferkheperure Amenhotep IV (alias Ikhnaton), like Moses (13\textsuperscript{th} century BCE), and Zoroaster (around 1200-1000 BCE), achieved a monotheism which approximated closely to the contemporary Hebrew monotheism. [Farhat-Holzman: 2003, 23] This monotheism appears to have developed in Sumer and the Mesopotamian states, from an awareness of God as both personal and all-powerful. This did not just suddenly occur, for it had been almost two millennia since earlier Sumerian and Akkadian stories about the pantheon of gods had heavily influenced Sargon's kingdom of Akkad. After that, Hammurabi's Babylon and other city-states, great and small, carried Sumer-Akkad's cultural influence to the entire Middle East.

Perhaps it was this continuing influence of an old polytheism during two millennia (2500-0 BCE) that slowed the spread of strict monotheism after Moses set forth the holy law. Some of the highest gods in the non-Hebrew states and nations performed functions comparable to some of those of the Hebrew's Yahweh and approximated more or less closely to Yahweh's creative power. At that time, worshippers believed that personal gods could and did punish individuals and nations. The gods were objects of love and reverence because their people believed that as personal beings they exercised free will. They viewed their gods as providentially caring for them. Baal worshippers in Phoenicia and other lands, to be sure, celebrated a cruel and violent deity. And the Hebrews not only worshipped a loving Yahweh but also valued their society as gentle and civilized.

Both in Sumer's successor states and in Egypt, creation stories naturally developed, perhaps because in both regions a predictable flood occurred each year, bringing new plant life and thus recreating a lush landscape surrounded by desert. This yearly change so strongly impressed Egyptians that it probably prodded individual priests to worship life-in-death as part of one's life-sequence and to celebrate funerary gods as well as gods bringing succor to those people still living. Perhaps the strong preservative effects of hot desert air on the bodies of deceased Pharaohs and other important people inspired Egypt's faith in continued life-in-death. Immortality was conceived by the Egyptians...as essentially a prolongation of earthly life. [Childe: 1964, 149]
Besides these sources, the Nile River and the relatively straight course through its narrow valley may have evoked Egypt’s strong historical consciousness. Thus, when Egypt’s world picture was still unique, she shared her sense of history with an as-yet foreign Middle Eastern historical consciousness.

The very continuity of the Nile, flowing hundreds of miles, and the obviousness of the waterway’s continuity is like the connections of history, one epoch flowing into another. It is this very sense of continuity in things that sharply distinguished the Egyptian world picture from that of the Greeks. Even the sculpted panels on buildings depicting historical events reveal the differences. Egyptian sculptors often made the inlay shallow, while Greek sculptors carved deeply. Egyptians were thus aware of the historical continuity of the people and events being immortalized in carved stone. Perhaps the irreversible course of the Nile River impressed Egyptians strongly enough to give their imagination a decided historical quality.

So strong was the sense of a single historical “path” of history, that the priests and pharaohs probably envisaged their great buildings not merely as halls of worship or shelters, but also as walls or markers of the historical path toward eternal life-in-death. [Spengler: 1939, vol. 1] But Greek sculpture, three-dimensional, emphasized the separation of historical or fabled events. One civilization was historical, and the other was non-historical. One consciousness embraced millennia; the other consciousness (even that of Thucydides), limited itself to the history in living memory. Egypt’s historical consciousness itself probably helped to cause her elaborate funerary preparations, tomb-building, and construction of preservative pyramids.

Egypt, like China, developed a sophisticated bureaucracy. And it was in irrigation and flood control that Egypt and China’s bureaucracies were finely honed. Egypt's priestly caste, however, never created a secular religion functioning within an atheist bureaucracy, as happened in China. As Enlil had received special worship in Sumeria, Marduk in Babylonia, Ashur in Assyria, so did Atum ("self-born"), Amun, and Osiris, in Egypt. China’s cosmological devotion to out-of-doors nature and to the astronomical heavens probably ruled out any idea of an almighty personal God or divine law.

Egypt came into being as a united royal domain, rural in character, with cities that were, in fact, religious centers of administration. [Frankfort: 1970, 10] So isolated was Egypt that she even lacked, until
the second millennium BCE, a permanent capital and did not have city-states until Greeks founded the city of Alexandria. In Mesopotamia, whose world state had always been more secular than that of old Egypt, the earliest Sumerian cuneiform texts were economic and administrative documents. But in Egypt the earliest texts were records or memorials of the kings' achievements under the gods. As to her economy, ancient Egypt was a farming civilization before joining the Middle Eastern world. In this propensity for farming, China to a degree was similar to Egypt, but Egypt's isolation from the other civilizations limited her foreign trade far more than did China's mandarins restrict trade in favor of agriculture. Memphis was a religious center, a place of bureaucratic administration and record-keeping. Of Egypt's foreign contacts, Sumerian traders for their expanding society probably made contact with the Egyptians on the land (and sea) route to western Asia, because they crossed over from the Red Sea to the Nile Valley.

When Egypt had been isolated from the rest of the Middle East, her desert kingdom's pantheon of gods performed the same function as those in the other states and kingdoms. But Egypt's isolation was coming to an end around 1500 BCE, when some pharaohs conquered parts of the Middle East. Such was the tremendous power of the Middle Eastern world picture that Egypt and several other empires and states of the time came close to having monotheistic cults. To be sure, under the Macedonians, and later the Romans, until the Christian period, Egypt's priests continued to worship Osiris and many other gods in her large pantheon. And as the enthronement Psalms (e.g., 24: 7-10) of the Old Testament referring to God's kingship, indicate, even outside of Egypt, so basic was this theme that strict monotheism had to yield; for without other gods, Yahweh could not be king of the gods. Whence came the expression: "Who is like thee among the gods, O Yahweh?" [Exodus 15: 11] and [Gordon: 1965, 126-7]

Thutmose III (ca 1490-1436BCE) and Ikhnaton (Amenhotep IV), in their military conquests in Western Asia, anticipated by some 16th century incursions, gave Egypt exposure to Hebrew monotheism and to the ideologies and practices of the whole Middle East. Pharaoh Ikhnaton's short-lived worship of the sun-disk reveals how firmly a monotheistic worship in the 13th century BCE had penetrated Egypt. Ikhnaton sought reforms in religion and art which were close to Middle Eastern ways of seeing things. Such ideas and values included those of monotheism, emotionality, non-parochial universality, and temporality.
These amounted to a convulsive effort to bring Egyptian life and thought into tune with the emergent cosmopolitan world of the Middle East. [McNeill: 1963, 140, 142; Dawson: 1957, 282]

**World Picture, Not a Religion**

Historical evidence is plentiful on the homogeneity of the Middle Eastern worldview among the Middle Eastern states, cities, and empires, beginning in the heyday of the city-state of Lagash, in Sumer, 3000 BCE, and later during the millennia. Twentieth century American and European archeologists in Iraq and adjacent countries continued to unearth ancient artifacts and discover four and five-millennia-old baked inscribed clay tablets.

Perhaps the more evidence they uncover, the more definitely they will have verified the Middle Eastern worldview. It existed in the fourth millennia BCE and it still exists, in various intensities, throughout the world in the 21st century, depending on the status of the prevailing world picture as, for example Western modernity, vis-a-vis that of the Middle Eastern world style of the Christian religion. It is probably important to distinguish world picture from religion.

When historians argue as to the general nature of world pictures they become as theoretical as sociologists. Some historians perceive that each educated human being creates and more or less unconsciously knows a living world picture, shared with others, in a series of many actions. These actions and events and their products are constituent parts of the world style. How well does this describe the minds of educated early Sumerians, who originally were not Semites? Many times, and during millennia, the barbaric Semitic nomads infiltrated and conquered the settled centers of Sumer. [Kramer: 1963, 42]

But the ideas constituting the origins of the Middle Eastern world picture could only have existed sporadically and unconsciously in the minds of Sumerians after Sumerian and other Arabian nomads settled in Sumeria, i.e., in what is now southern Iraq. Their migrations and raids into Sumer particularly influenced the world-perceptions of those who lived in Sumer's city-states. One of the results was that Sumeria and the later kingdoms of the area assimilated much of the harshness of Arabian shepherds and nomads.

In those centuries, local Sumerian ecumenes were expanding outward from the valley of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. And the earliest expansion probably occurred where the two rivers entered the Persian Gulf. In view of the location of the Arabian land mass outside
of Mesopotamia, Oswald Spengler's reference to the Middle Eastern Society as the "Arabian Culture" was inaccurate. [Spengler: 1939] Yet nomads had emigrated from Arabia's deserts to the watered farms of Mesopotamia either peacefully or violently. The movement of Arab shepherds into farming country had been going on from the earliest beginnings of Sumeria and would not cease until the Persian kings brought most of the Middle East into their kingdom.

Cyrus II, while king of Persia (559-530 BCE), was called "Cyrus the Great" for good reason. His son, Cambyses II, conquered Egypt in 525 BCE. Thus Egypt, whose Thutmose II and Amenhotep II had begun a process of "Middle Easternization," became part of Persia's Middle Eastern empire. At the same time, the Middle East was becoming a "higher civilization" in the full meaning of the term. So civilized did the Middle East become, that as late as the Roman Republic around 200 CE, Lebanese and Syrian lawyers became leading jurists in the City of Rome. Jurist Ulpian of Tyre (died 223 BCE) prepared for Rome some eloquent legal writings which, seven centuries later, eventually would supply a third of Justinian's entire Digest [528-534]. Two architects from the Middle East, Anthemius of Tralles and Isadore of Miletus, designed Justinian's religious masterpiece, the Hagia Sophia in 537 CE.

As for Middle Easterners who lived nearly 3,000 years ago, some of them in their business or legal careers dealt with Hammurabi's law. Others later coped religiously with Moses' new holy law under which they lived. Even today, inhabitants of America's state of Louisiana have to submit to a modernized form of Justinian's Middle Eastern Roman law. Ancient Middle Easterners, like all civilized peoples in 1700 BCE, were seeing their world through several symbolic "lenses." That is, they gazed out at the world around them through a variety of central or key ideas and values within their Middle Eastern world picture. Almost all their humanly complex outlook existed unconsciously.

As to the religions, Israel's Judaism, Persia's Zoroastrianism, Rome's Western Christianity, Constantinople's Eastern Christianity, and Arabia's Islam were all Middle Eastern cults. These carried a world picture that had probably already existed for four millennia. In this manner can be understood a civilizational attitude shared among the people of this international ecumene. Such an ecumene naturally tended to unite individual members of the society by evoking special social, political, religious, and economic ties. [Richardson: 1972, 1-18] And
the Semitic Akkadian language was the literary language of Mesopotamia for three millennia before the Christian era. [Encyl. Brit.: 1969, "Akkad"] Nevertheless, educated citizens of the Middle Eastern empires, states, and cities, from the time of Sumer (3100 BCE) or Sumer and Akkad (ca 2000 BCE) onwards, were unaware of the world picture that they shared.

Quigley’s “Incentives to Invent”

Historian Carroll Quigley (1910 -1977) has strongly emphasized the idea mentioned earlier of “incentives to invent;” that is, the enormous power of successful ideas to enliven political and social life, as will be seen. Quigley’s theory is probably sound. His theory of incentives to invent underscores the importance of world pictures to the well-being of civilizations and, in particular, the importance of that of the Middle East. It is probably worth while to examine here Quigley’s scheme of history in view of the Middle Eastern outlook’s long active existence.

He used an interesting ploy to deal with such complex constructs as civilizations. He did not treat a civilization in toto, but limited his task by dividing it into narrower classifications. Fairly narrow limits in his model of civilization are indicated by the title of his book, The Evolution of Civilizations. [Quigley: 1961] It is a model proposing seven stages in a higher culture’s history. Thus, Quigley describes the first of seven steps in a civilization’s existence, namely, acquiring “an instrument of expansion.”

By the term “instrument of expansion, Quigley meant that the society must be organized in such a way that three things are true: 1) it has an incentive to invent new ways of doing things; 2) somewhere in the society there is accumulation of surplus (in other words, some persons in the society control more wealth than they wish to consume immediately); and 3) the surplus being accumulated must be used for new inventions, or the use of them. [Quigley: 1979, 132-3]

In the middle 20th century, when Quigley was writing, historians had become aware of the contrast between aged or out-of-date institutions and styles of aged civilizations, in contrast with the inventions and novelties of young civilizations. Oswald Spengler probably caused much of this awareness, for in his Decline of the West, written in Munich during the First World War, he argued persuasively that all civilizations decline. He implied that their main symbols are like styles, in that a style loses its hold on public favor through having been
“explored” or articulated, and, in this manner having bored a people or even suppressed individual initiative.

Quigley, an American with a deeply Irish background, at first an instructor of mathematics and science at Princeton University, was aware of the great discoveries in modern sciences. He also probably enjoyed the democratic freedom of thought and action that was available in 20th century America. As an historian, which he eventually became, and teaching at Georgetown University’s School of Foreign Service, he became acutely aware of the necessary conditions which would refresh an historical civilization and which would thus enable its society to function.

That a civilization’s world picture might be rationally analyzable did not occur either to Spengler or to Quigley. Quigley, consequently, did not discuss the ideas, values, symbols, and metaphors of civilizational world pictures. He was unaware that the high importance his theory of history gave to “incentives to invent,” and to the conditions of a society that enable these incentives to survive and be effective, would also be useful in world style theory. For a world picture is a matrix of various “incentives to invent.” And these depend upon a surplus of wealth in a society, and the society must organize itself so that the surplus will be available for the new inventions. He may have realized that a civilization’s worldview should be attractive enough to be an incentive to invent new ways of doing things.

Quigley’s terms are probably relevant to world picture terminology. Then it follows that a fresh world style, if it were violently suppressed, would be an incentive suppressed. It follows, too, that a worn-out world style, if new ”incentives to invention” were supported, would give way to a new outlook and its advantages. Thus, in the light of the Quiglean emphasis upon “incentive to invent,” an old civilization, its no-longer-fresh incentives having lost their appeal, could therefore benefit. For it could be importing new or not previously seen or felt ideas and values.

For example, at the end of the 19th century, members of the Japanese Civilization, confronting an attractive Western world picture in this manner, thus acquired “incentives to invent.” And in not having an absolute king or dictator, rich Nipponese persons free to divert some wealth could attain an “accumulation of surplus.” Japan’s relatively liberal organization of her society (the samurai class being considerably independent of the Imperial Court) enabled her to use the surplus that
was being accumulated "to pay for or utilize the new inventions." All of these things, said Quigley, are essential to any civilization.

Quigley's theory will probably help to understand why the Middle Eastern world picture has endured a long time. And the dramatic success of Modernity in the world of the twenty-first century will probably occur in the Middle East. Nevertheless, China and India have kept their civilizational unity since 1500 BCE. It is likely that changes in both civilizations, alternating between larger autocratic empires and a multiplicity of states, gave effectiveness to "incentives to invent." Greece and Rome were not so fortunate, nor the Aztecs, Mayas, or Incas. But the most divided culture, the Middle Eastern, has had the most long-lived world picture.

Comparing the Middle Eastern lifestyle with the Chinese world picture probably reveals their general nature. Both world styles were probably renewable. And the duration of their effectiveness was probably extended many centuries. Unlike the Mesopotamian ecumene, China's cultural history displays considerable unbrokenness in the permutations of the Chinese world picture. It underwent some alterations during the long interval stretching from the early Shang era (2000 BCE) through that of Confucius (500 BCE) and from Confucius to the Modern Westernization of China (2000 CE). [Toynbee: 1961, 557]

Millions of China's citizens became converts to Buddhism in the fourth century CE. Two centuries earlier, in the second century CE, and two centuries later, in the sixth century CE, Buddhist temples, shelters, and art works were destroyed. Many centuries later, thousands of Buddhist monks and nuns were forced to refute their religion and became laicized. An atheist Confucian cultural tradition during this time was becoming supreme, while ordinary uneducated members of the culture worshipped various gods. China's excellent historical records reveal the complexities of cultural continuity.

The Middle East's Long-Lived Vigor

A special quality marks the history of the Middle East. Here was an ecumene which took shape as early as Sumer's time in 3000 BCE. Already, Sumer's myths were beginning to resemble the Hebrew prophets' worship of the one true God, almighty Yahweh. And their lawmakers were beginning to create a law like that of Moses. Hardly ever has one nation, state, or kingdom ruled the huge ecumene.

Enough freedom existed in the interstices of the Middle East's history to encourage creative people in the Middle East to have "an incen-
tive to invent.” In particular, they had “an incentive to invent (or improve)” the Middle Eastern world picture, because no one nation, state, or kingdom strictly ruled the ecumene. It had originally expressed its key ideas and values in symbols and metaphors. For this process has always unfolded entirely within the personal unconscious of the educated people. But it seems to have evoked, albeit largely unconsciously, an impulse to unfold itself farther and farther. Even in the 21st century CE, 4,000 years later, Middle Easterners have fresh “incentives to invent” hitherto unsuspected aspects of their world style, from having seen or felt attracted to features of foreign world styles.

On the one hand, Middle Eastern law (via Christian doctrine) succeeded in almost convincing Renaissance scientists that physical nature is ruled by eternal physical laws. Today, on the other hand, perhaps a Middle Easterner might combine two key ideas: that of the familiar world-controlling features of God almighty with China’s relativism and her long-lived deep respect for relativities, which the West has probably borrowed from China. We cannot accurately study this life-style as if it were in a vacuum, for, of all world outlooks, its intensity of existence has varied the most, and not only in the Middle East. And the Middle Eastern coexisted with the outlooks of other civilizations. It existed in ancient times for the most part collectively and unconsciously. And in these modes the Middle Eastern world-style still exists. To avoid seeing this too abstractly, it is advisable at times to modify the adjective “Mideastern” as follows: "insofar as Assyria and Judea shared the Mideastern worldview" and the like. For a larger object of study extends beyond the Middle East to other world pictures, as, for example, that of Japan’s old civilization.

Worldview and religion are not the same, yet the Middle Eastern worldview is found in four different religions, and the Hindu worldview in several Hindu religions. Both the Middle Eastern and the Hindu are religious world pictures, since they and their respective religions are closely attached to each other. In this way, the Hindu worldview is closely associated with the Advaita Vedanta religion, and the Middle Eastern outlook with the Muslim religion. India’s world style is also closely attached to the Jain religion and to some forms of Buddhism. And the Middle East is also closely attached to the Christian religion. As for Delhi’s Advaita Vedanta and Riyadh’s Islam, they contain, respectively, the Hindu and the Middle Eastern world pictures without ceasing to be religions. Since both world styles probably always exist
in religions, they differ markedly from secular world pictures, such as that of ancient Rome, that of the Nordic-medieval-Renaissance-Enlightenment Europe, that of China, and that of Japan. But a secular quality probably exists in these two religious world pictures of the Middle East and of India. For they are both contained in a variety of religions.

**How World Pictures Influence a Civilization**

An historical analyst, e.g., a comparativist, can understand a symbol of mechanics both in 12th century canon ("fugal") church music, and in Gothic cathedral design. Yet the medieval composer and the medieval architect could not, of course, understand a rational mechanics that mathematicians were going to create several hundred years in the future.

Their clear understanding of their own craftsmanship was also confused and indistinct. They were creating mechanical symbols unconsciously, as well as consciously designing their artwork. Some of the confusion has been removed. Decrypting a small portion of the music and architecture occurs when a human perceives the common mechanical symbol therein. Then, one better understands the Western world style which musician and builder shared. In canon music, voices sing against each other, as if mechanically so braced. Moreover, it is almost a popular saying that Gothic Cathedrals are a mechanical play in stone. Yet, analyzing such cultural symbols did not occur to general historians until the twentieth century.

Since world picture theory is a fairly new discipline, its practitioners are not ready to discuss the extent to which it is a new science or, for that matter, how closely it approximates being a science at all. Understanding the same symbol encased in music and in architecture: how scientific is that, even if it is clear and distinct? Ideas of this nature thus pursued may perhaps be conditionally accepted. Such an understanding of world pictures can probably succeed if it is based on rational postulates.

Unconscious activities, as seen above, are involved in the influences of worldviews on each other. An art historian might want to decrypt unconscious activities of the Greek Phidias' mind, though Phidias lived 2,400 years ago. In this way, an art historian may seek to learn part of the Greek worldview. An historian, by examining the Greek world picture, might thus decipher some of the symbols that Phidias unconsciously had used.
“Unconsciously” is appropriate, here, here, because most of the impression of the Greek world picture upon any ancient educated Greek was unconscious. It is similarly the case with the Modern, Global (or Western) outlook, today, for it also partakes of the immensity of the personal unconscious. And that the personal unconscious is huge probably follows from the contents of the brain, because the human brain contains a hundred billion neurons or brain cells and ten trillion synapses available to connect them.

A civilizational world picture has a complexity on an order approximating that, say, of an oak tree in all its minute parts, or that of the City of Tokyo in all its relations. Even the few clear and distinct ideas we have of a world picture do not readily occur, unless we analyze it.

For such an analysis Jung’s theory of psychological types of people (intuitive, feeling, sensing, and emotional) is helpful. His description of his analysis of his patients’ symbols and metaphors probably also applies to the examination of art works, philosophies, etc., in order to understand a little of the underlying world picture. An historical analyst might imagine an artistic symbol as, for instance, a Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775-1851) water-color landscape. In attempting to uncover the symbol in Turner’s painting, such a researcher might say, Turner invested rosy clouds and atmosphere with God’s presence. And in his pantheism he made the earth or cosmos symbolically become the body of God. Alone, this interpretation would be worthless. Are these experiences truly replicable, that is, are they enough replicable for other historians to obtain the same results? This is the acid test of the physical sciences.

As for unlocking or interpreting the implicit iconography of symbolic emotions and sensations, that is the aim. Thus, evidence exists in painting, poetry, music, dance, and in the culture’s world style from whence the symbols flow. It is in this evidence that scholars might attempt to find replicates. To pursue this inquiry, one needs to consult specialists; for in reading the specialized accounts one learns to decrypt one fragment or more of an entire world picture. One can push ahead in this line of study by learning about the leading philosophies, sciences, and religions of the civilization. For these human activities supply much of the symbolic contents of the world picture. Thus, the analyzer of a world picture works from two directions, first, from the distinctive symbols in the culture’s creative works, and second, from the culture’s ideology contained in its philosophies, sciences, and religions.
The reference to a “world picture” seems to be extraordinarily wide. Historians usually do not address such a wide range of disciplines. Several disciplines, including history, play their parts in the task of deciphering the role of world styles in history. So this project’s success depends on an increasing awareness of this rich background, both on the part of general historians and specialists in philosophy, religion, sociology, and archeology. Civilization’s political and military actions and sciences and philosophies come within the scope of world outlook, but how would the worldview refer to the society’s deeds and works? Both the historical events and the ideas have clarity. And they affect or even cause history’s changes.

They are also clearer than are the arts. Yet, for all their clarity, at least to those who study them, they do not in simple evidence reveal the society’s world perspective. Nevertheless, to give attention to less clear actions, such as creating fine art works, painting, music, dance-choreography, poesy, and drama, does not increase the difficulty. That is, weighing an outlook’s impact on a painting does not become more difficult simply because its meaning evades the painter. To learn the world style, then, is the reason for bringing under objective scientific observation the subjective and aesthetic understanding. It justifies bringing under clear and distinct scrutiny clear and indistinct understanding.

In sum, the personal unconscious has unclear but probably many distinct perceptions, and these percepts may be symbols that, for example, an artist portrays in a painting. A Chinese landscape painting with a mist-filled emptiness perhaps symbolizes qi (ch’i), the basis of matter in Chinese eyes and visualized as an evanescent vapor. Qi, in the 21st century, might even refer to “radioactive emanations.” [Needham: 1956, V2, 472] Chinese painters clearly perceived the symbolism of the mist, though they may have dimly or confusedly understood it.

Chinese artists’ personal unconscious, though, probably perceived the same object distinctly. Higher processes of the personal unconscious are perhaps like a night where consciousness is “blind” and in which the unconscious can value things, sense them, or think distinctly about them. These mental processes can be likened to entering a room, so dark that one sees nothing, and yet its furniture and other objects are all distinct. The personal unconscious may also be likened to the impaired senses of a blind person who sees nothing and yet recognizes things by touching them.

Painter Michelangelo Amerighi Caravaggio’s 16th century use of
perspective was "clear and confused." Even Caravaggio would probably have admitted this, in regard to his *Crucifixion of Christ*. In the Nordic-medieval-Renaissance-Enlightenment world picture, distinctly understandable things were significant. But here, aesthetic facts could have been directly apprehended, at best, by clear and confused knowledge. Nevertheless, it is often possible to conduct rational analysis of the symbolic import of Renaissance art-works. At times, this will probably produce almost scientifically clear and distinct ideas. Several of Caravaggio's paintings, such as the *Crucifixion of Christ*, affect the spectator by unconsciously perceived rotational forces on the plane of the canvas. They are balanced counter-forces, comparable to counterpoint in music. Thus, they are a symbol of mechanics, part of the space imagery of the old Western world picture.

**World Picture versus Religion**

In India's Hinduism, the roughly equal power of good and evil divinities has usually not been contested. Hindu pundits, though, looked to an Absolute which completely transcended personalities, and which, therefore, was superior to the status of God. Thus, in the view of this religion, Yahweh or Allah would be inferior to the Absolute. Such an idea of the absolute, of course, could never have been introduced into 17th century Christian churches, but one of the early Moderns, Hegel, used "absolute" as another, special, name of Christianity's God. [Allbright: 1957, 359-61; Breasted: 1944, 252-3]

Sino-Christianity, in the early 1600s, as practiced in China by newly baptized Chinese, had not yet assimilated the Chinese culture. And this was a flaw. For a Christian doctrine containing part of the Chinese worldview without having assimilated it would be flawed. In the West, the Pope, being aware of the contents of China's Christianity, reacted negatively and forbade priests to compromise their religion with Confucian and other Chinese ideas. This compromise between a "Western" religion and Chinese secularism was going on at the same time that, far more successfully, another admixture of the Chinese and Western civilizations had occurred.

To begin with, the latter rapprochement was largely unnoticed, since it affected, above all, the old Western world picture. Scarcely anybody was aware that Chinese cultural ideas and values were entering the West. And even if Westerners, most of them Christians, had been aware of this intermixing, the details of the influences would have been hidden. For these would have almost entirely occurred within the per-
sonal unconscious of Westerners. Moreover, Europe’s world picture, as well as that of China, was secular. And thus the Sinifying of the Western world picture did not obviously appear at odds with the Christian religion.

Indeed, after 1800, few, if anybody, noticed the silent entry of deep Chinese qualities into the new Modern (1800 et seq.) world style. But how could China’s world style have deeply altered the Western world picture without Westerners being aware of the change? The answer, discussed above, is that the alteration of the West’s life style proceeded unconsciously. This, in fact, was a series of processes. Creative Westerners read reports or histories about China, or encountered or reencountered Chinese customs or works of art, and the like. Then, the same Westerners forgot all, or most, of what they had read or experienced about China. Yet the “forgotten” experiences were probably retained in their personal unconscious. C.G. Jung has shown that the personal unconscious is a dynamic faculty, continually carrying on various processes. These include processes of intuiting, imagining, combining or distinguishing sensed imagery and ideas, evaluating, experiencing emotions, and storing ideas, images, values, emotions, and intuitions that once occurred at the conscious level and then were forgotten.

In such ways as these, the impact of China on the West probably became enormous, without making itself known. Creative members of a civilization, moreover, will consciously arrive at what seems to be utterly new conclusions; for they will be unaware that their personal unconscious has perhaps, combined an idea or a value which came from China, with their own Western ideas. They will believe that they have hit upon a completely original idea. Such creative persons are likely to communicate with others in their society. But the unconscious strength of the various processes probably far exceeded the power of conscious or obvious Chinese influences.

To this day (in 2003), few have noticed the transformation of the Western outlook, or its having assimilated several ideas and values of India, China, and Japan. Modernity in Western Civilization has been strongly influenced by the Middle Eastern world style. And this world picture even includes ideas and values which originally were those of Sumer. In this manner Sumerian ideas and values have been conveyed by Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity, and Islam to their respective adherents. Thus, the book most read by the ordinary people in 18th and
19th century Europe and the United States was the Bible. And the dominant religion, Christianity, is Middle Eastern in origin.

Yet 21st century, members of Western Civilizations do not think of the Middle Eastern outlook in its full consummation. If they are aware that this world picture accompanies their religion, it is unlikely that they envisage the world style stretching back to Sumer 5,000 years. For this Middle Eastern outlook, carried by the Judaic religions, has been considerably suppressed by a dominant Modern or Global Weltanschauung. In the last analysis, a second world picture co-exists in the minds of educated Westerners, for they live with a Christian as well as a Western heritage. They may gain insight into themselves by understanding the general traits of the suppressed as well as the traits of the dominant worldview.

In general, a world picture is a set or an organization within the psyche, composed of images, ideas, values, emotions, reasoning, sensations, and intuitions. Greece’s world picture, for example, gave high value to the forms (ideas). Greeks imagined various visible forms. Their physical scientists reasoned that forms serving as essences are the basis of things. They surmised very little about unconscious ideas, but rated them as inherently confused. C. G. Jung, a modern man, held that ideas in the personal unconscious are probably not confused.

And, in this light, we saw that world pictures can to some extent be deciphered. Though a world style is mostly unconscious, the people holding it may be convincingly aware of its general features. For the most part, it is a matrix of key ideas, values, images, and intuitions, residing in the personal unconscious of a civilization’s educated individual members. Yet a person’s own experiences at the same time are naturally idiosyncratic. Nevertheless, a “world picture” refers to the collectivity, since each individual member of the culture has it. Thus, a civilizational world outlook that people share is probably specifically the same, though differing individually in each person. It seems obvious, therefore, that a world style unites the people of a civilization.

It probably gives people a degree of sublimity; for all such worldviews are, ultimately, sublime. This trait follows upon the metaphysical images, emotions, and ideas in the world picture.

The Middle East and World History

Zoroaster was the founder and prophet of the Zoroastrian sect. He lived between 1200-1000 BCE, and his religion became the state religion of Persia about a thousand years after his time. [Farhat-Holzman:
2003, 38] He was a contemporary of the Hebrew prophets and believed in one God (Ahura Mazda). He was an Iranian from a tribe of Magi (priests). [Arnold: 1958, 7] His own outlook and that of his sect was Middle Eastern, as with the Jews, all sharing several traits common to their world picture. [Allbright: 1957, 360] He taught that only one Supreme good God (Ahura Mazda) exists, and, as for the native Iranian divinities, he translated them to the status of demons and angels. His idea of God was of a divine person, attentive to the world and yet absolutely divine, transcending the world. This is, in modern days, as in Zoroaster’s time, the most important idea of the Middle Eastern world style.

Zoroaster’s religious tenets affected Judaism and perhaps did so more than any other external religious impulse. For one thing, Zoroastrians strongly held to choosing between good and evil. In these tenets are also "the antecedents of Judeo-Christian and Muslim angelology." [Hutchinson: 981, 278] This religion, too, foretold a judgment, that is to say, it predicted an apocalyptic end of the world. This violent end is to be followed by a final redemption. Zoroaster’s cult held also that God speaks and utters revelations. Assimilating these religious tenets particularly intensified two Hebrew notions: the presence of Yahweh in the world and the reality of Yahweh’s transcendence. [Eddy: 1961, 65-70] As to the human capacity for free choice, Zoroaster wrote:

Hear with your ears that which is the sovereign good/ With a clear mind look upon the two sides/ Between which each man must choose for himself. [Duchesne-Guillemin: 1952, 63]

In some ways, however, the Middle Eastern religions and those of the ancient Greeks and Romans, and the medieval and modern Christians, all show an unbroken historical continuity. Theologians imagined, for example, the Christian God as presiding over Paradise similarly as Zeus on Mount Olympus. They described God much as Greeks might have described Zeus’ concern for events on Earth. [Lancaster: 1956, 289-90] But this Middle Eastern dualism, between the ruling God and His creation, was going to exclude the Hindu doctrine of the immanence of the absolute in all things.

So, too, today, in the 21st century CE, Jewish temples, Christian churches or basilicas, and Muslim mosques are not like Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist temples. India’s temples are not symbols of a divinely present
personal Yahweh, but of an impersonal absolute power, which is immensely dynamic. And the quality of absoluteness in religions of India differs radically from the physical world. As to the worshipping predecessors of the monotheistic religions, they became the cults of Baal, Yahweh, Marduk and lesser-known deities, their adherents striving after personal salvation given by a personal almighty God. Striking similarities in those religions intensified the Middle Eastern Civilization's homogeneity to the point at which perhaps its unity became obvious.

Unlike India's scriptures, the Old and New Testament traditions presupposed that the secular world exists more or less simply as humans experience it, and that God is present to the world. It is as if the world were a cave in which all history occurs and where the divine spirit dwells. Spengler, in his *Decline of the West*, used a metaphor of "world-cavern," which excellently symbolizes the Middle Eastern worldview. An even better symbol is the enclosed space under a dome of a church building or beneath the cupola of a mosque, its ceiling curving down from several directions from one side of the building directionally to the other.

Then, all of history symbolically becomes a "world-cavern" to which God is symbolically omnipresent. This symbolizes that God is aware, *sub specie aeternitatis*, of the minutest events and yet divinely envisages the entire scheme of history. (Spengler: 1939, V1 200, V2 239-50) Zoroastrian temples in ancient Iran were surmounted by a dome. In Zaroster's time, Zoroastrians, Middle Easterners, and Jews were all teaching God's eminence over the world. [Radhakrishnan: 1940, 230-36; Havell: 1918, 60-62] But none of these Middle Easterners envisaged God as inferior to an impersonal Absolute, for Jehovah was absolute in being all powerful and all knowing. Worshipers whose religion is associated with the Middle Eastern outlook are more apt than those of other societies to relate history directly to the worship of an almighty and all-seeing God. [Spengler: 1939, V2 114]

References


Allbright, W.F, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel* (Johns Hopkins
David Richardson


Danilevsky, Nikolai, *Russia and Europe: A Viewpoint on the Political Relations between the Slavic and Germano-Romantic Worlds* (1871; fourth ed. 1889).


Green, Peter, *Essays in Antiquity* (The World Publishing Co., Cleveland, OH, 196?).


Jackson, A.W., "The Persian Dominions in Northern India ... "in *The Cambridge History of India* (Univ. Cambridge, Cambridge, 1922).


Josephus (80 BCE), *History*.

Kramer, Samuel N., *From the Tablets of Sumer* (Falcon's Wing Press, Indian Hills, CO, 1956; reprinted in 1959 as *History Begins at Sumer* (Doubleday, NY).


Needham, Joseph, *Science and Civilization in China* (Cambridge Univ.,
David Richardson


Pak, Hyobom, China and the West: Myths and Realities in History (E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1974).

Patai, Raphael, The Hebrew Goddess (Wayne State Univ., Detroit, 1990, third edit.).


Spengler, Oswald, *The Decline of the West* (Knopf, NY, 1939,2 vols.; first publ. 1918, 1922).


