

Differences between Chinese and Western cultures: Analyzing the concepts of “division” and “combination”

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Received: 18 September 2023

Revised: 8 February 2024

Accepted: 27 March 2024

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Abstract

Over thousands of years of development from primitive society to the present, Chinese and Western civilizations have created their own distinctive cultures under their different natural environments and historical conditions. The well-known scholar Qian Mu once said that: Westerners are good at dividing, Chinese people are good at combination as these are close to their desires. Hence, this manuscript explores the fundamental differences between Chinese and Western cultures through the lens of “division” and “combination”. Chinese culture, deeply rooted in the concept of “combination”, emphasizes harmony, unity, and collective responsibility, reflecting its agricultural society and Confucian values. In contrast, Western culture, grounded in “division”, focuses on individualism, personal freedom, and the separation of powers, shaped by its diverse geographical conditions and philosophical traditions. This study delves into historical developments, social structures, and ideological underpinnings that have led to these distinct cultural paradigms. By examining the country and society, human relationships, environment, and ideology, the manuscript elucidates how these cultural principles influence the respective civilizations. The analysis aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how “division” and “combination” manifest in various aspects of Chinese and Western cultures, highlighting the importance of these concepts in shaping cultural identity and social dynamics.

Keywords: Chinese and Western philosophy, division, combination, nationalism, society, ideology

1. Definition of the concept of “division” and “combination”

The formation of the respective characteristics of Eastern and Western cultures has its objective reasons and conditions. In the book Marx’s Capital, Marx stated: Different communities find different means of production, and different means of subsistence in their natural environment (Marx, 1867). Therefore, their production methods, lifestyles and products are also different. Marx’s discussion reveals the truth, that is, the difference in the natural environment of people’s algebra and the difference between the means of living and the means of production; the way of life, the mode of production, and the difference in the national culture are determined by this.

China and the West have roughly the same historical starting point in primitive societies, and both are matrilineal societies. The cultural genes of primitive matrilineal societies are “inherited” and “mutated” in the historical evolution of China and the West. The characteristic of Western culture is to move towards individual-based characteristics, focusing on individual freedom and rights; while Eastern society pays more attention to group-based characteristics, paying attention to individual responsibilities and obligations. This is the prerequisite for “division” and “combination”. The West is moving toward “division” and China is moving toward “combination”.

The original social patterns were matrilineal. The first great division of labor in society was the separation of animal husbandry from agriculture. In ancient human society, the main force that provided the tribal groups with primitive public ownership was not men, but women. With the improvement of production tools, primitive agriculture and primitive animal husbandry have developed rapidly, which has caused new changes in the division of labor. With the formation of large-scale herds, some tribes are mainly engaged in animal husbandry, separating themselves from agriculture and becoming nomadic tribes. The daily necessities produced by nomadic tribes are different from other tribes, and the quantity is larger, which promotes exchange. The exchange has accordingly promoted the development of private ownership, and the family has also changed accordingly. The animal husbandry of men has become the main means of earning a living, and men have gained a dominant position in the family. The first great division of labor brought many changes to society, and the result was the first great division of society, where the paternal line replaced the matriline (Li, 2010). The second great division of labor in society refers to the separation of the handicraft industry from agriculture. It happened in the advanced stage of the barbaric period of primitive society.

After the first great division of labor in society, productivity has further developed. In most areas, people discovered ironware after bronzeware was discovered. Ploughing was used in agriculture instead of hoeing. As ploughing uses a new power-animal power, agricultural development has taken an important step. There are more and more agricultural products, which provide humans with regular and reliable food. The development of agriculture laid the foundation for the prosperity of the handicraft industry. Pottery, metallurgy, casting and other handicrafts were all developed at this time. The types of handicrafts were increasing day by day, and the production technology was becoming more and more complex. Such diverse activities could no longer be carried out by the same person, so the second division of labor took place: handicrafts and agriculture (Li, 2010).

After the second great division of labor in China, the patrilineal clan commune developed to the pinnacle of the clan system. But the more the patrilineal clan develops, the more it creates the factors of disintegration from within. This is due to the further improvement of production tools and farming methods so that a piece of land that had to be cultivated by the entire family or even the entire clan was required to be farmed by only a few people. This makes productive labor increasingly individualized. In this way, in the late patriarchy, small families were separated from large families. This kind of small family is a monogamous individual family, a single-family production and living unit composed of a couple and their children. The growth of individual families and the deepening of the social division of labor gradually disintegrated the patrilineal family commune, which is the basic cell of the patrilineal clan society. In the article “Division and Combination: A Comparison of the Fundamental Spirits of Chinese and Western Cultures”, Lu believes: “This family-based social structure determines people’s dependence on family and clan concentration (Lu, 2013). Only by integrating with his existing group and society can an individual gain a definite social status and a sense of belonging”. The dissolution of individuals in society has shaped group-based values. Groups not only provide individuals with a fundamental guarantee for their lives but also fix individuals in the group’s network of relationships. Therefore, throughout the dynasties of China, the smallest unit in society was the family, and the state was the family or the expansion of the family. Every member of the family coexists together and is responsible for society together. In general, the group-based approach is the most basic prerequisite for China to move toward “combination”.

At the same time in Europe, after the second great division of labor, the spread of agriculture was mainly through the migration of individual farmers. Historically, due to the constraints of agricultural output, periodic diseases, and competition from other civilizations, people in the core areas of European agriculture have formed a stronger spirit of collectivism to protect themselves, and they are more inclined to kingdom rule and a unified country. Residents who advocate liberalism and have a strong pioneering spirit choose to immigrate to the west and north to open up wasteland, and gradually pass through the German region to distant places such as Britain and Northern Europe. When a certain area is gradually developed, population density rises, and then transformed into an agricultural core area, the aforementioned population diversion process will occur again, and the population distribution will again appear to be self-selected. Land resources are limited, and the population is increasing. To maximize personal interests, competition and conflicts continue to occur in groups so that groups are separated and become independent survival of individuals. "From the perspective of the historical development of Western culture, ancient Greece has the unique conditions of the ocean. Exploration and unique commercial civilization enabled ancient Greeks to have a strong personal consciousness early on, and they began to look at people from a rational perspective. Differences with nature, individuals, and society. In the ancient Roman private law system, jurists regarded the law as the rules for confirming and defending individual rights" (Lu, 2013). In medieval Christianity, God gave everyone a soul and saved mankind as an individual, which gave the meaning of individual existence. Society can only intervene and influence individuals to a minimum and must respect the individual personality and private space. In modern times, John Locke proposed that individuals exist before society and that their lives, freedoms, properties are not violated, and between an individual and an individual, an individual and a society and, a society and a country are formed based on rules and agreements (Locke, 1980). The mission of the country and society is to protect the rights of individuals. Therefore, the West is moving toward "division" and individualism is its most basic premise.

2. The concept of country and society

According to Wan, China's "home" and "country" are mainly "united" and inseparable. The country in the Chinese view is so close-not as close as family members, and not regarded as a member of the family, but the leader of all families - the parents of all families. It is deeply

embedded in society in a way completely different from the West. Chinese people often have this understanding: family and country have the same structure. In the context of Chinese traditional culture, “home” and “country” are roughly constructed according to the same organizational principles. Wan once wrote: “The Chinese call “我们 Wǒmen - means we” as “大家 Dàjiā - means big family”, “他人 Tārén - means other people” as “人家 Rénjiā - means people of other family”, and “祖国 Zǔguó- means country” as “国家 Guójia - means country of family”, reflecting that Chinese culture is essentially a kind of “family” culture” (Wan, 2017). There is a “country” as long as there is a “family”. The family is the basic organizational unit of ancient Chinese agricultural society; the family relationship is the most basic but most refined social relationship in the Chinese cultural system. Chinese people have built the world’s most complex interpersonal identification system around family relationships. The family undertakes the basic governance functions of long-term stability in Chinese society, including economic, financial, education, medical care, and pension functions that should be partly or fully borne by the government. In historical social turmoil, family security is also a “refuge” against “government failure” and “anarchy”. From Mencius’s “Kingdom” to Tao Yuanming’s “The Peach Blossom Spring” to the “China’s Dream” of the new era, the family has provided strong support for the development and rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. In the face of national disasters, social crises, and the difficulty of “loyalty” and “filial piety”, Chinese people have an innate overall view and a spirit of self-sacrifice to give up their lives and sacrifice for justice. As the saying goes “If there is no country, there will be no family?”

Contrary to China, in Western culture, from Locke’s “Two Treatises of Government” to Rousseau’s “The Social Contract”, “home” and “nation” are regarded as two different fields, following different principles of organization and governance. In Locke and Rousseau’s view, in order to protect the natural freedom of man, people enter into contracts and establish governments; the power of the ruler comes from the consent of the ruled, “People unite to become a nation and a major and important person under the government. The purpose is to protect their property” (Locks, 1980; Rousseau, 2004). In this kind of relationship, the family is just a combination of human freedom and property rights. The government is a temporary agency of the state. The family and the country are often in an optional relationship between individual freedom and property rights, requiring power struggles between different political groups.

Family and country have the same structure. In the context of oriental culture, especially in the context of traditional Chinese culture, the basis for judging good governance or tyranny, good governance or evil governance depends on whether it is beneficial to the people's livelihood and whether it is beneficial to the survival and development of the people. Therefore, people's livelihood is one of the political themes of the Chinese dynasties. Focusing on this key issue and core values, Chinese culture has nurtured a system of values oriented towards unity, harmony, responsibility, dedication, and individual interests subordinate to collective interests. "Family" is opposed to "state". In the context of Western culture, "democracy" is the eternal politics of modern Western governments, even if it is a money-based democracy or vote-based democracy presented through power struggles and manipulation of public opinion. Based on this key issue and core value, Western culture has developed its value system oriented by freedom, human rights, fairness and transparency, and political participation.

3. The concept of the Chinese Empire and the Roman Empire

The Huaxia Empire refers to the ancient Chinese feudal dynasty in the era of great unity in the history of Western historians. In ancient China, the feudal dynasties usually refer to the Chinese empire at that time by dynasty names, such as the Han, Tang, Ming and Qing dynasties. The Roman Empire (27 BC-1453 AD, the Western Roman Empire was destroyed in 476, and the Eastern Roman Empire was destroyed in 1453), was a great empire centered on the Mediterranean Sea, spanning Europe, Asia, and Africa, its official name is *Senātus Populusque*, and named Daqin and Fufu in Chinese history books. Europe used to be very large. On the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the ancient Roman Empire was described as they once spanned Asia, Africa and Latin America. Later, the Holy Roman Empire also unified most of Europe, but it soon split into three countries. Reunification with Europe is temporary, and the history where division is the main theme is relatively China. China was very small at first, including Henan, Shaanxi, Shanxi, and Hebei, but today China's territory is approximately 963,400,700 square kilometers.

Why the Roman Empire was "divided up"? How did China "combine" and maintain unity for most of the next two thousand years? This is caused by the differences between Chinese and Western nations, cultures, topography, and ideology.

Great Unification and Huaxia’s View

China tends to “combine”, first of all, because the core of China has always been the Central Plain (中原 Zhōngyuán) since ancient times. The unification model has always been to compete for the Central Plains and occupy the Central Plains region with the most developed agriculture and the most prosperous civilization.

Secondly, from the pre-Qin era, the “view of the world” was formed. It is a concept of limited territory that expands outward based on a center. Therefore, who is at the center becomes a key issue. The concept of unification is based on this problem. They were constructed by later Confucian students according to different situations need. With the rise of Confucianism, these concepts gradually evolved into national ideologies. During the Spring and Autumn and Warring States period, ~~there were~~ endless battles, and countless deaths and injuries, then the first emperor of Qin ruled the country, unified written characters, weights and measures, cultivated roads, built the Great Wall, promoted the system of prefectures and counties, laid an immortal foundation. Only in a unified era can ordinary people live a good life. Referring to and achieving the goals, this contribution is difficult to compare with in future generations. Only in a unified era can ordinary people really live a good life. Qin “initially united the world” and “divided the world into thirty-six counties” (Lu, 2013).

A unified civilization must have a core in its geographic unit. The core thing is the identity of a unified cultural system, including language, writing, knowledge, and ideology. This kind of self-identity precedes the unified empire, which has completed the “cultural construction” before the unified empire. In China, a single-subject nation has brought a relatively single culture. The unified empire was destroyed, but the cultural group was still there. In Rome, this bond never existed. The rivalry between Latin culture and Germanic culture includes Byzantine Greek culture, Slavic culture, and the once glorious Islamic culture. The whole of Europe has been in the collision of various cultures until nowadays. Roman culture is not Roman, but Greek, and the essence and excellence of Greek culture is abstract philosophical thinking and the pursuit of endless truth, rather than serving real politics and world issues. Therefore, although the Roman Empire has a long history, its inherent conditions are not strong enough. There are differences in culture, language, and ideology among the various races, that is, they cannot achieve great unity and become more and more fragmented.

Topography

In the Spring and Autumn Period, the core area of China bordered the Pacific Ocean in the east, mountains and ridges in the west, deserts in the north, and barbarians in the south. In comparison, European countries have been involved in North Africa, West Asia, and Eastern Europe since ancient Greece, and its area could reach nearly ten times that of China in the Spring and Autumn Period. The “task” of unification was obviously much more difficult for Europe. The Yangtze and Yellow Rivers in China were the main cradle of civilization, and the two rivers were very close together, resulting in a relatively concentrated population. However, water sources in Europe are very scattered. The Danube, Rhine, Don, Elbe, Loire, Volga, etc. were scattered in various regions. Therefore, civilization gathering points and even large cities built along the river were naturally scattered in various regions, it did not form a whole nation with cohesive force. This led to the next factor.

Ethnic/Nationality

In the ancient Chinese empire, the Han nationality was a dominant nation, so it was easier to “heal”. Moreover, the Han nationality had a strong ability to assimilate and could show a very strong tolerance for other ethnic groups in a unified non-war era. This point reached its peak during the Tang Dynasty. Even in the period of being ruled, the Han people could quickly counterattack the ruling nation by virtue of their advanced civilization, and management capabilities which was accumulated over thousands of years.

European nations were more complicated and easy to “divide” into independent groups. Latins, Germans, and Slavs were divided into three parts of the world. Besides Celts, Greeks, Magyars, Bulgars, etc., scattered in every corner of the entire European continent. The first three major European nations had always been in a delicately balanced struggle. Such a struggle was brought about as a result of their affairs. Even if they often intermarried with each other, they still could not change the reality of lack of subject cohesion. Due to the lack of a dominant ethnic group, the various ethnic groups in Europe were embodied in an attitude of not accepting anyone and acting independently. After the emergence of nationalism, these nations gradually formed their respective main countries.

Writings and text

The Chinese use ideograms, which are more suitable for a unified empire than phonograms, and can build a bridge of communication for people who cannot communicate by language. The identity of the Huaxia Civilization was not based on descent and skin color

but on textual concepts. During the time of Emperor Qin Shihuang, Xiaozhuan was used uniformly throughout the country. In the Han Dynasty, the promotion of official script made it possible for people across the country to write Chinese characters so as to make them understand even if they spoke in dialects that they did not understand at all. The recognition of an official script was already quite high. The relatively unified language and writing made it easier for various regions in China to communicate, which also promoted cultural tolerance and cohesion. Uniform writing is also one of the basic principles of “combination”.

In fact, even in the Roman Empire, the Latin language in different regions had quite different accents. When the empire collapsed, with the relative independent development of various regions, the differences in spoken languages in countries such as Spain, France, Italy, Portugal and other places increased. Finally, based on the Latin family, the unique language of each nation was derived: Italy English, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Romanian, etc. These belong to the Romance Languages, which is also the Latin language family. As compared to Rome, the Germans belonged to a backward civilization, and their languages did not replace the dialects of the Latin region. (The only exception is the United Kingdom, where the Anglo-Saxon language replaced the ancient Celtic language.) Although there was no replacement, it still had an impact. With the addition of Slavic languages, the European language family is more scattered. Therefore, European countries existed independently, and different languages made the Roman Empire one of the principles of “division”.

4. View of nature: the harmony or independence of nature and human beings

The relationship between man and nature is the first issue to be dealt with in human survival and development. Although Chinese culture also had the idea of “controlling the destiny of heaven and using it”, the dominant concept was the harmony of nature and humans, they believed that humans and nature were closely related and interdependent, thus forming the natural view of harmony between humans and nature. On the contrary, Western culture regarded nature as an external thing, an object that could only be used and modified by humans, and regarded the conquest of nature as the manifestation of the essential power of humans, thus forming the dichotomy of nature and humans.

Li Dazhao in “The Fundamental Differences between Eastern and Western Civilizations” stated that: The East receives many blessings from nature, so its civilization is one that is in harmony with nature. The West receives less blessings from nature, so its civilization is one

that struggles with nature. One is to be in harmony with nature, one is to control nature. Li Dazhao's emphasis on one being "in harmony with nature" and the other "to control nature" in the relationship between humans and nature, also affirmed that one is natural adaptation, and the other is natural conquest. (Li, 1918).

China's concept of "Unity of Man and Nature" was proposed by Zhuangzi¹. "Unity of Heaven and Humanity" first proposes that humans are united with heaven and that heaven and humans are in harmony. Xinzong Yao considers this a rationalistic approach to heaven as the spiritual ultimate initiated a humanistic understanding of the "way of heaven" and "way of human" (Yao, 2000). This idea had made a huge impact on agricultural civilization. The long-term agricultural life made people attach great importance to the coordination between humans and nature. On the other hand, people also experienced a close connection with nature in their agricultural production and labor, which precipitated the harmonious unity of human and nature. China has always had a tradition of attaching importance to agriculture. Since ancient times, farmers have had the habit of making offerings to heaven and earth, not only congratulating a good harvest, and thanking nature, but also praying for blessings from nature for the upcoming year. In China's agricultural society, the relationship between humans and nature is extremely close. In Chinese traditional weddings, the bride and groom pay homage first to "heaven and earth".

Laozi in Chapter 25 indicates that "Man follows the way of earth, earth follows the way of heaven, heaven follows the way of the Tao, and the Tao follows the way of spontaneity" (Wang et al., 2008). The idea of harmony between humans and nature is the basic principle of Chinese culture in dealing with the relationship between humans and nature, reflecting the close relationship between them. Therefore, "the idea of harmony between humans and nature has important enlightening significance for solving the problems of environmental pollution and the destruction of ecological balance caused by industrialization and unrestricted conquest of nature in today's world" (Liang, 2005).

The West is moving towards "division". In the issue of the relationship between humans and nature, Western culture puts humans in a state of opposition, emphasizing that humans must conquer nature, and control nature, humans and nature are in opposition to each other, not harmonize each other. Therefore, in ancient Greece, one of the origins of

¹ AKA Chuang-tzu 莊子 or "Master Zhuang", is the pivotal figure in Classical Philosophical Daoism.

Western culture, philosophers focused on exploring nature, taking “nature” as the object of understanding outside of human beings, forming a more developed natural philosophy. The theologians of the Middle Ages granted humans the right to rule nature. As the Bible says: The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth and upon every bird of the heavens, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea. Into your hand they are delivered. (English Standard Version Bible, 2001, Genesis. 9:2). The ancient Chinese idea of unity between nature and human beings strongly affirms the unity between the natural and spiritual worlds, emphasizing the harmony between humans activities and the natural world, deeply demonstrating dialectical thinking about the relationship between subjectivity and objectivity, between subjective dynamism and objective regularity. Its ideological value and practical significance are huge. Objectively, the idea of the unity of nature and humanity warns humans not to go against the laws of nature, to surpass the laws of nature, to insatiably improve nature, to conquer nature, but can only take advantage of nature on the premise of compliance and respect for natural laws, allowing humans to coexist and develop with other creatures in the natural world. At the same time, with the deepening of practice and perception, in the tradition of thought of the unity of nature and humanity, the natural world is absolutely not an opposing entity that transcends humans, it is not a mystical thing, but something that can be perceived. Therefore, the issue of unity between the natural world and humans, between the human spirit and behavior and external nature, the balance of individual body and mind and the balance of external nature, the balance between morality and Heaven and man’s way... are possible and inevitable.

Ancient Western science sought to study nature, so Western Greek antiquity produced great mathematicians such as Pythagoras and Euclidean; and famous physicists and architects such as Archimedes. Even in the darkest period - the Middle Ages, Europe was dominated by religion and theocracy, controlling scientists like Galilei and Bruno to search for the secrets of nature. Through the Renaissance period of art, in the context of scientific research, Europe in the 16th century began to shift from emotional and experiential results to research and understanding of ethics and laws. Regarding methods, modern natural science research methods were gradually formed on the basis of scientific experiments. They took advantage of ancient natural science documents and achievements to make natural science move away from religion and theology and develop rapidly. Based on new science and technology, Columbus discovered a new continent, people like Magellan succeeded in proving that

the earth rotates, proving that the earth is spherical. This not only accelerated the destruction of feudal church rule and promoted capitalist economic growth, but also increased people's confidence and courage in the search for truth, learn the secrets of great nature, and conquer and transform nature. After the Renaissance, humanism and rationalism began to wake up in the West. Humanism promoted the spirit of human nature, while rationalism aroused people's desire to explore nature, and then became a sharp weapon for understanding and transforming nature. Descartes believed that with the help of science, "we can make ourselves the masters and rulers of nature" (Descartes, 1998). Yu in other words commented that only by conquering the barbarous and murderous nature could human beings recover their subjectivity (Yu, 2012). In ancient Greece, people's love for themselves surpassed everything, and the beauty of the human body became a model of all beauty. In the 18th century, European capital accumulation was basically completed, and people's interest in studying natural science and its achievements grew more and more. Newton's theory of universal gravitation and optical theory, James Watt's discovery of the steam engine,... With new research results in all fields of natural science such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, astronomy, and biology, Westerners have taken a big step on the path of conquering nature and improving nature.

5. Ideology

Monism and dualism

It can be seen that there is a huge difference between the traditional Chinese Confucian moral culture and the Western moral culture. From a deeper perspective, moral culture is a category of understanding. The existence of culture is not the inevitability of the external world, it is formed by the self-consciousness of the subject. Therefore, the analysis of Chinese Confucian morality and Western morality should start from the subject's thinking level, that is, the cosmology. The concept of the word universe is the core issue of culture, and it is people's understanding of the relationship between people and the outside world. The difference in cosmological views is the deep-seated cause of cultural differences.

According to Confucius (551–479 BCE)², morality is the five basic human social relationships called human morality, Mencius (372–289 BC)³ called the five moral principles as lord and retainer, father-son, husband-wife, brothers, and friends. Among them, the three most basic

² A Chinese philosopher of the Spring and Autumn period.

³ An itinerant Chinese philosopher and sage, and one of the principal interpreters of Confucianism.

relationships, Dong Zhongshu (197–104 BC)⁴, called the Three Fundamental Bonds – are three ties that bind people from family relationships to society. Virtue is the most important quality that people need to have to perform well in the above basic relationships. In Mencius, it is the “Four Virtues” (benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom); Dong Zhongshu named it the “Five Virtues” (benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness). He tells us in The Spring and Autumn Annals: The lord is yang (阳), the retainer is yin (阴); the father is yang, the son is yin; the husband is yang, the wife is yin. The way of yin cannot proceed anywhere on its own...Therefore, the retainer depends on his lord to gain merit; the son depends on his father; the wife on her husband, yin on yang, and the Earth on Heaven... The Three [Fundamental Bonds] of the kingly way can be sought in Heaven (Chapter 53).

Three Fundamental Bonds and Five Constant Virtues are often combined, the purpose that Confucianism promotes is social stability, ultimately it is to protect the rights of the emperor – “son of heaven” and maintain class distinctions. This is not only the content of Confucian political ideology, but also has moral meaning and is a moral requirement of humans. We know that one of those moral categories is conscience and responsibility. From this perspective of sense, a person who fulfills his or her duties and obligations means that person is moral. The positive meaning of the ideology is to make people clearly aware of their responsibilities and obligations in social relationships. Humans exist in countless interwoven social relationships, in each of which humans have certain obligations to perform. This is necessary in all social regimes, at all times. The ideology requires people to properly fulfill their obligations to the community and society within the framework of their dignity, contributing to maintaining social stability. Hence, Chinese people always remember their position and place themselves bound to the community and to relationships in society, which literally cannot exist independently.

The thinking framework of Western culture and Chinese culture has a mirror structure. The difference is that Western culture is a reflective culture while Chinese culture is an experiential culture. Western culture advocates a dualistic view of the universe and tends to “divide” that human beings and the external world are not unified, and material and profound are separated. People in the West are more likely to be opposed to nature, society, others, and even God. If people want to know themselves, they must reflect through the mirror of

⁴ The great Han dynasty Confucian philosopher and statesman.

the external world. This kind of cosmology of Westerners separates people from the universe, and can well explain the Western individual-centered morality. China's traditional Confucian culture advocates a unified view of the universe, "combined" and believes that man and the external world are unified and harmonious, and the world is regarded as an indivisible whole. This cosmological thinking mode determines that Chinese culture shows the value principle of focusing on the consistency of family and country in the outlook on life.

Quantitative and qualitative

The qualitative ideology of the Chinese is a kind of overall thinking, and the way of cognition of things goes from the whole to the part. Historically, because China's external environment, such as climate and geography, is relatively stable on the whole, qualitative thinking is sufficient to meet the needs of survival, and the culture does not pay attention to the details of things, and qualitative thinking does not have the motivation to pursue details. This can be seen in Chinese traditional ink-painting art. On the other hand, Chinese ancestors used qualitative thinking to develop ideology. Starting from the basic logic of the mutual influence of everything in the world, they built a relatively complete model of the universe's operation from a macro perspective. This is supported by the "I Ching", of course, not only the "I Ching".

Westerners's quantitative ideology generally recognizes things from part to the whole. Quantitative thinking not only tells us what it is but also explains how much it is. In this way, precise mathematics, a cognitive world such as classical mathematics appears. Quantitative thinking is similar to building a house, building bricks by bricks, leaving no room for uncertainty. Therefore, Westerners pay more attention to the details. Western oil painting consists of a large number of details to form a complete picture, which is the manifestation of this thinking. On the other hand, the cognitive path of quantitative thinking from one part to the whole makes Westerners pay attention to summarizing the laws through phenomena, and then express them with mathematical formulas, then use pure mathematics to deduct, sublime into theories, and integrate scattered and partial theories. For a unified theory, the "unified field theory" that Einstein worked hard for is such an attempt.

6. Conclusion

Over thousands of years of history and development, people, with their hands and minds, have built what we still call culture today. And of course, culture has become the foundation,

the launching pad that takes people from barbarism to civilization. Current civilization is the civilization of the age of digital technology, the age of global culture. However, culture is the choice of each human community - a community in each different territory with its own geographical and economic conditions, from the very beginning, even though they have the same common denominator. However, each community has different cultural choices. As Marx says, that leads to differences in outlook on life, worldview, thinking, concepts, methods of survival, production, customs, lifestyle and even habits. In the process of cognition of the world, dealing with the relationship between humans and nature, humans and society, and humans themselves, Chinese and Western cultures have formed a typical cultural spirit with “combination” and “separation” as the basic characteristics. China’s “combination” culture contains not only positive elements of harmony and progress but also negative elements of conservative and backwardness. It is precisely by emphasizing the “division” and difference that the Western culture has formed the progressive values of scientific spirit equality and democracy. But it is also the emphasis on division and subjectivity. Western culture has brought heavy pressure and endless loneliness to the individuals in it. It also has serious ecological crises and sharp-value confrontations among them. Therefore, it is necessary to dialectically analyze the differences between Chinese and Western cultures and, at the same time, learn from each other’s strengths in cultural exchanges, to jointly promote the progress and prosperity of human culture.

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