

崔校平
编著

比较

文化

中西



上海交通大学出版社
SHANGHAI JIAO TONG UNIVERSITY PRESS

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内容提要

本书的目标是培养学生的文化意识,让学生了解中华文化和西方文化的差异以及差异的根源,以缓解跨文化交际中可能碰到的文化冲击,为学生跨文化交际扫除障碍,使他们在以后的学习、工作和社会交往中能用英语有效地进行跨文化交际,同时提高综合文化素养,以适应我国社会发展和国际交流对具有国际竞争力的人才的需要,提高学生独立鉴别、吸收文化的能力,增强文化创新意识。本书主要包括以下内容:文化与地理环境、文化与神话传说、教育制度、语言与思维模式、艺术生活与风格、家庭观念与价值观以及饮食与烹饪艺术等。本书可供大学本科学生和研究生使用。

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前 言

文化(culture)是一个非常广泛的概念,它指的是人类在社会历史发展过程中所创造的物质和精神财富的总和。笼统地说,文化是一种社会现象,是人们长期创造形成的产物。同时文化又是一种历史现象,是社会历史的积淀物。确切地说,文化是指一个国家或民族的历史、地理、宗教、风土人情、传统习俗、生活方式、文学艺术、行为规范、思维方式、价值观念等。

《中西文化比较》一书用英文写成,由导入、文化与地理环境、文化与神话传说、宗教信仰与价值观念、语言与思维模式、艺术生活与风格、家庭观念与传统和饮食与烹饪八章组成。该书旨在培养大学生的跨文化意识,使他们了解中国文化和西方文化的差异、差异的根源,以缓解跨文化交际中可能碰到的文化冲击,为他们跨文化交际时扫清文化上的障碍,使他们在以后的工作、学习和社会交往中能用英语有效地进行跨文化交际,不断提高综合文化素养,以适应我国社会发展和国际交流对具有国际竞争力人才的需要,提高学生独立鉴别、吸收文化的能力,增强文化创新意识。

国家不同,民族不同,文化习俗也就不同。不同文化反映着不同国家、民族在意识形态、思维方式、价值观念以及生活方式等诸方面的独有特点。中国是个东方大国,其传统文化不同于西方。中国历史悠久,从远古的神话传说时代、尧舜禹的禅让、夏商西周、东周春秋战国的百家争鸣、秦汉统一、三国战乱、魏晋南北朝的民族大融合、隋唐五代光辉灿烂的文化直到宋元明清帝制的结束,五千年的历史留给我们无尽的财富。中国传统文化是以老子道德文化为本体,以儒家、庄子和墨子的思想、道家文化为主体等多元文化融通和谐包容的文化体系。西方文化主要是指以希腊罗马文化为起源、以基督教为主要宗教信仰、以近现代工业为经济模式的文化。通常,人们认为西方文化包括以下几个时期:①以人为本的古希腊罗马时期;②以神为本的中世纪封建主义时期,即基督教文化时期;③突显科学技术、市场经济和产业发 展的近代文艺复兴时期;④宣扬民主政治思想的现代资本主义时期。由此可见,中国文化与西方文化大不相同。

比如,中国饮食文化突出养助益充的营卫论,强调以素食为主,重视药膳和进补,并且讲究食物的“色、香、味”俱全。而西方人遵循的是一种理性饮食观念,他们讲究每一天要摄取多少热量、维生素、蛋白质等,注重的是饮食的营养,而不太在意食物的色、香、味或形。



总之,中国人推崇集体主义,而西方人推崇个人主义。中国文化鼓励人们克制内敛,而西方文化给人们表达情感的自由。中国人重“内”,西方人崇“外”。中国人喜欢从动态中观察分析事物,西方人习惯从静态中观察分析事物。中国人善于把握整体,注重平衡,习惯从整体中看个体;西方人喜欢化整为零,注重分析,习惯从个体中看整体。中国文化崇尚斗智,因而棋术十分发达;西方文化崇尚斗勇,故而体育甚为突出。中国文化重现世,尚事功,学以致用;西方文化重思辨,尚超越,学以致用。

本书对中国文化和西方文化两个根本不同的体系进行多方位的对比,解析中西文化的突出差异及根源,每个章节后面都附有若干注释、思考题,以帮助读者理解每个章节的内容,也方便教师开展教学工作。本书既可作为高等学校教学用书,又可供广大热爱中西优秀文化的读者阅读。

在本书的编写过程中,作者参阅了大量相关教材、论著,并从互联网上选取了部分文字材料,由于篇幅所限,在此不再一一列出,谨向有关出版社及作者表示深深的谢意!此外,本书的编写还得到了山东大学本科生院领导的大力支持和帮助,在此一并致谢!

崔校平

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Chapter One

Introduction

Section 1 What Is Culture?

Definition of culture

Culture is a word for people's "way of life", referring to the way groups do things. Different groups of people may have different cultures and different nations have different cultures. A culture is passed on to the next generation by learning, whereas genetics are passed on by heredity. Culture is seen in people's writings, religions, musics, clothes, cooking, and in what they do. The concept of culture is very complicated and difficult to define. The word "culture" is borrowed from the Latin word "cultura", which stems from "colere", meaning "to cultivate". It is a term that has different meanings. For example, in 1952, Alfred Louis Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn compiled a list of 164 definitions of "culture" in *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*. However, the word "culture" is most commonly used in three basic senses: 1) Excellence of taste in the fine arts and humanities, also known as **high culture**^①. 2) An integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior. 3) The outlook, attitudes, values, morals, goals, and customs shared by a society.

All in all, culture can be defined as all the ways of life including arts, beliefs and institutions of a population that are passed down from generation to generation. Culture has been called "the way of life for an entire society". As such, it includes codes of manners, dresses, languages, religions, rituals, norms of behavior such as law and morality, and systems of belief as well as the art. Most broadly, "culture" includes all human phenomena which are not purely results of human genetics. The discipline which investigates cultures is called anthropology, though many other disciplines play a part.

National cultures

Cultures are what make countries unique. Each country has different cultural activities and cultural rituals. Culture is more than just material goods, that is things the culture uses and produces. Culture is also the beliefs and values of the people in that country. Furthermore, culture includes the way people think about and understand the world and their own lives.

Different countries have different cultures. Here is just one example of it. In many countries, people will tell you what they think you want to hear, whether or not it is true. To them, this is the polite thing to do. To Americans, however, it is considered confusing, even dishonest to avoid telling the true facts, even for the sake of politeness. It is helpful to remember that different cultures consider



some matters more important than others. For Americans, trust and truth are most important. One of the worst things that can be said about someone in America is that “you cannot trust him.”

Considering such differences in values among the many cultures of the world, we come to know a certain truth. We realize it is natural that misunderstandings will occur. “How far is it to the next town?” an American traveler asks a man standing by the edge of a road. In some countries, the man may realize the traveler is tired and eager to reach the next village. Therefore he will politely say, “Just down the road.” He thinks this is more encouraging, gentler, and therefore it is the matter-of-course answer the traveler wants to hear. São the American drives alone for many more hours before he comes to the village. The traveler is angry, feeling tricked. He thinks that the man has purposely lied to him. The man must have known quite well what the distance was, the American traveler thinks. If a visitor to the United States asked an American standing at the edge of a road how far the next town was, the American would think it dishonest if he said it was near when he knew it was actually 24 miles away. While he, too, would be sympathetic with the tired traveler, he would say, “You have a long way to go yet; it is at least 24 miles more.” The traveler might be disappointed, but he would know what to expect. In this case, there would be no misunderstanding.

Sub-cultures^②

Culture can also vary within a region, society or sub-group. A workplace may have a specific culture that sets it apart from similar workplaces. A region of a country may have a different culture than the rest of the country. For example, Atlantic Canada has a different culture than the rest of Canada, which is expressed by different ways of talking, different types of music, and different types of dances. A group who acts or speaks differently may be said to be, or have, a subculture.

In cultural studies, and sociology, a subculture is a group of people within a culture that differentiates themselves from the larger culture to which they belong. The term “subculture” has become **deprecated** among some researchers, who prefer the term **co-culture**, in order to avoid the connotations of inferiority associated with the “sub-” prefix. While exact definitions vary, the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the term as “a cultural group within a larger culture, often having beliefs or interests at variance with those of the larger culture.”

The study of subcultures often consists of the study of symbolism attached to clothing, music and other visible affectations by members of subcultures, and also the ways in which these same symbols are interpreted by members of the dominant culture. According to Dick Hebdige (迪克·赫伯迪格,著名当代文化批评家和理论家), members of a subculture often signal their membership through a distinctive and symbolic use of style, which includes fashions, **mannerisms**, and argot. And subcultures can exist at all levels of organizations, highlighting the fact that there are multiple cultures or value combinations usually evident in any one organization that can complement but also compete with the overall organizational culture. In some instances, subcultures have been legislated against, and their activities regulated or **curtailed**. Youth subcultures have been described as a moral problem that ought to be handled by the guardians of society within the post-war consensus. British youths in the post-war era were labeled as troublemakers by members of the dominant culture.

It may be difficult to identify certain subcultures because their style (particularly clothing and music) may be adopted by mass culture for commercial purposes. Businesses often seek to **capitalize on** the **subversive** allure of subcultures in search of *Cool*, which remains valuable in the selling of any



product. This process of **cultural appropriation** may often result in the death or evolution of the subculture, as its members adopt new styles that appear alien to mainstream society. For example, music-based subcultures are particularly vulnerable to this process, and so what may be considered a subculture at one stage in its history—such as jazz, **goth**^③, **punk**^④, **hip hop**^⑤ and **rave cultures**^⑥—may represent mainstream taste within a short period of time. Some subcultures reject or modify the importance of style, stressing membership through the adoption of an ideology which may be much more resistant to commercial exploitation. The punk subculture's distinctive (and initially shocking) style of clothing was adopted by mass-market fashion companies once the subculture became a media interest. Dick Hebdige argues that the punk subculture shares the same “radical aesthetic practices” as Dada and surrealism.

Anthropology

Anthropology is the scientific study of humans, past and present, that draws and builds upon knowledge from the social sciences and life sciences, as well as the humanities. It provides students with a comparative, theoretical, and global understanding of human culture and society from evolutionary, historical, and contemporary perspectives. Anthropology is studying human beings and how they relate to each other. An anthropologist is a person who studies anthropology. Anthropologists believe that people use symbols to communicate (express) their experiences—who they are, what they believe, where they started. Anthropologists call this use of symbols “culture”. For example, immigrants (people who move from one country to another) may keep some of their customs and traditions from their old country. By keeping their culture in this way, they express who they are and that they came from somewhere else.

Culture is manifested in human **artifacts** and activities such as music, literature, lifestyle, food, painting and sculpture, theatre and film. Although some scholars identify culture in terms of consumption and consumer goods (as in high culture, **low culture**^⑦, folk culture, or **popular culture**^⑧), anthropologists understand “culture” to refer not only to consumption goods, but to the general processes which produce such goods and give them meaning, and to the social relationships and practices in which such objects and processes become embedded. For them, culture thus includes art, science, as well as moral systems.

Various definitions of culture reflect differing theories for understanding, or criteria for evaluating, human activity. Writing from the perspective of social anthropology in the UK, **Tylor**^⑨ in 1874 described culture in the following way: “Culture or civilization, taken in its wide **ethnographic** sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.”

In 2002, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) described culture as follows: “... culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs.”

Culture as civilization

Many people have an idea of “culture” that developed in Europe during the 18th and early 19th

centuries. This notion of culture reflected inequalities within European societies, and between European powers and their colonies around the world. It identifies “culture” with “civilization” and contrasts it with “nature.” According to this way of thinking, one can classify some countries and nations as more civilized than others, and some people as more cultured than others. Some cultural theorists have thus tried to eliminate popular or mass culture from the definition of culture. Theorists such as Matthew Arnold (1822~1888) or the **Leavisites**[®] regard culture as simply the result of “the best that has been thought and said in the world.” Arnold contrasted mass/popular culture with social chaos or anarchy. On this account, culture links closely with social cultivation; the progressive refinement of human behavior. Arnold consistently uses the word this way: “... *culture being a pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know, on all the matters which most concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world.*”

In practice, *culture* referred to élite activities such as **museum-caliber art** and classical music, and the word *cultured* described people who knew about, and took part in, these activities. These are often called “high culture”, namely the culture of the ruling social group, to distinguish them from mass culture or popular culture.

From the 19th century onwards, some social critics have accepted this contrast between the highest and lowest culture, but have stressed the refinement and sophistication of high culture as corrupting and unnatural developments that obscure and distort people’s essential nature. On this account, folk music (as produced by working-class people) honestly expresses a natural way of life, and classical music seems superficial and **decadent**. Equally, this view often portrays indigenous peoples as “noble savages” living authentic **unblemished** lives, uncomplicated and uncorrupted by the highly-stratified capitalist systems of the West.

Today most social scientists reject the monadic conception of culture, and the opposition of culture to nature. They recognize non-élites as just as cultured as élites (and non-Westerners as just as civilized)—simply regarding them as just cultured in a different way.

Cultural change

Cultures, by **predisposition**, both embrace and resist change, depending on culture traits. For example, men and women have complementary roles in many cultures. One gender might desire changes that affect the other, as happened in the second half of the 20th century in western cultures. Thus there are both dynamic influences that encourage acceptance of new things, and conservative forces that resist change.

Three kinds of influence cause both change and resistance to it: 1) forces at work within a society; 2) contact between societies; 3) changes in the natural environment.

Social conflict and the development of technologies can produce changes within a society by altering social dynamics and promoting new cultural models. Environmental conditions and contact with other societies may enter as factors, spurring or enabling generative action. These social shifts may accompany ideological shifts and other types of cultural change. For example, the end of the last ice age led to the invention of agriculture, which in its turn brought about many cultural innovations and shifts in social dynamics.

Contact between societies produce different types of changes in those societies. War or competition over resources may impact technological development or social dynamics. Additionally,



cultural ideas may transfer from one society to another, through diffusion or **acculturation**^①. In diffusion, the form of something (though not necessarily its meaning) moves from one culture to another. For example, hamburgers, common in the United States, seemed exotic when introduced into China. “**Stimulus diffusion**” (the sharing of ideas) refers to an element of one culture leading to an invention or propagation in another. “**Direct Borrowing**” on the other hand tends to refer to technological or tangible diffusion from one culture to another. Diffusion of innovations theory presents a research-based model of why and when individuals and cultures adopt new ideas, practices, and products.

Acculturation has different meanings, but in this context refers to replacement of the traits of one culture with those of another, such has happened to certain Native American tribes and to many indigenous peoples across the globe during the process of colonization. Related processes on an individual level include assimilation (adoption of a different culture by an individual) and **transculturation**.

Cultural invention has come to mean any innovation that is new and found to be useful to a group of people and expressed in their behavior but which does not exist as a physical object. Humanity is in a global “accelerating culture change period”, driven by the expansion of international commerce, the mass media, and above all, the human population explosion, among other factors.

Culture change is complex and has far-ranging effects. Sociologists and anthropologists believe that a **holistic approach** to the study of cultures and their environments is needed to understand all of the various aspects of change. Human existence may best be looked at as a “multifaceted whole.” Only from this vantage can one grasp the realities of culture change.

New Words

- deprecate *vt.* 不赞成
co-culture *n.* 合文化
mannerism *n.* 言谈举止
curtail *vt.* 削减, 剥夺
subversive *adj.* 颠覆性的
artifact *n.* 史前古器物
ethnographic *n.* 人种学
decadent *adj.* 堕落的, 颓废的
unblemished *adj.* 无污点的, 完美无缺的
predisposition *n.* 倾向
acculturation *n.* 文化适应, 文化互渗
transculturation *n.* 跨文化移化

Phrases and Expressions

- capitalize on 从……中获利
cultural appropriation 文化挪用
stimulus diffusion 刺激扩散
museum-caliber art 博物馆艺术
holistic approach 整体分析

Notes

1. **high culture** A term now used in a number of different ways in academic discourse, whose most common meaning is the set of cultural products, mainly in the arts, held in the highest esteem by a culture. In more popular terms, it is the culture of an upper class such as an aristocracy or an intelligentsia, but it can also be defined as a repository of a broad cultural knowledge, a way of transcending the class system. It is contrasted with the low culture or popular culture of, variously, the less well-educated, barbarians, Philistines, or the masses. Still similarities can be noted between high culture and traditional-folk culture as they can be all conceived as the repository of shared and accumulated traditions functioning as a living continuum between the past and present.
2. **subculture** 亚文化,又称次文化,是一个社会学名词,指在某个较大的母文化中拥有不同行为和信仰的较小文化或一群人。次文化和其他社会团体之间的差别,在于他们有意使自己的服装、音乐或其他兴趣与众不同。一个文化通常包含了很多个次文化,某些次文化的差异在到达了某个程度以后,会拥有自己的名字。
3. **goth** 哥特文化,gothic 的简称,但与建筑无关。它是一种跟潮流、生活模式有关的文化。哥特文化作为一场现代文化运动,开始于20世纪70年代末期朋克摇滚音乐的浪潮,当后者渐渐退去的时候,它作为一种边缘的亚文化幸存了下来。哥特文化是一种独特的中世纪复古风格的音乐、艺术和文学的文化范畴。在音乐上它承袭了70年代欧美朋克摇滚音乐的风格,在艺术上表现为一种对12世纪到16世纪西欧的哥特式建筑风格的强烈复古倾向,在文学上演变为那种隐郁和怪诞的神秘黑暗文学。哥特文化实际上倾向于那种非暴力的、和平主义的、被动的、宽忍的生活态度,但在许多媒体中却将它错误地理解为那种极端暴力的、仇视少数民族的和白人至上主义的边缘文化。哥特文化总是表现出一种孤僻疏离的、阴沉的精神气质,它总是去探讨那些引人深思的社会问题,如种族歧视、战争以及仇恨。
4. **punk** 朋克,又译为庞克,诞生于20世纪70年代中期,一种源于60年代车库摇滚和前朋克摇滚的简单摇滚乐。它是最原始的摇滚乐——由一个简单悦耳的主旋律和三个和弦组成。朋克音乐不太讲究音乐技巧,更加倾向于思想解放和反主流的尖锐立场,这种初衷在20世纪70年代特定的历史背景下在英、美两国都得到了积极效仿,最终形成了朋克运动。
5. **hip hop** 嘻哈是20世纪60年代源于美国街头的一种黑人文化,也泛指rap(说唱乐)。嘻哈文化的五种表现方式包括rap、b-boying(街舞)、dj-ing(玩唱片及唱盘技巧)、graffiti writing(涂鸦艺术)、beat-box(口技)。因此说唱只是嘻哈文化中的一种元素,要加上其他舞蹈、服饰、生活态度等才构成完整的嘻哈文化。
6. **rave cultures** It used to be that raves were grass-roots organized, anti-establishment, unlicensed all-night drug-fueled dance parties held in abandoned warehouses or an open field. These days, you pay \$40 for a branded party at popular riverfront nightclubs where age and status, rather than DJ expertise and dancing, shape your experience.
7. **low culture** A derogatory term for some forms of popular culture that have mass appeal. Its contrast is high culture. It has been said by culture theorists that both high culture and low culture are subcultures. Today, this would mean things like “take-away” meals, gossip magazines, and books that are current best-sellers. In 2013, the open-access *Trash Culture Journal* was established, which provides a platform for discussing discourses surrounding low-brow cultural forms.
8. **popular culture** The entirety of ideas, perspectives, attitudes, memes, images, and other



phenomena that are within the mainstream of a given culture, especially Western culture of the early to mid 20th century and the emerging global mainstream of the late 20th and early 21st century. Heavily influenced by mass media, this collection of ideas permeates the everyday lives of the society. Popular culture is often viewed as being trivial and “dumbed down” in order to find consensual acceptance throughout the mainstream. As a result, it comes under heavy criticism from various non-mainstream sources (most notably religious groups and countercultural groups) which deem it superficial, consumerist, sensationalist, and corrupted.

9. **Sir Edward Burnett Tylor** (2 October 1832~2 January 1917) English anthropologist, the founder of cultural anthropology. Tylor is representative of cultural evolutionism. In his works *Primitive Culture* and *Anthropology*, he defined the context of the scientific study of anthropology, based on the evolutionary theories of Charles Lyell.
10. **Leavisites** The name given to followers of the English literary critic F. R. Leavis, who achieved an extensive influence in mid-20th century British culture as co-editor of the Journal—*Scrutiny*.
11. **acculturation** 涵化, 又称文化适应, 指不同民族接触引起原有文化的变迁, 涵化研究不同民族的接触而产生的文化变迁过程及其结果。



Exercise

I. Discuss the following questions with your partner.

1. What is culture?
2. What is high culture?
3. What is anthropology?
4. What is cultural diffusion? And what causes cultural change?

II. Fill in each of the following blanks with an appropriate word or phrase chosen from the text.

1. A culture is passed on to the next generation by _____, whereas genetics are passed on by _____.
2. The discipline which investigates cultures is called _____, though many other disciplines play a part.
3. It is helpful to remember that different cultures consider some matters more important than others. For Americans, _____ and _____ are most important. One of the worst things that can be said about someone in America is that “you cannot trust him.”
4. If a visitor to the United States asked an American standing at the edge of a road how far the next town was, the American would think it _____ if he said it was near when he knew it was actually 24 miles away.
5. Culture can also vary within a region, society or sub-group. A group who acts or speaks differently may be said to be, or have, a _____.
6. The study of subcultures often consists of the study of _____ attached to clothing, music and other visible affectations by members of subcultures, and also the ways in which these same symbols are interpreted by members of the _____ culture.
7. Theorists such as Matthew Arnold (1822~1888) or the Leavisites regard culture as simply the result of “the _____ that has been thought and said in the world.”

8. Social conflict and the development of technologies can produce _____ within a society by altering social dynamics and promoting new cultural models.
9. _____ has different meanings, but in this context refers to replacement of the traits of one culture with those of another, such as happened to certain Native American tribes and to many indigenous peoples across the globe during the process of colonization.
10. Cultural invention has come to mean any innovation that is new and found to be useful to a group of people and expressed in their behavior but which does not exist as a _____.

Section 2 The Origin of Civilization

What is civilization?

The abstract noun *civilization*, meaning “civilized condition,” came in the 1760s, again from French. The first known use in French is in 1757, by **Victor Riqueti, marquis de Mirabeau**^①, and the first use in English is attributed to Adam Ferguson, who in his 1767 *Essay on the History of Civil Society* wrote, “Not only the individual advances from infancy to manhood, but the species itself from rudeness to civilization.” The word was therefore opposed to barbarism or rudeness, in the active pursuit of progress characteristic of the Age of Enlightenment.

In the late 1700s and early 1800s, during the French revolution, *civilization* was said singular, never plural, and meant the progress of humanity as a whole. This is still the case in French. The use of *civilizations* as a countable noun was in occasional use in the 19th century, but has become much more common in the later 20th century, sometimes just meaning culture (itself in origin an uncountable noun, made countable in the context of ethnography). Only in this generalized sense does it become possible to speak of a “medieval civilization”.

Already in the 18th century, civilization was not always seen as an improvement. One historically important distinction between culture and civilization is from the writings of **Rousseau**^②, particularly his work about education, *Emile*. Here, civilization, being more rational and socially driven, is not fully in accord with human nature, and “human wholeness is achievable only through the recovery of or approximation to an original **prediscursive** or **prerational** natural unity”. From this, a new approach was developed, especially in Germany, first by Johann Gottfried Herder (赫尔德), and later by philosophers such as Kierkegaard (克尔凯郭尔) and **Nietzsche**^③. This sees cultures as natural organisms, not defined by “conscious, rational, deliberative acts” but a kind of prerational “folk spirit.” Civilization, in contrast, though more rational and more successful in material progress, is unnatural and leads to “vices of social life” such as crafty, hypocrisy, envy, and greed. In World War II, Leo Strauss (列奥·施特劳斯, 德裔美国政治哲学家), having fled Germany, argued in New York that this opinion of civilization was behind Nazism and German militarism and **nihilism**.

A civilization most broadly is any complex state society characterized by urban development, social **stratification**, symbolic communication forms (typically, writing systems), and a perceived separation from and domination over the natural environment. Civilizations are intimately associated with and often further defined by other socio-politico-economic characteristics, including centralization, the domestication of both humans and other organisms, specialization of labor, culturally deep-rooted ideologies of progress and **supremacism**, monumental architecture, taxation,



societal dependence upon agriculture, and expansionism. Historically, a *civilization* was an “advanced” culture in contrast to more supposedly barbarian, savage, or primitive cultures. In this broad sense, a civilization contrasts with non-centralized feudal or tribal societies, including the cultures of nomadic **pastoralists** or hunter-gatherers. As an uncountable noun, *civilization* also refers to the process of a society developing into a centralized, **urban structure**.

Civilizations are organized in densely populated settlements divided into hierarchical social classes with a ruling elite and subordinate urban and rural populations, which, by the engagement in intensive agriculture, mining, small-scale manufacture and trade. Civilization concentrates power, extending human control over the rest of nature, including over other human beings.

The earliest emergence of civilizations is generally associated with the final stages of the **Neolithic Revolution**^④, culminating in the relatively rapid process of state formation, a political development associated with the appearance of a governing elite. This Neolithic technology and lifestyle was established first in the Middle East (for example at **Göbekli Tepe**^⑤, from about 9130 BC), and Yangtze and later in the Yellow river basin in China (for example the **Pengtoushan culture**^⑥ from 7500 BC), and later spread. But similar “revolutions” also began independently from 9000 years ago in such places as the Norte Chico civilization (小北文明) in Peru (秘鲁) and central America at the Balsas River (巴尔萨斯河). These were among the six civilizations worldwide that arose independently. The Neolithic revolution in turn was dependent upon the development of **sedentarism**, the domestication of grains and animals and the development lifestyles which allowed economies of scale and the accumulation of surplus production by certain social sectors. The transition from “complex chieftains” to “civilisations”, while still disputed, seems to be associated with the development of state structures, in which power was further monopolised by an elite.

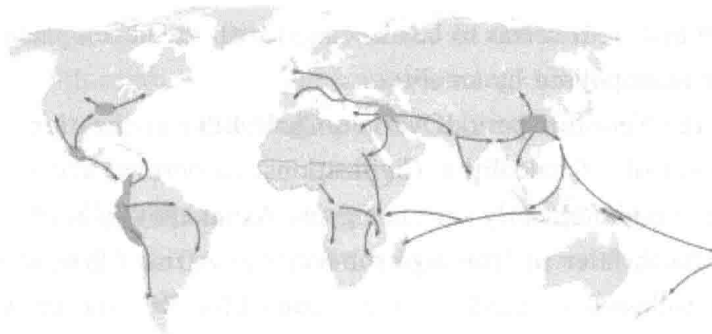
Towards the end of the Neolithic period, various **Chalcolithic** civilizations began to rise in various “cradles” from around 3300 BC. Chalcolithic Civilizations, as defined above, also developed in Pre-Columbian Americas and, despite an early start in Egypt, Axum (阿克苏姆, 埃塞俄比亚) and Kush (库施, 大致位于今日苏丹), much later in Iron Age sub-Saharan Africa (撒哈拉沙漠以南的非洲). The Bronze Age collapse was followed by the Iron Age around 1200 BC, during which a number of new civilizations emerged, culminating in the **Axial Age**^⑦ transition to Classical civilization. A major technological and cultural transition to modernity began approximately 1500 in western Europe, and from this beginning new approaches to science and law spread rapidly around the world.

Origins of civilization

Historically civilizations were assumed by writers such as Aristotle to be the natural state of humanity, so no origin for the Greek polis was considered to be needed. The Sumerian King List (苏美尔王表) for instance, sees the origin of their civilization as descending from heaven. However the great age of maritime discovery exposed the states of Western Europe to hunter-gatherer and simple **horticultural** cultures that were not civilized. To explain the differences observed, early theorists turned to racist theories of cultural superiority, theories of geographic determinism, or accidents of culture. After the Second World War these theories were rejected on various grounds, and other explanations sought. Four schools have developed in the modern period. They are: theories of voluntary development, theories of coercive militarism, Carniero’s theory of environmental circumspection, Claesson’s Complex Interaction Model (CIM).

The Neolithic Era

The process of sedentarization is first thought to have occurred around 12000 BC in the Levant (地中海东部的罗望地区) region of southwest Asia though other regions around the world soon followed. The emergence of civilization is generally associated with the Neolithic, or Agricultural Revolution, which occurred in various locations between 8000 and 5000 BC, specifically in southwestern/southern Asia, northern/central Africa and Central America. At first the Neolithic was associated with shifting subsistence cultivation, where continuous farming led to the **depletion of** soil fertility resulting in the requirement to cultivate fields further and further removed from the settlement, eventually compelling the settlement itself to move. In major semi-arid river valleys, annual flooding renewed soil fertility to be renewed yearly, with the result that population densities could rise significantly. This encouraged a “secondary products revolution” where domesticated animals became useful for more than meat production; being used also for milk, wool, and animal traction of ploughs and carts. The 8.2 Kiloyear Arid Event and the 5.9 Kiloyear **Interpluvial** saw the drying out of semiarid regions and a major spread of deserts. This climate change shifted the **cost-benefit ratio** of endemic violence between communities, which saw the abandonment of unwalled village communities and the appearance of walled cities, associated with the first civilizations. This “urban revolution” marked the beginning of stable agriculture and animal domestication which enabled economies and cities to develop. It was associated with the state monopoly and violence, the appearance of a soldier class and endemic warfare, rapid development of hierarchies and a fall in the status of women.



Note: Map of the world showing approximate centers of origin of agriculture and its spread in prehistory; the Fertile Crescent (新月形沃地) (11000 BP[®]), the Yangtze and Yellow River basins (9000 BP) and the New Guinea Highlands (9000~6000 BP), Central Mexico (5000~4000 BP), Northern South America (5000~4000 BP), sub-Saharan Africa (5000~4000 BP, exact location unknown), and eastern USA (4000~3000 BP).

The Iron Age

The Iron Age is the period generally occurring after the Bronze Age, marked by the prevalent use of iron. The early period of the age is characterized by the widespread use of iron or steel. The adoption of such material coincided with other changes in society, including differing agricultural practices, religious beliefs and artistic styles. The *Iron Age* as an archaeological term indicates the condition as to civilization and culture of a people using iron as the material for their cutting tools and weapons. The *Iron Age* is the third principal period of the three-age system created by Danish antiquarian, Christian Thomsen (1788~1865) for classifying ancient societies and prehistoric stages of progress.