

Definitions of Culture in Well-known Dictionaries and Encyclopaedias

It is obviously impossible to compile and study all of the current definitions of culture in one single volume. However, we can refer to distinguished dictionaries and encyclopaedias and explore the main ones given by established scholars around the world.

Culture Described in Persian Reference Books

“Farhang (derived from farhandge), (the Farsi equivalent for culture) refers to knowledge, intelligence, wisdom, accountability, a Persian lexicon, Keikavus’ mother, and a branch put in soil to be planted elsewhere. It also means a water drain.”¹

Hossein ibn Fakhruddin Hassan Anjui Shirazi believes “*farhang to have six various meanings:*

First, knowledge

فلك ر قدر تو اندوخته بسی رفعت خرد ز رای تو آموخته بسی فرهنگ

“*Your value has greatly elevated the heavens, and intelligence has gained much culture from your ideas.*” (Kamal Ismail)

Second, manner

مرد را ور هذر فرهنگ تو سنی از سرش بپا هنجد

“If man acquires culture alongside his art, will be able to manage any severity” (Sanai)

Third, intelligence

نه دانش باشد انكس رانه فرهنگ كه وقت اشتي بيش اورد جنك

“One who raises war at peace-time, knows no knowledge or culture.” (Nezami)

Fourth, a book containing Persian words and their meanings

نوشتست بخت از بی کام خویش بر اوراق فرهنگ او نام خویش

“Fate has written his name in its own desire on the pages of culture.” (Souzani)

Fifth, it is Keikavus' mother's name

Sixth, a branch buried in soil so that it would become a shrub and be planted somewhere else.”²

Explaining the entry “farhang” in his Persian encyclopaedia, the late Dehkhoda has cited many verses by distinguished literary figures in Persian in order to further illustrate the vast range and depth of culture in Persian literature.

The Persian Encyclopaedia reads: “Culture shows a peoples' life style and traditions in anthropology. Its English equivalent was first used academically in the nineteenth century by Sir E.B. Tyler. The concept of culture has proved so useful that it is now also used in other fields of sociology, literature and biology. Culture has been the distinctive point between mankind and animals ever since the rising of man.

The traditions, ideas and conditions of a group are passed on through its generations mostly by education, not genetically. Following customs is enforced in each culture through its own special system of rewarding and punishment. Language and other symbolic tools do play an important role in the transfer of culture between generations, but some kinds of behaviour can be achieved solely by experience. Every society possesses its own specific “cultural basics” which include all organizations necessary to man, e.g. social organizations, religion, political organizations, economic organizations, and material culture (tools, devices, weapons, clothing, etc.). Sophisticated societies are distinguished from “primitive” ones in the complexity of their cultural bases. However, these two terms must always be considered relatively.

Basically, each human community has a definite culture, but in complex societies, secondary cultures can also branch out of its national, social and religious conditions. On the other hand, peaceful or even

hostile cultural contact can lead to common cultures acceptable by various nations –based on the fact that co-culturalism can exist and each side may adopt the other's traditions. The characteristics of a culture may be spread directly or indirectly among its groups. Such a process is called diffusion.

A cultural area is a land where some features of a culture are visible. Various schools of thought have emerged in anthropology attempting to account for how cultures work, develop and spread, but all agree on a vast evolutionary process throughout the history of man, especially in technical and economic domains. However, the evolution has not taken place at the same rate for all nations, and is still incomplete in many of them, although at times co-culturalism can integrate several steps into one.

In the first phase, food-hunting, small groups of nomadic hunters, fishermen and fruit pickers move from one place to another in search of food. They live temporarily in caves or other shelters, as in the lower and middle Stone Age.

The next phase is producing food, in which man has learned how to tame animals and use plants. He lives in small settlements, like the upper Stone Age.

After that, civil life began, evidence of which can be found in great ancient civilizations.

Categorizing a contemporary culture should not be done solely on the basis of its technical or industrial progress. For example, today's food-hunters, e.g. native Australians are not comparable with lower Stone Age hunters 25,000 years ago, because ancient systems of relationships and religion must have been different.”³

We may now come to consider these points:

1. No dictionary or encyclopaedia has provided a clear-cut, specific definition of culture. The reason is not negligence on behalf of scholars in identifying culture, but due to the great diversity in cultural elements and phenomena, which prevent a fixed comprehensive definition. Neglect in achieving a complete definition could also be due to some cultural researchers ignoring its spiritual and supernatural meanings –an ignorance which has unfortunately infected some people.

2. “Culture has been the point of distinction between man and other animal species.”⁴

If we are to take into account meritorious deeds and phenomena in our definition of culture, we would have to search for the distinctions between man and animals before the existence of culture in man's fatalistic life, for some scholars consider meritorious phenomena and deeds prior to his compulsory affairs in life, e.g. thinking about preparing a settlement, developing legal relationships among a society, social management, etc.

3. “In all, all anthropologists approve of a step-by-step evolutionary process in the history of mankind, particularly in technical and economic areas.”⁵

A few points must be considered concerning the above statement:

- a. Since freedom of will is equal to authority in the definition of evolution –particularly value evolution – the technical and economic aspect brought up by compulsory life affairs therefore cannot be included in the concept of culture, as forced efforts to provide a home cannot be thought of as culture.
- b. “The evolutionary process throughout the history of mankind has not taken place at the same rate all over the world, and some cultures have not completed it.”⁶

This is an absolutely correct fact, also applicable to scientific and technological progress made by civilizations; in other words, no theory or school of thought is able to prove these events advancing in a direct, orderly fashion.

Anyone aware of the development of science and civilizations admits that the factors causing their existence have not only been irregular, but totally unpredictable.

- c. “Sometimes co-culturalism can integrate a few of the phases in the process. In the first step, food seeking, small groups of nomadic hunters, fishermen and fruit pickers move from one place to another in search of food.”⁷

Here we can see phenomena concerning culture and its mutation –which, however, due to their fatalistic nature – cannot be included in the evolutionary concept of culture.

Culture in Arabic Reference Books

The Arabic equivalent for culture is the word *al-thiqafa* which means “victory, intelligence and skill, and also talent for science, crafts and literature.”⁸

“Its root, *thaqaf*, means skilful, clever, brilliant and victorious.”⁹

To find a definition of culture and the topics concerning it, it is best to look up *al-thiqafa* and *al-adab*.¹⁰

Al-Monjad thus defines *al-adab*: “An *adib* is a person familiar with literature. Its plural form is *oda'ba*. An *adib* is well-trained in lexical and literary subjects, and possesses great culture. *Adab* means science and knowledge as a whole or a particular field. It also means what a person or object morally deserves, e.g. how one should behave in a classroom, or as a judge, etc.”¹¹

In the following verses also, *adab* refers to culture, and conveys knowledge and demonstration of fine morals according to appropriate principles achieved through conditions in one's lifetime.

كن ابن من شئت واكتسب ادبا نعينك محموده عن النسب

“Acquire knowledge and culture, no matter what family you may have been raised.. Culture will make you independent of any relation.

ان الفتى من يقول ها انا ذا ليس الفتى من يقول كان ابي

Truly, a free man is one who can claim, “This is who I am, not am so and so’s son¹².

Culture in French Reference Books

Deriving from the Latin word *cultural*, it means fertilizing (soil), production, or planting. Culture also has several figurative meanings:

1. Enhancing mental strength, e.g. mental culture.
2. One's whole acquired knowledge, for example general culture, literary culture, philosophical culture, classic culture and massed culture¹³ which spread by means of mass media.
3. A series of activities based on various socio–historical guidelines, and also structures pertaining to a specific behaviour or performance caused by the education of a particular social group; for instance, a special culture in the society that relates that to Western culture.
4. Culture in French has also been referred to the physique; for example, in ancient texts, *culture physique* means physical education and culturalism refers to gymnastics.¹⁴

Another reference book reads, “In the fifteenth century, *culture* derived from the Latin word *cultural*, which means fertilizing; likewise, *cultivar*, meaning planting and cultivating was used in the twelfth century.”¹⁵

The Rober Encyclopedia has thus defined culture:

“All of the knowledge that provides mankind with the power to criticize and the taste for judgment.”

It then asks the reader to refer to words such as knowledge, education, training, and science, adding that.

“Culture is what remains in man's mind when all else is forgotten. Adjectives like vast, strong and high have been used to describe it.”

Two points should be considered about the definition of culture in French reference books.

1. A careful study of the above definitions shows that the majority of the meanings provided are based

on virtual facts which remain unchanged even if the objects or persons applicable to them do, unless the whole nature of mankind undergoes complete metamorphosis and becomes a helpless thing like animals or objects or parts of machinery. However, literary and philosophical culture will be unaffected, for their bases are truly unchangeable.

It is impossible to change the truly original facts shown to the French by Victor Hugo in *Les Misérables*. Even Sartre and his like, with all their novel phrases and terms tending to influence the simple-minded, failed to eliminate Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* from the culture of mankind. Likewise, the dogmatic writers of our own era could not eliminate the role of Mowlavi's *Mathnavi* in great human culture; all they achieved was brainwashing the simple-minded with their contradicting jargon.

They felt that they were fulfilling their own selfishness, which was a grave mistake itself; selfishness is an insatiable flame that only quenches when it has burned itself out, no matter how many others it also victimizes in the process.

2. Categorizing the meaning of culture into the real and the figurative leads to three possibilities: first, some meanings may be archaic, e.g. agriculture and cultivation of the soil, which is the Latin meaning for culture. Some other meanings are frequently used regardless of their older ones. The second possibility is that culture initially meant agriculture, but through gradual use in texts of high moral values, was transformed to a new meaning. Third, the old meaning of culture, i.e. cultivating and using a potential, is an unchangeably comprehensive reality applicable to various things, e.g. the soil, trees, animals and human beings.

Therefore, metaphor interpretations in this case cannot have a definite, evidential reason. We also must keep in mind that if a word changes in meaning, its original meaning, conveying definite true fact(s) is not necessarily omitted.

Culture in View of German Reference Books

The Duden Dictionary thus defines culture:

All of the aspects of mental or artistic life;

The fine aspect of life;

Raising bacteria and other living matter on a platform made of food;

Cultivating agricultural soil;

A new species of organic life.

Another reference, defining culture as all aspects of a nation's lifestyle, lists them as:

- a) Human activities in order to fulfil man –and his society's basic requirements, such as food, clothing, shelter, health care and environmental protection.
- b) Providing the means needed for all human activities such as science, industry, construction, organizations, etc
- c) Efforts have been made ever since mankind inhabited the earth and culture arose with them towards providing human character with originality, finesse and form, limiting inferior human desires and transforming them into highly elevated needs.

The first significant point about the above definition is that such encyclopaedias, having mentioned the highest facts of value defining culture –such as giving form, originality and delicacy to man's character and transforming his mediocre desires into high moral needs –state that “culture began when mankind arose on earth.” In other words, the facts described as meaning(s) of culture are unchangeable, and cannot be contaminated by the new worthless meanings added to culture nowadays, considering “what man's talents show” and “what his values represent.”

Culture in the Encyclopaedia Americana

“Culture, a vast concept, has been used by sociological and anthropological experts. Its other meanings refer to educated persons, i.e. those who are well–composed and are familiar with culture and the fine arts of life.

Specialized discussions on culture arose in anthropological texts of the mid–nineteenth century. Sir Edward Burnett Tyler, the English anthropologist, used the term “culture” to represent a developed series of ideas and what arises out of historical experiences. In 1910, American anthropologists used culture to show the specific characteristics of peoples in societies. In the 1930s, Ruth Benedict described culture as those patterns of thought and action that makes one distinct among others.

The word “culture” is of much significance to sociological experts, for it provides the simplest concept for expressing the behaviour and history of mankind. For instance, compared to the term “society” –which, by definition, refers to an organized group dependent upon each, other who coexists inside a system in order to continue their production and life –culture has vaster applications. Culture shows the behavioural content of the society. The point here is: Why has culture found so many various definitions?

The reason is that culture does not consist of a single, homogeneous topic or refer to an individual. It covers many elements, including ideas, emotions, values, ends, behaviours, tendencies and experiences.”

The Evolution of Culture

Studying the process of evolution in the history of culture, we come to three significant points: first, culture can form the distinction between human characteristics and animal norms. Secondly, the observed behavioural pattern is due to the outcomes of man's cause-and-effect physical development. Thirdly, population growth and the cultivation of man's surroundings have led to cultural manners focusing on symbols and language, in turn resulting in a vast treasure of thoughts and ideas throughout history. Considering it through a vaster point of view, we may realize that culture is not the fulfilment of one of man's needs, but a manner-based phenomenon aiming to provide magnificent virtues of life to creatures potentially possessing it.

Man, having the capability to build tools and use them for various purposes, can obviously think of different subjects, interrelate and organize his thoughts and develop a new idea. It is also possible to pass on the findings of one generation to the next through transcription and records. No other living creature has such abilities. Culture found its true identity through the development of such commitments.

Culture: A Lifestyle

Cultural variables are based upon man's creativity and talent for imagination. Human beings are able to conceive any manner of behaviour or meaning of human life. However, there are limits to practical and economic life that restrict the process of developing and establishing variable forms of concepts and social life.

The economic and materialistic aspects of man's life have, in various stages, become his ability to transform his natural surroundings into higher comfort and more property. Although the artistic, research and philosophical aspects of culture have also developed, we are not sure if they have done so in certain stages.

All in all, absolute diversity in cultures on earth seems to be fading away. The increase in Western, industrialized lifestyles spreading around the world has influenced many unique distinctions at the cost of replacing them with industrial civil patterns.

Historians and anthropologists believe that cultural diversity must have reached its peak during the 14th and 15th centuries; i.e. before Europeans began to infiltrate into the lifestyles of other nations.

Cultural Elements

Analyzing cultures requires certain concepts. First, we can categorize cultural elements according to quantity and basic principles. However, using specific terms will lead to the same series and usages. Apart from classifying the constituents of culture, other concepts are also necessary for research and utilization of culture. Here, we are faced with two significant ideas: concepts and actions.

Each cultural element (showing ideas on behavioural patterns, or objectives) includes all interpretations or symbols of the mental reactions of those facing the element.

The usage of a cultural element is determined by its researcher, not an individual caused by the culture. Sociologists have also categorized culture into two schools of thought which are to fulfil man's mental needs.

Cultural Manner

Pattern-based manners can also be defined in culture using a specific method; in other words, culture can be used to define the way to do certain things in society.

Therefore, "cultural subgroups" convey certain methods for some of the actions in specific parts of the society. Thus, Afro-Americans in the United States have lifestyles very different from others, although they all live in one country. Culture used in behavioural manners is mostly applied to solve problems.

There are several points to consider here:

1. "Its (culture's) secondary concepts symbolize educated, well-cultured people." It is incorrect to call this a secondary concept, for any individual who possesses the virtual characteristics called culture can be considered a cultural person, as we would regard anyone that has the qualities and manners of civilization civilized. The concept and term "civilization" is not a sideline concept for civilized man, and so neither is culture.
2. The text, unfortunately, does not mention the time-honoured originality of cultural phenomena such as science, education, moral virtues, and art.
3. "All in all, anthropologists agree on the fact that culture, unlike instinctive or hereditary patterns, consists of behavioural learning methods and ways to adopt them."

Since cultural elements and activities concern the appropriate values of man's life, we must point out that the intrinsic culture-seeking potentials in humans are virtual, and activating them calls for need and conscious effort. For example, the potential need for acquiring science, art and moral virtues exists in humans regardless of time or geographical issues, but using it in reality requires education and practical admittance.

4. A considerable point in the Encyclopaedia Americana is, "The term 'culture' is of high importance to sociologists, for it provides the simplest concepts needed to express human behaviour and history. For instance, compared to the term "society" –which, by definition, refers to an organized group dependant upon each other coexisting inside a system in order to continue their production in life –culture has vaster applications. Culture shows the behavioural content of the society."

It is true that culture is highly important, but we must note that its importance is not due to the fact that it provides the simplest concept expressing the history and behaviour of mankind, for the simplicity of a mass abstract noun, such as law, pleasure, sorrow, generosity or reality cannot possibly lead to its comprehensive explanation. Therefore, encyclopaedias and dictionaries have begun research to find the complete truth about culture –and have so far led to around 164 definitions of it–likewise; much effect has been put into research on the concept of law. 16

This is the best reason for the complexity in the definitions of culture. The fact stated by the encyclopaedia, “Why has culture found some many various definitions? The reason is that culture is a homogeneous topic and does not pertain to one individual alone; it covers a great many elements of high diversity, such as ideas, emotions, values, intentions, actions, tendencies and experiences,” needs more accurate consideration, for it is true that the various definitions of culture are not homogeneous.

This best proves that finding a comprehensive commonality among the existing 164 definition has not been what all the dictionaries and encyclopaedias have been struggling for. Considering the diversity among human souls, it would be extremely hard to do so, even in case of the examples we have mentioned (emotions, values, goals, actions, tendencies and experiences).

5. The theory that “Culture shows the behavioural content of the society,” depicts the resulting outcome, of culture, not the facts facing it.

In other words, the theory believes that the culture of a society lies in the behavioural aspects of its inhabitants; however. it does not mention the intrinsic factors of culture, i.e. moral virtues and aesthetic values Considering the principle that “no effect can totally reveal its cause,” our objection is quite justified. For instance, much effort is made nowadays to advertise a culture like goods all over the world. Is the reason behind the aesthetic efforts truly serving mankind, or to increase consumer demands? Those who regard culture a purely behavioural subject should have a convincing explanation ready for such problems.

6. The Encyclopaedia Americana states three points about the evolution of culture:

First: “Culture is exclusive to humans, not all living beings.”

This point, as far as our knowledge of biology is concerned, seems to be totally accurate.

Second: “Such behaviour is a result of cause and Effect outcomes in human; physical development.”

This point calls for a more scientific analysis; if “human physical development” means that a significant extent of cultural effects appear as intrinsic outcomes in the body and its development (such as mental, emotional, etc effects), it is quite reasonable; however, if this means limiting cultural effects in the physique, it would not be acceptable, since human spiritual evolution by means of internal factors such as religion, accountability, morals, love and humanitarianism proves highly more fruitful than depicting physically human cultural development.

Thirdly: the fact that “Population growth and the consumption of natural resources, have caused cultural norms to result in a treasure of ideas and approaches throughout history, based on symbols and language,” can also be accepted, except a short point of interpretation that is necessary about “cultural norms.” Since there is no comprehensive definition of culture in such texts, “cultural norms” remain unexplained.

7. The text reads, “Considering the vastness of culture, it is not what primitive men invented owing to their needs; culture is a manner-based phenomenon tending to supply beings with the great moral life they potentially had.”

This theory calls for more careful attention, for mutual coexistence between men and the serious cooperation and harmony it demanded, was undoubtedly essential; in other words, the gradual necessity of force balance and sacrificing endless personal desires –which caused destructive disturbance –led man to accepting limited desires in order to make mutual coexistence feasible. This was the beginning of co-existential culture, which was established by men in completely free will, not by force. The text then states, “Man, who is able to build tools, and use them in different jobs, can definitely also think of various ideas, interrelate them, and come up with new ones.” Obviously, as the need for physical tools existed, human spiritual life also needed the most basic cultural factors.

Let us consider the following statements in order to further elaborate on our point:

“Delicate philosophical ideas and elevated religious beliefs are generally intertwined in legends, like an ore containing both coal and gold. Unless mythological analyses separate myth from ideological units, it would be impossible to explore the treasures of human thought buried in legends.

Regardless of the entertaining lullaby-like aspect of myths and legends, in fact, it is the existence of such highly original thought supplies unconsciously lying in various contexts that makes studying mythology inevitable for researchers of the history of the development of philosophical schools of thought, anthropologists, sociologists, theologians, idealists, scholars of humanities and literature, and those who aim for awakening the conscience of mankind.

One of the best ways to discover the basic origins of legends is definitely compiling an alphabetical glossary of the main terms and concepts, and foreign legends.”¹⁷

Distinguished historians also agree on this:

“It is not logical that arts and supernatural facts such as man's desire for beauty, truth, and the good—generally, the “ideal” —are totally separate from the physical needs he fulfils in order to stay alive. The reason is that we believe the best way to a successful life is to feel that human life is a meritorious truth.

Some experts have come to believe that primitive men struggling with their surroundings, either found no chance to discover their spiritual truth, or felt no desire for the *internal* tendencies towards eternal facts

and supernatural discoveries.

However, scholars who know human nature correctly believe that primitive men were not obsessed with the practical aspects of life like their predecessors are nowadays, and even had spiritual affairs, and used their emotions to colour the objects around him, to look beyond their natural appearance and realize their supernatural meanings.

Thus, the emotional values lying in objects became more significant than their natural features. If we consider carefully the life of ancient Australians in the vast plains –usually thought of as the poorest of people due to high violence and social maladjustment –we would discover from the mysteries in their lifestyle, that even every cane or stone they used contained historical or traditional characteristics. Therefore, canes and stones used in ancient eras were related to secrets in the human surroundings of that time that are not conceivable now. However, man did consider himself the happiest creature on earth.

In brief, since the earliest times, men have been both physical and spiritual; both realistic and idealistically perfectionist.”¹⁸

8. The text says, “...culture is a part of human creativity and imagination as a manner of life –the basis for cultural variables. Man can conceive almost any behavioural state or interpretation of human life. There are, of course, some obstacles on the way to establish stable forms of social and life variables, due to biological and economic realities.

The economic and materialistic aspects of human life have apparently in the course of time turned into the transform of his natural environment into greater wealth and luxury. Aspects of culture such as arts, research and philosophy have developed in some periods, but their continuity is doubted. All in all, cultures of the world are losing their absolute diversity.

As modern industrial lifestyles spread throughout the world; much rare cultural diversity have been sacrificed to make way for industrial civil life. Anthropologists and historians believe cultural variety to have been at its peak during the 14th and 15th centuries –shortly before European began to infiltrate the lifestyles of other countries.”

There some points in the above statements that require further study and criticism:

a) The statement, “Cultural variables are based on creativity and imagination” is generally correct and acceptable, but the point is that the cultural constants inside humans need to be discovered and distinguished from variable cultural examples; the above statement not only ignores this point, but even makes it more mysterious later on in the passage: “All in all, the cultures on earth are apparently losing their diversity.”

b) The text reads, “Man can conceive almost any behavioural state or interpretation of human life.”

The above sentence is somewhat ambiguous, for if the physical outcomes of human behaviour are meant, they are obviously noticeable through studying ideas and senses by means of behavioural research. And if the focus is upon the total identity and internal and external results and reasons for human behaviour –as most scholars around the world have admitted, the number of human faculties and capabilities that still remain unknown far exceed his known abilities; such a general statement would require revision.

This is also applicable to the next phrase– “interpretation of human life,” for our knowledge of the true nature and factors of the existence of living beings is extremely meagre, so our interpretation of life would be highly limited and superficial. Let us consider the theory proposed by a distinguished Russian biologist:

*"Every object in the world can be thought of as both living and lifeless. Accepting such an approach makes such questions like "What is life? What objects can be considered alive, and which cannot? How did life arise?" meaningless. As we know, the definition of "life" is still struggling in dispute, and many scholars have failed to achieve it."*¹⁹

After comprehensive research on life and its development, he adds:

*"It is only by means of such an evolutionary approach that we can not only discover what goes on in the bodies of living beings, but also provide answers to the seven million "whys" we confront on our path to discovering the true essence of life"*²⁰

However, since discovering why the phenomenon “life” has progressed so evolutionarily is as hard as the other discoveries about life, we must say that discovering the true essence of life in every object, makes us face seven million “whys” plus one.

c) It then comes to the conclusion that:

"However, the diversity among cultures on earth is apparently fading away with industrial Western lifestyles spreading out throughout the world; some rare diversities have disappeared to make way for industrial civil life."

The encyclopaedia unfortunately refuses to mention any of the causes or positive negative outcomes of its predictions.

We must first address the problem whether cultural diversity on earth is deteriorating by itself, or by fate, or powerful dictators striving to strip man of any freedom, dignity or the life he deserves?

We then face the question whether industrial societies spreading throughout the world will destroy only the rare differences or influence all cultural distinctions and therefore also abolish the identity of culture itself?

The first statement, “The diversity of cultures on earth will gradually fade away”, implies that an identity named culture will not be able to withstand Western industrial lifestyles, which is likelier than other possibilities. If so, there would be no creature called “man” on earth any longer, and no sign of his great potentials, abilities, ideals and beauty either.

In other words, if Western industry dominates the world, we would face a clock work of machinery instead of man or humanity. If such a vision embraces reality, and man loses his life, culture, ideologies and ideals, the motive for living would either remain or be destroyed; if the latter proves true, the world would turn into a huge industrial factory, which may continue functioning until its resources run out, but will eventually destruct; that is, of course, if the greedy dictators allow life to last so long.

On the other hand, if the motive for life survives, it will overflow time and time again, bring industry under man's control and prevent life from being sacrificed by ignorant dictators and anti-moralist gluttons for power. In other words, when culture vanishes from the earth –the background for the evolution of man's life –it would definitely mean the end of life.

9. The encyclopaedia does not go into explaining definitions, classifications, significance, changes or transfer in “cultural elements”, so we cannot make any comments on this matter.

10. The encyclopaedia presents a definition of culture in order to elaborate cultural styles, but does not explain the nature or fundamentals of culture. If what the author(s) have tried to convey is merely that “culture can be applied to certain social procedures”, their concept of culture is not at all clear.

After our study and criticism of the treatise on culture presented in the encyclopaedia, we may undoubtedly claim that since the main issue here is mankind, it is impossible to achieve any acceptably true facts about the highest of human concepts –such as culture, just to name one –which all nations, even the most industrially sophisticated, may agree upon unless we all come to an agreement on the identity and characteristics of man.

Culture Seen by the International Grolier Encyclopaedia

“In biology, culture refers to a group of living cells or organisms grown artificially, such as several kinds of micro organisms like bacteria, yeast and fungus growing and reproducing, in a medium. The word 'culture' has two main applications:

1. It refers to any product of a great civilization, such as art, literature or philosophy; therefore, it could colloquially refer to highly educated persons.
2. Anthropologists use the term 'culture' to distinguish man's history and life. For instance, the creation of ideas, thoughts, habits and objects leading to man's ever-complicating coexistence with his surroundings.

In this book, we shall deal with the second meaning of culture, which has academic and historical usages. The latter meaning of culture leads to three major domains:

- a. culture as an evolutionary concept,
- b. culture as a descriptive concept,
- c. culture as a lifestyle or human behaviour .

The development of the concept of culture also depends on the above categorization. At first evolutionary research (such as Darwin's studies on biological evolution) appears. Then we come to descriptive treatises on culture, coinciding with the early 20th century developments in research on peoples and cultures. Finally, various cultural forms and changes in human behaviour are to be studied.

As an evolutionary concept, culture indicates those characteristics that distinguish man from other animals; characteristics that have evolved through million of years since life arose on earth. The fossils found from the Ice Age made by humans or humanlike creatures, each provide a history. Wherever there is a sign of thought or conscious human activity in order to control or respond to his surroundings, there is also culture.

Such evidence, in the shape of stone tools at least 700,000 years old, alongside *Australopithecus* fossils has been found in south Africa.”²¹

Culture in the World Book Encyclopaedia

“Culture is a term that sociologists apply to all patterns of life. Colloquially, culture means activities like arts, literature or music, but sociologists also include in it all thoughts, imaginations and all methods made by a group. Therefore, arts, beliefs, habits, innovations, inventions, language, technology and traditions are all part of culture.

Civilization is a term similar to culture, except that civilization pertains to highly sophisticated patterns of life, whereas culture is a way of life; whether simple or consisting of detailed ideas, culture is made up of ways man has learned to behave, feel or think (and not his involuntary biological functions).

Any human being works, understands and thinks in a manner that shows his culture. In other words, culture refers to functions man as learned to work, understand others or express his ideas more efficiently

Some animals, guided by their genetic instincts, follow certain patterns of behaviour. Animals naturally inherit the methods of searching for such requirements as food or shelter. The distinctive point between man and animals in this case is that man is capable of experiencing alternative methods for providing his shelter and achieves better results through his own attempts. There is no end to man's struggle towards

faster, easier and better achievements. Culture consists of a series of experiences acquired by every part of the human body.

Sigmund Freud, the well-known Austrian psychologist, sees culture as an artificial instrument man uses in order to improve his physical faculties (like dentures or glasses). He believes culture, like any other man-made tool, enables him to do what his body could not manage.

For instance, if man had arrows, he would not require forks or hooks; if he had tame horses, he would never have to run; and without culture, he would not be able to send astronauts to the moon and provide them with enough technology to survive.

The human body needs oxygen, a certain temperature and many other necessities in order to remain alive. Likewise, man-made instruments and other cultural facilities enable him to overcome the limitations of his unpleasant surroundings and survive.”

Then the text goes on to define primitive culture as a simple survival tool, and quotes Sir Edward Burnett Tyler's definition of culture:

“Tyler, the distinguished English anthropologist, defines culture as other scholars do nowadays. In his 1971 book on primitive culture, he defines culture as:

“A series of any beliefs or ideas (general or complicated) including science, ideologies, arts, morals, law, traditions and any other habit or capability man may have acquired as a member of his society.”

The origin of human culture dates back to prehistoric times. Some milestones in its process can be named as:

1. The development of tools and instruments,
2. The rise of agriculture,
3. The growth of large cities,
4. The progress in scribing and calligraphy.”²²

The article continues with explanations on each of them. The World Book Encyclopedia presents five different viewpoints in defining culture:

1. Culture as all modes of life.
2. Culture meaning various activities, e.g. arts, literature and music.
3. Folk culture includes all thoughts, mental perceptions and methods for performing group actions. Therefore, culture consists of arts, beliefs, ideologies, traditions, inventions, innovations, languages,

habits and technology.

4. Culture consists of the modes man acquires in his behaviour, emotions and thought (except his involuntarily biological functions).

5. Culture includes all experiences gained by various parts of the body.

The text finally introduces Freud, who considers culture equivalent to the most normal of tools and absolutely natural phenomena limited to the physical aspects of man's life. The most significant definition given in the text pertains to Tyler.

Surprisingly, the fourth definition contradicts the fifth; the fourth definition separates man's "naturally biological" functions from culture, whereas the fifth –particularly Freud –says nothing about supernatural phenomena or facts.

How Does Culture Change?

All cultures are constantly changing. Changes may happen rapidly or slowly. Since culture consists of various factors, changes in one will also affect the others. Some sociologists believe much social maladjustment is due to unequal changes in different cultural components. When some parts tend to lag behind others, cultural retardation develops. Most of the cultural retardation observed in the history of the United States concerns ideas, traditions and mental matters. Science and technology advances so rapidly that it often overtakes culture and leaves it behind.

Therefore, guiding the leaders of technology today –who lucratively provide themselves with power and authority –toward more consideration for human culture and moral virtues may prove in vain, or perhaps cause them to become even more resistant toward it, and strengthen the advance of technology.

Therefore, it is best to address societies where the fundamentals of human culture still exist, and hope for a day when they lead a cultural renaissance.

A point ought to be emphasized here, although we will address the issue when we explore disharmony in cultural elements. The point is that unfortunately, scholars currently presenting definitions and characteristics for culture do not distinguish the stable sections of culture from its variable parts.

The unchangeable cultural elements depending on man's fixed needs should be distinguished from the change-prone elements; however, the two are usually integrated, which leads to errors in cultural activities and understanding. Let us now consider the general, unchangeable principles of culture which are not to be mistakenly mixed with its variable examples. For example:

1. Eagerly seeking greatness is an undefiable principle, despite the variety of its outcomes in different people.

2. Respect, which is reflected in human cultures in forms such as love and devotion for fellow beings.
3. Man's intense need for a meritorious life.
4. Adjusting and correcting the four relationships: man–himself, man–God, man–universe, man–fellow beings.

Culture Seen by Argentine References

“Etymologically, culture means cultivating the earth and reflects the relationship between men and the earth, although its meaning has undergone change through time. The simplest definition of culture describes it as a series of physical and spiritual advantages a human community acquires in order to establish harmonious coexistence in its national society.” Argentina's scholars, lexicographers, historians, philosophers and even revolutionary anti–imperialist sociologists have defined culture as mentioned above. As well as being a true fact existing outside man's physique, culture also has mental aspects.

Most intellectuals have failed to understand the comprehensive quality of culture, for they are obsessed with individualistic civil culture (and also affected by Imperialistic culture infiltration), and therefore cannot realize how vast the concept of culture really is. It goes far beyond that, in fact. This is why we are addressing Chinese, Spanish, French and Latin American cultures.

Imperialism is constantly influencing the masses, “democratizing” cultures by imposing its own imperialistic culture, luring intellectuals towards its anti–revolutionary goals, spreading huge amounts of publications and movies. By presenting imaginary tales of big city life and imperialistic centre lifestyles, they create a mirage of a luxurious life. They have thus estranged millions of their own culture by spreading American patterns of life. Although America has presented the lifestyle, Americans themselves are devoid of historical or cultural background.

In South America, native cultures were unable to resist imperialistic propaganda, so alien cultures succeeded in separating the middle and well–to–do classes from the country's national culture. As imperialism falls astray now, native and alien cultures, still in constant conflict, continue to divide the people. The first impact reflects in arts. It is not surprising that is South American folk art (in Brazil and Mexico, for instance) shows significantly political background. The reason is the endless folk culture and increasing revolutionary conscience of third–world South American artists.”²³

We now should point out a few things concerning the above text:

1. The briefest definition given here for culture is the same as the comprehensive one presented in other well–known encyclopaedias. Since we have already treated them, there is no need for further elaboration.

2. “As well as being a true fact existing outside man's physique, culture also has mental aspects.” This is absolutely correct, and we will address it later on in our discussion entitled: “Culture is a Bi-polar Truth.”²⁴

3. “Culture is also a historical reality.” Considering the definition of culture and its historical effects, it is obviously a reality arisen from man's original needs.

4. “Intellectuals are mostly unable to understand the comprehensive identity of culture.” The reason is the great diversity among cultural elements and outcomes which inhibit a comprehensively common concept. However, if we consider culture as a progressive reality, we may present a definition based on the one given during the first sections of this book, which can include all of the elements and outcomes of culture:

“Culture consists of the appropriate qualities or meritorious methods for man's spiritual and physical activities, based on logical thinking and emotions arisen from sensible evolution.”

5. The other reason mentioned why the comprehensive identity of culture has not been understood, lies in cultural invasion –and also due to Imperialistic cultural invasion. “We have already mentioned that the issue currently is not cultural invasion, but deculturization, for in order to generalize and globalize culture according to the definition above, obviously invasion and opposition are totally unnecessary, for all of mankind eagerly desires a culture so developed that it would guarantee their spiritual and physical evolution.

6. “By influencing the masses, 'democratizing' culture and imposing Imperialistic cultures, Imperialism is luring intellectuals towards its own anti- revolutionary goals.”

“Democratizing culture” is equivalent to “pursuant culture”, which totally neglects the moral, political, literary, artistic or religious development of man, for the motto of pursuant culture can be defined as:

“What I want is certified, only because I want it”.

7. “By mass-producing publications and films, they are constantly deteriorating the minds of the masses. A mirage of a luxurious life is created through showing fairy tales of big city life in Imperialist centres. Millions have been infatuated by American lifestyle propoganda, and have become estranged with their own culture.”

Such statements need no further comment. However, those who lead the operations aimed to destroy other cultures should have in mind that all human societies resemble a swimming pool, if in which a small stone is thrown in its corner, waves large and small will diffuse in all parts of the pool. The adverse results of destructing cultures will definitely infect all human communities. Once, a father got angry with his young son and said, “I will take you by the ear and swing you around the yard.” When his son asked, “If you do so, father, will you swing, too?” The father immediately let go of him. He was a highly

intelligent father, for he at least valued his own safety.

8. “Millions have been alienated from their culture.”

This magnificent statement reflects its writer's deep thoughtfulness and sense. It is clear that pioneer cultures affect human souls so profoundly that their destruction will lead to the deterioration of man's own identity.

9. “Foreign and native cultures still divide people into separate groups, which are constantly in conflict.”

Cultural conflicts can damage every aspect of people's social lives.

Culture in the Encyclopaedia Britannica

“Culture can be defined through man's behavioural characteristics, as well as other factors affecting his behavioural development, especially culture, language, ideologies, habits, traditions, laws, social organizations, devices, techniques, works of art, religious rituals, ceremonies, etc. The existence and the application of culture strangely depend on a particular human faculty, which is commonly called the capacity for sensible or abstract thought.

However, since strong evidence of sensible thought has also been reported in animals, the meaning of “abstract” falls into doubt. Therefore, we had better express man's unique capability to abstract through the term “symbolizing”. Symbolizing includes selecting symbols to represent specific objects or events unable to be realized through our senses.

A good example is verbal eloquence. The sound included in the word “dog” provides no hint of its meaning. Obviously, its meaning arises from a conventional agreement selected by humans. Symbol selection is behaviour independent of the physical senses.

As Edward Burnett Tyler, the English anthropologist stated in 1871:

‘Culture consists of a complete series of knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws, traditions and any other abilities, capacities or habits acquired by man as a constituent of his society.’

According to Tyler's definition, culture is attainable only by humans. His statements won the approval of other anthropologists for fifty years. Advances in anthropology, however, led to deeper studies on identity and concepts and in turn various definitions.

In 1952, two American anthropologists, A.L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn cited 164 different definitions of culture in their work, ***Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions***.

In their view –and also as many other scholars nowadays see it –the best definition of culture consists of an abstraction; to be more precise, abstract human behaviour .

Such concepts prove to be either incomplete or vague. The existence of behavioural patterns – frameworks of behaviour, whether inherited genetically or acquired socially – have been undoubtedly proven in non human species (e.g. honeybees, ants and termites).

The abstract concept of culture poses first the question culture is real (for abstraction is at times considered inconceivable); secondly, it defies the existence of culture. Therefore, as the non biological science of mankind, culture cannot exist without real visible phenomena, for it has been regarded as both real and nonexistent.

Kroeber and Kluckhohn eventually concluded that if culture is regarded as equivalent to behaviour, its identity would bring it into the domain of psychology. Therefore, their conclusion was that culture consists of abstractions of observable behaviours.

Now rises the question how we would abstract wedding rituals or pottery according to Kroeber and Kluckhohn's pattern? Such questions lead to problems they have not considered. Perhaps Leslie A. White's solution in his 1959 work, *The Concept of Culture*, may prove useful. White argues that, "The point is not whether culture is indeed a reality or a mental concept; its scientific interpretation should anyhow be carefully studied. Anything or any event leads to behaviour when studied in relation to human organisms.

When studied not in relation to human organisms but to others, it becomes culture –for instance the prohibition against marrying one's mother-in-law or stepmother consists of a series of concepts, attitudes and actions. If they are regarded in relation to human organisms, i.e. the organism's functions, they can be named behaviour.

Therefore, if we consider the prohibition against marrying one's mother-in-law or stepmother in relation to social compositions, settlements, traditional segregations of man and woman and their roles in society and upholding the good, it could be regarded as culture.

This distinction has been used for years; many words are considered behaviour due to their pertaining actions. However, if words are considered in relation to each other –studying their lexical definitions, grammatical and structural usage –they will become part of language, and would enter not only psychology, but also linguistics. Thus, culture is a term referring to a category of items and events depending upon conventional symbols studied in a framework of the supernatural content of man's life."

Now let us consider the points of importance presented in the Encyclopaedia Britannica:

1. "Culture can be defined through man's behavioural characteristics, as well as other factors affecting his behavioural development, especially culture, language, ideologies, habits, traditions, laws, social organizations, devices, techniques, works of art, religious rituals, ceremonies, etc."

The problem with the above statements is that:

a. Including culture in its own definition does not seem to make sense, for the defining items ought to be clearer than those which are to be defined; using an object to elaborate itself traps us in a vicious circle.

b. Including particular human behavioural patterns in the definition of culture is not sufficient, for such patterns, e.g. language, belief, and habits, express only a few of the results of culture, not culture itself: “The existence and application of culture calls for a uniquely specific human faculty.”

Obviously, unless that unique faculty is known, the true identity of culture would remain unsolved, particularly since the results of cultural elements are so diverse that sometimes it is impossible to combine them into one general concept that can be called the identity of culture. For instance, works of art that oppose morals or religion cannot be united to convey culture. The encyclopaedia thus elaborates on the cultural faculty.

“Such a faculty is commonly known as the capacity of logical or abstract thought”

It then objects to this term, and adds, “However, there is proven evidence of logical thought in animals, so the meaning of abstraction here is unclear.”

We must say that even if living organisms other than man possess the faculty of logical thought, they would be incomparable to man, for human thoughts are conscious, and definitely use abstract principles. In nonhuman life, as far as we know, it merely moves from the beginning steps to results; in other words, their actions aim for providing the beginning steps, like nesting as a preliminary step towards mating and reproduction.

However, the statement, “The meaning of abstraction is unclear” reflects an obvious mistake about the delicate functions of the brain. Some people think that the functions performed by the brain and everything pertaining to the “self” can be studied by the same methods used for physical phenomena.

They ignore the fact that we will never be able to discover the true identity of self-consciousness. However, a developed brain is not only self-conscious, but also capable of understanding and performing abstraction. Describing such internal functions is as hard as explaining joy, sorrow, surprise or responsibility.

c. “Thus, symbolizing is a more suitable term for expressing the unique capacity for abstraction in men.”

We must remember that symbolizing, as other words, is just a conventional term, and cannot reflect its content. Two illustrating examples can elaborate this point in the subsequent sentence.

2. Culture is “a complete set of knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws, traditions and any other capacities or habits acquired by man as a member of the society.”

If the above-mentioned phenomena refer to interrelated realities affecting each other's qualities and also quantity, their combination can express the unique reality named culture; however, we have already

seen that deriving a definition of culture is not possible merely through determining one or several culture phenomena.

The statement, “If we could maintain a relationship with the whole identity of culture through identifying cultural phenomena, we would no longer need to fully comprehend the definition of culture” is incorrect, for it is based on the false premises that we can establish a relationship with the whole identity of culture by identifying a few cultural phenomena; the ability to figure out the true identity of objects merely by studying a few of its effects is a grave mistake. In proof of it, we must say:

Man Innately Desires to Figure out the Truth about Elevating Culture

It is proven clear to any researcher on culture who has accomplished discoveries about it that without culture, man would not only lose his dignity, self-respect, his valuable “freedom” and the life he merits, but even consider them as harmful hallucinations; as we all know, if such basics of life vanish, the only logic remaining in man's individual or social life would be the passageways to nihilism, power and pleasure. Obviously, if power and pleasure dominate man's life, no necessity or meritorious value could prevail, and even their opposing factors would also be demolished, even though they may be justified.

It is amazing that most academic authorities on the –humanities still continue to attempt to prove the fact that man is heading for true greatness, with such deceiving eloquence that any simple mind believes them. Some put on such a detailed display of complex jargon that even other scholars might be forced to assume it to be unquestionably true.

High claim for man's progressive evolution aims to sacrifice all of the cultures and peoples around the world –who basically agree on logical principles –to feed their technological monster. One day, the monster might strangle its own operators to death, and eliminate any chance for them to relive their painfully eventful story which ends in suicide.

A significant point comes to attention here, which can also influence human life evolution: all around the world there are hundreds of seminars, conferences, and vast studies on man and his relationship with technology, and still, there is no indication of a serious attempt to discover a reasonable identity of culture and its relation to mankind. Perhaps the few honest authorities on humanities are totally in despair about the unstoppable demise of humanity.

Therefore, let us uphold our heart-warmingly reviving culture and introduce it to other people, and have community leaders do their best to help the process before it is too late. Then, they will definitely admit that ruling over one human being who enjoys dignity, logical freedom and the life he/she deserves, is better than ruling over millions devoid of them, who have only been labelled “human” by history after the Cro-Magnons.

3. “As Kroeber and Kluckhohn and also many other currently leading scholars see it, the best definition of culture consists of an abstraction –to be more precise, an abstraction of human behaviour .” If the above sentences refer to a dimension of reality, not only is it generally correct, but in fact Kroeber and Kluckhohn have pointed out an important aspect of culture (the internally innate pole) which is also the abstract aspect of culture.

This is an absolutely correct point, for the non–instinctive, calculated movements and accountable behaviours observed in some animals, refers to meritorious values conveying the general concept of culture, which is undoubtedly abstract (as is the general concept of beauty).

The regular behaviour seen in honeybees, ants and termites depends on their unconscious instincts, not conscious merits or freedom; therefore, if Kroeber and Kluckhohn believe the abstract definition of culture to be the best one, they are gravely mistaken. It would be like defining beauty as “an abstract concept”, which reveals nothing at all about the qualities or identity of beauty.

In brief, we must note that the general truths about culture –beauty, greatness, etc –consist of two poles: The first, the innately internal pole, which includes mentally abstract concepts describing general definitions. The other pole is observable, i.e. those behaviours and effects seen physically.

Thus, we may put the theory of culture being an abstract concept in the encyclopaedia in opposition with Kroeber and Kluckhohn's viewpoints. The encyclopedia states that:

The concept of culture as an abstraction poses first the question whether culture is real (for at times abstraction is considered inconceivable), and then defies it.”

The authors of the encyclopaedia must keep in mind that defying abstract realities such as culture, beauty and greatness could first cast doubt upon all scientific principles –which are definitely derived from generally abstract issues and regular phenomena in the world and then even question the integrity of mathematical and geometrical laws. Such a presumption could put all of human knowledge and everything man has acquired through mental abstraction in the shadow of serious uncertainty, or even defy them all.

4. The encyclopaedia states that, “Therefore, as the non–biological study of mankind, culture would be consistent both nonexistent and real, and could not remain without actual worldly events.”

Unless interpreted correctly, the statements above could prove unreasonable, for if we judge the reality of objects biologically, we would have to defy all of man's psychological activities, for they are non–biological.

It is scientifically reasonable to accept the existence of internal, psychological and mental facts, even though their external effects would require observable behaviour and imagination in visible phenomena.

5. The statement, “Therefore, Kroeber and Kluckhohn concluded that culture is an abstraction of

observable behaviour” flaws in its sense-based deduction is that Kroeber and Kluckhohn have neglected the distinction between the facts that “Observable behaviour provides the basis for abstract mental realities like culture, beauty and justice” and “Observable behaviour leads to the abstraction of culture”.

Scientific observations and analyses on abstract facts have shown that culture, beauty, justice, etc, are bipolar abstract facts (consisting of virtual and observable poles), and the resulting behaviour account for the observable one. It is incorrect to suppose that such realities arise from abstractions of observable behaviour.

6. We may conclude from the above item that Kroeber and Kluckhohn's conditional theory –“If culture is regarded as identical to behaviour, it would naturally become a psychological issue” –calls for some rethinking, for bipolarity should not make culture a domain of psychology, as is the case in beauty consisting of two poles (internal virtues and external virtues).

However, such issues can be studied in terms of psychological and also scientific matters, but they do not necessarily afflict their abstract reality.

7. The text reads. “Perhaps Leslie A. White's suggestions presented in his 1959 work, *The Concept of Culture*, may provide a solution. White reasons that it is important to take into consideration the scientific interpretation of culture, not whether it is a reality or just a mental concept.”

This point also needs to be modified, for in order to fully comprehend the scientific interpretation of culture, it is at least as important as other essential factors defining culture to determine whether culture is a really external fact or just mental– if not the most important, for the qualities of a mental fact highly differ from those of physically observable ones, even if the two share a common abstract concept. It then adds:

“Whenever objects or events are considered in terms of their relation with human organisms, they lead to behaviour. Otherwise, i.e. when they are considered only in relation to each other, they would by definition result in culture “

The point rising here is, what is meant by “objects and events” in relation to human organisms? If they mean all– external or internal –factors and motives, the point would prove to be true, for human organisms are obviously prone to any external or internal influence, which lead to behaviour, whether being merely a reflex or causing mental or bodily functions. However, if “events and objects” convey externally physical phenomena, they would only account for a certain extent of behavioural factors.

On the other hand, the statement, “If studied independent of human organisms –i.e., only in relation to each other –they would by definition result in culture,” is somewhat unclear, for billions of the components of the universe are constantly affecting each other, but many of such effects may not fit into culture. As we have already seen, the primary basis of culture is the virtually internal pole relating to

human life merits such as “What it is like” and “What it *should* be like”, which lead to man's aims and ideas in such issues.

8. “Thus, culture is a term referring to a class of objects or events depending on conventional symbols considered as part of man's supernatural content.”

Culture as seen by Russian Encyclopaedias “Culture is a series of social achievements consisting of physical or mental advances used by the community, and also those cultural traditions serving man's future progress.

In societies suffering from struggling classes, culture inevitably becomes class-biased. The opposite of culture is barbarity, savagery or cultureless ness. A true understanding of culture is only feasible on the basis of socioeconomic guidelines and sequences of social organizations brought about by defining productive forces, production processes, social relationships and the qualities of any given society.

Yet, culture cannot replace these concepts, for it includes all achievements of any range –mental or physical –altogether, whose characteristics determine historical periods for various societies, peoples or nations.

Culture consists of man's creative activities, and is the most significant sign of his advance level. Culture derives from the Latin word *cultural* (agriculture), which means mowing, producing and processing; it originally conveyed man's influence on nature, determining his achievements and the factors playing a role in them. The latter meaning was most used in the bourgeois culture era, and was seen frequently in the works of 19th century historians, anthropologists and archaeologists, which led at that time to the term “The History of Culture.”

The concept of culture consists of two parts, physical and mental. The physical aspect shows man's ability against the forces of nature. Physical culture conveys man's progress in understanding nature, the community, and also the scope of his vision and progressive thoughts and knowledge. Tools are the most prominent symbol of physical culture.

Mental culture consists of social achievements in morals, arts, science and philosophy. It also represents man's political and legal relationships and advances. Mental culture is used to determine the extent of progress made in social, political or legal relationships. Language, speech, thought, logic and behavioural principles make up the phenomena of human life.”²⁵

The following comments may be presented on the above statements:

1. It is true that culture is of high importance in man's progress, and as a principle, the main role of culture is to be progressive.

However, what eventually can be named pioneer culture? The question is left unanswered.

2. The statement, “In societies suffering from class struggles, culture inevitably becomes class-biased”

is correct from a certain viewpoint, but on the other hand also calls for reconsideration. What is meant here by “struggling” classes? If the struggle involves positive competition instead of harmful conflicts, culture can definitely serve the development of such a progressive society. Also, if we were to have a systematically organized community, culture would again prove to be dynamically progressive, and aim for the advancement of the whole society.

3. “The opposite of culture can be stated as barbarity, savagery, or cultureless ness”

The important point seen here is how meritorious culture is, despite those who regard it as social customs and traditions. No matter how deserving and elevating social traditions may be, we based the definition of the identity of culture (given at the beginning of this discussion) upon its meritorious ness. Therefore, since the highest human virtues and principles make up culture –and defying them would defy the whole of humanity – “The opposite of culture is barbarity, savagery or cultureless ness.”

4. Further on, we encounter two contradicting statements:

a. “A true understanding of culture is only feasible on the basis of socioeconomic guidelines and sequences of social organizations brought about by defining productive forces, production processes, social relationships and the qualities of any given society.”

b. “Yet, culture cannot replace such concepts, for it includes all achievements of any range –mental or physical– altogether”, for understanding a true fact means acquiring knowledge of it without the influence of any presumed principles or accepted ideals.

In other words, it is scientifically vital to strongly avoid using our physical senses (laboratory devices, tools enhancing human senses, etc) as much as possible to discover realities as they truly are. By gathering more experience and knowledge, we can free ourselves from the conflicting points in our scientific domains.

Culture in Italian Encyclopaedias

“Culture is the series of mental and social knowledge which can be acquired through vast study –though never completely.

A cultured person aims to develop intelligent thought in himself/ herself, feel it flowing through his body, and use it to quench his mental desires. In fact, he tends to activate his peers¹ –or even his predecessors¹ –thoughts, and purify their mental processes.

The most dangerous enemy of culture is fashion, which can demolish all cultural values. Fashion tends to constantly substitute novelties for the old. It even destroys itself.

The history of culture is an average of the tastes, knowledge and moral and/or religious beliefs existing

in a certain location and era.

Civilization consists of the artistic, scientific, economical and moral life aspects dominant over a nation, era or all of mankind.

Culture depicts intellectual lifestyle and thought, and its reflection upon a generation or a country. This definition obviously also conveys the concept of civilization in Italian.

Culture, derived from *cultivure*, means planting, developing a farm; it also conveys all of man's mental or acquired knowledge, especially academic levels of literature, art, music, history, philosophy, etc.

Culture is not only a mental issue, but also spiritual, relating various branches of knowledge (as its spiritual aspect) to developing tastes and attitudes.

As a generalization of the above statements, we come to the culture of a nation, era, or cultural development and the history of culture.

In anthropology, as well as sociology and psychology, culture is considered a human community's organization or characteristics, including the goals, virtues, symbols, beliefs and behavioural patterns common among most of its members.”

Let us now take a few points helpful to our understanding of culture into further consideration:

1. “Culture is the series of mental and social knowledge which can be acquired through vast study – though never completely.”

Clearly, although this definition presents some components of culture to a certain extent, the identity of culture –the main core of the definition –remains unmentioned nevertheless.

Two points are worth considering:

a. It is undeniably true that acquiring the whole of mental or social knowledge requires vastly extensive study.

b. Such vast studies would still prove inadequate for achieving complete mastery of culture and its components and outcomes.

2. “A cultured person aims to develop intelligent thought in himself, feel it flow through his body, and use it to quench his mental desires.”

This statement shows man's authentic eagerness for culture. Indeed, when man selects his culture consciously and freely, he must have found it sufficiently deserving for him to feel it flow through his body and quench his intellectual needs with it. Obviously, no sensible person, consciously aware of his benefits and perils, would choose an animal or filthy quality as his culture, or become so attached to it

that it would flow through his/her veins. This is the virtual meritoriousness a dynamically objective human culture should have. Otherwise, the significant species known as “homo sapiens” would definitely disappear from the face of the earth.

3. “The most dangerous enemy to man is fashion, which demolishes all cultural values.”

If only today's cultural leaders would carefully and adequately consider this critical issue –the conflict between fashionism and a dynamic, objective culture they could save mankind from a hemlock that deviates man's spirit from following his virtues, pulls people so deeply into consumerism that it demolishes their health, possessions and dignity, throws their spirit into the darkness of despair and infidelity, wandering in artificial ruins made by their greedy rulers.

As the encyclopaedia states, “Fashion is always substituting novelties for the old”; therefore, fashionism and dynamic, original cultures would always conflict, for if man does not use his enormous sense of novelism in order to gradually renew his spiritual and psychological virtues, he would undoubtedly apply it to superficial fashion games. Cultures of dynamic originality are based upon fixed principles much higher than changes in appearance. The encyclopaedia puts it very delicately: “Fashion can even destroy itself.”

4. “The history of culture is an average of the tastes, knowledge and moral and/or religious beliefs existing in a certain location and era.”

Provided that the above statement is *based on the permanent principles of the culture*, it would be perfectly correct: the history of the culture of a given society at a certain point of time and location can be expressed by the average of tastes, knowledge or moral and/or religious beliefs based on permanent human principles, not the average of variable, baseless outcomes of alien cultures spreading from one society to another. If it is not stated it the basis of fixed principles, however, it would prove prone to defiance.

5. “Culture includes intellectual lifestyle and thought, and its reflection upon a generation or a country. This definition obviously also conveys the concept of civilization in Italian.”

As an indication of one of the aspects of culture, this statement is correct. But further elaboration on “intellectual thought and its reflection upon a generation or a country”, especially “intellectual thought”, may reveal one of the most important constituents of the definition of culture.

6. “Culture is not only a mental issue, but also spiritual, relating various branches of knowledge (as its spiritual aspect) to developing tastes and attitudes. As a generalization we come to the culture of a nation, era, or cultural development and the history of culture.”

These valuable statements prove that the identity of culture does not only reflect the thought of a community; likewise, the thoughts of the members of the society cannot represent their culture either.

The spiritual aspect of culture, i.e. man's evolutionary development towards high moral virtues, consists of an important part of culture, and would be worthless without it.

Culture as Seen by Greek Reference Books

“Of Latin origin, *culture* means agriculture. In the last two decades, however, ideological and social class changes turned it in Greek into *cultural*, which means agriculture, and also physical and mental development through education, evolution, culture, and intellectual training.

Greek dictionaries provide agriculture, education, training, culture and civilization as its synonyms. Occasionally, when one is labelled as ***culture yaris***, it humorously means a person pretending to be interested in cultural matters in order to show off before others.

In Greek, culture is seldom consisted of a series of meanings; for Greek is such a vastly rich language that there is a specific term for each object or concept; therefore, the five synonyms provided for culture are easily applicable to their proper cases, each of which convey a certain aspect of culture.”

Here are the three most significant points arising from the definition of culture in the Greek Encyclopaedia.

- a) Its cultural elements are mostly of evolutionary value, and the word “development” is stated.
- b) It introduces “intellectual training” as one of the concerned parts. Obviously, “intellectual” cannot be limited to mere thought, but must include mental activities based on moral virtues.
- c) Culture conveys variety: “In Greek, *culture* is seldom consisted of a series of meanings, for Greek is such a vastly rich language that there is a specific term for each object or concept.”

We will discuss this significant point further later on.

Culture as Seen in Spanish Encyclopaedias

The Royal Spanish Academy's Dictionary metaphorically describes culture as “the result of developing human knowledge and perfecting it through practice.”

Space Calpe, the best-known Spanish encyclopaedia available, defines culture as being “the mental or physical developmental state of a nation or peoples.”

The encyclopaedia considers illustration (***illustracon***) and civilization as synonyms for culture. *Salvat* presents a philosophical definition of culture:

“The series of definite productions of humans as creative beings able to change themselves as well as their surroundings.”

The definition provided in the Royal Spanish Academy Dictionary is more likely real than metaphorical, considering its frequent usage and approval by the *Space Calpe*. Perhaps this mistake (which also occurs in the French encyclopaedia) lies in the lack of distinction between a word's actual meanings at a certain time with those other points of time, which is caused by the expansion of the depth of meanings of a word as time goes on.

Considering the Latin origin of the word –meaning agriculture, fertilizing, and raising plants and living beings – the subsequent meanings of culture arisen in Eastern countries may also be associated with the original ones as its examples, results, or even real meanings education, fertilizing human knowledge, or purifying it through practice. If there were nothing in common between its new meaning “the mental or physical developmental state of a nation or peoples” and ‘civilization’ and its old ones, even if the older meanings were contradicted, they would still remain real. In other words, culture would be a verbal portmanteau among various realities.

The second statement, “The series of definite makings of humans as creative beings able to affect themselves and their surroundings” also depicts the element of man's innovativeness and his capability to change his environment.

Culture as Seen by Chinese Encyclopaedias

The Sea of Words thus defines culture: “All of the physical of spiritual wealth created by man throughout social history consists of culture. Culture is a social phenomenon, and each society possesses a culture appropriate to its own social physical development. As an ideology, culture represents the politics and economy of the society, which greatly affect its socioeconomic survival. In class-orientated societies, culture also has class-biased qualities.

Proletariat culture, critical of man's historical achievements, makes use of all the experience gained from class struggles, productional struggles and academic experiments and develops.”

The above definition brings us to several points:

1. The statement, “All of the physical and spiritual wealth created by man throughout social history makes up culture” implies that *The Sea of Words* considers all of these treasures as culture; in other words, each of these components cannot individually be culture. Unless, of course, supposing the components of the definitions were not related, and the omission of any of them would not demolish culture. Therefore, it is obvious that we literally mean “all”, and culture includes each and every one of its components.
2. In order to define the identity of culture by using a definition, the words forming the definition should be clearer than culture (the “defined”); yet, culture nowadays is more easily understood than words like “all of the physical and mental wealth”, etc. by people.

3. How can physical wealth possibly be included in the meaning of culture?

4. “Culture is a historical phenomena.” This is absolutely correct, provided that we accept that culture arises, continues and evolves throughout history, rather than being fatalistically brought about by it, for our definition of culture was based upon “qualities” and ways of a meritorious, sensible life. Therefore, since fatalistic phenomena totally ignore values and merits, culture cannot depend on fatalistic historical factors.

5. “Each society possesses a culture appropriate to its own social physical development.”

The following point shows that this statement calls for revision.

The fact– that each society has an appropriate culture of its own is not applicable to all cultural phenomena or elements, for throughout time and even today, human societies share a series of cultural commonalities like literary culture, artistic culture, moral culture and ideological culture; although each of these concepts differ characteristically in aspects such as literature, arts, morals and ideology, cultural diffusion from one of these aspects to another in one society or among several societies is quite common.

If nations and peoples were not basically so common in culture, today's vast mutual cultural understanding could next exist. The phrase “social physical development” verifies our point, for if we were to evaluate a society's cultural development on the basis of its physical production growth, finding a few common points of qualitative and quantitative growth among some societies would definitely lead to common cultural elements.

6. “As an ideology, culture represents the politics and economy of the society, which greatly affect its socioeconomic survival.”

In comparison to an original Chinese economic, political and legal theory –“Economic affairs, especially those concerning production and its tools, quality and quantity make up the most fundamental element of every aspect of human life, whether economy, politics, morals, law, etc.

The above statement is contradicted, for it believes that culture (an ideology) determines the socio–politics and socioeconomics, whereas the theory states that politics, economics and even culture are reflected by fundamentally important economic affairs. The current harmony in manufacturing methods and financial viewpoints and also the vast difference existing among cultures and ideologies requires more careful attention.

Due to its political viewpoints, the definition provided for culture in the Chinese encyclopaedia has undergone deep reconsideration by scholars today. However, had Chinese scholars considered their vast history and culture more carefully, they would have found an incredible wealth of cultural elements rarely found in any other society. Perhaps the originality of diverse cultures in China has led to the

tumultuous early to mid-20th century cultural diversities.

As *The Ancient History of Chinese Philosophy* reads:

“The general trend during this era was destructively sceptic, casting criticizing doubt upon all basic foundations, even family and marriage. Liang Chi Chao (1873–1929), the well-known scholar, compares it with the Renaissance in Europe.

Indeed, all of the thoughts of this era are closely related to the socio-political events occurring then. Christianity has found strong support in China, bringing with it Western knowledge and philosophy, particularly John Dewey's pragmatism and Karl Marx's dynamic theories; both have had profound influence upon Chinese intellectuals. Distinguished writers like Tolstoy, Ibsen, Guy de Moupasant, Shelley, Emerson, Marx and Engels have had a strong effect on causing such a novel atmosphere.”²⁶

As we will see, a certain viewpoint rising in order to determine the fate of culture cannot destroy the original cultures of a civilized society.

“Philosophy develops alongside other political, social, religious and artistic changes, all of which are used to depict the culture of a country. Therefore, it would be natural for a primary school of research criticism to arise during this last phase of total changes, and put the new Confucian eras of Song and Ming up to ridicule.

They are China's most meticulous critiques ever. Although their radically critical ideology can be regarded as pragmatic, it would still not qualify as a philosophical school of thought, for it emphasizes the study of language and criticizing texts rather than truly-philosophical research. Criticism, in fact, as the most effective motivation during this era, could itself lead to a new school of Chinese philosophical principles.

The consequent effect of such critical spirit is the movement entitled “New Culture.” Its leaders, hailing Western positivism and pragmatism as their major inspirations, and the knowledge of social development and democracy as their goals, regarded the Confucian primary school equal to their predecessors' conservatism. “Down with Confucian and his followers,” was their motto. However, it was not easy to demolish the ideals –of millions of Chinese people, and a struggle began –and, sadly, still goes on.

Once, all was turned inside out, except for China. Now, however, nothing in China has escaped change. The most conservative nation in history has become the most radical, and tends to demolish all traditions, once regarded valuable, all organizations, monuments or moral and virtual norms. However, it is not possible to destroy ancient ideas and customs established since the era of ancient philosophers, and replace them with Marxist ideological brainwashing. The old virtues and morals still remain engraved in peoples' minds. The Chinese prefer harmony, compatibility and composition –none of which fit into Marxist ideologies. Knowing this, Communists have attempted to adapt Marxist-Leninist theories to suit

traditional Chinese humanitarian beliefs.

This does not mean that Chinese philosophy is robust, for as we have already seen, it is all but that.

Although Chinese philosophy – as of other nations –has suffered much change and upset, very seldom has it adopted anything from foreign cultures without adapting it specifically to Chinese philosophy. In fact, the natural harmony within Chinese philosophy is the key factor to its flourish. Any influences not adjustable to its evolutionary harmony have faded away.”²⁷

As Durant quotes from Hu Shih:²⁸

“Taking the innovative trends of philosophy in 5th, 4th and 3rd century China into consideration adds to its respect.”

We must state that Hu Shih, although a pioneer of the “New Mutiny Movement”, has intelligently recognized how worthy his predecessors were, and thus expressed the most important issue in his country:

“If accepting a new civilization would mean uprooting the old rather than combining with it, mankind would undoubtedly suffer extremely heavy losses.”²⁹

Therefore, the real question is how we can adopt a new half–civilization able to adjust itself to our own, and survive.”

Culture in the Japanese Encyclopaedias

Culture has thus been defined in Japanese reference books: “Efforts towards making use of nature or natural resources in order to improve man's life.

- a. Knowledge, arts, religion and man's spiritual achievements.
- b. Technical achievements equivalent to civilization. The word culture means:
 1. Civilization,
 2. Civilizing, and
 3. Gentleness and Exquisiteness.

In the above–mentioned definition of culture, both bringing into use natural talents and resources in order to improve man's life, and the highest human capabilities, talents and phenomena, e.g. science, arts, religion and other spiritual achievements have been included.

In item b, civilization has been cited as one of the meanings of culture. Civilization, growth, evolution and development and other such concepts can all be regarded as results of culture, for culture –by definition³⁰ –is what links all definitions; culture determines a society's goals and ideals, and indicates

guidelines and motives to attain them. However, we must keep in mind that the results –civilization, development and evolution –in turn affect cultural elements.

In all, the definitions of culture in Japanese encyclopaedias clearly affirm the evolutionary, meritorious reality of culture.

Culture as Seen in Indian Encyclopaedias

“As a whole, civilization in India is more alive than anywhere in the world, and one of the oldest. Few countries have been conquered, and even fewer have such diverse climate, traditions and languages as India. The reason why Indian civilization has survived is the harmoniously structured legends and social values, which have found their true identity after fifty years of struggle, gradual acceptance, and evolutionary combination.

In a country as vast as India, alien occupation, war or victory (the factors leading to harmony or decomposition in empires or kingdoms) have not caused India to suffer the emigration of its population, another culture replacing its own, or physical influence on its nation's customs. The key to survival in India lies in certain organized customs, beliefs and qualities its nation possesses; Dharma and keeping on with the four balanced aims in life:31 Artha, the desired ideal, Karma (deeds), Moksa (freedom) and deliverance, all of which rule people supernaturally.

The final word on civilizational achievement of India is that one's caste32 or actions are determined by one's Dharma inductions. Every individual should search, study and eventually elevate a certain series of approved rules and duties based on the necessities of life.

In his work Mahabharata,33 Krisna34 describes Dharma as a protective activity, consisting of social order and universal harmony, both of which prevail in the Indians' minds. It is such a divinely universal justice that forms the rules making and protecting the universe and logic.

Dharma has depicted and adjusted peoples' social life and attempts towards their goals, and has been described throughout history as the undisputed key to the existence of social relationships and liberating forces arisen from mutual dependency and unity.

The individual end, attaining perfection, also the communal end in culture, is achieving undisputed balance and reality in man's universal existence and universal society (**paramataman**)– worshipped and named **Narayana** in Indian – both of which mutually depend on each other .

The Hindu Philosophy of Culture

“The most logical, powerful and glorious representation of Indian philosophy and culture is undoubtedly the statue of the heavenly spirit **Shivamahayovara** (three sculptures in one), located in a temple on the island Elephanta.

The main face of the absolute, bright sculpture –*tatpuruṣa saclastiva* –does not face any direction, and is located beyond its own limits.

Aghora, the figure on the right, looks fearsome, angry and aggressive, and is a symbol of disapproval and destruction. The left figure, **Uma**, Shiva's bejewelled wife, represents positive games and movements, love and affection.”³⁵

In Indian culture, **Uma** (also called Secti), carrying a water lily, is a symbol of Artha and Karma goals. Aghora, the right figure carrying a snake through his fingers, symbolizes Dharma goals; Moksa, righteousness and liberty, whereas the main figure –Tatpuruṣa –considers the harmonious and repetitive structure of nature, silence and activity and peace, all to be temporary. Like any other phenomenon, they rise, reproduce and then decompose

Universal legends and forms, along with symbols, statues and the pictures seen in many sacred Indian books have played a significant role in spreading Indian culture, and even provided a framework for studying Asian cultures, and giving them form and structure.

More significant examples of these legends are: Jatakas, Puranas, Agamas, Tantras and single texts like Saddharma, Lalitavistara. Only through scholasticism, literature and art can one understand the spirit of India, the inspirations throughout its history and its relationships with the outside world. India's fundamental cultural references, and all of its classes of people, even those descending from nomadic, Iranian, Syrian or merchant ancestors, sooner or later were dominated by the idea that life is temporary. The necessity of moral virtues (Karma), emigration, belief in the existence of spiritual social ranks, the sacred and dynamic form of family life and responsibilities, the ideal of brotherhood among men, expressing affection for others, aesthetic attitude towards life and its consequential emotions and desires, have arisen in a both abstract and centralized manner.

These social virtues –which form the generalities of a civilization must have been supernaturally human for its basics, unity, expansion and generalization to be used frequently throughout time, helping form empires and renaissances, and keeping people's zeal for life burning in times of despair.

Geographical Influences upon Cultural Expansion

Culture is an anthropological term including everything, from the customs people follow when they eat or produce coal to how they construct their buildings; the social, moral and religious virtues highly popular to them, or the accepted trends used to satisfy the more intellectual minds. The fact that India more or less succeeded in protecting its protected cultural evolution, is partly due to the geographical features of the country, whose location has kept it away from excessive visitors.

Furthermore, the Himalayan Mountains form a natural barrier in the north of India, preventing invaders and keeping Indian culture quite safe.”³⁶

The most striking fact about Indian culture is: “The individual end, attaining perfection, also the communal end in culture, is achieving undisputed balance and reality in man's universal existence and universal society (paramataman) –worshipped and named *narayana* in India – both of which mutually are dependent upon each other.”

Considering such evolutionary principles, belief in god and the supernatural, we should also take other Indian cultural elements into consideration.

Indian culture is incredibly unique among all other cultures throughout the world –whether old and new, Western or Eastern. In a nutshell, all positive or negative capabilities imaginable for man can be seen in Indian culture. It includes a variety of issues, from purely scientific approaches to man and the universe, and even absolutely mystic, philosophical and fictional approaches. As some scholars on India have claimed, “India is like a mass of coal containing lodes of diamond.”

1. Here, there is a variety of beliefs, from pure idealism to realism, from the goodness of mankind to his lethal threats, and also a vast range of theories, speculations and conclusions on the universe, God, egos and so on.

2. Indian ideologies are mainly religious, and are accepted owing to peoples' religious faith. Will Durant's theory on it is quite worthy of consideration:

“Religion is incredibly strong and important in India –more than any other country. The fact that Indians have been conquered many times by alien rulers shows that they do not care who dominates or exploits them. The main point was religion not politics; the spirit not the body; the immortal other world, not this mortal, worthless life.

When Ashuka undertook absolute piety, he nevertheless remained faithful to the Hindu religion, which shows the powerful influence of this religion on even the strongest of men. In the present century, again it was a man of piety who united all of India for the first time throughout its history, not a politician.³⁷

This proves how profoundly critical the role of Islam has been in guiding mankind and uniting religion and politics.

Religion cannot merely be regarded semantically, i.e. by only considering supernatural aspects, and ignoring materialistic, economic, legal, political and artistic affairs or issues adjusting human life virtues, for none of man's potentials cannot embrace reality without a logical connection between man's physical, social and worldly affairs with his supernaturally spiritual. It is such neglect of man's life in the four relationships (man–himself, man–God, man–universe and man–other humans) that has led to a Persian saying, “Ever since he broke up with his dear aunt, he's been thinking about conquering India.”

Will Durant's mistake in interpreting Ghandi's attempt to liberate India was ignoring the fact that managing all the tedious social activities of negative resistance is impossible without knowing the

principles of politics, even though the negative resistance against the enemy may be a religious and spiritual one; since moral, religious, political, legal and revolutions should be based on man's original needs, any constructive revolution must have been established on the basis of human spiritual motives. Hence, some sociological experts have stated that any change truly advantageous to humanity, must definitely arise from religious motivation.

The Essence of Life in Indian Culture

Essentialism is quite common throughout Indian culture, although it is mostly based on emotions rather than reasonable deduction. With the exception of feeling the existence of God, its essence is the highest, most significant feeling of humans, especially because the higher the essence is, the more elegantly glorious it will be. However, there are several points of significance to be considered on this cultural element:

a. How valuable is well-reasoned life? Is life virtually so gloriously priceless that man can do nothing but sacredly respect it?

This is incorrect, for any living thing of any situation, does not necessarily possess highly valuable merits; even man, the most complete of all creatures, is at times so dangerously rotten that he is ready to destroy millions of lives –maybe even the whole world –for just a few moments of his own pleasure. If man cannot justify bloodthirsty tyrants like Ghengiz Khan or Nero, he would find no other reality provable either. Has God truly created such glorious value in life?

The answer is yes, but we must keep in mind that although God has granted man the potential for glory and valour, the potential is variable; like the God-given potentials for dignity and grace, for which if man does not choose the path of righteous morality, he would be doomed to fall.

The phenomenon called life is also seen thus in a value-based point of view; i.e. life is the phenomenon which man was given the God-given potential to make real; therefore, when used unlawfully, the potential would naturally fade away, or even turn into anti-life and disturb other living things. In such cases, life will fall into anti-values.

Hence, no original human culture is able to absolutely uphold the value of life.

b. Would a culture regarding life as so extremely valuable, allow a group of people claiming to be supporters of culture to slay human beings influenced by propaganda and politics, without confirming its lawful, critical necessity for life? In other words, despite having a strong element like essentialism of life, how does Indian culture explain the killings of Muslims there?

c. The belief that meta-psychosis leads to a great deal of suffering and at times loss of life –and provides the chance for greedy tyrants to ravage their country – also needs reconsideration, for in human logic fails in such cases, the existence of “reasonable life” would no longer be acceptable.

Having studied Indian culture, we now address a few concepts concerning culture in the Academy of Lalitkala:

“An academy determines national stability, as well as the perfect character, capacity and facts of life, and continues on its way despite the immense contradictions remaining. Keeping on with such ideas about protecting cultural heritage, establishing a knowledge of the arts among people, and encouraging creativities and visual arts in a vast scale, have been some our academy's goals.³⁸

These statements contradict the following, for the former describe culture as an everlasting flow, whereas the subsequent state, “Anything going on alongside with people is human culture. Human beings have unstable behaviour, which varies with time and location. Human societies and behaviour have constantly changed throughout history, and new findings and experiences have influenced man's behaviour. Likewise, man's experiences, culture and behaviour affect all social influences. Therefore, culture should be regarded as a part of our man-made surroundings.”

As you see, besides contradictions in describing culture in stability or variation, considering human behaviour as original is also another one of the current superficial deductions of the text. Unfortunately, such anti-cultural imitations have spread out of Skinner and Watson's³⁹ works into other societies. As we have frequently repeated, few parts of the humanities have escaped the destructive harm of behaviourism.

Culture in African Encyclopaedias

A. Kenya

“Culture is peoples' lifestyle used in a certain period of time in order to deal with social, political and economic challenges. Kenyan culture has originated from three native communities:

1. The Cushites (the Buran, Somali and Randil tribes)
2. The Nilotes (the Luvo, Kolenjin and Masae tribes)
3. The Bantu (the Kikoyo, Lohya, Lamba and Mijenda tribes)

Kenyan culture in general is influenced by its tribal organizations, and is a mixture of several native tribe cultures.”⁴⁰

This definition is obviously limited to the applications of culture, not its definition or characteristics.

B. Namibia

“After Namibia declared independence, since English was accepted as the sole official language of the country, the definitions for culture in its reference books have also been derived from English encyclopaedias, despite diverse cultures dominating the various ethnical groups and tribes existing in

the country.

For example, each ethnical group tends to express respect for its own tribe's customs and traditions in affairs like marriage, food, manners and morality as the culture of the whole society, whereas non-native emigrants from Europe and South Africa bring along a culture totally different from the Bushmans or other primitive tribes.

In general, the definition may be stated as the capability of various tribes and communities to adapt oneself with public laws.

The English-based definition moved on to –and even accepted by –Namibia or other African societies cannot convey the essence of “true culture” in these societies, as laws transferred to other countries are unable to meet their real legal needs. Therefore, it is added, “despite diverse cultures dominating the various ethnical groups and tribes existing in the country.”

If the imported culture exceeds the native in strength and executive quality, it would definitely dominate the country; however, the established ideals, beliefs and logical conscience-based ideologies are too strong to fail to resist foreign cultures.

C. Other African Countries

By referring to expert research on African societies, we can address culture in other countries in Africa. Uli Bayer, for instance, has presented highly significant material.

“Delicate philosophical thoughts and highly religious beliefs have always existed beside simple-minded superstitions in legends; they resemble a huge ore of coal, containing randomly distributed lodes of diamond. Therefore, unless we do not extract them out of the fairy tales through analysis of the legend and divide them into primitive thought groups, we may never be able to discover the essence hidden inside delicate human thoughts and legends

As a matter of fact besides the playful lullaby-like aspect of legends and fairy tales, it is the existence of the most original resources of human thought belonging to various peoples in them that make researchers of philosophical thought, development history, upholders of human conscience, anthropologists, sociologists, theologians comparing different religions, ideologists and other scholars of the humanities and folklore literature inevitably attracted to them.”⁴¹

The significant point about culture in African countries is that, unlike other continents where political, economical, legal and cultural changes happen gradually, highly intense changes in Africa have since the earliest times defied the usual process, turning primitively virtual culture into a complicated network dominated by technology.

Clearly, African countries have suffered two kinds of cultural invasions, which can be categorized

according to social and cultural lifestyles:

the culture of the invading societies;

generally mechanistic culture, relatively close to their national culture.

The rise of religious cultures like Islam and Christianity in Africa has, of course, familiarized them with spiritual cultures which aid them to live by principles common in other main cultures of the world.

Culture as Seen in Polish Reference Books

“Culture means the series of achievements made by human civilization activities throughout its evolution. Creative activity by people constantly enhances these achievements. Culture also determines the extent of progress made by the society or a certain class of people, which depends on natural forces, the level of public knowledge, artistic creativity and forms of social coexistence. The term “culture” is applied to various aspects, and finds different meanings in fields like literature, scientific, texts, and everyday conversation. Many years ago, culture was categorized to:

1. Physical culture, meaning tools and equipment and also skills used in social production and enrichment.
2. Mental culture, including all scientific, artistic, social organization, and moral achievements.
3. Individual culture, conveying the culture of the individuals in the society.
4. Tool culture, conveying all physical advances.

Currently, a different type of categorization is used to define culture. On this basis, culture means:

1. How we express (language, attitudes, behaviours),
2. Dominating nature (industry, techniques, and health care)
3. Social organizations (the government, law, morals, ethics)
4. Individual knowledge (religion, the supernatural, ideology),
5. Artistic or literary creativity, and
6. Mental activities (knowledge, science).”⁴²

Culture in Finnish Encyclopaedias

“Culture: 1. (seldom used to convey) agriculture or planting several shrubs, 2. (main meaning) situation of physical and spiritual accomplishments (and all of their effects) made by man, a nation or a group of people at a certain period of time, 3. a) expanding physical and spiritual abilities and characteristics, b) exquisite beauty in customs, traditions, and the value expressed in the arts or generally in any other aspects of human life”.⁴³

“Culture: civilization, agriculture; primary meaning: farming.

1. Protection and development of natural surroundings, land, plants and animals in order to fulfil man's vital needs.
2. Human activities and productions achieved in technology, science, arts and religion.
3. Man's spiritual development.
4. The essence of a nation's (or a group of nations') greatness.

Culture can be categorized into various cultural domains like customs, mental conceptions, education, lifestyles, justice, politics, science, arts and religion.”⁴⁴

The first statement – “(seldom used to convey) agriculture or planting several shrubs” is quite significant, for it requires the Latin meaning of culture {agriculture and other pertaining meanings to it) which later infiltrated into most European dictionaries and encyclopaedias to have been the oldest one, which has been cited by the authors as a reminder alongside the newer meanings, Since the attention to the archaic quality of agriculture as a meaning of culture has been fading away in Finnish and other encyclopaedias and even in conversation the question is why the French Encyclopaedia has cited planting (wheat) and fertilizing the soil as the primary meaning?

Culture in Swedish Encyclopaedias

“Culture agriculture; originally, cultivating the earth. More general meaning, all human activities, also results of spiritual and physical activities passed on to the next generations, The more common meaning of culture is spiritual development in fields like knowledge, literature, arts and religion. In archaeology, culture pertains to the remains of a certain geographical location at a given point of time.”⁴⁵

Again, as in the previous definitions, the evolutionary, virtual quality of the vital phenomenon, culture, has been conveyed through listing some of its effects: “spiritual development in fields like knowledge, literature, arts and religion”, for they are –and will always be –undoubtedly the highest ways to human evolution.

Culture in Danish Encyclopaedias

“Derived from the Latin word *cultra*, culture means agricultural, development and production. Culture represents the series of processes used by human beings to change natural phenomena. In its limited meaning, culture depicts earth fertilization, raising and improving trees, production and purification of bacteria, and the results of such development.

From a broader point of view, it means all human activities –and their outcomes –whether physical or non-physical, which are passed on to the next generation in form of social heritage, rather than genetically.

In philosophy, culture traditionally pertains to individuals, representing man's objective activities

concerning himself, his environment, self-enhancement and attaining the highest moral virtues.

Sociologically speaking, man is part of a whole. Therefore, the term “culture” should be considered in association with society. Thus, the definition for culture would be: the vast and complex series of knowledge, ideologies, arts, morals, traditions or any capability acquired by man as a member of society.⁴⁶

Sociology basically draws a line between physical and non-physical culture. Furthermore, it tries to combine *culture* with *society*, since it considers all human phenomena to be dependent upon social culture. Thus, social roles are to some extent determined by culture. In fact, when people are colloquially regarded as cultured, it merely means how close they are to the culture of the higher social classes, and “high or low” culture actually shows how similar peoples' culture is to 18th or 19th century European or American culture.”⁴⁷

The Danish encyclopaedia's definition and description of culture brings us to several points:

1. Culture is the knowledge acquired through mental and physical activities used by man in order to change his natural surroundings.
2. “In its limited meaning, culture depicts earth fertilization, raising and improving trees, production and purification of bacteria, and the results of such development.”

The phrase “limited meaning” in the above statement lacks precision. As in other dictionaries and encyclopaedias, it would have been more appropriate had it been regarded as the primary, or one of the other meanings of culture.

3. The general meaning of culture includes “all human activities –and their outcomes –whether physical or non-physical, which are passed on to the next generation in form of social heritage rather than genetically”

This statement clearly depicts the (relative) stability of cultures –which is absolutely correct, for phenomena and activities heading for destruction cannot have a role in establishing the fundamental basics of man's virtually proper lifestyle.

4. “In philosophy, culture traditionally pertains to individuals, representing man's objective activities concerning himself, his environment, self- enhancement and attaining the highest moral virtues.”

This statement obviously approves that culture is an objective human activity pertaining to man's own self, his peers, his environment and also his self-development aiming for the highest spiritual virtues, clearly an evolutionary phenomenon.

5. The sociological claim, “Man is part of a whole.....” is absolutely correct, and in approval of almost every encyclopaedia published by civilized countries all around the world.

6. "Sociology....tries to combine *culture* with *society*, considering the fact that all human phenomena are dependent upon social culture."

The point here is that, if human development and evolution had been followed as a principle throughout history, philosophical and sociological approaches would have enhanced each other, rather than fall separate.

7. One of the final statements reads, "when we speak of 'high and low' culture, we actually mean how close people's culture is to 18th and 19th century European and American culture."

The author(s) have astonishingly based the criterion for high or low culture on 18th and 19th century cultures of Europe and America, whereas other societies, e.g. Eastern countries, possess cultures much better established, more delicate and more evolutionary.

Culture Seen in Turkish Reference Books

"Culture is consisted of a nation's way of thought and works of art resulted in by imitation, criticism and experiences acquired throughout life; any lifestyle caused by connecting thoughts with hearing; improving thought levels and standards of social life through criticism, appreciation, comparison and gathering necessary information."

The significant point in these statements is, "improving the level of thought and standards of social life through Criticism, appreciation, Culture is, of course, a factor in improving thoughts and social lifestyles. The point lacking attention here is the evolutionary aspect of culture, which has been emphasized by almost all distinguished encyclopaedias around the world.

Here are more statements on culture quoted from another Turkish reference book:

"The word "culture" found its way into the Turkish language from French and Latin after young Turks came to office in 1910, when Mustapha Kamal began vast cultural changes; it generally means civilizations remaining from the past. Its other meanings are:

a nation or peoples' specific cultural or civilizational change;
one's knowledge and cultural learning;
purifying on element or substance of unwanted alien material;
biological processes in agriculture, or raising-various bacteria."

Culture in the Encyclopaedia of Human Rights

Culture, every human's right to contribute to cultural life, has been presented in the World Treaty on Human Rights as:

Article 1027: Every human being is entitled to the right to live freely, contribute to his society's cultural lifestyle, and enjoy its scientific and artistic advantages. Everyone has the right to be provided with material and moral support caused by scientific endeavours or literary and artistic works.

This right has been further emphasized in the Treaty of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Article 1051: All member countries of this treaty are in official agreement on these rights for every human being:

- a. to contribute to cultural life;
- b. to use the advantages of scientific advances and its applications;
- c. to be physically and morally supported for one's scientific literary or artistic accomplishments.

Article 2015: Members of this treaty are to play an active role towards the achievement of these ends by means of developing science and culture.

Article 3015: Members of this treaty totally agree on the right of free research in scientific and creative domains.

Article 4015: All members of the treaty acknowledge the necessity of international cooperation towards scientific and cultural development.

Defending human rights against racial injustices in cultural issues has been emphasized in this treaty.

Article 5: In accordance with the fundamental rights stated in Article 2 of this treaty, all members pledge to prevent any kind of racial injustice –whether in race, skin colour, nationality or ethnic group –so that any human being can enjoy equal rights, especially in:

- a. economics, particularly social and cultural rights;
- b. the right to participate in cultural activities. The treaty also prohibits any kind of sexist, biased injustice or cruelty to women.

Article 13: Membering countries are to make any effort towards dealing with socioeconomic injustices to women, so that women and men may have equal rights, particularly in sports events and all cultural activities.

The UNESCO officially undertakes the responsibility of safeguarding and supervising support and development of cultural rights. The UNESCO relies on these agreements in order to attain its goals: the UNESCO treaty on protecting cultural possessions during military invasion, approved on May 14, 1954, also known as the Hague Treaty; its protocol, May 14, 1954; the UNESCO treaty on preventing smuggling, importing or exporting cultural monuments and objects, November 14, 1970.

The treaty on the protection of cultural heritage, November 16, 1972; the statement on the Principles of Cultural International Cooperation, November 14, 1966; the UNESCO statement on Principles of Satellite Transmitter Usage for Free Information flow, and Cultural Exchange, November 15, 1972 and also the

UNESCO statement on Mass Media Participation and Role in Enhancing Peace and International Relationships, and Protecting Human Rights; Fighting Racial Injustice and War, November 28, 1978.

Other approved agreements aiming to protect cultural rights include an article obliging all museums to be available to all people, December 14, 1960; recommendations on preventing illegal import or export of cultural objects, November 19, 1964; recommendations on national support of cultural and natural heritage, November 16, 1972; recommendations on the protection of historical places, November 26, 1976; recommendations on the protection of contemporary historical monuments.

November 28, 1978; UNESCO'S advice on the situation of artists, October 27, 1980, along with the international treaty on social and cultural rights sanctioned by the Socio–economical Commission on May 11, 1976, according to which the UNESCO is to regularly report to the commissions the progress in issues concerning its duties in the rights explained in Article 18. Information on the progress of the contents of Article 15 of the treaty –on the right to attend cultural activities –are recorded as UNESCO's economical, legal, cultural and social rights advances.⁴⁸

Points of Common Approval between Islamic Culture and Human Rights

1. Both Islamic Culture and the Human Rights agree on items (a) and (b) for Article 1027.
2. Items (a), (b), and (c) of Article 1015 are also culturally agreed upon.
3. Likewise Articles 2015, 3015, 4015 and 5.
4. In Article 13, the two cultures do not agree in their approaches to the different rights considered for men and women.⁴⁹

The Criterion in Islamic Culture

Any cultural phenomenon or activity opposing the highest human virtues, like morals or religion, is unacceptable in Islam. Culture, or any phenomenon or culture arising as culture in the society which is in conflict with human dignity and the perfectionistic tendencies in man, however attractive it may be, is prohibited by Islam.

This is the most important duty of a dynamic culture, which is strongly supported in Islam.

1. Borhan–e–Qate (The Undefiable Proof), by Mohammad Hussein Khalaf Tabrizi.

2. Jahangiri Dictionary.

3. The Persian Encyclopaedia, see culture.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.
8. See Lessan–ol–Arab, al–marja; also Al–Monjad, thaqaf.
9. Encyclopaedia, by Farid Vajdi, see thaqaf.
10. The current encyclopaedias, e.g. Farid Vajdi's, do not mention any of the recent discussions, or fervid research done on culture.
11. Al–Monjad, see Adab.
12. It has been said that Imam Ali (a) wrote these Arabic verses.
13. Culture de masse.
14. Dictionary Encyclopédique Noms Communs, Hachette, 1991.
15. Jean Mathieu, Dictionary Etymologique, Rosay, Paris, 1992.
16. See Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions, by A.L Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn, quoted in the Encyclopaedia Americana.
17. Africa, Legend of Creation by Uli Bayer.
18. History of the World, Hamilton, Vol. 1.
19. Life Nature and the origins of Evolution Oparin
20. Ibid
21. International Grolier Encyclopaedia
22. World Book Encyclopaedia.
23. The National Identity of Argentina, by Juan Jose.
24. p 142
25. Constantinov. Encyclopaedia of Philosophy.
26. The ideas of such personalities would definitely differ a great deal, or even contradict. Merely supposing that they were influential in the Chinese society, sufficiently proves that China must have possessed a culture to prepare its intellectuals to accept such a vast range of diverse – or contradicting –schools of thought.
27. Chu Jai, Winberg, Ancient History of Chinese Philosophy, and Will Durant, History of Civilization, Vol. 1.
28. Hu Shih (1891–1962), Chinese philosopher.
29. Will Durant, History of Civilization, Vol. 1.
30. See p. 1
31. The four elegant Buddhist realities forming the base of Buddhism.
32. Indian religious sect.
33. The great legendary Hindu book.
34. One of the three Hindu Gods described in Mahabharata.
35. Radha Kamal Mukerjee, The Culture of India.
36. Ibid.
37. Will Durant, History of Civilization. Vol. I
38. The Encyclopaedia of India.
39. Contemporary originalist theorists.
40. The Encyclopaedia of Kenya.
41. Uli Bayer, Africa, Legends of Creation
42. The General Encyclopaedia.
43. The Finnish Dictionary.
44. The Finnish Encyclopaedia
45. Bra Bokers Lexicon.
46. Quoted from Edward Burnett Tyler, English anthropologist.
47. The Gylelendals Encyclopaedia.
48. The Encyclopaedia of Human Rights.
49. For a further detailed treatise, see M.T. Ja'fari, Universal Human Rights: from the Viewpoints of Islam and the West. pp.292–306

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