

Chapter 16

Ethos and Self in the *I Ching* and Erikson's Psychology

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SUMMARY

This chapter examines ethos and the self as constructed within indigenous psychologies (Heelas & Locke, 1981) from a cultural psychology perspective (Valsiner, 2014). Ethos is viewed both as a cultural system and as a form of ethics found within a cultural system. Following Valsiner's (2015) call for a dialectical synthesis as critique in psychology, a comparison of the indigenous psychologies of China and psychoanalysis is made by examining their models of self-development, the growth of ethical characteristics, and formative relationships. This chapter begins with a brief discussion of dialectics, as the method for this critique and as a key element within each of these systems, followed by an overview of these perspectives. It closes with analysis of the configurations of meaning manifest in self, activity, and nature for each tradition, revealing ideal patterns (mythemes) and a critique of these views.

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades there has been a growth of interest in bridging psychological theory across cultural traditions in psychology (Roland, 1988; Paranipe, 1998) and in anthropology (Heelas & Lock, 1981; Jahoda, 1982). Heelas and Lock (1981) state that indigenous psychologies are found in all cultures and form the basis of self and its growth and development within socio-cultural institutions. In developing a critical cultural psychology, Valsiner (2015) calls for a *critique* approach involving collaboration, construction, and dialectical synthesis of differing views. This chapter follows these leads and examines trajectories of self-development (Zittoun, Valsiner, Vedeler, Salgado, Goncalves, & Ferring, 2013) within the Chinese ethos and in psychoanalysis, both recognized as indigenous psychologies by Heelas and Lock (1981). While there have been several accounts that draw together the Chinese cosmology with Freud's psychoanalysis (Hsu, 1985; Tu, 1985), this account focuses on Erikson's (1950) psychoanalysis of cultural profiles as it relates to Chinese thought (Yang, 2006).

Eriksonian psychoanalysis is built upon Freud's developmental model of psychosexual stages and erogenous zones (Benjafield, 2015); however, he extends his theory of organ mode configurations beyond the sexual to the psychosocial and spatial modalities of activity in play and work (Erikson, 1950). He also extends Freud's developmental stages throughout the life cycle (Erikson, 1982), with a series of ego virtues, which develop within a cultural ethos. The Chinese ethos is built upon several classical texts, such as the works of Confucius and the *I Ching* and is developed through every day practices such as musical training (Yang, 2006), tai chi (Wong, K., 1996) and feng shui (Wong, E., 1996). Central to this view is the harmony of self in social relations and with natural elements. Present discussion will be limited to the works of Confucius and the *I Ching* as Taoist examples of the broader Chinese cosmology. Following a review of these models of self-development, ethics, and mentoring

relationships, there will be a deeper analysis of the configurations of meaning, or *mythemes* (Valsiner, 2014), found in each view as they relate to formative activity that is grounded within nature. This chapter concludes with a critique and synthesis of these indigenous psychologies.

DIALECTICS

Dialectics is a mode of thought that involves the joining of opposites into a synthetic whole. This chapter describes dialectics both as a way to bring together these psychologies, and as a central element in each ethos. Dialectics is found in Asian and "Western" philosophy and psychology (Paranjpe, 1998) and is central to cultural psychology (Valsiner, 2014). Western dialectics begins with Pythagoras in music and Plato in ideals (Benjafield, 2015), and culminates in Kantian three-part dialectics of *thesis-antithesis* and *synthesis* (see Figure 1).

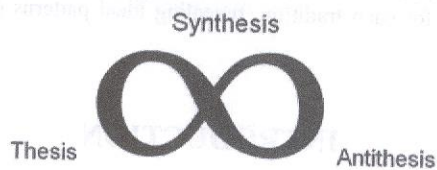


Figure 1. Kantian dialectics.

Dialectics is central to the work of Hegel, Freud, and Erikson (Paranjpe, 1998). For Erikson, dialectics is the basis of psycho-social relationships and the dynamics of ego epigenesis (Tonks, 2004), where the development of opposing strengths and weaknesses gives rise to the synthetic emergence of ego virtues through rituals of socialization (Erikson, 1950). More detail will be elaborated upon in later sections.

The Chinese cosmology is built upon dialectics, as seen in the formative texts of *Haung-ti nei ching* (Zhu, 2003), Confucius (Tu, 1985) and the *I Ching* (Legge, 1971), which centre on the concept of the *Tao* made up of yin and yang (Yang, 2006). Figure 2 shows the Tao symbol, comprised of yin (black) and yang (white); each containing a little of the other. Together they engage in a dynamic flow giving rise to various forms of dialectical syntheses, or elemental manifestations of the Tao. This is seen in the *trigrams* surrounding the yin-yang in Figure 2, which will be elaborated upon further in coming sections.



Figure 2. Taoist yin-yang dialectical symbol.

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According to Taoism (Lao-Tsu, 1989), all things are comprised of yin and yang and the flow between states of yin to yang and back again. An easily recognizable manifestation of the cycles of the Tao (yin & yang) is the cycles of the moon from new through to full and back to new.

Dialectics is foundational to both the Chinese cosmology and Erikson's psychoanalysis. Psychosocial relationships and ego virtue growth are built through the dialectical exchange between persons, and the internal dynamics of the psyche for Erikson (1950). Likewise, all of nature and the essentials of self and society are also built upon the dialectics of the Tao within the Chinese cosmology (Yang, 2006). Further elaboration of these will be made in the next section on the self, and in a dialectical synthesis of these two traditions in the last section.

SELF

Self is central to indigenous psychologies which function to develop and sustain "self" within a network of social institutions (ethos) of a given culture (Heelas & Lock, 1981). Self is also central to cultural psychology, where it is developed out of social relations within the framework of shared meanings of self, body, activity, and geography (Valsiner, 2014). As Taoism and Erikson's models of self and the growth of ethics are both idealist systems (Heelas & Lock, 1981), each is considered as describing *shared* melodies of living (Zittoun, et al., 2013) and musical chords of self-development within a cultural ethos (Roland, 1988; Paranjpe, 1998). Presently, the melodies of self and ethical development in formative relationships are examined along with the chords of configurations of activity.

Self in Erikson's psychoanalysis

Erikson's (1950/1964/1982) psychoanalytical model focuses on the growth and development of the ego within eco-biological and psycho-social realms. His model is grounded in two sets of basic forms: the *organ mode configurations* and the *stages of ego development*. Erikson (1950) provides a rich description of his configurational model in application to traditional indigenous and western industrial societies. He also identifies the realms of *soma*, *psyche* and *ethos* as his ontological foundation, representing a "bio-psycho-social" formulation.

This model arises out of the western rationalist tradition of self (Taylor, 1989), beginning with Plato and influenced by Christianity (Dumont, 1985), merging the Hellenic and Hebraic views (Paranjpe, 1998), which gave rise to the modern individualized ego and self. Erikson clearly follows this tradition as drawn from Sigmund and Anna Freud as well as William James' (1890/1950) notion of self.

Erikson's (1950) model of organ mode configurations is built upon the Freudian *erogenous zones*, i.e., Oral, Anal, Genital, and *spatial modalities of action* that correspond to the psychosocial dynamics in which the person is raised. Figure 3 shows the normative organ modes (incorporating, biting, holding, inclusion & inception) that are applied to the five developmental stages of: Oral I, Oral II, Anal, Pre-genital, and Genital.

Beginning with Oral I, the infant is primarily concerned with the *incorporation* (*getting*) of nutrition and social experiences. Next, Oral II, is when teething begins and biting or *taking* becomes the new developmental mode. This gives rise to an alteration of the psychosocial relations between the mother and the infant, where discipline away from biting is necessary (Erikson, 1950). The third stage (Anal) is focused on both retention (*holding*) and expulsion (*letting go*) as new developmental modes that emerge based upon psychosocial relations with the parents. In stage four, the Pre-genital modes of *inclusion* (feminine) and *inception* (masculine) emerge and are expressed in a child's play (as spatial modalities of action); *configurations* that are guided by socio-cultural morals (mythemes) and are recapitulated in the Genital stage.

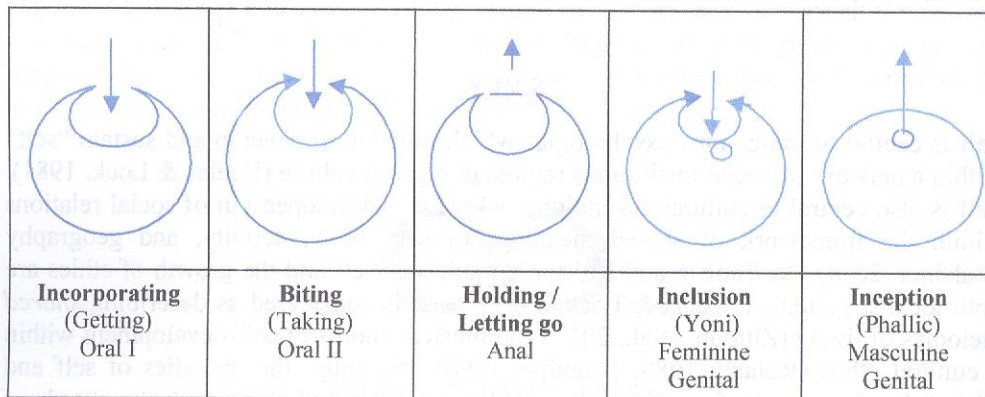


Figure 3. Erikson's (1950) organ mode configurations.

Each of these modal configurations may become manifest in any of the zones, stages, or spatial modalities, forming the basis of healthy or neurotic fixation and embodiment of characteristic modes of activity, as seen in the case studies that Erikson (1950) provides. He also extends this analysis of configurations to the social and cultural ethos of societies and their relationships to cultural modes of activity that are grounded in nature (as will be elaborated upon later).

Secondly, Erikson (1950/1982) identifies eight major crises, or turning points, in the human life cycle that represent responses to evolutionary and developmental needs. These "crises" of development are opportunities for individuals to realize strengths of positive or negative forms along with the emergence of virtues of the ego. The first five of these stages overlap with Erikson's configurational development, while the last three represent adult development. Erikson (1964) identifies ego virtues that develop through the dialectics of psychosocial rituals (you-me; we). Beginning with the rituals of feeding and infant care (Oral I & II), he identifies the need to develop *trust* along with *mistrust* in the growth towards the emergence of *Hope*. This development continues through later stages where *ritualization* of psychosocial interaction leads to the development of the positive *syntonic* (thesis) while *ritualism* leads to the negative *dystonic* (antithesis). If the former (syntonic strength) is more dominant, then the ego-virtue will emerge strongly; for example, with *trust* over *mistrust* in the development of *Hope*. Throughout

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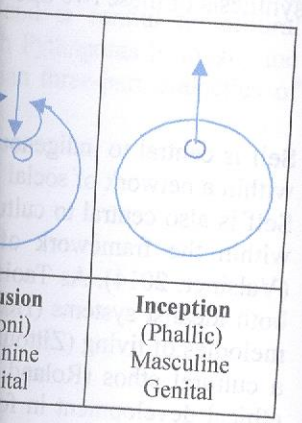
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childhood the virtuous strengths of *Hope, Will, Purpose, and Competence*, contribute to later ethical action as the adolescent development of *identity*, and the virtue of *Fidelity*, involves knowing one's "*mythology*" that ties oneself to one's cultural ethos and how to contribute to the future prosperity of one's community (Erikson, 1964). As one develops there is the possibility of the syntonic ethical growth or the dystonic trappings of false ethics where Erikson (1964) calls for the development of a truly universal ethics which must genuinely unfold and cannot be fabricated, one that entails the *synthesis of opposites*.

Moving into adulthood, the virtue of *Love* emerges and gives rise to "the intimacy of individuals and is thus the basis of ethical concern" (Erikson, 1964, pp. 129-130). In middle adulthood, the virtue of *Care* emerges as responsibility for children becomes a necessity. Here one needs to "experience 'the other'" (1964, p. 229) and through this "inter-living" or *mutuality*, parents guide their children and stimulate the development of their virtues and eventual ethical action. A capacity for ethics is internalized through psychosocial rituals and externalized in action. In later adulthood, the virtue of *Wisdom* emerges for those finding integrity over despair.

Formative relationships are crucial for ego and ethical development, where parents and community members nurture and mentor the young in their development. Psychosocial rituals instill cultural forms of ethics and self understanding and vary from culture to culture (Erikson, 1950). Such mentorship also occurs, for Erikson, in the relationship between the analyst and the analysand, as a partnership where a "mutuality of praxis ... [emerges and the doctor can] develop as a practitioner, and as a person, even as the patient is cured as a patient, and as a person" (1964, p. 236). The therapist and client together engage in *disciplined subjectivity* to achieve a shared understanding and insight of the precipitant problem to foster growth of the individual. Such insight may involve the unlocking or release of the fixated organ modes in the body and activity (Erikson, 1950).

Erikson's model of self-development is based upon ideal configurations of organ modes that are built from Freudian erogenous zones. He enhances this model with a normative schematic of stages of ego virtue development that can be applied to all cultures. Erikson identifies the growth of self and ethical action through generative mentoring relationships that are built upon the dialectics of give and take between persons and within an individual's psyche, processes similar to those in the *I Ching*.

Self in Chinese thought

The Chinese conception of self has a long history going back millennia (3000 BC), developing in the *Zhou period*, and flourishing in the Confucian (551-479 BC) construction of self. This involves *self* and *other* in a *dyadic* relationship as part of the more central task of a quest for sage-hood and self-realization through lifelong commitment to learning (Yang, 2006). The Chinese conception of self centres on the need for harmony of self in society and in nature. The Zhou people recognized that the person is situated in society and is regulated by *li* and *yue*. *Li* "is a set of role expectations that guide people's behaviors" (Yang, 2006, p. 334), while *yue* means music, the means through which harmony emerges in the development of *li*. The self

conceptualized by Confucius centres on moral cultivation of the individual as a source of order and harmony in society (Yang, 2006). Confucius held that a person's moral cultivation (li & yue) is related to bodily changes in three ways: (1) inside the person's body, (2) on the person's appearance, and (3) surrounding the person. Development of the individual is a means for the development of society.

Yang (2006) also identifies two idealized forms of self that tend to ensue: *Jun Zi* and *Xiao Ren*. *Jun Zi* is a gentleman or great man of the ruling class, a model to strive to become. *Xiao Ren*, on the other hand represents a small man who is uncultivated and unknowledgeable. Through self-cultivation and following the teachings of the wise, one can strive to become *Jun Zi*. Here, inner and outer development occur together with the dialectical cultivation of inner moral traits that are brought to societal development.

The *I Ching* (Legge, 1971) is a source of divination and a guide for self-development and harmonious living as directed by its collection of metaphorical parables (Piekkola, 2017). As a source of Taoist wisdom, the *I Ching* provides descriptions of all possible life scenarios, built upon the foundational *trigrams* of solid (yang) and broken (yin) lines (see Figure 4).









Meaning	Trigram	Tai Chi Position	Meaning	Trigram	Tai Chi Position
Heaven		Ward Off	Earth		Roll Back
Wind		Pull Down	Thunder		Split
Water		Press	Fire		Push
Mountain		Shoulder	Valley		Elbow

Figure 4. Eight *I Ching* trigrams and tai chi movements.

The eight basic trigrams represent the elements of: heaven, earth, wind, thunder, water, fire, valley, and mountain. The reader of the *I Ching* generates a *hexagram* (comprised of two trigrams) through "tossing" coins or yarrow stalks to reveal the meaning of one's situation. The hexagram is one of sixty-four possible circumstances or manifestations of the Tao. The reader interprets the parable of the hexagram as a narrative mytheme offering guidance in activity and self-understanding. One contemplates the meaning of the hexagram and the corresponding judgment, commentary, and great symbolism that describe the preferred course of action for the *Jun Zi* (Superior Man) who makes wise decisions versus those of the *Xiao Ren* (Small Man) who creates havoc (Legge, 1971). Important traits of *Jun Zi* are both psychological and embodied, including: *benevolence*,

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conscience, morality and intellect; benevolence to care for others, conscience to be self-aware, morality to engage good action, and intellect to think clearly (Yang, 2006). Within this view the person (self) is seen to be the centre of ethical action and is valued not by what one is, but through one's *actions*.

Yang (2006) further elaborates on the relationship between *Ji*, the self, and *Ren*, the social world around a person. *Ji* is meaningful when associated with *Ren* showing that self is most meaningful in relation to one's group. Hsu (1985) also describes self as *Jen* which transcends layers of personal consciousness through to intimate family and relations. Here, the Chinese self is primarily constituted by the "supremacy of kinship" where "self-esteem" arises through identification with one's parents, siblings, and close relatives. Tu (1985) elaborates on the Confucian concept of "self as a dynamic process of spiritual development", where self-transformation is "a communal act" (p. 231) and the life-long journey of self-development is fostered through "ritualizations" between generations of fathers and sons.

The formative relationships between sons and fathers, and the ideal of *filial piety*, father worship, shows that such mentoring leads to self-cultivation through an opening up of self to others (Tu, 1985). As such, through the *mutual caring* and devotion of the son to the father (allowing the father to be a father, and the son to be a son), the two can move towards their ideals of self-realization. This connection to the father also transcends towards ancestors which maintains the tradition of self-and-other development across time and generations. This is the core of the Chinese ethos of self-development and is seen in other mentoring relationships as in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), with the mutual dependence of doctor and patient in promoting health (Zhu, 2003), and practices like tai chi, where the *sifu* (master) requires an eager and willing student who will follow and learn to lead. The playing of tai chi is directed towards the learning of the forms of the *I Ching* through basic movements, but most importantly the ethics of self-defense, in two-person *application forms* such as *San Shou* (Yiu, 1981).

The Chinese cosmology, like Erikson's model, gives rise to a model of self that is generated through the dialectics of mutual relationships that guide the internalization of cultural virtues. These models, however, differ in the specific virtues (hope to wisdom vs. benevolence to intellect) that are valued within each ethos, as well as the foundations of their idealized configurations. Ideals of harmony of self with others and with nature are also highly valued in the Chinese ethos along with filial piety, forming the foundation of ethical development. More detail is provided in the next section on the role of the configurations of trigrams as they apply to activity, cultural rituals, and nature.

CONFIGURATIONS OF ACTIVITY AND NATURE

Both of these systems of psychology provide ideal frameworks for self-development (Heelas & Lock, 1981), based upon idealized formal patterns (configurations) which are applied to central activities grounded in nature. Cultural psychology seeks to describe essential activities that reflect the impact of cultural ideals on self (Cole, 1996; Valsiner, 2014). Erikson's organ mode configurations (Figure 3) and the *I Ching* trigram

configurations (Figure 4) can be applied to activities central to self-development within their cultural perspectives. In his analysis of cultures, Erikson (1950) describes geographic influences on the mythemes of cultural rituals based upon configurations; for example, the Yurok living at the mouth of a great river take on an "oral" stance, using jaw-like traps to catch salmon. Likewise, the *I Ching* provides configurations of trigrams and hexagrams that form the foundation for activities like tai chi. Both systems ground activity, culture, and self in configurations of nature, although they differ with Erikson starting with bodily organ modes to explain activity, culture and nature and the *I Ching* starting with natural elements that apply to activity, the body, and culture.

Erikson's configurations of play and work

Erikson (1950) provides a number of case studies illuminating the manners in which geography impacts cultural rituals of ceremony, work, and play. In the same manner that organ modes (e.g., inclusion and inception) may become "fixated" into the body of the growing child, these embodied forms come to influence typical patterns of social interaction in play and work (spatial activity modes) in a given culture. Erikson identifies, for example, parallel forms of configurations and activities found in cultural rituals like the Sun Dance, around a tall pole, for the Sioux, reflecting their hunting buffalo with spears as a phallic (inceptive) configuration. In contrast, the sweat lodge ceremony for the Yurok represents their yonic (inclusive) style based upon the 're-birthing' of entering and leaving the "womb" of the lodge. These traditional cultures, and their rituals, are generated out of the geographic locations in which their cultures arose. As such, configurations of oral, anal and genital organ modes are presented as a cultural psychology of typical activities within a given culture. These forms emerge in child-care rituals and the play of children which instill in the individual the necessary mode of activity for adult work. While children's play and phantasy may lead them to fixated and embodied abnormal forms, such activities also prepare the child for normal living in a cultural mode (Erikson, 1950).

Trigram configurations of play

Learning the *I Ching* and playing tai chi are integrated practices that allow an individual to internalize the trigram configurational forms and to embody their principles through the basic eight forms of movement (Olson, 2001). For example, the *I Ching* calls for action in times of *Tun*—(Retreat) where the tai chi practitioner moves with *lu* (rolling back). Tai chi is a collection of activities (forms) that have the goals of: integrating mind and body, spiritual (ethical) development, and self-defense. These *I Ching* patterns of trigrams form the basis for ethical self-development and best action in society and in nature. By playing tai chi, one's body activates the configurations that the mind understands through reading the *I Ching*. The movements in tai chi are circular movements of the Tao that can release embodied emotions, as in TCM (Zhu, 2003), and express opening and closing of the body along with absorbing and expelling (Zhang, 1992), providing a point of comparison with organ modes.

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Critique and synthesis

This critique as collaborative construction (Valsiner 2015) seeks points of convergence and synthesis between these indigenous psychologies, as do Gadamer and followers (Bernstein, 1988) in seeking the fusion of horizons of intellectual traditions where new insight and enrichment arises through synthesis (Tonks, 2004; Valsiner, 2014).

Presently, these systems of self and ethical development provide varied, but similar cultural melodies of self and ethical development and differ in their ideal virtues and chords of configurations. Analysis of their chords of configurations provides a path towards the synthesis of these indigenous psychologies. While interpretations of the hexagrams resonate differently from Erikson's organ modes, clear parallels exist in their basic nature and offer a point of synthesis; for example, between "biting" and "penetrating" of the *I Ching* and tai chi and the "oral" and "inceptive" forms of Erikson's organ modes and play. While a detailed synthesis of specific hexagrams such as *I-nourishment* and *Chia Jen-family* along with the organ modes of incorporating and inclusion is beyond the present task, it can still form the basis of future analyses.

Unlike the *I Ching*, Erikson provides a normative, universal, framework that can be applied to all cultures, something he has been criticized for (Roland, 1988; Zittoun, et al., 2013), even though he does recognize great diversity across cultures (Erikson, 1964). As a test of validity, a valuable collaboration can be made by examining the Chinese self from an Eriksonian perspective. Further collaboration between these views can be found in the application of the *I Ching* in western therapy as a form of logo therapy, in finding a 'mythology' of meaning in a client's life (Erikson, 1950). Lastly, the application of tai chi play can be therapeutically beneficial in releasing embodied (configurational) trauma as seen in Eriksonian (1950) play therapy.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided an account of theoretical perspectives from Chinese and psychoanalytical traditions showing how ethos gives rise to self-development in a dialectical fashion. Similarities between these views have been identified regarding a foundation in dialectics, the growth of a relational self-directed towards ideal ethical action as fostered by formative relationships, and the importance of ideal configurations in understanding self, activity, and nature. Differences between these views have also been shown in the foundations of configurational patterns arising from bodily vs. natural elements and the specific values that comprise the height of (ethical) self-development. Points of potential synthesis of these views were also presented, showing a harmony of these songs of ethos and self.

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