

(a) The West's Material (質料的) View of Earth

The Western Material View of Earth

The Relationship between the View of Heaven and the View of Earth

In the West, the distinction between the View of Heaven (view of the sky) and the View of Earth (view of the land) varies according to the criterion of the transcendent Heaven (transcendental sky) versus the immanent Heaven (immanent sky).

- The perspective of the transcendent Heaven

- ◆ Encompasses all of Heaven and Earth (the Idea, the monotheistic God)

- The West's substance-oriented, ontological cosmology

- ◆ Heaven and Earth—especially the earth—are regarded as material beings in which form is realized

- ◆ Distinguished from the immanent Heaven (which regards Heaven and Earth as yin and yang)

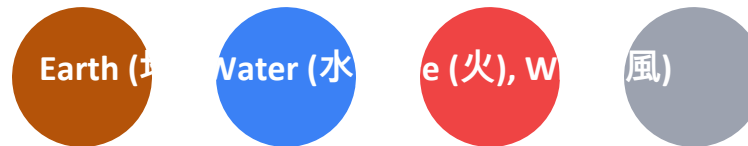
The Concept of the West's Material View of Earth

The West's Material View of Earth has changed across eras and perspectives, developing in various ways according to its philosophical background.

- The philosophical background of the Material View of Earth
 - ◆ The View of Earth varies according to the character of the transcendent Heaven (the Idea, the monotheistic God, reason)
 - ◆ The earth is regarded as the matter in which form is realized
- Changes since the modern era
 - ◆ A tendency to regard the transcendent Heaven as materialist reason
 - ◆ Reconstitution of the worldview with the emergence of the atomistic worldview
- The relationship between form and matter
 - ◆ The form of the Heaven beyond Heaven (the transcendent Heaven) is realized in the earth (matter)
 - ◆ The dualistic structure of matter and form is the basic framework of Western philosophy

The Theory and History of Earth-Water-Fire-Wind

Earth-water-fire-wind: an ancient theory that composes the world from four substantial elements (earth, water, fire, wind)



- Thales' theory
 - ◆ The substantialist worldview that "the origin of all things is water (水)"
- The development of earth-water-fire-wind
 - ◆ Empedocles: the establishment and systematization of the four-element theory
 - ◆ Plato: the four-element theory linked to the world of Ideas
 - ◆ Aristotle: the theory of form and the addition of a fifth element (ether)
- Global influence
 - ◆ Influenced Western philosophy as a whole (down to Matteo Ricci)
 - ◆ Functioned as a common worldview of the Indo-European language family
 - ◆ The concept of an earth-water-fire-wind wheel also appears in the Buddhist cosmology of the heavens; the West's Material View of Earth

The Three-Function System and Correlative Thought

Dumézil: the three-function system appears repeatedly in Indo-European mythology and in the West

- The composition of the three-function system

Upper stratum: the religious function

Middle stratum: the military and political function

Lower stratum: the productive and aesthetic function

- Example: Greco-Roman mythology

- ◆ The three goddesses of the Trojan War
 - ◆ Hera (religion) / Athena (politics) / Aphrodite (production)
 - ◆
 - ◆

- The connection between the correlative principle and earth-water-fire-wind

- ◆ The correlative principle inherent in earth-water-fire-wind
- ◆ Composed of principles of ascent and descent

- A similar Samgye (三界, Three Realms) system

- ◆ Buddhism: the realm of desire, the realm of form, the formless realm
- ◆ Eastern Samjae (三才): Heaven, Earth, Humanity
- ◆ Indian mythology: Mitra, Varuna, Aryaman

Comparison of East-West Worldviews

The worldviews of East and West differ in essential perspective, and even the same concept manifests in different interpretations and functions.

East: centered on attributes (yin-yang and the Five Phases)

- A worldview centered on relations and attributes
- Yin-yang and the Five Phases: emphasizing the attributes and changes of phenomena
- Water (水) and Fire (火): their meaning as attributes

West: centered on substance (earth-water-fire-wind)

- A worldview centered on independent substances
- Earth-water-fire-wind: the substantial constituent elements of matter
- Water (水) and Fire (火): matter as substance

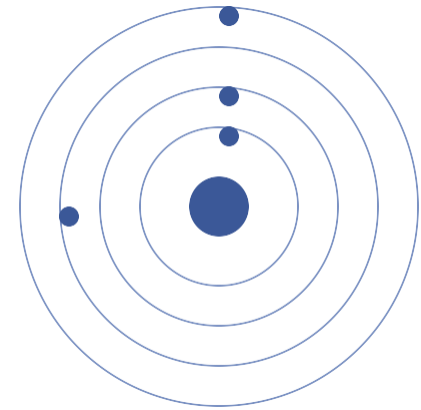
Commonalities and differences

- ♦ Spatial division: the division into the heavenly realm, the earthly realm, and the human realm is similar
- ♦ Core principle: the same term/concept manifests in different interpretations and functions
- ♦ Matteo Ricci: "Earth-water-fire-wind is correlative thought made of substance; yin-yang and the Five Phases is correlative thought made of attributes"

Modern Atomism and Material Civilization

Modern atomism appears as the maximized form of the West's Material View of Earth.

- The emergence of the atomistic worldview
 - ◆ Establishing the view that all things are composed of atoms and molecules; earth-water-fire-wind's substantialist attributes are maximized through analytical methods
- Western material civilization and scientific development
 - ◆ The core foundation for the development of modern material civilization
 - Establishing a mode of analytically understanding and controlling the material world
- Clarifying the distinction between form and matter
 - ◆ Emphasizing the relationship in which the form of the transcendent Heaven is realized in the material world; the material worldview's completion and maximization



Conclusion and the Crisis of Modernity

The West's Material View of Earth contributed greatly to the development of modern civilization, but its limitations also became clearly apparent.

- The materialist worldview became the foundation of scientific and technological development
- The Material View of Earth was the driving force of modern industrial society and material civilization
- A worldview biased toward matter brought about the collapse of the divine-being system
- It harbored the danger of leading the world to the brink of annihilation
- It became the starting point of the crisis of modernity

"The West's Material View of Earth, biased toward matter, utterly collapsed the divine-being system of the new cosmos and instead became the occasion that led the world to the brink of annihilation."