Lucian Pye's Contributions to, and Flaws in, the Study of Chinese Political Culture

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Abstract

As a pioneer and leading scholar in the field of contemporary Chinese political culture study, Lucian Pye is well known for his psycho-cultural interpretation of Chinese political culture. Not only does his study of Chinese political culture provide a methodological direction for the later researchers, his profound insights of, and comments on, Chinese political culture also deeply enriched and expanded our understanding of that nation and its culture. However, some flaws in his works, such as successive imagination without reliable evidences, selective use of materials, reductionism, and loopholes in his logic, and so on, should not be ignored while commenting on his contribution to the study of Chinese political culture.

1. Introduction

Lucian W. Pye is generally acknowledged as a member of the first generation of scholars of Chinese political culture since the concept of political culture was come up with by Gabriel Almond in 1956. He is also well-known for two things. One is for his good at borrowing concepts, theories and methods from other disciplines such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, especially the psychiatry of psychology, which placed him among the most outstanding representatives of the school of psycho-cultural analysis of political culture. Another one is for his consistently raising questions and brought up arguments in a very challenging way, making his research both original and controversial.

In this paper, the author is going to introduce briefly Pye's important works on Chinese political culture study, followed by explaining why he

is interested in Chinese political culture and take psycho-cultural analysis as his research approach, and the buck of this paper will focus on what contributions he made to the study of Chinese political culture, his influences on the subsequent scholars, as well as some flaws in his study of Chinese political culture.

Pye's study of Chinese political culture began with his monograph *The Spirit of Chinese Politics: A Psychocultural Study of the Authority Crisis in Political Development*, published in 1968, which made his reputation in the field. Disagreeing with the optimistic attitude concerning China's prospect prevalent among many Western scholars at that time, Pye pointed out great tensions beneath the seemingly calm surface in China on the eve of the Cultural Revolution and predicated the outbreak of that campaign. Simultaneously, Pye argued that the problems preventing China's modernization did not arise from the identity crisis common to most transitional societies. Rather, they arose from "a deep crisis of authority in Chinese civilization" (Pye, 1992: ix). This work, as Tang Tsou wrote, was "a new departure in so far as his use of theories and concepts is concerned" (Tsou, 1969: 656).

In 1976, the year when Mao Zedong died, Pye's another work, *Mao Tse-tung: The Man in the Leader*, came out. Because of Pye's creative revelation of the psychological links between Mao's public image and his intensely private experiences by the application of psycho-historical analysis, and his revolving around Mao's mother rather than his father to shed light on key events significant for Mao's personality and political style, this book found itself unique and important among all of the works on Mao Zedong. For anyone wishing to know more about the political psychological study of political elite, this book is worth reading.

For those interested in contemporary Chinese factional politics, *The Dynamics of Chinese Politics*, published in 1981, never failed to provide useful clues. In this work Pye not only described general principles and patterns behind the political behaviour of the Chinese political elite, but also convincingly demonstrated that the fundamental dynamic within Chinese politics comes from the tension between consensus and faction (Pye, 1981: xi-xii), and how this tension between consensus and faction developed psychologically. His insights were quite novel given the time when the book published. For instance, Chinese viewpoints of power, in his words, "principles of power", as well as the concept of "guanxi" had seldom been analyzed by others at that time.

Asian Power and Politics: The Culture Dimensions of Authority (1985) was a broadly comparative study focusing on the impact of the Asian's views of power and authority on the different paths of political development in Asian societies. Pye brought about in this work his three consistent arguments. First, the connotation of the concept of power cannot be viewed as a universal one.

Rather, it is determined by different culture. Secondly, the different courses of political development in Asian societies come from the differences of the viewpoints about power and authority rooted in their different culture traditions. Thirdly, the development of the viewpoints of power and authority is closely relevant to the patterns of family socialization in childhood. In short, "cultural variations are decisive in determine the course of political development" (Pye, 1985: vii).

The Mandarin and the Cadre: China's Political Cultures (1988) is the most important work in Pye's late academic career. First, Pye made a comprehensive and challenging response to a variety of critiques on the study of political culture. Secondly, it represented Pye's pondering for decades on Chinese political culture and political behaviour. The characteristics of Chinese political culture and reasons for the distinctiveness of Chinese politics were strongly demonstrated by him. As David Shambaugh wrote, "This relatively slim volume is weighty in its insights, extensive in its evidence, provocative in its arguments, intricate in its presentation, and intellectually broad-gauged in its analysis" (Shambaugh, 1990: 310). In Shambaugh's opinion, "This is psycho-politics as its best, and should be mandatory reading for all serious students of China as well as comparativists" (ibid.: 310).

2. Pye's Intellectual Development

Many scholars are influenced by their personal life experiences and chances available to them during the course of their intellectual development. Pye was a typical example from this point of view.

As the third child of an American couple who came to China as Congregational missionaries, Pye was born in 1921 in Fenzhou, now called Fenyang, a small county in western Shanxi province of China. He spent nearly 16 years in China off and on up until 1947 he went for Yale University to pursue his doctor degree. He learned to speak Chinese during his years of elementary and middle school education in China. Obviously, Pye's early life experiences in China set the stage of his interest in China politics. He once mentioned in one of his books, *Warlord Politics: Conflict and Coalition in the Modernization of Republican China* (1971)[1], that some of his political sentiments and his sympathy for the problems those Chinese warlords faced were inspired by Yanxi Shan (Pye, 1971: vii), a famous warlord who controlled Shanxi as long as 38 years.

The academic atmosphere in American humanities and social sciences during the first half of the 20th century in America partly determined Pye's psycho-cultural inclination in his study. Disciplines such as psychology, anthropology, sociology were seeing their booming at that time. Freudian and subsequent New-Freudian in the field of psychology was reaching its heyday.

Various schools emphasizing the psychological and cultural effects on human being's behaviour, such as psychological anthropology and social psychology, also appeared in anthropology and sociology respectively.

Affected by the development of the above disciplines, the study of politics in America began to exploit some concepts and methods from psychology, sociology and others. In 1921, Charles Merriam pointed out in *The Present State of the Study of Politics* that psychology and social psychology, among others, could offer both materials and methods for politics (Merriam, 1921: 173-185), calling on the application of both concepts and methods originating from other disciplines into the study of politics. Harold Lasswell brought concepts of Freudian and approaches of anthropology into his research on political behaviour thereby bearing important fruits. His far-reaching works: *Psychopathology and Politics* came out in 1930, *Politics: Who Gets,When and How?* in 1936, *Power and Personality* in 1941.

As a result, the study of politics in America during the first half of the 20th century "had begun to be more and more sociological, psychological, processual, and functional" (Almond, 2003: 93). Political psychology and political sociology, as new sub-disciplines in politics, emerged. Political culture research also saw its growth in 1940s and 1950s as one of the consequences of the above mentioned development. Among a large number of books on political culture, some classic works, such as *Chrysanthemum and Sword* written by Ruth Benedict, and others, came out, influencing several generations of scholars in this field.

Among those who inspired Pye to study political culture and ushered him into the field of political psychology, Almond, Lasswell, Nathan Leites, Eric Erickson were most worth mentioning.

From 1947 to 1951, Pye spent four years at Yale University, where Almond and Lasswell were teaching. As Pye's tutor, Almond, who had had psychology and sociology training while studying politics at Chicago University, not only passed down to his student his definition of political culture in psychological perspective and his emphasis on the role of political culture in political development, but offered opportunities to do such research. For instance, Pye's first experience of fieldwork in Malaya in September of 1952 to January of 1953 could be, to a great extent, contributed to Almond's recommendation to the Center of International Studies established at Princeton University in 1951. The outcome of this fieldwork, *Guerrilla Communism in Malaya: Its Social and Political Meaning*, turned out to be the beginning of Pye's career in the field of political culture. It is this research that made him "acutely aware of many of the psychological problems which can haunt people who find their social and political worlds erratically changing" (Pye, 1962: xiii), leading him later to study political development in terms of political culture.

Lasswell, as we mentioned before, a pioneer and founder of political psychology, perhaps influenced Pye more than Almond did because Pye kept repeating Lasswell's viewpoints in many of his books and papers.

Reading through Pye's works, Lasswell's emphasis on the study of political elite, especially their personality, his theory about the motivations of political men, i.e., the behaviour of political men in the public sphere always relating to their private motives, his typology of political men: the agitators, the administrators and the theorists, his concept of the life histories, and so on, appeared in Pye's works either as the theme or the argument over and over. It seems that Lasswell quietly stand behind Pye all the time. Although we cannot argue that Pye's knowledge of political psychology all comes from Lasswell, it is reasonable to extrapolate that Lasswell's viewpoints about political psychology structured Pye's knowledge resource both theoretically and methodologically.

Leites, well-known for his study of political elite, prompted Pye to study political elite. While Pye was at Yale and worked with Leites, Leites was engaging a study on the "Operational Code of Politburo" in order to figure out the behavioural patterns underneath the behaviours of the political elite in the Soviet Union. Leites' conclusions and processes of this study were used and followed later by Pye in *Mao Tse-tung: The Man in the Leader* and *The Dynamics of Chinese Politics* respectively.

Furthermore, Leites's discussion of potential relationship between patterns of child-raising and political behaviours of an adult and its continuity in his far-reaching essay, "Psycho-Cultural Hypothesis about Political Acts", issued in *World Politics* in October 1948, especially the question he dealt with at the outset of this essay, "how culturally typical political acts are related to the past life experiences of those who perform them" (Leites, 1948: 103), has later become one of the main concerns in Pye's study of political culture. Although it is uncertain that it is indeed Leites or those Freudians who came up with the same idea that made Pye consistently stress the impact of the early life experiences during childhood on the adult behavioural patterns, at least we could say that Leites's thinking on this topic strengthened Pye's emphasis on it.

Comparing with Almond, Lasswell and Leites, Erickson's impact upon Pye came later. It began from 1958 when Pye has become a faculty member of MIT. But it does not mean that the importance of Erickson for Pye's political culture study is lesser than any of them. On the contrary, it might not be exaggerate to say that it is Erickson that casts much psychological nature on Pye's study of political culture. First, many of Erickson's theory of personality functioned in Pye's study as his fundamental analytical tools, such as concept of the self-identity and identity crisis as well as the trauma theory. Secondly, the approach of psycho-history created by Erickson in his studying of youth

Martin Luther and Mahatma Gandhi was directly followed by Pye in his study of Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping.

In short, what influences Pye's interest in Chinese political culture and his inclination of psycho-cultural analysis comes from several dimensions: his personal life experiences, the academic atmosphere in American humanities and social sciences especially the booming of political culture study during his intellectual development as well as the scholars around him. And these dimensions worked interactively on him as a whole.

3. Pye's Contributions to, and Influences on, the Study of Chinese Political Culture

As one of the first generation academics in the field of Chinese political culture, Pye's role in the history of this field is irreplaceable and his contribution can be examined theoretically and methodologically.

Methodologically, Pye's approach provided the first sample of a political culture study when it was impossible to conduct large-scale questionnaire surveys in the People's Republic of China. Pye began his Chinese political culture study in the late 1960s when formal diplomatic relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China did not exist. It was unimaginable that American scholars could conduct a kind of empirical survey in China. Even after the normalization of diplomatic relations between the United States and China were established on January 1, 1979, it was still very difficult to conduct large-scale questionnaire surveys or interviews in the mainland. With such difficulties in obtaining primary source materials, Pye produced many influential works by using the psycho-cultural analysis approach according to what's available to him, academic researches on Chinese politics, official information issued by the Chinese authorities, literatures, autobiographies, memoirs, and his own in-depth interviews with people fleeing to Hong Kong from the mainland during the Cultural Revolution, and so forth. Although his approach of psycho-cultural analysis and some conclusions are controversial, it is unfair and unwise to deny or ignore his initiative contributions.

Secondly, Pye's research is noted for his deep and comprehensive insights. Pye's work emphasized the necessity for Chinese political culture study to be conducted through empirical research based on broad questionnaire based surveys. Such research, however, in his view, more often than not, was not sufficient at exploring the in-depth psychological dynamics of a people's particular political orientation because it lacked an historical perspective, despite the fact that quantitative research has become more technologically complicated. Pye believes that the complexity and distinctiveness of human beings would disappear if people were fitted into diagrams or charts,

transforming them from individuals into dots on a chart. Pye strongly opposes the practice of conducting social science research only according to the standards of laboratory study. Rather, he makes good use of imagination and creativity in his goal of deeply understanding human nature. And he did contribute a lot in the revelation of the sources and roots, which marked Chinese politics and political culture as so distinctive and simultaneously unique, in the realms of psychology, culture, and history.

It is important to note that, in essence, Pye's analysis of Chinese and Chinese politics not only proceeds from his psycho-cultural interpretation which are partly based on his imaginative hypotheses; he also pays close attention to that society's social structure and political institutions. This allowed Pye to expose and examine deeply the roots of China's political culture. Also, it represents his dislike for platitudes: he never hesitated to take a path very different from other academics in order to produce original research. For those dedicated to the study of Chinese political culture, they will find his approach both heuristic and fascinating.

Theoretically, Pye's most significant contribution was his combination of the studies on transitional societies with those on communist China, thereby greatly broadened the field of Chinese political culture study. At the time when Pye began his studies on Chinese political culture, the researchers of Communist China seldom treated China as a normal transitional society, much less engaging in academic communication or intellectual exchange with the students of political development. Pye pointed out at the outset of *The Spirit of Chinese Politics* that "China is not only Communist; it's a developing country"; emphasizing that the "sharp division between those working on Communist China and those working on political and economic development" (Pye, 1992: 1) must end. In Pye's opinion, the study of political culture was not only a study of ideology, but fell within the domain of political development as well. This idea was groundbreaking, which brought about a broadening and renewal of these two fields. After this, major or significant theoretical problems relating to political culture, such as the legitimacy of government and cultural identity in transitional societies, conflicts with world culture or western values with local or traditional value systems and dominant ideologies, such as Marxism, with tradition culture, and so forth, have received much attention both in the study of ideology and of political development.

Furthermore, Pye's psycho-cultural interpretation of Chinese political behaviour, the characteristics of Chinese political culture as well as Chinese politics, more often than not, are thoughtful, distinctive and heuristic, although some of them remain controversial. Pye revealed that the basis for Chinese cultural identity was fundamentally generated from a sense of historical greatness that "rooted primarily in a profound, mystical, and self-conscious awareness of the biological ties to their ancestors" (*ibid*.: 55). He pointed out

that the crucial problem of China's political development that should first be resolved is a crisis of authority that lay deep in Chinese civilization; if the Chinese cannot separate the concept of legitimacy from that of morality, this crisis will persist throughout this society's political development. He also identified the rhythm of Chinese politics was not a movement from right to left like a pendulum, but of up and down, completely different from the western model. In addition, he found that the differences between the seemingly contrasting values of the two poles of Chinese culture, elite culture and popular culture, "share a common origin at an even deeper psychological level" (Pye, 1988: 70). It was this point of view that revealed the reason for the contradictory traits of the value of Chinese intellectuals. Perhaps one of the most successful efforts comes from his application of psychological personality theory to politics in *Mao Tse-tung: The Man in the Leader*. In this book, he revealed that those seemingly contradictory traits in Mao's political style actually reflected the coherence of Mao's personality, thereby demonstrated the usefulness, or at least the possibility, of personality theory, or psychological theories, as means to offer insight in areas that political theory fails to illuminate.

Influenced by Pye's study of Chinese political culture, some younger scholars stepped into his shoes to do their researches. Richard H. Solomon, one of Pye's students, focused on the relationship between socialization, political attitudes and patterns of Chinese behaviour in his book, *Mao's Revolution and the Chinese Political Culture*. One can easily find the impact of his teacher's theories and methods in Solomon's work. Methodologically Solomon's investigation was also largely based on the combination of intensive interviews and the literature of psychology, cultural anthropology along with politics. What makes Solomon's work different from Pye's is his use of more complicated, more specialized psychological interviews, such as the application of two psychological tests, the standard Rorschach test and Thematic Apperception test. In this way, Solomon improved psycho-cultural analysis. As far as this theory was concerned, Solomon confessed in this book's preface that "the interpretations developed here, rely heavily on his [Pye's] insights into the workings of China's political culture, as elaborated in his recent study, *The Spirit of Chinese Politics*" (Solomon, 1972: xvii). Interestingly enough, one can detect a mutual impact in the work of these two men. Some of Solomon's conclusions, such as the human relationship between Chinese, was characterized as a "dependency social orientation", that there existed a "major continuities between childhood experiences and adult attitudes" (*ibid.*: 7), that "attitudes and behavioural patterns acquired early in life persist in adulthood" (*ibid.*: 7), were later borrowed by Pye.

Alan P.L. Liu, Pye's another graduate student, wrote *Political Culture and Group Conflict in Communist China* in 1976. Obviously, the psychiatric and

historical perspective presented in this book was similar to that taken by Pye. Like Solomon, Alan helped Pye better understand Chinese political culture through his work.

Not only were Pye's psycho-cultural analytical approach and theories absorbed and improved by his students, but also by Taiwanese scholars such as Shih Chih-yu. Although Shih Chih-yu was frustrated by the fact that "culture and personality hardly appear in contemporary politics", he persisted with "putting the culture, history and personality on his agenda of research" (Shih, 2003: vii) to interpret the political personality of Shen Chang-huan, Lee Teng-hui and Chen Shui-bian, in order to discuss the relationship of personality with political style. Simply one of Shih's conclusions is adequate to demonstrate how his work echoes Pye. As Shih puts it:

> Lee Teng-hui's self-consciousness is very strong, which makes him constant-ly alert, while Chen Shui-bian is desirous of being the winner in the struggle of power. That is why we have two different styles of policies when it comes to the Cross-Straits ties. Lee's political personality falls into the narcissistic personality while Chen's is more like the authoritarian personality. Lee's self-consciousness is highly related to the external resistance. In order to keep it in the order, Lee's self-consciousness is projected upon an idealistic subject consciousness of Taiwan as well as subject identity. Thus the style of keeping resisting constantly developed as the basic source of the tension of Cross-Straits ties. For the purpose of restraining the self-consciousness as well as appealing to subject consciousness of Taiwan, Lee uses strategic means which are very particular and indirect to carry out his policies with-out displaying his real intention. On the contrary, Chen Shui-bian fails to develop a set of explicit evaluation criteria for policies, and lacks inherence in those policies with regard to the Cross-Straits ties. Furthermore, he views the criticisms of his policies as the expressions of refusal of his leadership. And the possibility of formulating long-term policies has been excluded by Chen in such ways[2] (*ibid.*: 145-146).

Comparing Shih's work with Pye's *Mao Tse-tung: The Man in the Leader* approach to Mao's personality and political style, the similarity between Pye and Shih's research is evident. Shih himself spoke highly, in his books and essays, of Pye's contributions to the study of political culture.

4. Criticisms of Pye's Study of Chinese Political Culture

It is unquestionable that Pye's work on Chinese political culture "will long remain a prime source of knowledge and a guide to future research" (Blackmer, 1988: 890); that his pursuit of his own distinctive and profound interpretation as well as his refusal to settle for the obvious make his work very different from others. Nevertheless Pye's methodological arguments and

interpretation of Chinese political culture in terms of psycho-cultural approach are not beyond criticism. Rather, a series of fallacies can be found in his working on Chinese political culture. They are: 1) too many arguments that lack reliable evidence, 2) selectively using materials and the over-interpretation of these materials, 3) the willful substitution of evidence, 4) reductionism, and 5) logical flaws. It is very necessary to consider such fallacies if we are to completely evaluate Pye's study of Chinese political culture.

First, Pye goes too far with respect to the imaginative hypothesis. For students of social science, nobody can deny that, as Pye puts it, "the imaginative hypothesis must come first" (Pye, 1988: 11), in any study of social sciences. Therefore, the role of imagination in the field of social sciences must not be rejected. As researchers, we have to admit that what Pye achieves in this respect is quite extraordinary. However, what some perceive as his great achievement others believe is Pye's weaknesses. "The imaginative hypothesis", of course, "must come first" in the study of political science, but, it does not mean that the subsequent process of proving the theory can be ignored, whether or not the lack of proof is intentional or unintentional. Pye prefers to address this criticism by writing that his study is "highly speculative," rather than providing firm evidences for his hypotheses. Because of Pye's unproven conclusions, the effectiveness and explanatory power of his research approach has been called into question. This begs another equally important, if not more important question: to what extent are his conclusions significant if they cannot be proven? Unless we question Pye's research in a scientific manner, it is impossible to completely endorse Pye's imaginative hypotheses and artistic descriptions of Chinese political culture. After all, science differs from art. Therefore, although his hypotheses and descriptions have contributed much to a better understanding of human nature, no one would argue Pye's work on Chinese political culture was meticulous, scrupulous, or prudent, until he provides convincing empirical proof for his work. Although the analysis of political culture aims at exploring the hidden significance beneath various phenomena, rather than proving a consistent model, imagination is not a substitute for evidence. Unfortunately, in some occasions, Pye's creativity falls into such "imaginative" category.

For example, Pye wrote, that Mao Zedong barely mentioned his grand-father was the proof that Mao's parents "failed to manifest the proper spirit of filial piety, a cardinal Chinese value of reverence for one's forebears" (Pye, 1976: 75). Mao's complaint that being ignored by Deng Xiaoping was, according to Pye, "reminiscent of how he must have felt when his brother was born and he was no longer the sole object of his mother's affections" (*ibid.*: 280). Pye also wrote that Mao's "private, limited, remote, isolated personal character" were all related to Mao' childhood setting, his "remote and isolated" hometown (*ibid.*: 70-71), the village of Shaoshan, Hunan

province. All of these comments are Pye's beliefs and lack adequate evidence, and therefore scholars cannot take them seriously. In Lowell Dittmer's words, *Mao Tse-tung: The Man in the Leader*, "should be taken as a preliminary set of hypotheses rather than a fully tested theory" (Dittmer, 1976: 828).

Such feeble comments can be found in Pye's other books. For example, in *The Spirit of Chinese Politics*, Pye wrote, "in a sense the intellectuals and modernized specialists in modern China, whether among the hangers-on of a warlord or in a controlled office of the Communists, have at least only taken over the role that in traditional politics was filled by eunuchs" (Pye, 1992: 45). This comment obviously displayed Pye's ignorance both of the eunuchs and the Chinese intellectuals. In modern China, those who cherished the values of freedom and independence never disappeared among the intellectuals. Hu Shih, Lu Xun, Ding Wenjiang, Hu Feng, Ding Ling – none of these was obsequious flunkies dependent on his or her master; neither were they bystanders who were alienated from politics for the sake of their own well-being.

The second problem weakening the credibility of Pye's conclusions derives from his selective using of literature and undue interpretation or over-interpretation of materials. This problem was particularly evident in *Mao Tse-tung: The Man in the Leader*. Given that Pye was very familiar with Mao's writings it is really a shame that it appears Pye used Mao's literature selectively. Pye had a superb collection of Mao's writings, literature on Mao, memoirs of those who knew Mao, publications, and information released by the Chinese authorities, and others. He also read many scholarly monographs on Mao and discussed the Chinese leader with the world's leading academics. Despite this wealth of knowledge, what readers read in Pye's aforementioned monograph is his hatred of his mother, wives, and siblings as the result of his mother's withdrawal of her love for her son, Mao Zedong. Any positive emotion felt by Mao for his family cannot be found in Pye's work, therefore readers cannot help but suspect the credibility and truth of Pye's description. According to Pye, all of Mao's positive behaviour, such as the glorification of his mother's virtues and the value of brotherhood, Mao's efforts to improve the status of women, all of these, should be regarded as reflections of the ego-defensive mechanism, rather than coming out of his real emotional life. Obviously, Pye purposely picked up these ideas as the evidence to prove his hypotheses of Mao's narcissistic personality, so as to enhance the explanatory power of personality theory, while intentionally omitted negative evidence adverse to his hypotheses. Despite the fact that, according to psychological theories, there indeed exists opposite motives or feelings behind some actions, it does not mean that all behaviour should be explained in this fashion. Using literature for the purpose of proving the applicability of personality theory in the field of politics not only, unfortunately, undermines the value of such

studies, but may also lead to some unexpected and unwished consequences. For example, a rejection of the use of psychoanalysis in the study of leaders, due to the selective using of literature, may taint the approach of this research or even the theory itself. If it had not been for this defect, Pye's conclusions would have been more convincing, because his use of psychological themes *per se* is quite reasonable. So long as the truth of what Pye argued is accepted so is his hypothesis since his psychological reduction was based on some solid psychological theories. That is why Gordon Bennett remarks that "no other biographer approaches the depth of Pye's analysis of Mao the person and how personality probably affected political style" (Bennett, 1977: 529). What is regretful is Pye's manipulation of literature in order to prove his psychological themes, which forces readers to be careful and cautious with Pye's interpretation of Mao. If not, the image of Mao readers obtain from Pye would be one-dimensional.

The third problem, namely, the willful substitution of evidence, was demonstrated in *The Dynamics of Chinese Politics*. This study was partly based on in-depth interviews with 49 refugees who fled to Hong Kong from the mainland during the Cultural Revolution. Pye's aim was to reveal the Chinese elite's political psychology at the highest level of Chinese politics, and thereby to understand Chinese political behaviour. However, his evidence to explain elite's psychology and behaviour was derived from those who were not elites. They were just common people. Pye did not provide any evidence or theory that linked the feelings and observations derived from ordinary people and elite political behaviour. Whether Pye did so because of inadequate evidence or merely out of negligence is not known. Nevertheless, such a research and methodological defect cannot be accepted, although the difficulty in obtaining information on China's highest political elite, such difficulties exists even for Chinese scholars, can be understood. The similarity of attitudes among members of the same political culture system does exist, but it is inappropriate to assume the political or ordinary people and elites are the same. In China, the two groups are simply too different in circumstances such as societal and political status. Comparing *The Dynamics of Chinese Politics* with Pye's other study, *Politics, Personality and Nation Building: Burma's Search of Identity*, which was based on evidence obtained from a true elite sample, the persuasive power of the former is much weaker than the latter because of the fallacy of this misinterpretation of evidence.

As for reductionism, the fourth problem in Pye's psycho-cultural interpretation of Chinese political culture, had been pointed out by some scholars for two reasons: one, his attributing some social and political events to the effects of psychological factors; another, his ascribing behaviour during adulthood to experiences of childhood. In my opinion, such charges are unwarranted, because, to some extent, any explanation or theory is a form of

reductionism. Where the difference lies is the direction or purpose to which the theory is used. Any scholar can only use, or seek, one or two explanatory paths among various causal relationships for their purposes because of the limitation of their interest or the information they can obtain. Should Pye's psycho-cultural approach of study be regarded as reductionism, who can then guarantee that their own work could provide all possible answers?

Nevertheless, whatever approach or path Pye chooses for his study, it cannot be used as a pretext for not providing some facts that function as key linkages in his hypothesis or theory in his interpretation. Therefore, in this respect, his interpretation cannot be exempted from the charge of reductionism. In Pye's view, adult behaviour reflected influences of family socialization during their childhood. However, he ignored or at least was unaware of the possibility of breakage between adult behaviour and their experiences of childhood and effect of other influential factors. Sociological research has proven that apart from family members, peer groups, or even crises during childhood can also play a very important role in the development of children's attitude and personality formation. In order to smoothly slide or move between the continuum of adult behaviour and family experiences of childhood, it is very necessary to provide reliable evidence about continuity within these two ends. Unfortunately, Pye failed to achieve this goal. Rather, he made a great jump between the two. Of course, when it comes to the individual, namely, while he was referring to Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping, he did not forget to demonstrate such continuity by tracing their life histories step by step. Nevertheless, he did it from an opposite or even a dangerous direction. In other words, before he proved the existence of such continuity, he had set up a hypothesis in the first instance, and then picked over stories that seemed to fit his hypothesis. Precisely, Mao or Deng's personality traits, which Pye highlighted, Pye also argued derived from their childhood and adolescence experience. At first glance, this seemed unquestionable. However, when we ponder the possibility of the fact that perhaps many things adverse to Pye's hypothesis would have been omitted, it is clear that Pye's conclusion is open to question.

In addition, another criticism of using national or cultural traits in a reductionist fashion, frequently used in academia during the first half of the 20th century, can be found in Pye's study of Chinese political culture. Although it might be incorrect to classify Pye's work on Chinese political culture as a study of national and cultural traits, his study, to some degrees, conveys something of the flavour of such a study[3]. Sometimes, the complexity, particularity, and diversity of human beings as individual have been simplified or mantled by his identification of culture with psychology, his confusion of individual personality with the social and cultural system, his strong predisposition of stereotyping Chinese characteristics as a whole.

The fifth problem concerns some flaws in Pye's logic of interpretation. In *The Spirit of Chinese Politics*, Pye wrote, on the one hand, that the fundamental socialization process in modern China was still profoundly influenced by traditional culture since the dominant pattern of family socialization remained the same. On the other hand, he argued that there were two types of people in modern China. One type kept showing reverence and deference to traditional authorities in modern suits. Another type released its aggressive impulses through channels provided by modern society. Here arises a problem in logic that needs to be clarified. Just as Tang Tsou puts it, "Given his assumption of the existence of one dominant pattern of early socialization practices, it is incumbent upon Professor Pye to explain more fully and in more specific terms the distinct psychological mechanisms that produce these two very different types of men and tendencies from a single pattern of early socialization" (Tsou, 1969: 673). Unfortunately, Pye rarely addressed this point in *The Spirit of Chinese Politics*. However, Pye was obviously aware of the problem because an explanation appeared in his another book, *The Mandarin and the Cadre*. In this 1988 work, Pye argued that this seeming political contradiction was so because the release of aggressive sentiment and deference authority shared a common origin at an even deeper psychological level because of the Chinese craving for security. However, this argument needs to be further explained in terms of a gap in logic because Pye did not analyze specifically under what kind of condition such a psychological shift from one side to another, that is, from the aggression to deference, would occur.

In addition, in *The Dynamics of Chinese Politics*, there exist some loopholes in logic, which make it difficult for readers to understand well his explanation of the primacy of power in the formation of factions. Pye claimed that the psychological motivating force for faction formation derived from insecurity of the Chinese as the result of uncertainty in Chinese politics, and that power considerations, among others, has become primary "because power is seen as the least ambiguous and most predictive of all factors in social life" (Pye, 1981: 127), hence reducing, as much as possible, political uncertainty. However, among three principles of power holding by Chinese, the first two principles – the tendency of conceiving of power relationships as a single coherent hierarchy and the tendency to equate status with power – are conducive to reducing the uncertainty within Chinese politics, but the third one, that "the power is readily transmitted through linkages of personal relationships" (*ibid*.: 130), increases uncertainty within Chinese politics. Obviously, it was necessary for Pye to make clear how power reduces the uncertainty in Chinese politics among these contradictory principles of power. Unfortunately, he only illustrated the manner by which Chinese predict the processes and outcomes of the operation of power. That is, to build some particularly personalized relationships with those who are in power. As for

the uncertainty introduced into Chinese politics by these conflicting views of power in China, it seems to him it was unnecessary to make any effort to clarify it because Chinese "don't understand it" (*ibid.*: 129) themselves.

On the top of that, Pye's argument is logically obscure and therefore confuses the reader about the relationship between the distinctiveness of culture and its effect. In *Asian Power and Politics: The Cultural Dimensions of Authority*, he asserts that, in Asia, "cultural variations are decisive in determining the course of political development because political power is extraordinarily sensitive to cultural nuances" (Pye, 1985: vii). Obviously, such a causative proposition is open to question. Just as Andrew Nathan puts it, "Weber would have argued fallaciously if he had tried to prove that the notion of Original Sin was essential to capitalism because capitalism developed only where this idea existed. His theory of the Protestant Ethic was convincing because he abstracted from the Protestant mentality the idea of an acquisitive rationality that he said was crucial to capitalism, and which might have existed elsewhere but apparently did not" (Nathan, 1993: 933). By the same token, Pye should provide us with some examples crucial to political development only found in Asian culture, rather than merely taking the uniqueness of culture as the basis of his argument.

Finally, the author wants to point out that some of these fallacies, such as deliberate selection of literature, simplification in the course of explanation, as well as the logical defects, could be possibly found in any scholar's works; some of them, such as excessive imagination, over interpretation, perhaps are relevant to the methodological and theoretical opinions of the school of psycho-cultural interpretation in the study of political culture. In other words, the approach of psycho-cultural analysis does not necessarily bring about such fallacies, but there exists in this approach some qualities which renders researchers more likely to produce such fallacies. Whether or not be able to avoid such problems depends on students themselves. As far as Pye's work is concerned, his study of Chinese political culture indeed leaves many questions open. However, this is not a reason to reject or deny the value of psycho-cultural analysis as well as Pye's study of political culture. Should we accept the view that a piece of research's significance does not only derive from the reliability of evidence's used, but from the depth of perception that scholars themselves contribute and the applicability of their research approach, the value of Pye's study of Chinese political culture and his application of psycho-cultural analysis need not to be defended.

Notes

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1.   *Warlord Politics* was essentially based on Pye's dissertation, "The Politics of Tuchunism in North China, 1920-1927: An Aspect of Political and Social Change in Modern China".
2.   This paragraph is translated by this paper's author.
3.   I have no intention to devalue nationality study. On the contrary, its contribution as a kind of pioneering study can never be belittled no matter how many shortages it has and how much criticism it has encountered. In fact, some works on nationality study, such as *Chrysanthemum and Sword* written by Ruth Benedict, were very successful and worthy reading up to now.

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