**The Origins of Go Strategies in Classical Chinese Grammar:**

**Why the Chinese Play Go and the West Plays Chess**

*Note: This is a slight expansion of a talk delivered to the 2012 International Go Symposium, which was a very short version of a much longer article that will appear with my other articles in the AGA Bob High Memorial e-Library at* [www.usgo.org/bobhighlibrary](http://www.usgo.org/bobhighlibrary). *This will be announced in the AGA e-Journal.*

**By Peter Shotwell**

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**Introduction**

Like someone who came from the East and looked at everything chess has been involved with in the West, I’ve worked on the same thing with Go for 30 years. The results are in the e-Library of the American Go Association and four books with Tuttle Publishing including *Go! More Than a Game* (revised 2011)*,* which is 1/3rd history and a survey of the fields that Go is involved in today—computers, combinatorial game theory, mathematics, education, cognitive psychology, etc. etc.

This article is related to two of items in the field of Go history in ancient China where I have broken new ground.

1. I showed how Han period (206 BC-220 AD) scholars distorted the Yao myths about Go which led to 2000 years of misunderstanding about their meaning and their motives. Instead of Go being a sanctified game that we know today, it was regarded as a Daoist creation that was detrimental to the Confucian values fostered by the autocratic Han emperors who were anxious, as this article will explain, to suppress its bellicose Daoist origins and strategies for playing.[[1]](#footnote-1)

2. I established that the three early Go writings allegedly written by Confucius (551-479 BC) and Mencius (372-289 or 385-303/302 BC) actually are the work of their disciples between c. 280 and c. 260 BC. This was much later than has been traditionally supposed. I also found that the authors of the *Zuo Zhuan* who wrote the fourth early passage between c. 330 and 312 BC had inserted Go into their 4th century BC view of a 6th century BC story. This work was based on the dating of the passages by E. Bruce Brooks in *The Original Analects* (Columbia Univ. Press; 1998). There have been some arguments about his methods but there are none about the Go passages. Moreover, by looking at the context of these passages, rather than “thinking little” of the game as “Confucius” and “Mencius” are assumed to have thought, it seems that the disciples were imitating the *Zuo Zhuan* writers and used the game to illustrate their evolving views about filial piety. Since they didn’t have to explain it, Go was something that “everyone knew about,” but like so many early accounts of games, no one had commented about it as being anything remarkable. Thus, it would seem that it might have been played on a small board and was regarded as lightly as we might regard checkers. The game as we know it, with its elaborate strategies and spiritual mystique, did not begin to develop until the Han period after 206 BC, when five hundred and fifty years of internal fighting finally ended. This progression can explain why Sunzi’s *Art of War* and other Warring States warrior/philosopher books of the *Bingjia—*the “Dark School” of Daoism—did not mention the game, although their*Yin-Yang*-basedthoughts closely resembles Go thinking. Nevertheless, these two cultural “products” of Daoist beliefs seem to share a common ancestry: the grammar of the Classical Chinese language.[[2]](#footnote-2)

**Language Affects Culture: The Case of Abstract Nouns**

As this article traces the origins of Daoist thought it will become apparent why Go was so readily acceptable to the Chinese and why chess was so accepted by the West. It seems that the constrictions and freedoms of the adopted languages and in particular, the awareness or unawareness of abstract nouns, shaped their thinking processes long before these games entered their cultures.

The thesis that language affects culture is now largely accepted and the arguments today are over how much it does.[[3]](#footnote-3) Part of that argument is how much having abstract nouns or not is important. This has long been studied, however, no one to my knowledge has applied it the development of the “mind sports” of go and chess and how these games are related to the respective cultures.

**Greece**[[4]](#footnote-4)

A common observation has been that early Greek thought was a search for “Truths” and that this was influenced by contacts with other Mediterranean countries.

The isolated Chinese, on the other hand, with a more jaundiced eye, were concerned with practical matters, such as the names of things and how to manage them and people and their places in the world. Where did these differences come from?

First of all, in Greece, the operating assumption of classical philosophy was Orphism. Named after Orpheus, the poet who returned from Hades, this was an ancient mystery religion that arose in the 6th century BC from a synthesis of pre-Hellenic beliefs. As written in sacred texts about the origins of gods and humans, it held a belief that immaterial, eternal and divine souls were imprisoned in flawed material human bodies that, through re-incarnations, created painful cycles of life and post-mortem punishments. These could only be broken by performing secret initiation rites, purifications and ascetic living. This naturally created a viewpoint that there were innate goals in life that had a beginning and an end to which we aspire to in life.

Secondly, the grammar the Greeks had at their disposal helped shape their outlook on the world. Most important, its copula (which joined subjects to predicates) confused “Existence”—what there is—with “Essence”—what it is “in itself.” As in English and most Western languages, the “is” in “It is raining” (Existence) is different than, “This is a chair” (Essence). This caused confusion in philosophical circles for many centuries.

The “is” in “This is a chair” points to a Orphic-styled world that exists beyond what is sensual and can be seen. In this way, Greek grammar directed Greek thought—for Plato, this led to hypostatization i.e. the “making real and codifying” of the features of the world so that there is an ideal “Idea” of a “chair” in our minds or outside of us which we compare with the real ones we see before us. Since we can never trust our senses, this ideal world outside of us is the only “True” one. (Of course, this ran into trouble when slippery things like morals and ethics were considered).

Aristotle, on the other hand, had his General Categories written in a language that developed to accommodate his thoughts as they developed. His framework was also more “real” than the objects they delineated. As with Plato’s famous Shadows-in-the-Cave, they pointed to a more perfect order than is readily apparent.

Thirdly, the Greek and Western languages are inflected with endings so we have built-in distinctions of singular/plural and past/present to mention a few. Inflections also can tell us whether a word is a verb or a noun. This tends to make us think about the universe as being built up from individual parts, accented by definite articles that tempt us to examine and ultimately manipulate and control them.

These factors naturally led to questioning about what was the “One and the Many,” “Change and Permanence,” “Physical and Transcendent,” “the Reality of Mathematical Objects,” “The Nature of Ethics,” and so on.

In other words, linguistics forced the isolation and abstraction or hypostatization of aspects of the world that in Greece made them seductively ready for independent analyses. Ultimately this led the various languages that Greek thought passed through—Latin, Arabic, English and the Romance Languages—to the ideas about God, Heaven and Hell and the beginning and end of Time as “Real” entities. Time had a one-way direction and History became a series of episodes like points on a line that were not repeated. This also led to the development of science that vastly improved our lives but may, in the end, destroy us all.

Of course there are many levels of abstraction and the forthcoming lengthier paper will closely examine them, but the general idea is that because of the perceived dichotomy of “Reality,” a type of confrontational metonymy arose in our Western style of thinking. That is, Day and Night became thought of as “Light vs. Darkness” which is then equated with “Knowledge vs. Ignorance” and “Good vs. Evil.”

***Paradigm***

*A B*

*1. Day Night*

*2. Light Darkness*

*3. Knowledge Ignorance*

*4. Good Evil*

***Syntagm***[[5]](#footnote-5)

This extends to the ideas of the “Kingdom of Good” fighting the “Kingdom of Evil,” as in the Christians vs. the Muslims and White vs. Black on chessboards. The important point is that opposites are habitually “confrontational” in the West.

**China**

In order to function, all languages must contain abstractions. However, what is vital is what is *thought* about abstraction and whether one is aware of it when codifying the physical and mental worlds. The Greeks were and the Chinese were not.

A large reason for this difference is that in China, there were different words for existence and essence. However, this essence was far different than that of the West. For example, there is a big difference between saying “the ox *is* blue” and “the ox *has* blue,” which is the closest that Classical Chinese came to essence.

A.C. Graham remarks:

*. . . In the absence of an affirmative copulative verb there is no* being *an ox, any more than there is* being *white, and so no essence intervening between name and object; the term closest to Aristotelian essence,* [*qing*] *. . . covers everything in the ox without which the name ‘ox’ would not fit it, not everything without which it would not* be *an ox. One begins to understand why in Chinese philosophy argumentation is conceived solely in terms of whether the name fits the object.* [[6]](#footnote-6)

*. . . The practice of asking of something, not what it is, but what is meant by its name and what it is like, may be seen as guiding all ancient Chinese thinking towards the nominalism explicit in the Later Mohists and Hsun-tzu.* [[7]](#footnote-7)

There are several other quasi-Platonic Classical Chinese words that convey somewhat the same feeling and they might have progressed further along these lines, but they were opaque to these kinds of verbal explorations, perhaps with the exception of the sophists who could effectively argue that, in Chinese, “A white horse is not a horse.”

In other words, as Chad Hansen once proposed, the way the Chinese language developed is that there are no discrete things *per se*—there is no “ox” and “oxen” since there was no singular and plural, no gender, no past or present, no articles and no copulas, so there is only “ox stuff” and this ox stuff was a part of the universe along with many other interconnected stuffs.[[8]](#footnote-8)

In the same way, by about 100 BC during the Han period, Time always had to take place in Space, therefore, for example, the season of Fall for the Emperor meant in Five-Phase theory (see below) that it was the time of Metal so it was proper to go to war, render punishments, fix up the prisons, etc. Time/Space was not cyclical, it simply “was.” The two could not be thought about apart from each other.

The most important point is that without an “outside” standard to apply universal statements about things, the Chinese developed *Yin-Yang* theory to explain their universe to themselves. Without the “grounding” of an “outside essence”—that is, what something *really* is between the name and the object—the only way to perceive and take account of reality was to ask what its *opposite* was.

But then one must ask, where does one concept start and the other end? When does Day begin and Night end and vice-versa? Where does Good become Evil and vice-versa? We have God *against* the Devil—Good vs. Evil—built into our culture to answer these questions. A Chinese, while acknowledging that *Yang* is somewhat superior to *Yin*, would say it could not exist or be thought of without its compliment*.* Thus, the Chinese have metonymy—Light is*Yang* and superior to Dark *Yin*.[[9]](#footnote-9) But, in Chinese, it is Light *and* Dark, North *and* South. The opposites are *complementary* and not antagonistic.

To take things further, a Chinese would ask, “Where does ‘Something’ become ‘Nothing’ ?” In the West, “something” means “some thing,” and “nothing” means “no thing,” that is, empty space. To the Chinese, at least in Classical times, “Nothing” is dependent on “Something”—for example, the inside of a pot won’t go away unless the pot goes away. The use of a wheel is dependent on the “Nothing” at its center

This is the earliest statement (c. 250 BC) of how the Chinese divided up and defined their world:

[[10]](#footnote-10)

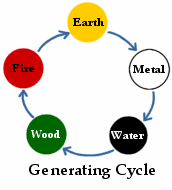
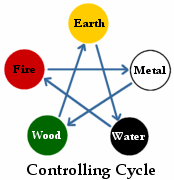
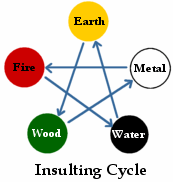
*Yin-Yang* thinking was then integrated into “Five-Element theory,” meaning the five elements that made up the world: Water, Fire, Metal, Earth and Water. More correctly, it was called “Five-Phase theory” because the emphasis was on how the world was in constant *change.*

The first rendering of the theory was the “Destructive” or “Controlling” cycles. Thus, Water could weaken or control Fire (by limiting it), Fire could weaken Metal (by melting it), Metal could weaken Wood (by cutting it with a knife or an axe), Wood could weaken Earth (as with the roots of a growing tree that penetrate it) and Earth could weaken or control Water (by absorbing it and turning it into mud).

The earliest text on the subject, *The Yellow Emperor’s Classic of Internal Medicine*, explains:

*By the transformation of* yang *and its union with* yin*, the Five Elemental Energies of Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, and Water arise, each within its specific nature according to its share of* yin *and* yang*. These Five Elemental Energies constantly change their sphere of activity, nurturing and counteracting one another so that there is a constancy in the transformation from emptiness to abundance and abundance to emptiness, like a ring without beginning or end. The interaction of these primordial forces brings harmonious change and the cycles of nature run their course . . . The Five Elemental Energies combine and recombine in innumerable ways to produce manifest existence. All things contain all Five Elemental Energies in various proportions.[[11]](#footnote-11)*

The Han developed two other cycles:

  [[12]](#footnote-12)

In the Generating or Nourishing Cycle, Water generates Wood in the form of trees; Wood generates Fire by rubbing two sticks together; Fire generates Earth in the form of ash residue; the inside of the Earth generates Metal; and Metal generates Water in the formation of morning dew.

The Over-Acting or Rebellious Cycle occurs when a controlling phase over-reacts or rebels from its proper function. Thus, if too much Water is used the Fire will go out, etc.

Thus, by extension, we get:

***Fire****: draught, heat, flaring, ascendance, movement, etc.*

***Wood****: germination, extension, softness, harmony, flexibility, etc.*

***Metal****: strength, firmness, killing, cutting, cleaning up, etc.*

***Earth****: growing, changing, nourishing, producing, etc.*

***Water****: moisture, cold, descending, flowing, etc.*

If the elements or phases are balanced, all is well. When they are out of balance and overacting, counteracting, or failing to support one another, we experience

dis-ease of one sort or another.

Beginning in about 100 BC, the entire universe was beginning to be explained by Han and this process has continued ever since.

*Phase* *New Yang Full Yang Yang-Yin New Yin Full Yin*

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| --- |
| Table 1 |
| |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | **Wood** | **Fire** | **Earth** | **Metal** | **Water** | | Orientation | East | South | Middle | West | North | | Season | Sprig | Summer | Late Summer | Autumn | Winter | | Climate | Wind | Summer Heat | Dampness | Dryness | Cold | | Cultivation | Germinate | Grow | Transform | Reap | Store | | Yin Organ | Liver | Heart | Spleen | Lung | Kidney | | Yang Organ | Gall Bladder | Small Intestine | Stomach | Large Intestine | Bladder | | Orifice | Eye | Tongue | Mouth | Nose | Ear | | Tissues | Tendons | Vessels | Muscles | Skin & Hair | Bones | | Emotions | Anger | Joy | Pensiveness | Grief | Fear | | Colour | Blue/ Green | Red | Yellow | White | Black | | Taste | Sour | Bitter | Sweet | Pungent | Salty | | Voice | Shout | Laugh | Sing | Cry | Groan | |
|  |
|  |

*Shape Rectangle Triangle Square Round Curve*

*Energy Generative Expansive Stabilizing Contracting Conserving*

*Planets Jupiter Mars Saturn Venus Mercury*

Think again of the Emperor and his peasants surrounded by the manifestations of their Time/Space continuum in a “sea” of *Qi* energy that is the source of *Yin* and *Yang* and that flows through everything. This is how their world concept related to community—their chief concern.

That is, Confucius and his early followers had argued that names of things should be unchanged and ritual preserved—in other words, in a sense, he gave names and rituals an other-worldly “essence” in the Western sense of the word. However, this all changed once the relativistic Daoist *Yin-Yang-*based theories of things and Five-Phase theories of Change was accepted and the things of the world reverted back to just having names. The self was no longer split off from the movements of Heaven and Earth—everyone is part of it and not separate from it. That is another way of looking at the *dao*—the “way”—of everyday life among many other *dao* and it is also important to note that this type of “friendly” ever-changing binary thinking runs through Chinese rhetoric, the use of chiasmus in their poetry, the indeterminacy and suggestiveness of their aesthetics and, as will be seen, their methods of war.[[13]](#footnote-13)

**Daoism Applied to War**

It is important to realize that all these cultural developments occurred in the context of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods—771-221 BC. There was 550 years of continual warfare in a “fishbowl” cut off by the sea and barbarians from the rest of the world. It began as simple, seasonal, feudal fighting between about 150 states for honor and booty, then, in a pattern familiar to anthropologists who study isolated areas, the big began eating the little and the armies progressively grew in size to hundreds of thousands of men. Think of the 650,000 killed in our biggest arena of slaughter, the Civil War, and then think of the purportedly 400,000 Zhao soldiers who were slain in 260 BC by the Qin after they had surrendered. This may look like a simple extension of the feudal Spring and Autumn period’s formal and extensive use of human sacrifices and the raising of mounds of skulls after battles to mollify the ancestors, however, it was not. It was the expedient and efficient elimination of a rival for the riches they possessed.[[14]](#footnote-14)

In this new world where expediency had replaced honor and rank, generals could rise from common origins and had to become organizers and administers of mass death. Instead of nobles leading the charges in battles that lasted a day or so at the most, generalship became an intellectual endeavor and battles went on over long fronts and could last for months. Strict obedience to orders was paramount and the general had to have complete command of the situation as he stayed out of sight from his men and used spies to gain information and flags and drums to signal his orders.

In the ensuing fight to the death during the aptly named Warring States period (481 to 403-221 BC), the seven remaining major states reduced themselves to one. Yet, this age fostered the Golden Age of Chinese thought known as the “100 Schools of Philosophy” competed to understand the universe they lived in and what, if anything, they could do about it. As Charles Darwin once quipped, “The war of nature is creative.” He also said something like, “It is not the strongest that survive that war of Nature, it is those that can adapt to it.”

In the end, the winner, the war-machine state of Qin, tried to keep on doing what had brought them victory—using a 500,000 army to extend the empire south while continuing to enforce complete subservience to state service and rigidly codifying all aspects of life. The Qin had already eliminated the inefficient feudal aristocracy who formerly owned much of the land. This was replaced by a military “meritocracy” based on punishments and rewards. It had also organized agriculture into a rigid grid-like form whose outline can be seen from the air today. Additionally, the chaotic written language, measurements, coinage and even the width of chariot axles were completely standardized.

However, following disputes, incompetence and the death of Qinshihuang, the “First Emperor,” the result was a complete collapse after 14 years followed by a period of internal war and a victorious reunification by the Han in 206 BC.

The Han also kept a relatively totalitarian hold on the populace with a social system that imitated the Qin by setting up units structured so that everyone kept an eye on everyone else. It was “relative” because there were always rebellious Daoist-oriented souls and revolts about—but these were generally crushed and except when China was conquered from outside, that is the system that has survived until today.[[15]](#footnote-15)

**Go and *Yin-Yang* Based, Non-Abstract “Go Think”**

With this background in mind, the role of the generals in the Warring States period should be examined in more detail. What happened was that *Yin-Yang* theories began to be philosophically applied to war and the result was books like *The Art of War* by Sunzi and other “philosopher/warriors.” The basic idea was that if one was faced with a *Yang* situation—for example, an overwhelming force—there was often a *Yin* solution that could be applied.

Thus, taking account of the *Yin* of a situation, strength should not be approached directly. Instead, “Encirclement” was the key idea and the basis of most traditional Chinese thinking about the most efficient methods of warfare. “Lure the Tiger Down from the Mountain” is a favorite *Yin-like* aphorism—i.e. entice him down to where he is exposed and can be safely netted (“surrounded”), attacked by dogs (“surrounded”) and then speared (a *Yang-*like direct method of attack after a series of *Yin* moves).[[16]](#footnote-16) In short, negotiations at the banquet table were preferred to the battlefield, enemies and spies were to be lured with deception and false movements, small units were readily sacrificed for the sake of preserving the larger ones since the “Big Picture” (which was continually changing) had be looked at instead of being overly-influenced by the local situation. In other words, true Daoist thinking was not about balancing *Yin* and *Yang* as it has been misinterpreted in the West following its misinterpretation by the *literati* who passed it on to the early missionaries who introduced it to the West. Instead, it is taking advantage of the ever-changing imbalances of *Yin* and *Yang* in the moment and manipulating them to one’s advantage.

Thus, the ideas of the early Daoists like Laozi were developed and applied and became a “practical philosophy,” or “praxeology.”[[17]](#footnote-17) If Confucianism was a way for dealing with those one trusted, this “Dark” form of Daoism became a way of dealing with those you didn’t trust. While the Han emperors disparaged this “Left-handed” and “dishonorable” way of thinking, it entered popular culture in the form of novels, theater, folk sayings and now TV and movies. And it is interesting how cunning was generally thought of differently in the West and China. In the West, think about what is popularly thought about lawyers, advertisers and chess players (before Gary Kasparov came along). In contrast, think of how highly go players are thought of in the East.

However, for the Han emperors, Dark Daoist thought was feared despite the fact that using it was how they gained their victories and so they changed the implications of the Yao myths. Dan Zhu, Yao’s son, did not improve himself by learning the game his father invented or brought down with him when he descended from Heaven—he only learned dirty tricks and rebelled when the throne was passed on to a more worthy minister.[[18]](#footnote-18)

In this way, from early on in the Han period (but perhaps not so much in the time of the early Confucian writings), “Go Thought” was considered “Dark Daoist Thought.” Consider how the “commander”—the player—must use *tesuji* (clever plays), *jie* (invasions), the prominent role of sacrifice and the way that the manipulation of small pieces contribute to the whole. How everything on the Go board is connected in “communities” and grows together. How in this context, one should judge whether going for early influence or going for profit is wise and how to use the advantages of doing so later in the game.

The very nature of the game is creative as Sunzi said about “unorthodox” maneuvers in war. Thus, players are advised to temper their aggressions and to reconsider and perhaps curb their impulses to use “orthodox” straightforward or impulsive actions. No wonder that the “arm chair warrior” *literati* came to embrace and eventually idolize this once-primitive game of the early Confucians as they developed skillful ways of playing when peace had come to their once war-torn country and they had time to play a lot.

Moreover, the game starts on an empty board reminiscent of the traditional Chinese view of the beginning of the world. The *Huainanzi* from 139 BC begins with the most developed cosmogony in early Chinese literature. There was no abstract God around:

*When Heaven and Earth were not yet shaped, it was amorphous, vague, a blank, a blur . . . The Way began in the tenuous and transparent, the tenuous and transparent generated Space and Time, Space and Time generated the* [*Qi*]*. . . . the clear and soaring* [Qi] dissipated *to become Heaven, the heavy and muddy* [*Qi*] *congealed to become Earth. . . .*

*"The superimposed quintessence’s of Heaven and Earth became the* Yang *and* Yin*, the concentrating quintessence’s of Yin and Yang became the Four Seasons, the scattering quintessences of the Four Seasons became the myriad creatures. . . .* [and so on through the creation of things].[[19]](#footnote-19)

Perhaps to symbolize this process, early Chinese games started with two white and two black stones in the corners. In any case, the universe on the go board begins to expand and the stones are placed on the board just as the Chinese wrote their language on bamboo slips, one character at a time. The meaning is in the syntax as the characters pile up. The same word can be a noun or a verb, there is no singular and no plural; no “The” to set things apart; no sentences to mark linguistic entities. The “move-placements” of individual stones become groups like noun-verbs while the “Somethings” begin to need the “Nothings” of eyes to survive, However, there are no paragraphs to lead from Beginnings to Ends and, in fact, there is no dramatic end—there is only stasis.

Moreover, all this is played on a grid. In Chinese structural thinking about the world, grids were applied to order everything from feudal farming patterns to cities to the universe with, in one theory, its 81 (9x9) continents. To this, add the common idea that the *Qi* energy we are all “swimming” in is racing up and down the lines on the board, being blocked and maneuvered like flowing water by the placements of the stones.

**Chess and Abstract Thought**

Chess, as opposed to Go, is abstract—the pieces and the game are *Yang* to the core. Chess pieces have an essence and existence and meanings that seem to “float” above the board.

Here are some examples from the medieval Lewis chess set discovered in Scotland in 1831:



[*http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lewis\_chessmen*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lewis_chessmen)

The berserker Viking pawn is probably on psychedelic mushrooms since he is biting down on his shield, so anxious is he to begin fighting. He and King and Queen are united in their abstract purpose to “kill” the opposing king. They begin life in confrontational rows ready to do battle and they all have Western-style destinies. Their moves are verbs and have directionality and the strategies employed resemble the ideas of Clausewitz and Antoine Henri de Jomini, the classic Western strategists.[[20]](#footnote-20)

Clausewitz suggested:

*Our position, then, is that a theater of war, be it large or small, and the forces stationed there, no matter what their size, represent the sort of unity in which a single center of gravity can be identified. That is the place where the decision should be reached; a victory at that point is in its fullest sense identical with the defense of the theater of operations.*[[21]](#footnote-21)

And the defense of the king in chess.

Jomini wrote:

*Indeed, . . . skillful marches are but applications of the great principle of throwing the mass of the forces upon the decisive point . . .*

*From this, it may be concluded that all strategic movements which tend to throw the mass of the army successively upon the different points of the front of operations of the enemy, will be skillful, as they apply the principle of overwhelming a smaller force by a superior one. . . . The operations of the French in 1793 from Dunkirk to Landau, and those of Napoleon in 1796, 1809, and 1814 are models of this kind.*[[22]](#footnote-22)

Jomini’s *Art of War* was the only strategy book taught at West Point before the Civil War and all the students who became generals on both sides, except Stonewall Jackson, followed his theories to the letter.

“Chess-Think” extends throughout our culture and is easy to recognize in our other wars. One example comes from advertising gurus who wrote *Marketing Warfare* in 1997. Their words seem to unite some of the themes that this article has discussed:

*Marketing battles are not fought in places like Dallas, Detroit, or Denver. At least not in the physical sense of a city or a region.*

*Marketing battles are fought in a mean and ugly place. A place that's dark and damp with much unexplored territory and deep pitfalls to trap the unwary.*

*Marketing battles are fought inside the mind. Inside your own mind and inside the mind of your prospects, every day of the week.*

*The mind is the battleground. A terrain that is tricky and difficult to understand.*

*The entire battleground is just 6 inches wide. This is where the marketing war takes place. You try to outmaneuver and outfight your competitors on a mental mountain about the size of a cantaloupe.*

But then they added:

*. . . In World War II, offensive attacks were usually launched on a very narrow front. Sometimes down a single highway. Only when a breakthrough was achieved did the attacking forces expand laterally to occupy territory.’*

*When you attack on a narrow front, you’re putting the principle of force to work for you . . .*

*We think the best book on marketing was written by a retired Prussian general, Carl* *von Clausewitz. Entitled* On War*, the 1832 book outlines the strategic principles behind all successful wars.*

*Clausewitz was the great philosopher of war. His ideas and concepts have lasted more than 150 years. Today,* On War *is widely quoted at places like West Point, Sandhurst, and St. Cyr.[[23]](#footnote-23)*

One thinks in terms of how the American Civil War was fought, how the two sides fought in World War I, and how the Americans, Russians and Germans fought in World War II.

However, one also thinks of the 20th century wars where these two styles of strategic thinking came up against each other. It was ‘Shock and Awe’ vs. ‘Awe and Shock’ as the orthodox was trumped by the unorthodox in the civil wars in China, Malaysia, Indochina and Vietnam, where the graduates of Sandhurst, St. Cyr and Westpoint, in that order, met with difficulties and continued to do so in Afghanistan and Iraq.

1. For details, see my “Speculations” article and its appendices in the Bob High e-library. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See Appendix V of the “Speculations” article for details. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Linguistic_relativity> for details. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. I drew many of my thoughts about the importance of abstract nouns from the unique PhD thesis of David Moser; *Abstract Thinking and Thought in Ancient Chinese and Early Greek*; University of Michigan PhD thesis; 1996. He shows many of the ways that language affects thought and thus culture but he does not examine board games. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. This is the thinking of Roman Jakobsen as adapted by A.C. Graham in *Disputers of the Tao*; *Open Court*;1989; p. 321 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. A.C. Graham; *ibid*; pp. 409-10 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. A.C. Graham; *ibid*; pp. 421 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. This is Chad Hansen’s “Mass Noun thesis” in *Language and Logic in Ancient China*; Univ. of Michigan Press; 1983 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. The usual story is that this dichotomy came about because North is the shady side of hills in China and is therefore *Yin.* That is why North is always at the bottom of a compass rendering. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Graham; p. 331 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. <http://lieske.com/5e-intro.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. [www.tcmstudent.com/theory/Five%20Element%20Theory.html](http://www.tcmstudent.com/theory/Five%20Element%20Theory.html) [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. It is a mistake to capitalize *Dao*. This was another error stemming from the exportation of Chinese thought to the West. Early missionaries assumed there was one God, therefore there was one *Dao.*  [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Mark Lewis [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. All the rebellions in Chinese history, including the recent Falun Gong, were Daoist-based. This is why the present regime cracked down so hard on it. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. “Lure the Tiger” is one of the Thirty-six Strategies which encapsulates Dark Daoist thought. See <http://wengu.tartarie.com/wg/wengu.php?l=36ji&no=-1>

    The process of slowly building an advantage before striking is called *shi.* See Appendix VI of the “Speculations” article. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. If he is an actual person, he probably lived between the 6th and 4th centuries BC. His famous work, the *Daodejing*, is probably the product of an amalgamation of other writers. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. As with other myths, the Han story tellers liked this scenario so much that they repeated it two more times with different mythical emperor/inventors who had rebellious sons. See the “Speculations” article and the end of Appendix II for details. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Graham; p. 330 [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. The ancient Greek game of Poleis, also played with stones on a grid, lined up on both sides like chess pieces and custodial capture was used. In the related Roman game of Latrunculi, the stones were probably placed at random on a bigger board, but it was also a purely capture game. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Carl von Clausewitz; *On War*; *Michael* Howard & Peter Paret (trans.); Princeton University Press; 1984; p. 198 <http://www.clausewitz.com/readings/OnWar1873/TOC.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Antoine Henri de Jomini; *The Art of War*; *G*.H. Mendell & W.P. Craighill (trans.); J.P. Putnam; 1854; pp. 3-4. [www.arcmanor.com/FDL/AofW5674.pdf](http://www.arcmanor.com/FDL/AofW5674.pdf); [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Al Ries and Jack Trout; *Marketing Warfare*;McGraw-Hill; 1986; p. 44 [↑](#footnote-ref-23)