

Cultural Transformation Theory

Cultural transformation theory (CTT) was introduced to a general readership in Riane Eisler's *The Chalice and the Blade* (1987). It has since been the framework for many other works, including *The Chalice and the Blade in Chinese History* (1995) written by scholars at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing. CTT contradicts the conventional notion of a linear progression from "barbarism" to "civilization." Based on archeological and mythical data, it proposes that the earliest cradles of civilization that sprang up in the more fertile areas of the globe oriented more to the partnership system; then during a period of chaos, there was shift in a dominator direction. It further proposes that today it is more urgent than ever before that we reverse that shift – and work together to accelerate the move from domination to partnership.

“It is certainly true that our world has been changing very fast over the last few hundred years,” Eisler writes. Rapid technological and economic changes have destabilized not only established habits of work, but long-standing habits of thinking and acting. This has been the source of much dislocation and stress. But ... technological and economic change has also opened the door for questioning much that was once taken for granted, including once firmly entrenched beliefs about gender roles and relations as well as parenting practices. This questioning is part of a much larger movement for change: the global partnership movement toward more democratic and egalitarian relations in both the so-called private and public spheres.

While *biological* evolution of other animal species happens over millennia, *cultural* evolution for the human species can happen very quickly, states Riane Eisler in *The Chalice and the Blade* (1987). She writes that our human species' biological evolution is unique. We have a highly evolved brain, allowing greater memory, information processing, flexibility, and versatility. This means that we humans can change our behavior based on feedback. And the feedback coming at us today from all sides – environmentally, economically, socially – is that the mix of high technology and an ethos of domination and conquest are not sustainable.