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George F. McLean

Rethinking Marx

Chinese Philosophical Studies, XXVI

Edited by

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Introduction

Etienne Gilson once compared the history of philosophy to a giant laboratory for testing the validity and adequacy of philosophical ideas. These ideas can be generated out of fear and hate or of love and devotion, but they are not only for the mind; they guide life with others in this world. Over time this experience calls for strengthening some elements and reformulating others. Through this struggle to live, philosophy is subtly but inescapably corrected and rebalanced.

Within brief periods egregious mistakes become apparent and call urgently to be addressed, but over long periods of time important but incomplete insights make their important contributions before revealing their limitations and requiring additional and healing insights. Thus existentialism may last but a decade, the individualism, skepticism and scientism of modernity may last for four centuries, while the objective bias of Greek thought may last 25 centuries before being challenged by the expanded horizons of globalization.

Jean Piaget has pointed out, however, that change is not substitution and that the insights of prior ages remain to provide the substrate for what follows. What seemed at first to be salient may recede over time to be subordinated to other dimensions of philosophy which prove to be more basic and to serve more richly through changing circumstances.

This may prove true of the thought of Marx whose dialectical phase may have been overly stressed in the search for clarity and guidance, but whose dynamic of matter and rich human values and concerns remain and unfold.

Thus the present study is divided into two parts. The first part has to do with the doing of philosophy itself: its relation to life, the history of its texts, its relation to economic theory, and the dynamics of its development, East and West.

The second part looks more deeply into the content of Marxist philosophy. Should it be seen as totally without metaphysics or is this latent in its ontology? If so what is its sense of truth, goodness and beauty, not as abstract Hegelian categories, but as lived in the will and between free individuals. Indeed can the notion of love, long supplanted by the notion of justice, not only be reintroduced from Christian and Confucian sources but be implemented more fully in our times by the rich social vision of Marx? These are the issues examined in this work.

Part I, "The Development of Marxist Philosophy Today," studies the process of philosophizing itself.

Chapter I, by Li Wenge, "Philosophy and Life," treats a very popular topic in China nowadays, the relation between philosophy and life. This issue involves the relation between philosophy and philosophers, and between philosophy and the life-world. The author argues that Marx maintained that in a liberated age, creative labor is the human being's great joy, and philosophy

should be a labor of love (though it is at the service of others). Labor is not essentialist, but rather, values man and relation, progress and function, creation and individuality, and so on.

Chapter II, by Sun Meitang, “On the Modernity of Marxist Philosophy from the Point of View of the Transition of Philosophy,” argues that Marxist philosophers should open up to contemporary philosophy instead of stereotyping it as degenerate. Indeed, a strong case can be made for the extraordinary modernity of Marx, since he rejected metaphysics already in the 19th century, and maintained that philosophy must be founded on human experience. Marx also anticipated the turn from discussion of ‘what’ to discussion of ‘how’, and advanced what is really a kind of ‘process’ philosophy.

Chapter III, by Nie Jinfang, “The History of Studies of Marx’s Texts and Reflections on Its Methodology: A Preliminary Review,” classifies and interprets many of the posthumously published works of Karl Marx, because the majority of his writings were not widely available until the 20th century. In the 21st century, it is expected that the analysis of Marx’s work will be more academic and precise, thus discrediting what can be called “vulgar Marxism.”

Chapter IV, by Shen Xiangping, “Economics as an Historical Science: A Philosophical Review of the Crisis of Economics,” argues that economics has fallen into crisis precisely during the time it is affiliated with economic imperialism. The causes of the crisis are two fallacious hypotheses, (1) “scarcity,” and (2) the “rational economic agent,” both rooted in the failure of economics to operate as a “historic science” (instead, it is operating as a “natural science”). The author points out that the current crisis is, according to Marx and Engels, to be expected in that humanity is now in the stage of “objective dependence.”

Chapter V, by Tang Zhengdong, “The Implication of Neglecting Ricardo in the Interpretation of Karl Marx’s Philosophy: A Comment on G. Lukacs’s Interpretation of Marx,” disagrees with Lukacs’s controversial interpretation of Marx, an interpretation emphasizing Marxist economics. Tang maintains that Lukacs goes wrong because of his reading of Marx’s texts from the angle of German classic philosophy. Lukacs considers the thought of A. Smith and D. Ricardo fetishist, whereas the latter, in Tang’s view, actually has a good grasp of the contradictory nature of social relations.

Chapter VI, by Wang Yuchen, “The Study of Marxist Western Philosophy in Chinese Academe and Its Defects,” analyzes the role of “Western Marxism” in China since it was introduced by Xu Chong-wen in 1982. While rejecting the Soviet Schoolbook System, Wang also advises that Western Marxism (Gramsci, Althusser, Frankfurt School, etc.)—while suitable for the West’s transition to a postmodern age—is not suitable for China’s needs, an “Oriental Marxism,” etc.

Part II, “The Content of a Contemporary Marxist Philosophy,” concerns issues to which Marxism can contribute in our day.

Chapter VII, by Yang Haifeng, “Marxist Negation of Metaphysics,” argues that Hegel’s metaphysics of ‘absolute limitless idea’, and Heidegger’s

metaphysics of ‘limited survival’, are at bottom alike. The author argues that Marx’s successful critique of Hegelian metaphysics can be directed with equal success against Heidegger: thus it makes no sense to construct a ‘new’ Marxism on the basis of Heideggerian existentialism, as some Marxists are nowadays trying to do.

Chapter VIII, by Yang Xuegong, “Marx’s Philosophy and Ontology,” argues that a strict distinction must be made between the model of traditional ontology (the traditional model Marx rejected) and ontology as a valid branch of the discipline of philosophy. The author maintains Marx never rejected the latter as such, and indeed, can be understood to have established an ontology based on “practical action and a practical model of thinking.”

Chapter IX, by Cui Xinjian, “On Truth, Goodness and Beauty,” sketches the parameters of these three, emphasizing that they always exist in concrete history. The author rejects the simple subjectivist position and also the objectivist, arguing instead that truth, goodness, and beauty are both subjective and objective. In the section on truth, topics include “truth of life and truth of fact,” “truth of logic and truth of language,” and “truth of science and truth of art.” The section on goodness deals with such questions as the difference between ethics and the philosophical study of good and evil. As for beauty, it is the “transcendence and transference of the subject towards the object and the emotion of the subject itself.”

Chapter X, by Zhang Mingcang, “The Theory of Will,” sets forth a Marxist ‘practical theory of will’, presenting the key points in his book *Practical Theory of Will* (Guangxi Renming Press, 2002). Zhang’s theory of will is “material, dialectical, historical and practical.” Maintaining that will originates from social practice, he examines in particular the relationship between human will and social law. The traditional dilemma posed by freedom of will on the one hand and determinism on the other is solved, in the author’s construction, by Marxist *praxis*.

Chapter XI, by Yu Jianxing, “A Reconsideration of Marx’s Idea of the ‘Association of Free Individuals’,” maintains that the whole Marxist theory centers on the emancipation and freedom of human beings, but Marx’s “free development of each [person]” should not be mistaken to mean ‘humanist individualism’. Marx’s ‘theory of freedom’ must be linked to his ‘theory of the elimination of private property’ and the eventual elimination of class and state so a “real community” can come into being.

Chapter XII, by Xu Changfu, “Love: Partial or Equal?—a Comparative Study of Confucian, Mohist and Christian Love,” explains the debate between Confucianists, whose *ren ai* is hierarchical, and Mohists, whose *jian ai* is absolutely impartial. The former argue that without ‘partial love’, social structure breaks down; the latter argue that so-called ‘partial love’ causes grave social abuse. The author argues that Christian *agape* or ‘equal love’ may very well be why the public sector functions more equitably in the West than the East. His own position is that Confucianism is best for domestic relations and Mohism best for governmental behavior and public policy.

Chapter XIII, by Zou Shipeng, “The Existential Turn and Practice-Existentialism,” presents that the existentialist turn is the reform of ontology, from a transcendental, substantial and abstract theory to a sensible, practical and existential ontology based on the life-world. He examines the development of the notion of ontology from ancient Greek to modern Western philosophy, and how it relates to the contemporary existential turn, further to the post-modern philosophy. He argues that Marx’s philosophy as transcended Western philosophy and a new human philosophy can play an important role in this historical turn.

George F. McLean

Part I

The Development of Marxist Philosophy Today

Chapter 1

Philosophy and Life

Li Wenge

Abstract: The fact that the relation between philosophy and life has recently become a hot topic reflects the situation that philosophy has gotten away from life. This problem can be divided into two aspects. The first is the relation between philosophy and philosophers. The second is the relation between philosophy and the life-world. Answers to these two questions will decide on how you look at philosophy, how one works at it, to what academic height philosophy can reach, and what kind of role it will play in society.

THE RELATION BETWEEN PHILOSOPHY AND LIFE

The relation between philosophy and life has become a hot topic in the present Chinese philosophical academic world. Different scholars enter into the discussion from different points of view. The topics such as philosophy and time, philosophy and life world, philosophy and reality, philosophy and human existence are all parts of the debate. However any debate should have its own reason for existence and the problem it discusses should be a real one with actual direction, or it would be a nonsense. Is this a real problem,-- the relation between philosophy and life?--and of so does it become a problem now?

In fact the relation between philosophy and life has had a long life. On the one hand, the history of philosophy is a process which goes ever nearer to real life. Ancient philosophy focused on the material and objective world. Modern philosophy took man's thinking as an object; present philosophy discusses the development of science and man's experiences and feelings about life. It is a process in which philosophy comes closer and closer to actual life and its status is more and more common. On the other hand, the tree of life is forever green and life will definitely make philosophy of the later times break away from that of the former. This requires philosophy to come back to the life-world. So when time changes and philosophy cannot explain life, or when life goes beyond the philosophical explanations, there will emerge the cry that philosophy should come back to the real world. The present situation in philosophical research shows that philosophy and life have broken apart in China.

In present China, philosophy exists in three forms: Lecture philosophy exists in speeches, official reports and public political lectures; forum philosophy exists in discussions by academic scholars; and practical philosophy is in the real world. Speaking about "forum philosophy," we can say its history in new China can be divided into three periods: pre-practical materialism, practical materialism, and post materialism. Before the reform

and opening, philosophy had a very close but twisted relation with real life. As an almighty guide, philosophy was used in every aspect of life and its status, function and relation with life was never doubted. In the 1980s of the 20th century, the relation between philosophy and life was not at all a problem, because philosophy and life developed at the same pace. From the criteria for truth, to humanity and alienation, further to subjectivism, and finally to practical materialism, all these topics were discussed not only as theoretical problems but also as realistic ones. Actually all these topics first came on stage as realistic problems. For example, the criteria for truth was discussed by extremely “Leftist” ideology; humanity and alienation were discussed, and abuses of human rights during the Cultural Revolution; and the aim of the discussion about subjectivism was to clear the way for market economy, etc. We can say that the whole period of the 1980s was a time for self-awareness of Chinese people and an enlightenment period of China. Philosophy not only witnessed this, but also was an initiator and a fresh force. Because of its close relation with life, philosophy in the 1980s was optimistic and energetic, with new ideas and opinions coming out one after the other. Philosophers did not feel alienated or lost. But after 1990, the close relation broke.

Some scholars summarized the situation of philosophy in the 1990s of the 20th century as one of remarkable academic results but a fading out in thinking. This is not very accurate, but partially true. After 1990 some scholars focused on academic research, or felt proud of their pure research. They were even ashamed of talking about reality and put philosophy against reality.

This certainly had some relation with the fact that philosophy and politics worked too closely together, and with the weak academic character of philosophical research and the commercialization of philosophy after 1990. This was a call back for the professional ethics of scholars and deep academic research. But for philosophy, especially, Marxist philosophy, academic research could not be sacrificed for historic research. Emphasis on learning does not oppose concern on reality. The other group of scholars turned to the vulgar. Loftiness, holiness and sense of historic mission were all gone from them. Academic research became a way of making money and a living. Writing academic articles was to gain technological titles. In these people the old, aggressive spirit disappeared completely. “Instead they became eclectic and worried about their position and income, and even became full of dishonorable means”¹. Of course these two groups of people represented the two extreme phenomena after 1990, not the whole academic field. But their existence showed that philosophical research after 1990 to a great extent lost its sense of times and life. It became ivory tower knowledge and learning for philosophers to produce and entertain themselves. That is to say that the link between life and philosophy broke, which is exactly the reason why philosophy became impoverished and marginalized and also why the relation has become a hot topic.

PHILOSOPHY AND THE PHILOSOPHERS

The relation between life and philosophy is a topic with full extension and cannot be generalized by the simple word that “Philosophy comes from life and serves life”. Essentially it is about philosophical vision and this is what we are interested in here.

According to Marx, a people’s existence is their real life experience². A man has nothing except his life; life is the whole connotation of a man’s existence. Different kinds of life style is man’s different styles of existence. So actually the relation between life and philosophy is essentially that of philosophy and the human being. According to different subjects of life, we can divide the relation between philosophy and life into two aspects: the relation between philosophy and the philosopher or the philosopher’s life, and between philosophy and the world or the life-world.

What is the relation between philosophy and the philosopher? This seems to be a question with a clear answer. Philosophy must be dealt with by philosophers or have philosophers as its subject. Simply speaking, philosophy is the result of philosopher’s thinking from the traditional intellectual point of view, or is the activity of philosophers from the modern activists’ point of view. But does this view point still remain at the direct or subject level which Marx had criticized in his outline of Feuerbach and does it reflect the objective aspect which is why philosophers undertake these activities? Some people may say it is for a living, and undoubtedly there are many philosophers who take philosophy as a means of living, not only in the past but also at present. But doing philosophical research work is never an effective way for living and does not explain why there are so many philosophers who sacrifice themselves for their philosophical beliefs,—that in ancient times there was S and in modern times there was B. Other people may say it is for administering the country well and giving people peace and security. Many philosophers do think so.

But actually, on the one hand, there are many philosophers who sincerely take administering the world as their mission. On the other hand, some hypocrites and selfish people only take it as a slogan. The best example is Confucius. We all know that it was Confucius who created Confucianism. But in the book *Confucius’ speeches*, there was a story describing Confucius like this. Fan Ci, Confucius’ disciple, asked him twice about how to plant grains. Confucius didn’t answer. When Fan Ci left the classroom, Confucius said, “Fan Ci will be nobody. As an administrator, if you can lay down good laws and regulations, people will respect you. If you can manage the country well, people will obey you. If you can give people good belief, people will trust you. If you can do all these well, people will come up to you with their families from over the county and you need not do any farm work at all.” (*Speeches of Confucius—Zilu*), yet, administering the country and giving people peace and security cannot explain the initial purpose of philosophers who take philosophy as their career. So there must be a more convincing explanation.

If we consider philosophy as activities of philosophers from an activists' point of view, Marx's opinion about labor may give us some inspiration. Before Marx, people looking at labour-- physical labour-- directly and perceptually, saw only its externalism and non-humanism; they took it as a means to make a living. But Marx analyzed labor from its origin. He thought that externalism was not labor's innate feature, but its specific existence style under certain conditions and was the result of separation between productive materials and laborers. When the conditions that reduced its externalism disappeared, labor would display its nature as man's life activities. So Marx pointed out, labor is man's active life, man's means of existence and of realizing his own value. This means that Marx analyzed labor from the historic point of view. Under this perspective, although labor has displayed itself as a means for living, sooner or later it will undergo a development process from alienation to reality, from means of living to means of existence. So man's existence is the nature of labor.

There is another problem here. Labor as a means of living is not liked by man, which can be proved by reality. Why does man like labor as a means of existence and value realization? It is because of man's own vision. According to Marx, man is an objective creature which not only means that other objects exist outside him and man can only exist by relying on them, but also means that man is a creature who wants to be perfect and what he pursues is to realize himself as deeply as can be. This is in compliance with the history of man. The history of human development and perfection is the essence of history. Effluent material products, various life styles and improvement of man's powers are all its performance. So man's development and perfection become the "main melody" and final aim of historical development, and the nature of man's life. Labor as means is eliminated; it shows directly man's existence and becomes what man likes to do and his first need.

Marx's analysis of labor fits in with philosophical and other activities which can perfect man himself. Philosophy as an activity of philosophers is also a labor, and a spiritual one. Although philosophical activities exhibit themselves somewhat as a means of living, it is in the nature of the philosophers' way of existence. Not only philosophy, but also science, art, religion, politics and the military are all parts of man's life and different ways of existence. Before man's living problem is solved, all the ways of existence of man have the nature of making livings. On the one hand, one cannot deny their nature as means of existence, because people who engage in these works are pursuing perfection, while, on the other hand, styles of existence as means of living may not suit specific people. Some people may not take them as means of living such as Socrates' attitude towards philosophy. At the same time during periods when life is difficult, different styles of existence show their nature as different means of making a living.

Roughly speaking, man's styles of existence can be divided into two types, real and symbolic, or material and spiritual. Between the two, the real or material type has more features of making a living. This is not because it is lower and more degrading than the spiritual one, but because it is the kind

of styles of existence which is the most basic and most needed by the human body. The symbolic or spiritual styles of existence, especially, philosophy and art, have more features that show its nature as a way of existence, because they do not directly meet people's physical needs. This is better displayed in the pre-capitalist period. At that time non-living activities were mainly engaged by slave owners and feudal lords who had solved the problem of living and who did this apparently not for a living. Aristotle has said, people can only begin to have philosophical ideology after their fundamental needs for living are met. In the capitalist period the disappearance of prestigious rights, education and more spare time made it possible for common people to engage in non-living activities.

But capitalism commercialized everything and non-living activities became living ones, because there is no room for non-living activities. If it is still not for living, it can only be taken as a hobby to occupy people's spare time. Non-living activities done in working time become living ones and means for living. This can well explain the historic and present situation of philosophy, and why philosophy as an existence style in ancient Greece became a means for making a living. People preferred spiritual activities, while looking down upon productive labor and thinking the former higher and more humane and the later humbler and more animal-like. This was because productive labor has never manifested directly man's existence style, while spiritual activities have shown the nature of man as a human being.

The fact that philosophy is both the life and the existence style of philosophers explains the following: Firstly, philosophers should speak like human beings, not like gods, or philosophers should not take what he himself says as mythology, or as "a most precious treasure," because philosophy is not directing people's life outside the life-world. Man's life itself and philosophers' way of living has no difference from other ways of living such as literature, art, science and physical labor. So engagement in philosophy does not change philosophers into gods or guarantee them any prestige. It can only make philosophers different from other people in the way that philosophers can realize their self-value through different ways. Thus what philosophers say is not absolute truth at all because of the limitations of life-world. Philosophy can not be placed above other sciences and philosophers cannot give orders. What philosophers can do is to have equal dialogues.

Secondly, philosophy should be pursued as both life and career. We have pointed out above that before the living problem is solved, philosophy generally has the nature of a means for living, which is more clearly shown in commercialized and market economies. But this is absolutely not the only characteristic of philosophy in these days, which can be shown by the following simple fact. The aim of some people who take philosophy as their career is not for profit and fame, but for interest and love because philosophy has never been a good tool to earn money and fame, since it is not material and does not belong to the main stream of society. If it were for material gains, many would not choose philosophy as their career. This means that philosophy is not only a tool, but also an aim. It is not only a means of living,

but also the life and existence style of philosophers. Philosophy is two sided. We can not cover its aim with tool or deprive its loftiness with its worldliness, because its aim and loftiness are pillars that sustain philosophers. So Marx said, "Philosophy understands life well. It knows that its conclusion will not wink at hedonism or selfishness in the heaven or the world."³ (page 123, volume 1, *Works of Marx and Engels*)

PHILOSOPHY AND THE LIFE-WORLD

The second aspect of the relations between philosophy and life is the relation between philosophy and life-world. In western philosophical history, the understanding of the relation between philosophy and life-world goes through a process of development. In Ancient Greece, the philosopher did not consciously integrate philosophy with the life-world. Aristotle thought that philosophy was a free science that began for entertainment and existed for itself.⁴ The really conscious link between philosophy and life-world began from modern times when philosophers realized that philosophy was a way of returning the alienated quality of life to human beings. Hegel expressed this realization clearly. To the question of what is philosophy, he answered: "It is a flower that blooms most luxuriantly. It is a notion of the spirit's whole forms. It is the conscious and spiritual essence of the whole objective world. It is the living spirit of its era."⁵ What the philosophy of Hegel expressed was the freedom of the spirit in its era. The consciousness of the relation between philosophy and life becomes stronger in modern philosophers. Marx thought that: "Philosophy is not the daydream about something out of the world." "It is the living soul of civilization." "Any real philosophy is the cream of spirit of its era." "The most exquisite and most valuable and unseen marrow exists just in philosophy."⁶ The mission of philosophy is to change the world.⁷ Edmund Husserl put forward clearly that philosophy must return to the life-world, because the life-world was its lasting and effective foundation and self-evident source. Only the philosophy originating from the life-world can build lasting significant relations with this world. So the problem of life-world is a general problem, rather than a partial one.⁸ Even Martin Heidegger who opposed seeing philosophy as facilitating cultural construction thought that philosophy was to inquire into the question why *Dasein* existed, and was not 'nothing'. He thought this inquiry to be an echo of the human circumstance.⁹ In other words, although all philosophies emerged in history from the foundation of the life-world, the consciousness of the relation of philosophy to life has undergone development from unawareness to awareness. Especially in contemporary times, the desire to return to the life-world has become a popular "voice". So what actually is the relation between philosophy and life? What is the meaning of philosophy stemming from life? How does philosophy return to the life-world? Not all the modern philosophers can answer these questions correctly. This is the reason why some contemporary philosophies have divorced from life. However, the relations between philosophy and life contains two aspects as regards the function of philosophy.

First, looking from the whole social productive system, philosophy is a department of the social division of labor. As an action that has existed for several thousand years, philosophy cannot only play the part of a conversation topic and entertainment for high officials and noble lords. Actually, it has entered into the social production system and existed as a department of the social division of labor, which is the reason why it could have existed several thousand years. Engels ever pointed out: “As a special realm of the social division of labor, philosophy of every era starts off with the special thinking that its pioneers handed down.”¹⁰ That philosophy is a department of the social division of the means of labor:

1. Society needs philosophy, otherwise, society cannot permit this department to exist.

2. Philosophy also needs society. It includes two aspects. On the one hand, as a department of the social division of labor, philosophy can only exist by putting itself into the system of the social division of labor. In other words, its existence needs the support of other departments. For example, it at least needs the support of the department that produces the means of livelihood, because philosophers must live first and second can go in for other activities. Hegel said that man could think those universal objects after the force coming from desires disappeared and desires were dispersed. On the other hand, philosophy needs society as its object and must satisfy the needs of society. Philosophy must bear some social responsibilities. In fact, whether philosophers are conscious or not, “so long as philosophers have formed an independent group within the social division system of labor, their productions (include their faults) will turn out to influence the development of the whole society, even that of economics.”¹¹

Second, philosophy is general thinking about the life-world. It differs from other subjects in the ideological sphere. Compared with religion, literature and the arts, it is rational, while in comparison with other concrete sciences, it is general. It is easy to understand what is rational, namely, that the conclusions are deduced from premises. But what is generality? The encyclopedic research of Aristotle is general; the way Hegel related nature, society and human spirit with his absolute idea is general. Human knowledge has accumulated to such a scale that contemporary philosophers cannot understand thoroughly all of its spheres. So what can guarantee the generality of philosophy? As the generality of philosophy cannot be obtained through studying all the realms of social life and all concrete sciences, it cannot mean to make philosophy an encyclopedia. Generality just means that philosophy should think the life-world as a whole, or should study its general and fundamental questions. Rational thinking of these questions is philosophical thinking. Rationality and generality are the criteria of judging that a kind of thinking as philosophical. Heidegger once answered the question “what is philosophy?” He thought that the answer was not a philosophical one, if it was gotten by collecting the views in philosophical history and summarizing their common features. “When

would the answer to the question “what is philosophy” be a philosophical one? When can we philosophize our answer? Obviously, only when we begin to dialogue with philosophers.”¹² What Heidegger meant here was that only if we thought what the philosophers always thought, for example being as being, could we philosophize our answer.

What are the general or essential questions of life-world? This relates to the understanding the essence of life-world. The conception “life-world” is put forward as opposed to the concept of an objective or “outside world”. It embodies a new world outlook or a new mode of thinking. The traditional essentialists thought that the world was something existing independently outside human, self-enclosed and self-existing. But the contemporary non-essentialists think that there is no other world but the life-world. And the life-world is the world that man opens up in the course of living. Man is the subject, the center and “master”. There is no life-world without man and his life. The life-world is the realm that man develops or perfects himself, because man’s life is the course of man perfecting himself. In this point, the following view of Heidegger is correct. “The world outlook also means firstly the outlook of life.”¹³ Certainly, the understandings of the life-world by different non-essentialists are different. For example, the subject of the life-world of Husserl is the individual person, therefore it is a subjective and positive world. But Marx regarded the masses as the center of the life-world, so his life-world was an object world being constituted with the public life.

Since man is the subject and center of life-world, the problem of man becomes the general problem of life-world. What then is the general problem of man? It is the problem that Kant always posed: what is man? This problem can be decomposed into the following questions: What’s the meaning of human life? Where does man come from? Where does the human life go? These are the general questions that philosophy should think. The function of philosophy is to make man realize clearly that man or his perfection is the ultimate end of the life and social development. By answering these questions continuously, it makes man correct his actions according to this realization. Actions in compliance with this criterion are encouraged; those not in conformity with this criterion are corrected. Heidegger said that philosophy was a “tuning”, through which “our actions are arranged like this or like that.”¹⁴

Philosophy arranges life by providing a mode of thinking. We often say that philosophy is the cream of an era’s spirit. In the view of Hegel, the spirit of an era is the special essence or character penetrating through all the departments of the culture,¹⁵ which is only its mode of thinking. The reason why the thinking mode needs philosophy to reveal is that the thinking mode is both present and not present. “Being present” means that the philosopher cannot fabricate a kind of thinking mode and import it into the life-world from outside. “Being not present” means that: First, the thinking mode has a course of forming or developing, and philosophy is not only the “owl” flying at twilight but also the “cock” participating in the forming of the era spirit. Second, even if in the period when the spirit of an era has opened up

completely, not all the people are conscious of it. Some act according to the thinking mode of his era only unconsciously. Another may act contrary to the trend of his era. This condition determines that philosophy can play the role of educator or liberator to push the muddled people from unconsciousness to consciousness. So there is the requirement to return to the life-world. In essence this is to change the thinking mode, or to abandon the traditional mode of thinking and create a new one. To return to the life-world of the contemporary philosophers is to refuse the mode of thinking of essentialism and to return to that of valuing man and relation, progress and function, creation and individuality, and so on.

The above-mentioned relations between philosophy and life mean that: First, philosophers should have the sense of responsibility and professional consciousness, because philosophers live in the life-world and philosophy is one department of the social division of labor. Second, philosophers should have the sense of life, and the problems of philosophy should originate from life. Third, the way that philosophy is related to life-world is different from other subjects. It is philosophical and general.

Editor, Qiushi Journal
Beijing

NOTES

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3 Marx, *The Complete Works of Marx and Engels*, People Press, 1965, Vol. 1, p. 123.

4 Aristotle, *The Complete Works of Aristotles*, The Chinese University Press, 1997, Vol. 7, pp. 30-31.

5 Hegel, *The Lectures of History of Philosophy*, Shangwu Press, 1996, Vo.1, p. 56.

6 Marx, *The Complete Works of Marx and Engels*, People Press, 1965, Vol. 1, pp. 120-121.

7 Marx, *The Collected Works of Marx and Engels*, People Press, 1995, Vol. 1, p. 61.

8 Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Life-world*, Shanghai Translating Press, 2002, pp. 258-271.

9 Heidegger, *An Introduction of Metaphysics*, Shangwu Press, 1996, pp. 12-42.

10 Engels, *The Collected Works of Marx and Engels*, People Press, 1995, Vol. 4, p. 703.

11 *Idem*,

12 Heidegger, *The Collected Works of Heidegger*, Shanghai Sanlian Press, 1996, 01, p. 599.

13 Heidegger, *The Road of Forest*, Shanghai Translating Press, 1997, p. 90.

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Chapter 2

On the Modernity of Marxist Philosophy from the Point of View of the Transition of Philosophy

Sun Meitang

Abstract: Marxist philosophy is one of the earliest schools to “reject metaphysics” and to complete the transition from traditional philosophy to modern philosophy. Denying the intuitionistic ways of viewing the world on the basis of “absolute noumenon”, Marxist philosophy resorts to practice, and regresses to the realistic and perceptual life. It perceives the world and being as an unceasingly generative and visible process, hereby realizing “practice transition” in philosophic history. We should reconsider the modernity of Marxist philosophy so as to better understand the trend [direction] of philosophical development.

On the question of how to understand the modernity of Marxist philosophy and the relation between Marxist philosophy and modern western philosophy, the traditional viewpoint pursues a dual standard:-- while according to the ‘*ideological standard*’, only Marxist philosophy is modern philosophy, because it is the *Zeitgeist* of imperial and proletarian revolutionary times, contemporary western philosophy is only “the absurd talk of the bourgeois in degenerate terms”. Such a viewpoint obviously never understands the essential meaning of a philosophical transition, and the true meaning of modern philosophy. According to the standard of ‘*philosophy formula*’, only western bourgeois philosophy is modern philosophy, which is mainly volitional and positivist and realizes the transition of philosophy to words, problems and thinking manner, namely, the *linguistic turn*. How should one perceive the modernity of Marxist philosophy? This issue is always avoided by relating Marxist to traditional philosophy, which fails to grasp its modern meaning. Interestingly these two viewpoints while apparently contradictory share two common premises: one identifies Marxist philosophy as Stalinist Marxist philosophy; the other abstracts Marxist philosophy totally from western philosophy, while ignoring the coherence between Marxist philosophy and modern western philosophy in exceeding western traditional philosophy and its realization of the former.

Aiming at these two trends, the author wants to point out two aspects: first, Stalinist Marxist philosophy has strong colors of mechanistic materialism, which set Marxist philosophy into the fixed pattern of traditional philosophy. At the same time, Marxist philosophy is not equivalent to Stalinist Marxist philosophy. In this case, we should ask whether the original Marxist philosophy, especially Marxian philosophy, actually belongs to or even starts modern philosophy? What is its position and meaning in the modern philosophy transition? Secondly, Marxist philosophy is the logical result

and idealistic summarization from Greek philosophy to German classical philosophy, which is developed in the process of resolving problems in the history of philosophy and grasping idealistic course. Hence, as to the problem that traditional philosophy starts modern philosophy, we should ask whether there exists coherence of Marxist philosophy and modern western philosophy insofar as developing the useful and discarding the useless are concerned.

In this article, we will try to connect the tradition of Marxist philosophy in western philosophy with the general direction of modern philosophy, analyzing the modern meaning of Marxist philosophy and its relation to philosophical development in our country.

I

To discuss the problems above, we should first discuss what is the essential characteristic of traditional philosophy and which aspects are embodied in the modern transition of philosophy. Western traditional philosophy is founded by Plato and completed by Aristotle, is a metaphysics premised upon an “absolute noumenon”. The so-called “absolute noumenon” is a transcendent entity and eternal “fountain” or “preliminary base” of material things. The main characteristics of traditional philosophy based on such as this are the following:

First, it is based on a noumenalism. The world is considered as the group of noumena, whose source and base is in traditional philosophy. These NOUMENA are exterior to the observer and refer to things in an emerging manner. The absolute super-metaphysical things are established, uniform and exterior to time. In other words, traditional philosophy looks to “eternal existences”: Existence is not a process and time is only an external background existing without an internal “time vector”. Existence does not emerge in connection with multiple potential factors, but is self-contained, self-caused and self-ideal to form the bases of existence. Thus the existence of all the things is fitted to the manner of thinking: “it is one or the other” with absolute certain and clear limits. Therefore, the mission of philosophy is to ascend infinitely in analyzing “the bricks of universe”, the atoms, either, “the thing itself”, “the ultimate ground”, etc. Such thought is justly criticized by Heidegger as paying attention to existents while forget existence itself.

Secondly, it is separated between the metaphysics and otherwise. It is believed in traditional philosophy that there exists one world with an “original condition” behind the experienced world with its motion and change, and difference. In other words, above the actual, material sensible world, there is transcendent, external and absolute fountain and noumenon from whence every phenomenon grows. From the “concept” of Plato to “absolute idea” of Hegel, traditional philosophy establishes many occult, abstract and absolute “sources”, which exceed experience and realistic and material things. This can be proved true or false, but it is the highest bases of original condition and universal rules for all the things.

Third, it is about the exterior viewpoint. The subject is not opposed

or uniform with the object, but is separated from object and exterior of the world. People, like God, are absolute spectators of this world. They can grasp the “world itself”, which exists absolutely exterior to man; Behavior is understood as at most changing the established or “original” world from the outside, rather than seeing the world as subject factor.

This visual angle, manner of thinking of traditional philosophy contains many inextricable contradictions: the separation and opposition of the metaphysics and the otherwise, theory and experience, the common and the individual, the abstract and the material, the physical and the spiritual, etc. It can neither illustrate the generative process of the world with continuity, nor see that the world is history and evolving, nor explain the effects of subject factor in the emerging of the world, nor grasp the world from the subject point of view and existence with eternal change. Indeed, these are just what are shown by modern science and human behavior. Therefore, modern philosophy almost starts with the rejection of metaphysics: positivism and logical positivism reject the propositions deduced with no proof or rigid logical rules, showing that philosophy is only a linguistic treatment, while pragmatism denies the abstract synthesis and the concept of “present at hand”, existentialism denies the generative and absolute essence of the human, etc. All deny the absolute noumenon. Through these rejections, the thought and visual angle of modern philosophy experiences a series of transitions:

First, the transition from a noumenal view based on abstract and super-metaphysical entity to ontology based on actual, material, and especially actual life. Most modern philosophy admits that there is no existence exceeding experience, that the truth is the experienced, sensible, material and actual life itself. In other words, there is no abstract and super-metaphysical world different from the actual one.

Second, the visual angle transits from the exterior field viewpoint to an interior one, i.e., the transition from the “purely impersonal” to such factors as linguistics, practice and behavior. Being is indispensably emergent in the world. Only through our worldview, can we grasp the “world itself”, that is through words, intuition, annotation, do we enter into existence and world.

Third, thought transits from the established and external to the generative and emergent. Existence and fact is not a group of noumena and things, but is a generative and evolving process with continuity. This is an indefinite sequence from possible to real, from potential to existing, and is a whole process; all the existence is generative in this process.

Fourth, it is about the concept of transition from attending to noumena to relations and process. Any existence itself is self-contained, while being deeply rooted in other factors. Any potential factor must be connected with other potential factors in order to be realized. Every “to be” and “should be” is connected with the premise of anything “to be” and “should be”.

Fifth, the emphases attended to in philosophy are “to be” and “exist”, but no longer “what”; at the same time, it pays attention to “how to be” and “how to exist”, i.e., how to become, but no longer only to “things” or “existence”.

By these transitions, one can differentiate modern from traditional philosophy.

In the west, this transition of modern philosophy is mainly shown by the linguistic turn. Analytical philosophy, linguistic philosophy, logical positivism, semiology, hermeneutics and later modernism, etc., all use linguistics as a means and object in philosophy research. Logical linguistics, denotation linguistics and the annotation of linguistics are the core problems attended to by modern philosophy. But this is not sufficient.

First, the linguistic turn cannot represent all of modern philosophy, as it should contain values and behavior (practice). The emphases paid attention to by the Marburg school of New-Kantianism, western Marxism, existentialism, post-modernism, the Frankfurt school, even New Thomism and personalism, etc., is the existence and value of the human, which try through philosophy to resolve the conflict of fact and value, “be” and “should be” in the era of scientific technique and industrialization, and to find a final basis to support and get on with the pursuit of the meaning of the human being. Such a trend can be called the *value turn*. The emphasis attended to by western Marxism, pragmatism, existentialism, etc., is the human being, behavior, life, practice or “doing”, which try to explain existence, essence and value in terms of existence, behavior, and “doing”, suggesting the world prospect as emerging and generative. Such a trend can be called the *practical turn*.

Second, even if we admit the linguistic turn, we see only the superficial phenomenon. What is its essence? What is its visual angle for observing the world and thinking about problems? How is it related to with other trends in philosophical transition? If we question deeply and further on these problems, we can see that: the transition from philosophy to linguistics is not to pay attention to linguistics itself, because philosophy is not linguistics. Philosophy is only using linguistics as a method to show the world, the world being in the process of “saying” and the text being in the process of “annotating”. It is made clear, and visible as reality; without the external observers. There is only the relation and process. At the same time, linguistics concerns grasping “to be” and “to exist”, so the staying point of linguistic philosophy is “to be” and “to exist”, not words, syntax, logic or text. Philosophy is communicating and talking with the world by means of words, to bring out possible worlds with truth and reality using linguistics. In philosophy, no matter what is fact (true) or value (meaning), it is abstract and muddleheaded itself. The truth and meaning needs explaining, constructing and understanding, by means of linguistics by the subject. Therefore, it is used in analytical philosophy, while in scientific philosophy it is seen to belong to the process of explanation of human behavior, while it is in hermeneutics considered that the meaning of the text is to understand.

From this angle, there is a correspondence between the linguistic turn, practice turn and value turn. Philosophy turns to practice and behavior, to do and “exist”, which the meaning of the world and the value of the human. The ‘value turn’ sets coordinates as its target, while its manner and visual angle is indeed the human being itself. That is to say, it finds the value and meaning of

the human from the *Dasein*. From the point of view of the subject, the essence of the linguistic turn is to consider existence and world as a process that is generative, emerging, clear and visible, considering existence as a process, which is common among philosophical.

Based on the above premises, we should discuss how to realize this 'philosophy turn' in Marxism, and what its relation is with modern western philosophy's turn.

II

Beginning with the flaw of traditional philosophy, as other modern western philosophy schools do, namely, the rejection of metaphysics, Marxist philosophy should also realize the transition from traditional philosophy to modern philosophy. In this book, "*Sacred Family*", Marx and Engels summarized metaphysics as formed in the 17th century by Descartes (here, "metaphysics" has its original meaning, i.e., "abstract metaphysics", "absolute things exceeding experience"). In this summary, they rejected the absolute reality, taking thought from "heaven" to "the world", taking the initiative of substance, needs, and the human in the actual world.

In the commentary on the themes of Feuerbach, they criticized divinity and the absolute idea of Hegel. They not only overturn his dialectic, but reject his metaphysics in order to realize an ultimate transition of the manner of thinking in Philosophy. Because the "absolute concept" is the typical metaphysical premise, and the Hegelian system is the peak of metaphysics--"metaphysics" has the meaning of "abstract metaphysics" and "the philosophy of relation and development".

If we look at that how to deal with the relation of the two by Marx and Engels, the meaning of this rejection of metaphysics is more obvious. Marx and Engels saw a return of metaphysics of the 17th century. So, they decided to cooperate in attacking all metaphysics, like attacking divinity in the 18th century. That is to say, the two are relatively close, in denying absolute things as dissociated and deviating from the actual world--whether concepts, divinity or abstract entities.

The materialism of Feuerbach and French on Descartes and Hegel did not complete the modern transition of philosophy. Although they denied the absolute and any entity exceeding experience (whether spirit or physical), they still do not understand the meaning of practice, which results in not getting rid of intuition and abstraction, so as to realize the modern transition of perspective and thinking manner of philosophy. Therefore, it is said in the criticism by Marx: "The main defects of all former materialism (containing Feuerbach's) are that, object, actuality and sensibility are understood only from the object or intuitionistic manner, but are not regarded as sensitive activity, practice and entity". What is it to understand in an object or intuitionistic manner? It is to put the thinking manner of entity and practice absolutely aside, to suppose no relative and original "world itself" (indeed the world grasped with human common sense). Such philosophy cannot understand that

it emerged in practice by entity as objects, so “it cannot consider the world as a process or the substance in history developing in continuous change”.

Although Germanic idealism develops the motile aspects, it develops these only in the abstract. Hegel considers the nature, history and human thought as a process, but it is only exterior existence of an “absolute concept”. Finally, this abstract frame asphyxiates any living realism. According to Marx, the common root of the old materialism and idealism do not understand practice. Feuerbach considers practice as “only from humble Jewish expressionism to understanding”. So he cannot know the meaning of ‘revolutionary’ and ‘the focus on practice’”. At the same time, neither does a mentalist idealism “know actual sensitive activity itself” either. In order to conquer all the limitations of traditional philosophy, it is necessary to start from humans and their actual life, from sense activity, from practice, from the visual angle of the entity to observe the world. Such a point of view is a new visual angle, and manner of thinking and saying in Marxist philosophy. Used in the manner of the “linguistic turn”, this visual angle can be called the “*practice turn*” (which contains a “value turn”). The “practice turn” contains the following contents in principle:

First, discard any abstract entity and transcendent pre-enactment of metaphysics with root and branch, start from reality, rooted in the material sensitive world, and emphasize material thought history. Contrary to traditional Philosophy, Marxism does not admit absolute things that exceed experience, as a “fountain” or “noumenon” of the whole world. It considers the actual sensitive life and history itself to be the as exclusive actuality. Marx opposed understanding humans with abstraction, opposed the world known as abstract and separated from the human; Engels satirized the “absolute concept” of Hegel as “saying nothing absolutely”. They all emphasize that philosophy should shift from heaven to the world, to the sensitive life and nature, and pay attention to the actual life and material history.

Second, see the world from the point of view of entity and practice. Criticizing the old materialism is understanding of the world from an objective and intuitionistic point of view, Marx claims to know the world in terms of sensitive human activity, from entity and practice. He does not consider it as “purely impersonal” without relation to the human, but as the world with human sensitive activity, i.e. practice. We cannot introduce and grasp the world without practice. The relations of the human and the world based on practice are the premise and foundation for grasping it. The human as entity, as sensitive and as practice, are the necessary conditions and premises to reveal and realize the world as actual matter than as abstract. The “Free world” is turned into a “self-constrained world”, in the course of intercourse and the “world itself” is shown in an objective manner. Whether the actual world or the human itself, Marx considers it to be the result of practice. The whole of world history is only the process generated by human labor; hence the existence of human must be coherent with its production that, with what and how of the production.

Of course, in Marxism, a preexistent and free quality is recognized,

but only in terms of practice can we grasp these qualities. In other words, only coming through the free world to the world as object is the world realistic and can reveal its character as preexistent and free. Both are meaningless without praxis. So Marx said, “nature understood in abstract terms isolated and separated from the human has [blinded] humans.”

Third, there is correspondence between natural and human history. Marxism denies the “exterior field viewpoint” of ancient philosophy and turns to the “interior viewpoint”. Natural history and human history seem to be opposed, but as long as the human exists, what we face is “realistic human nature”, or “real anthropologic nature”. The sensitive nature around us is absolutely not something that exists externally since the beginning of the history, but is the result of social conditions and human activity for generations. So, the science in the future should contain humanity, while humanity in future should contain science. Obviously, Marx denies in advance the exterior field viewpoint from the point of view classical physics and metaphysics, which was widely accepted by natural science in the middle of the 20th century, i.e., in the stages of the world we are both audiences and actors.

Fourth, existence is continuously born, evolving and emerging. The world seen by Marx is an object world, in a process of continuity growing for humanity. In the words of modern philosophy, the world is a process of emerging and generative, it is not a group of things but a group of processes. “The whole of nature is in an external process of generation and dying, in continuous flow, in movement and unceasing changes.” The whole of the so-called world history is a generative process by human labor. Marx and Engels even said, we admit only one science, which is history. It can be seen that, before the transition “from existence to evolving” is completed in the natural sciences, it is finished by Marx and Engels in philosophy.

In a word, the revolutionary meaning in Marxist philosophy is through the transition of the visual angle, dimensionality and methods to realize the transition from traditional philosophy to modern philosophy, which takes the lead.

III

Marxism rejects metaphysics and its realist philosophy in transforming western philosophy in the 20th the century. In other words, modern western philosophy develops the concept of Marx from the different point of view of consciousness or its lack. We can say that Marxist philosophy is the important headstream and first signs of modern western philosophy. This manner of thinking and its visual angle started with practice in the Marxist turn to praxis. Pragmatism emphasizes that valid truth must relate to human practice and behavior; existentialism thinks that the human essence is generated in the process of doing or existing; scientific philosophy considers science as resolving survival problems with man-made solutions; the Frankfurt school finds emancipation by resorting to dialectics and uses Marxism to look at the human world and its relations.

That Marxism grasps the world from an “interior viewpoint” in terms of entity becomes common in modern philosophy. Some ideas in Phenomenology, existentialism, hermeneutics, analytical and linguistic philosophy, scientific philosophy and late modernism consider the intuition of the human essence as the premise of existence. They regard the entity as the precondition and essential parameter for a realistic existence. Such manner of thinking about the world is put forward by Marx first. It is necessary to point out that the so-called “subjective mentality”, which regards the subjective factor as exclusively true, and considering the impersonal outside as untrue or as derivation of the subject, has existed since ancient history, but is quite different from the “interior viewpoint” in terms of the subject. That in the past we confused with these two shows that we did not understand manner of the thinking of modern philosophy.

That Marxism denies absolute noumenon, regarding world and history as a continually emerging process provides a total direction for the development of modern philosophy. All process philosophy, existentialism, philosophy of science, hermeneutics, etc. without exception, deny essentialism as well as absolute entity, regarding things and existence as appearing in multi-relations from the potential to the real, from the abstract to the possible “out come”, considering all as an historical and generative process. The visual thinking manner is common in modern philosophy, which should be said to benefit more or less from Marxism, directly or indirectly.

Besides, Marxist philosophy starts with real-life human, with human liberation and reversion. This began the tradition of value philosophy, mixing Marxism and humanitarianism, Marxism of the Frankfurt schools with existentialism, and Marxism and structuralism, etc. Hence, Marxist philosophy becomes the forerunner of the value turn.

It should be noted that the modern mark of western philosophy is more obvious in the 20th century, as philosophy transits to different directions. In detail, modern western philosophy is deeper and more meticulous than Marxist philosophy, but on the whole western philosophy in the 20th century lacks the grand vigor, historical discernment and profound critical spirit of Marxism. The “linguistic turn” is commonly recognized as an example. Philosophy must attend to linguistics, but this is only one of the ways for humans to grasp the world and visible existence. Moreover, linguistics itself is the result of practice and behavior; it is generated and developed in human lives. It is in praxis that the limits of linguistics are broadened, and with this the world expressed by linguistics is broadened too. Logic, linguistics, words, syntax, proposition, etc., are developed with praxis as these life is in actual life and human “existence”. Putting aside praxis as continuous creation and history with its continuous development, linguistic would become an abstract and fixed doctrine, another “metaphysics”.

Linguistic philosophy regards linguistics as the “base” or “root”: this keeps philosophy from conquering the contradictions of the actual and logical world, expressed and unexpressed. To limit the infinite world to the frame of linguistics results in proposition such as “the limit of linguistics is the limit

of world". The aim of many philosophers is to create a man-made linguistics to replace "fuzzy" everyday linguistics. But it cannot cancel everyday linguistics, because this comes from life and praxis, which are animated and developing. At the same time, a man-made linguistics (if generated) would deviate from life and practice and be certainly static and abstract. This shows that the life of linguistics comes from the creativity of life and practice. The potential of philosophy cannot be found in linguistics, so some philosophers say that the highest mission of philosophy is to make humans understand that philosophical propositions are meaningless, i.e. canceling philosophy,--which is just to show that this is an alternative to linguistic philosophy. This is a dim foreground of the linguistic turn, illustrating that practice is the real "base" and "root", and that only in reversion to practice does linguistics have any real strength.

Linguistics is a necessary method for philosophy, while the "linguistic turn" plays a great role in grasping human speech and logic. But the slow method of linguistics makes people think that it lacks a "common norm" in philosophy and is an "insignificant skill". The character and morals of the practical wisdom, historical discernment, and the ultimate care for man's fate, etc. in Marxist philosophy cannot be realized in linguistics.

We could take the "value turn" in the 20th century as another example. Philosophy in the 20th century deepens attention to the human's sphere, its being and the personality, and strengthens attention to existence and value until it encounters the problems of value since value was separated from Christianity. Hence its attention to value is overall dim and weak. When existentialism, Freudianism, the Frankfurt School and so on try to resolve the great historical problems in a cognitive manner, they certainly cannot give strong value support. Therefore, attention to human value must come back to Marx's thought deepened by freedom, creation and the mature abilities of entities.

In a word, Marxist philosophy comes from traditional philosophy and develops with its logic. It makes philosophy take a radical turn to a new route, and a new visual angle, conquering the insuperable contradictions in traditional philosophy, and initiating many western philosophical schools in the 20th century. The praxis turn of Marxist philosophy indicates that it is modern and coherent with the basic direction of modern western philosophy. We should put Marxist philosophy in the background in order to understand the western philosophical turn and annotation, and explain Marxist philosophy using the perspective and manner of thinking of modern philosophy. It is important to grasp fully the meaning and manner of thinking of the "practice turn" in Marxist philosophy, to learn to grasp the world and existence from the point of view of practice and entity, to grasp the "interior viewpoint" of the human, and to regard the world and existence as a continuously generative and visible process. Only this can enable Marxist philosophy to generate new life.

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NOTE

Many have pointed out Marx's rejection of metaphysics; see also Heidegger: *The Things Facing Thought*, Commercial Press, 1996, p. 60; Qian Xiao: *The Research on Practice Materialism*, China Renmin University Press, 1996, p. 29.

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Chapter 3

Preliminary Review: History of Studies of Marx's Texts and Reflections on Their Methodology

Nie Jinfang

The development of “Marxism after Marx” has been pushed forward by two kinds of actions: one was the translation, publication, interpretation and diffusion of Marxist classics; the other was socialist theory and practice as promoted by Marx’s successors, above all the politicians and revolution. Inherent and inseparable as were the two kinds of actions, it is wrong to omit or overlook the difference between them. It is indispensable to examine the history of the studies of Marx’s texts in reviewing the difficult development of Marxism. Furthermore, the breakthrough in Marxist studies depends to a certain degree on examining the history of the studies and methodology of Marx’s texts. In order to initiate attention of Marxist researchers this article will give a preliminary analysis of the history and methodology of the studies of Marx’s texts.

THE PUBLICATION OF MARX’S IMPORTANT TEXTS AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

In general, the history of the studies of Marx’s texts consists of the history of the preservation, gathering, translation, publication, interpretation and diffusion. The particularity here is that only a few of Marx’s texts were published during his lifetime and the vast majority of the texts came out for the first time in the 20th century. As a result of varied and complex causes there were many difficulties in the preservation and publication of Marx’s texts, so that up to now no collected works of Marx includes all his writings. Reviewing the history of the studies of Marx’s texts we find that almost every important writing of Marx created a great sensation and a lasting debate. The following is the data concerning initial publication of some of Marx’s important writings after his death:

	The title	The date of Publication	Editor
	<i>Vol.II of Capital</i>	1885	Engels
	<i>Theses on Feuerbach</i>	1888	Engels
	<i>The Vol.III of Capital</i>	1895	Engels
	<i>Wage , Price and Profit</i>	1896	Eleanor Marx
	<i>The Letter to the Father</i>	1897	

	<i>The Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature</i>	1902	Franz Mehring
	<i>The Letters to Dr. Kugelmann</i>	1902	
	<i>Preface to the Critique of Political Economy</i>	1903	Karl Kautsky
	<i>Bastiat and Carey</i>	1904	Karl Kautsky
	<i>Theories of Surplus Value</i>	1904-1910	Karl Kautsky
	<i>Selected Letters</i>	1906	
	<i>Selected Correspondence</i>	1913	Bebel and Eduard Bernstein
	<i>The Outline of the State, System and Anarchy</i>	1926	
	<i>Critique of Hegels' Philosophy of Right</i>	1927	The Marx-Engels Institute
	<i>The Outline of the Philosophy of Nature</i>	1929	The Marx-Engels Institute
	<i>The Great Man of Exile</i>	1930	The Marx-Engels Institute
	<i>Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844</i>	1932	Mayer
	<i>The German Ideology</i>	1932	The Marx-Engels Institute
	<i>The Mathematical Manuscripts</i>	1933	The Marx-Engels Institute
	<i>The Civil War in France</i>	1934	The Marx-Engels Institute
	<i>The Historical Notebooks</i>	1938-1940 1946	The Marx-Engels Institute
	<i>Grundrisse</i>	1939-1941	The Marx-Engels Institute
	<i>The "Morgan Notebooks"</i>	1946	The Marx-Engels Institute
	<i>Notes on Epicurean Philosophy</i>	1956	The Marx-Engels Institute
	"Kovalevsky Notebooks"	1958 1959 1962	The Marx-Engels Institute
	The "Phear Notebooks", "Lubbock Notebooks" and "Maine Notebooks"	1972	Lawrence Krader

The remarkable events occurring after Marx's death are as the follows:

1. An enormous number of manuscripts and books were left when Marx died. The manuscripts contained tens of millions words of original text, 1542 terms of correspondence between Marx and Engels and 4400 other letters. The collection of books had many notes and comments. The books are now incompletely preserved, and are scattered-about, but the manuscripts are preserved complete and gathered-together. The main original manuscripts have been preserved in the Institute of International Social History. The Pre-Soviet Marx-Engels Institute has the most complete duplicate of the manuscripts.

2. *Theses on Feuerbach* and *The German Ideology*, which were the basis, core, principle and framework of Marx's "New world outlook", were published in 1888 and 1932 respectively.

3. The manuscripts of Volumes II, III and IV of *Capital* were arranged and published by Engels and Kautsky respectively.

4. *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* of 1844, published in 1932, gave rise to the ideological trends that regarded Marx's theory as a kind of humanism and the birth of the Western Marxism.

5. Marxist researchers improved their understanding of the object of Marx's study after the "Historical Notebooks" and the "Ethnological Notebooks" were published; meanwhile they were puzzled by the problem of why Marx concentrated on remote antiquity without completing the *Capital* in his remaining years.

6. Riazanov started editing the first edition of the *Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe* (MEGA1) in 1924. It was in 1927 that the first book of the MEGA1 was published. Riazanov took charge of the edition of the MEGA1 which sought to include all of Marx's writings to facilitate the experts' studies. The MEGA1 was planned to consist of 4 parts, 40 volumes. In fact, only 12 volumes (13 books) had been published by its premature end. The trial edition of The MEGA2 was published in 1972 and the MEGA2 were formally published in 1975. Its planned 100 volumes were expected to be completed in 1990s, but later the planned volumes were expanded to 120-170 volumes and the deadline for publication was put off to the 21th century. The International Marx-Engels Foundation became the new institutional framework because of the serious influence of the Event of the Pre-Soviet and Eastern European Subversion. Under the leadership of the International Marx-Engels Foundation a new publication project of 114 volumes was drawn up. Up to April 2002, 52 volumes have been published.

7. The first Russian edition of the Karl Marx, Frederick Engels: Collected Works with 39 volumes, whose purpose was to propagate Marxism and facilitate the public's learning of Marxism, were first published in 1928 and completed in 1948. The second Russian edition of 50 volumes as first published in 1955 and completed in 1969. The German version of 39 volumes and Chinese version of 50 volumes were published with the first and second Russian edition as the original version respectively.

8. M. Rubel, working in the Research Center of Sociology in Paris, France established Marxology Studies in 1959. This was because Marx's ideological heritage, public activities and followers were all enormous, that there were many difficulties during the publication of his writings, that there has not been a reliable Collected Works and that great ideological difference existed in various Marxist schools ¹¹.

9. Marx's classical works have been divided into two series of texts, one consisting of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, *The Civil War in France*, *The Critique of the Gothe Programme*, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* and the Vol.I of *Capital*. The other consists of the *Thesis for the Doctorate*, Marx's articles published in *The Rheinsche Zeitung* and the *German-French Yearbooks*, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, *Thesis on Feuerbach*, *The Holy Family*, *The German Ideology*, the manuscripts of *Capital*, the *Historical Notebooks* and the *Ethnological Notebooks*. There are two kinds of Marxism which differ from each other in the theory and understanding of Marxism's theoretic value and practical significance.

PRELIMINARY COMMENTS ON THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF STUDY OF MARX'S TEXTS

During more than one century several kinds of studies on Marx's texts have formed because of many factors. Different researchers had different motives, tastes and comprehensions and the multiple ideological trends varying with the times. In my opinion, there exist five kinds of studies of Marx's texts.

1. Engels, Marx's relatives and their friends and followers there had priority in the interpretation of Marx's texts because they understood his theory through direct or indirect association with Marx, which others had not. It goes without saying that Engels had the first say in understanding Marx's texts after his death. Engels was fully aware that no people could replace him in arranging Marx's posthumous works, so he devoted his remaining years to arranging the manuscripts of his great deceased friend. Engels worked out a huge writing plan, for example, writing Marx's biography, the history of the German socialist movement from 1843-1863 and of the First International, publishing Marx's total writings and publishing Marx's articles in the *Rheinsche Zeitung* once again. After Marx died, Engels thought that it became very urgent to perfect and systematize Marx's theory, which was Engels's chief intention in publishing the writings in his remaining years. Owing to varied difficulties only a few of these writing plans were accomplished before Engels's death. On the whole, Marx's theory was embodied in the *Anti-Dühring*, *Ludwig Feuerbach* and the *End of the Classical German Philosophy*, *The origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, the *Dialectics of Nature*, a number of letters written in his old age, the volumes II and III of *Capital* and the second edition of the Vol. I of *Capital*. It is common sense that the most Marxists

understood Marx through Engels's interpretation of Marx, here a contentious problem is whether or not Engels had wholly comprehended Marx's theory.

As I see it, firstly, there is no evidence that Engels misunderstood, misrepresented or changed Marx's theory; on the contrary, he arranged Marx's posthumous works prudently and respectfully. In a letter Engels once said: "What I pay most attention to is to publish a true edition of Marx's works with all my heart, in other words, we must use Marx's texts to the full to express his own discoveries ... Marx has the right to let people know his texts and let his scientific discoveries be handed down according to his texts"²² Secondly, Engels arranged Marx's manuscripts from 1883 to 1895 in special circumstances, which means that he always paid more attention to the urgent, immediate tasks or things with full of practical significance, so it was impossible to attend to each and every aspect of the issues in arranging the manuscripts. Maybe he regarded some things important to be general knowledge and so he didn't lay stress upon them. Thirdly, on second thought, even if Engels exactly and wholly interpreted Marx's theory, the Marxists after Engels might not understand Marx completely according to Engels's understanding of Marx .

2. Eleanor Marx was another executor, she published again Marx's articles on the *Event of the Crimean War in The Eastern Question*, initially published the *Wages, Price and Profit* and some of Marx's letters. In addition, Dietzgen, Mehring, Kautsky, Lafargue, Labriola Plekhanov also contributed to interpreting and propagating Marxism, but they could not compare with Marx and Engels in understanding the object of the study and the framework of Marxism or its methodology and social functions.

The Social Democratic Party of Germany published some of Marx's writings which were less controversial but beneficial in extending Marxism's influence as a step first thing because the circumstances were so complicated that to publish Marx's manuscripts without limit was unimaginable.

Marx's manuscripts and letters were taken care of by Eleanor and The Social Democratic Party of Germany after Engels's death, but when Eleanor died several years later, they were possessed only by the latter. There have been much criticisms about the Party's preserving Marx's manuscripts in the Pre-Soviet Marxist researchers' writings on the history of Marxism and the history of the International communist movement because of some differences of revolutionary tactics between The Social Democratic Party of Germany and the Communist Party of The Soviet Union. The criticisms were that the leaders of The Social Democratic Party of Germany put off publishing Marx's manuscripts or changed his thoughts and that both the ideological content and the standard of edition of their publications were bad.³³ We now know most of their arguments were hardly tenable. From 1895 to 1914, as the main publisher of Marx's posthumous works, The Social Democratic Party of Germany published Marx's many writings, published some writings again which few people knew, and reprinted some of the most important writings. These publications always become the primary editions of varied versions and

were made good use of by the communists of countries, for example, *Neue Zeit*, the official periodical of The Social Democratic Party of German, was the main periodical in which Marx and Engels's writings were published.

Theories of Surplus Value edited by Kautsky should be mentioned here. Engels had not enough energy to arrange Marx's manuscripts of *Capital* and the handwriting of the remainders of the manuscripts was almost illegible, so Engels was extremely anxious to train his successor, meaning Kautsky. Under Engels's careful training Kautsky basically grasped the characteristics of Marx's handwriting. Under these circumstances Kautsky dared not to act rashly and did not publish Marx's *Theories of Surplus Value* until near ten years after Engels's death. Levin blamed Kautsky for changing Marx's manuscripts and upsetting the framework of *Theories of Surplus Value*. Now we know Levin overstated the case, Kautsky only adjusted the order of several pages to the framework of manuscripts and threw some light on the adjustment in several annotations because the order of these pages was out of accord with the framework of the manuscripts. Moreover, Levin criticized Kautsky for seriously abridging Marx's manuscripts, for example, about half a sheet was cut off in two places of the manuscripts and one chapter (one half of sheet) was wholly abridged, other fragmentary pages and paragraphs need not be mentioned. In fact, the half of sheet and one chapter were written twice by Marx, who wrote the two parts again after abridging them. Maybe he thought it would be best to preserve them. Kautsky's achievement in arranging and publishing *Theories of Surplus Value* should not be written off because of his different political standpoint.

3. The leaders of the labor movement and the proletarian revolution utilized Marxism's practical significance in solving social problems, which greatly promoted the propagation of Marxism and extended its influences. Lenin was a new phenomenon in the history of the development of Marxism's development, that is to say, the professions and functions of the leaders have altered a great deal. On the one hand, we cannot deny the leader's position as thinkers; on the other hand, they were first of all politicians and revolutionaries. As such they looked at the society from a special angle and devoted themselves to analyzing society, selecting revolutionary tactics and popularizing Marxism. Undoubtedly the popularization of Marxism depended to a great extent on their efforts.

4. Pre-Soviet scholarship on Marx's writings became the function of the state because Marxism has become the theory of the state. The Pre-Soviet researchers were the earliest to systematically collect, arrange, translate, publish and study Marx's texts on a large scale

The Pre-Soviet Marxists studied and popularized Marxism on an unprecedented scale after Lenin's death. The study and popularization of Marxism was brought into line with the state plan. The Pre-Soviet Marxist scholars had achieved great success in the studies of Marxist literature including Marx's texts. Under the leadership of Riazanov the work of the

Pre-Soviet Marx-Engels Institute was a brilliant achievement in arranging Marx's manuscripts. A scholar once said: "Riazanov's work in founding the Marx-Engels Institute and arranging Marx's manuscripts made the studies of Marxism scientific."⁴⁴ Less than one third of Marx's writings were published or took shape during his lifetime, with enormous remainders of notes, letters, reading notes, annotations and commentaries which were not published or finished. The great achievements made by the Pre-Soviet scholars have been the important basis of the follow-up research. Of course, we should also notice that their studies were strong in social ideology. They expounded and proved the correctness of new policy with the viewpoints of the teachers of the revolution as soon as the government adopted a new policy. As orthodox Marxists the Pre-Soviet scholars emphasized Marxism's polemic character and unique position too much to deny the rationalization of other interpretations of Marxism. Undoubtedly the Pre-Soviet scholars' studies on Marxism were deeply interfered with by the characteristics of the Pre-Soviet social development.

5. The members of Marxology and the editors of MEGA2 were absorbed in arranging Marx's manuscripts because they paid more attention to the manuscripts and its original meanings than to the practical significance and appraisal of Marxism.

Marx's life and writings were the objects of studies of Marxology without much limitation from ideology or subject. Rubel hoped to carry forward the good study standards with which K. Grün had edited the Library of the History of Socialism and the Labor Movement and Riazanov edited the MEGA1 from the beginning of the foundation of Marxology. "Marxology is independent of ideology."⁵⁵ Marx's texts were always the central issues discussed in the articles in the *Marxology Studies*, above all the First International's *Centenary*, the *Capital* was published, as was Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: *On the Czar* and *Russian Commune* and *On Communism*. In these and other articles Rubel and others analysed Marx's theories, generalized some conclusions from the theories and excluded many viewpoints attributed to Marxism. Rubel contributed great achievements in editing the Collected Works of Karl Marx, which he thought could reflect Marx's theory. The writings like *Karl Marx on the Socialist Ethics* published in 1946, the *Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy* published in 1956 and the *Collected Works of Karl Marx* were of great academic importance.

MEGA2 is identical with the Marxology and MEGA1 in the purpose of edition which was to publish Marx's total writings according to the manuscripts. The time and energy the editors spent in the MEGA2 were much greater than that on MEGA1 because the amount of work of the former was much larger than that of the latter. For example, the working group of the Vol. V, part I of the MEGA1 consisted of two German scholars and one French scholar. In order to discover the process, framework and handwriting of *The German Ideology* the working group had been studying tens of editions of *The German Ideology* for 15 years before drawing up a preliminarily outline. It

can be asserted that the editors of the MEGA2 and the members of Marxology were good at textual studies and were not at all in quest of fame and gain at all.

In short, it is not recommended for us to judge what is right and what is wrong before we seriously study one theory or viewpoint.

REFLECTION ON THE METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDIES OF MARX'S TEXTS

Nowadays, how to study the texts of Marx who lived in the 19th century is a big problem deserving serious treatment by us in the 21st century. Marx's texts will not be here in totality, but along the basis of the 20th century Marxian studies. Undoubtedly, new breakthroughs and developments depending on reviewing and renewing the textual studies of the past is essential to today's Marx's texts studies. The following problems ought to receive attention in reviewing the methodology of Marx's textual studies.

Firstly, does excessive emphasis on the practical significance of Marx's texts interfere with completely or accurately grasp Marx's theory? We find that the articles which had great vitality and have been handed down to us were those concerning the writing processes, editions and writing framework of Marx's texts when reviewing the Pre-Soviet scholars' studies on Marx's texts. To be sure, we cannot read any text with Luoke's "tabula rasa"; the indubitable facts are that the readers' state of knowledge and conceptions may engage in and interfere with their understanding. The problem is that the facts are not the reason why we exaggerate our state of cognition and conceptions. We must look on the texts which are the basis of the studies as an objective reality. We should pay attention not only to the theories' practical significance, but also the texts' writing background, processes, editions, frameworks, and to their spread and new trends. One should not attach too much weight to this and too little weight to that.

Secondly, is it necessary fully to consider the complicated relationship between the thinkers' thoughts and their texts when we read their texts, that is, whether or not the thinkers' texts completely accord with their thoughts? Readers grasp the thinkers' thoughts through reading their writings. Hence the relationship between the thinkers' thoughts and the readers' understanding may be very complex because reading process consists of several links, which make it exceptional that the reader completely grasps the thinkers' thoughts. Thus, it is prudent to pay attention to, and to determine the significance and value of the studies on details of texts which were usually looked upon as trivial, tedious and time wasting.

Thirdly, is it necessary that readers improve their understanding of texts? It is normal for different readers to have different reading motives, taste and understanding when studying the same writing, but this cannot be a reason for none being a better understanding of the writings. Only scholars can be true exegetes. For true exegetes, only rationality and objectivity rather than preconception, ideology, authoritative viewpoints or research

fashion can be the principle and standard of their studies. Meanwhile, they must remain prudent enough to know their viewpoints and understanding are not universally applicable. I think it is fair and reasonable for the readers to improve their understanding of Marx's texts in order that there be new development of Marxism.

It can be estimated that Marxian studies in the 21st century's china will be more specialized and academic. The contents of Marxism studies will consist of all of Marx's texts which are an invaluable treasure-house of ideas Marx left for us. In order to deepen and promote the study of Marxism and wholly to grasp Marx's theory we should regard Marx as not only the discoverer of the law of the development of history but also as a truth seeker. Marx always reviewed the historical materialism with which he analysed and grasped the varied society. Moreover, his life was full of varied hardships, setbacks and perplexities. Obviously, only by studying the several classics which have taken shape is too difficult for us wholly to grasp Marx's theory. The voluminous letters, reading notes, statements and records with great historical significance need urgently to be arranged. More importantly, we will surely remove those lopsided, vulgar and extreme views from Marxism and grasp Marx's thoughts more objectively and more reasonably if we strengthen the studies on Marx's new texts (manuscripts, reading notes, etc.). As the permanent basis for the study of Marxist philosophy, Marx's texts are a treasure-house of ideas holding new value and significance for the development of modern society.

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NOTES

1 See M. Rubel, *Forward the Marxology Studies* (1959).

2 See the first Chinese edition of *Karl Marx, Frederick Engels: Collected Works*, Vol. XXV, p. 105.

3 See Levin, *The Release and Publication of Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels's Works* (Moscow: Political Literature Press, 1948).

4 Quoted from D. Riazanov and the MEGA1, in *Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels Studies*, Nr. XX, p. 117.

5 M. Rubel, especially emphasized this in many places.

Chapter 4

Economics as Historic Science: A Philosophical Review of the Crisis of Economics

Shen Xiangping

Abstract: Economics fell into crisis as a whole as it was proceeding in its will and effort of expansive imperialism. The most serious crisis is that of the basic hypothesis of capitalist economics: scarcity and the rational economic agent. The crisis originated from lack of awareness of the nature of historic science itself, and failure to carry out the principles and methods of historic sciences. At this stage, the only way that economics can overcome its crisis is to be true to the nature of a historic science.

THE PROBLEM AS DRAWN FROM THE CRISIS OF ECONOMICS

There is a phenomenon that is often called “the imperialism of economics” in the study of humanities and social science. It is “the economic approach to human behavior” according to Gary Becker, or it is “political economics” according to the school of public choice which studies politics using economics, or it is the way domestic economists studying culture use economic methods. The nature of the “imperialism of economics” is that economists believe that “economics has now set the general syntax for social science”, that economic analysis is the centralized method for interpreting all of human behavior [1](P181). We do not want to appraise the imperialism of economics in this paper, but to point out that economics is facing the most serious internal crisis itself while triumphantly pressing ahead in its colonialism, as is always true of empires in history.

Actually, the crisis of economics is long-standing, which is also acknowledged by economists themselves. But as recognized by economists, the crisis of economics is that of one paradigm in the theory or the crisis of the guiding principle of its study, as concludes Mark Blaug who studied the methods of economics using the “paradigm” or “the guiding principle of study”. But if we regard the whole of economics as a paradigm of theory or guiding principle of study, the crisis is actually just a crisis around the margins, and there is no crisis in the core of economics; that is to say, there is no crisis in the basic hypothesis. Therefore the crisis as seen and believed by an economist is a limited one, namely. The “way” economics developed by carrying on a “revolution of science”. However, the crisis faced by modern economics is not the failure of this or that theory, it is the crisis of the “core” of the whole economic paradigm, that is to say, the crisis of its basic hypothesis. This is the basis of the whole economics edifice, and the premise that makes economics possible. Undoubtedly, this determines the life or death of economics.

Economic activity is a systematic effort by which man meets his needs by producing, distributing, exchanging and consuming resources, economics is the “ology” which studies that. Therefore, the basic hypothesis of economics must determine both the object and the subject. The hypothesis about scarcity is the hypothesis of the world as object in economic activity. Scarcity is a state of the world for man, that is to say, a state that the resources we possess are always less than the resources we need. The rational economic agent is the hypothesis of the person as subject in economic activity. It itself includes three meanings: (1) The hypothesis of “egoism”, which believes that seeking for one’s own benefit is the fundamental motive in human economic activity. (2) The hypothesis of “maximization”, which believes that seeking for the personal maximum benefit is the purpose of man’s behavior. (3) The hypothesis of the “methodological individualism”, which believes that the individual’s seeking for the maximum benefit will naturally lead to a fine social order and in the end to maximum common welfare. Economics plays the role that how to realize the best arrangement of the scarce resources and how to satisfy the rational economic agent’s demand. However, both basic hypotheses have fallen into crisis.

The hypothesis of scarcity represents perfectly the method of economics as the general principle of social science, as far as economists are concerned. But in modern times, it meets a crisis from at least two aspects which seem contradictory to each other: one is the challenge evoked by the “existential difficulty”. Economics resolves the contradiction between demand and scarcity by expanding production and arranging the resources, while the history of man’s economic activities dated from the birth of economics made it clear that expanding production led to the exhaustion of resources and the deterioration of the environment. The true result of the arrangement of resources is that the economically developed countries plunder or even colonize the developing countries. The crisis between nature and man and the crisis between man and man results in difficulties of human existence. The actual difficulty led people to doubt the hypothesis of scarcity in economics. The other crisis encountered by economists is the challenge from the knowledge or information revolution. People find that the resources produced and arranged by the knowledge industry, which is gradually becoming the main industry, are no longer material resources. ‘Knowledge resources’ are shared by all of the people, and are not exclusive: they will multiply during the course of dissemination and consumption instead of being consumed and diminished, as do the material resources. That is to say, the resources in knowledge economy are no longer scarce. The situation that arises here has been little studied in the field of economics thus far. Someone may say that the resources will no longer be scarce, only the solution of the existential difficulties. I would not draw a conclusion at present, but only point out that there is a logical error in the hypothesis of “scarcity” in economics. At least it cannot interpret reality very well with its former meaning and falls into crisis.

Economists have debated the hypothesis of “the rational economic agent” for a long time,--although economists all consciously regard “the ra-

tional economic agent” as the basic hypothesis of their theory building. There are three great debates about the rational economic agent within economics since it was challenged by the German History School. When economics expands its hypothesis to other subjects in a process of imperialism, it suffers more attacks from outside economics. The hypothesis of the rational economic agent encountered four attacks: The first is the argument between egoism and altruism. Egoism in economics can't explain the existence of unselfish behavior in actual life. Egoism faces the challenge of the moral person, the social person and the practical person. The second is that individuality may not seek the maximization of benefit. The third is that individual reason may not lead to collective reason. Systems theory and game theory show that collective benefit is not the simple sum of individual benefits, and seeking the maximization of individual benefit is not sure to lead to the maximization of collective benefit. The fourth is a challenge to economic reason. In economics, the one who consciously seeks for the maximization of individual benefit is a rational person; reason is understood as a plot. Actually, on the one hand, there are many irrational causes in man's behavior; on the other hand, the limited “reason” in economics is only a kind of instrumental reason, while practical and comprehensive reason ought to be a unity of instrumental reason and value reasoning. Facing attack from all sides, “the rational economic agent” in economics has come down to its last point. Economists face not a minor “operation”, but as the lord who gives birth to “the rational economic agent”, they must thoroughly rethink their own design and craft.

What is the root of the crisis in economics? From the early History School to the old and new institutional economic school, all have ever been rethinking the mainstream in economics. For example, an economist of German History School, B. Hildebrand pointed out early in 1848 that the fault of mainstream economics was that “it intended to find the general principle which was true for all ages from the temporal facts in the development of each country, and then founded a kind of world economics or human economics. This attempt completely corresponded to the rationalism of Adam Smith's times. It started from the belief that all of the laws of the civil economics, because they are founded on the relation between man and goods, overtook the limits of time and space, and were recognized as correct despite the fact that phenomena were changing all the time. Therefore these theorists did not understand that from the aspect of social animals, man was ever a newborn baby of culture and history. And that his demands, which form the relation of goods to man, would never forever be the same. They were all different according to geography and history, and they changed, and improved continuously with the human being's whole culture”. [2] (P41) The book *Crisis of Economic Theory*, edited by Daniel Bear and Owen Kristol in 1981, ordered concentrically the main opinions of different modern economic schools to the economics crisis. Twelve economists of different schools self-criticized the mathematical tendency, the theory of general equilibrium, the hypothesis of reason, and the hypothesis of steady preference, etc., in economics. They believed that the root of the crisis in economics was that “it didn't concern

history and it analyzed abstractly. . . . economic theory was founded on the pattern of the classical mechanics and played its role according to the imagination of the natural science. The result was basically applying a mechanistic behavior to human beings". Therefore, the way to overcome the crisis was that "economic theory must return to the time (logical meaning) and history (of experienced meaning) [3] (P108-111). But, they did not realize the historic problem of economics itself, that is to say, they could not realize and understand economics as an actively historic science.

WHAT IS HISTORIC SCIENCE?

The concept of the "historic science" can be traced back early to Giambattista Vico's "new science", but it was Marx and Engels who gave "historic science" its complete meaning. For Marx and Engels, "historic science" had the meaning of dividing subjects, but it was mainly a kind of principle and method of scientific study founded on the materialist conception of history concerning the meaning of historic science. As for the division of subject, "all branches of science which are not natural science are historical." [4] (P117) Obviously, the historic science concerned here includes the social sciences and the humanities. But the key meaning of historic science is a kind of integrated principle and method of scientific study. From this, Marx and Engels pointed out that "we only know one unique science, that is historic science" [5] (P2). The principles and methods of historic science can be reduced to three, that is the principles of historicism; the method of unifying logic and history; and the method of humanitarianism. The historic principles believe that all things are not forever and are not absolute, but are temporal products of history. The thing is its historical course. Therefore, just as Heidegger said, "all inquiries into being have the character of historic meaning". [6] (P27) But in modern times before Marx, man mainly followed the track of metaphysical rational views from Descartes to Hegel, which interpreted history with an eternal reason that was not historic. The historic materialism founded by Marx and Engels completely ended any fantasy about eternal things. Now, the historic principle has become the main general realization of all living academic traditions. Historic principle indicated that for any historic science (1) the principles, concepts and categories owned by this science "are as little eternal as the relations they express. They are historical and transitory products". [5] (P109) Therefore, there are not abstract, absolute principles, or concepts, categories or formulas which can be applied to everything. (2) Any science (whether social science or the humanities) is not ready made, or eternal. As historic patterns, they will disappear with the disappearance of the historical stage or condition of the science.

The historic principle studied by historic science determined its method as a unity of logic and history. As logic is the reaction of history, therefore the logic in thought must rise to the concrete from the abstract, and be identical to the historical facts. "The point where this history begins must also be the starting point of the train of thought, and its further progress will

be simply the reflection in abstract and theoretically consistent form of the historical course. . . . all theoretical conceptions which arise in the course of history can be understood only if the material conditions of life obtaining during the epoch of their revelation have been understood and the former are traced back to these material conditions. This was a revolutionary discovery not only for economics, but for all historical sciences.” While history decides the limit of abstract logic, we cannot decide history with logic. Of course, the unity of logic and history concerns the trends of the development, but not a unity whose aspects are identical one by one. Because history moves often in leaps and bounds and in zigzag line, logic cannot follow it everywhere. The application of logic to history must be “corrected in accordance with laws provided by the actual historical course; since each factor can be examined at the stage of development where it reaches its full maturity its classical form.” [4](P122) Therefore, any concept and category in science should be a unity of description and the abstract, reality and the ideal, while historic facts are the final true source.

“Historic science” as different from natural science implies its own unique method, namely that of humanitarianism. The difference between history and nature is that history is created by man, and history is identical with man’s creative activity. History’s development is the development of man. Man has no regular essence, “the whole history is nothing but the change of the human essence all the time.”[5](P138) In this sense, historic science is generalized humanities. On the contrary, all humanities are historic science. Even nature is concerned; it is a nature existing for man. Natural history and the history of human beings are conditioned by each other since man emerged. History is “the developing course of nature for man in this sense.”[7](P131) Historic science is therefore called by Marx and Engels the unique science. The character of humanitarianism in historic science is that: (1) The object studied by historic science was man, not matter; it was the real relation between man and man which was changing in the time with history. For those sciences that seem to study matter we must impose the relation between man and man over the relation between matters. Engels even pointed out directly, “economics doesn’t study matter, but the relation between men.” [4] (P123) (2) The starting point and purpose of historic science are in the existence and better existence of man. The final purpose is man’s free, all-round development. Forgetting this leads to the alienation of man, the loss of freedom and the crisis of existence. Therefore, as historic science, it must pay close attention to the conditions of human existence.

Historicism is the basic principle born from the scientific world outlook; it is the direct by given character of historic science, its concrete method is to acknowledge and study history in order to unify history and logic, which makes historic science possible as a science. The method of humanitarianism is a special method of historic science by which it always pays close attention to the condition of man himself, and will not result in the “loss of being”. The three principles and methods are the study principles and methods necessary for all historic science.

ANALYZING THE CRISIS OF ECONOMICS WITH HISTORIC SCIENCE

George C. Marshall held that economics was a science studying both wealth and man. Economics belongs to the scope of historic science, but the mainstream of economics ignored, and even escaped its character as historic science. This is the true origin of the crisis in economics. And the most serious crisis is the crisis of the basic hypothesis, described above. Hence we will analyze the two basic hypotheses of economics with the method of historic science, and look for the causes in order to find a possible settlement.

On the Hypothesis of Scarcity

From the viewpoint of historic science, the hypothesis of “scarcity” in economics stated that economics had forgotten “being”. Scarcity means we should cherish resources in order that they can be more beneficial to human existence. But there is a deeper hypothesis or belief, which has never been attended to by man behind the hypothesis of scarcity in economics. That is that scarcity is concerned in time and space and, although the matter we need is scare, it exists perpetually as a whole and eternal being. This is not true of nonexistence or nothing. The problem is how to find, create (as far as being is concerned, creation doesn’t create something from nothing, but makes one being become another being) and dispose it. Man worries that resources are scarce but not that they will disappear; he worries only about disappearance in this or that time and space, but not about that it will disappear in the world and for all history. Therefore, economics never worries about “to be or not to be.” In this hypothesis or belief, man always stands outside the world and divides world into his own property; He believes that resources will not be exhausted at first, and then has a blind faith that the fairy tale of the technology can produce a highly alternative world (this is another manifestation of the belief that matter is inexhaustible). But the consequence is that resources are exhausted, environment desiccated, and disputes continuously appear. Man is facing the same crisis as Hamlet: “to be or not to be, that is the question.” Therefore, when economics employs the hypothesis of scarcity, it must explain, and make detailed inquiries about this hypothesis of hypothesis in order to pay close attention to the existential conditions of the world and man. [8] Economics lacks an examination of meta-economics.

Economists also acknowledge, “Scarcity is a concept which essentially concerns no time, the same as choice”. [3] (P236) It supposes that man’s preference is steady in different times and cultures. Therefore the scare object too is steady. And this scarcity of resources is understood to be the scarcity of material resources. Therefore the fallacy that the problem of scarcity would be resolved by knowledge of economics arose. In fact, man’s preference is different under different historical conditions and different developing stages. And some of man’s preferences can be produced (such as by the modern advertising media). Therefore, the scare objects are different. In an information

society, although knowledge and information can be enjoyed together, it is not true that they will no longer be scarce, as some believe. In fact, on the one hand, there is surplus information enjoyed together; on the other hand, the information that has creative ideas and can bring the utmost economic benefit is packed closely and is not gratuitous (the property rights on information and the patent right on technology). Therefore it too is scarce. In essence, this kind of scarcity is the shortness of man's intelligence. Therefore, scarcity must be comprehended as an historical change.

At the same time, scarcity is not only the relation between man's need and resources. It always reflected the relation between men. Someone's state of scarcity is always the result of another's being wealthy because of the unfair social system or international order. Furthermore, with the changes of the system and the changes of the relation between men (including conscious political activities), men's state of scarcity will change too. Thus, the different cultures, systems, etc., which are the exterior causes for the mainstream economics will now be interior causes.

On the Hypothesis of the Rational Economic Agent

Biology and psychology have proven is that man has two ways of imploding: the selfish and the unselfish, while historicism believes that man's nature develops and changes in the historic activities. That is to say, at different stages of human development, the main tendencies of man's selfish and unselfish nature are different. Marx believed that man experienced three stages in the development of the practical level: "relations of personal dependence", "personal independence founded on objective dependence" and "free individuality"[10](P107). It is in the second stage that economics came into being. Compared with other two stages, man tends to selfishness at this stage. In the final analysis, this is because productivity is highly developed at this stage but has not developed completely. From this standpoint, economists' finding that man is selfish is not false, but the problem is that: (1) For economists, the selfish individual is not the result, but the starting-point of history, because they believed egoism is man's nature, the product of nature, but not of history. (2) Although man, at this stage, is more inclined to be selfish compared with other two stages, this does not mean that at this stage he has only a selfish character. (3) Nor is the selfish man. The market economy symbolized by objective dependence will pass out of history as man develops into the higher stage, that of free individuality; man's selfish behavior will then be the object of archeology. Therefore, economics must explain the premise of the selfish man's existence historically, state the selfish man's historic limits, and then render a determination of the conditions of its existence and its ending, that is, of the falsifiability of these conditions.

There are two premises to support the hypothesis of the maximization of the individual benefit. One is man's selfish tendency, which is the inner motive to maximize the benefit; the other is the completed reason, which is the condition for realizing the maximization of the benefit. I want only to

point out here that, to suppose that independent men based on the material dependence are generally unselfish and don't seek for the maximization of their own benefit is either hypocritical with ulterior motives or based on times having changed completely. But the dividing state of knowledge and information must make actual reason limited whereas the maximization of benefit indicates man's pursuit of the greatest possibilities. The result is often that "if you copy the best, you get mediocrity". It will not realize the maximization of benefit, but just reach the extent of confidence, just as J.K. Galbraith said.

Economics always starts from methodological individualism, which believes that to pursue the individual benefit will lead naturally to the realization of the public social welfare; reality shows this to be just utopian and, because historic nature does not repeat economic theory, economists seem very depressed. In fact, standing on the world's history, we can see the contradiction between the maximization of the individual benefit and the common welfare. The contradiction between the mass production and the means of production possessed privately in capitalist society can not be answered and resolved by economics at the stage of "personal independence founded on objective dependence". That the contradiction exists from the start to the end is one of the features of this stage, and also one of the causes that the stage will be surpassed. At present, we can only depend on the law and system for protection, not the expansion of economics, but the support of economics from politics, sociology and law.

The thinking of economics is the product of the modern rationalism, and the crisis in the basic hypothesis of economics also touches the problem of reason. The rationalism of economics is proud of its tradition of empiricism in England, but not the tradition of rationalism on the Europe Continent. However, when economics tried to make itself as mathematical as possible, and became a strict science defined by Descartes, the rational outlook of rationalism intruded into the marrow of the economics. On the one hand, "the invisible hand" upheld by economics since Adam Smith is nothing but the universal gravitation held by Newton or the world's reason held by Hegel presented in the economic field. On the other hand, no matter what economics understands: reason, plotting, the stability and transmutability of preference, or the consistence of means and ends, it always has the features of apriority, and instrumentality. These are the historical remains of modern rationalism that is not historic. To explain man's behavior and history with reason, we must start from man's practical activities and comprehend reason historically. Reason comprehended from practice is a kind of practical ability built gradually on man's practical activities, not on an "invisible hand" outside of man. The indefinite nature of practice determined that real reason was always the limited reason. The character of practice as the unity of man's being, the activity of cognition and the activity of value determined that reason must surpass the kingdom of epistemology and pass on to the unity of instrumental reason and value reasoning. To introduce a historic rational view into economics is a request in order for economics to shake off its crises.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, that economics became bemired in crises is originally because it forgot its character as an historical science, while the essential way that economics can escape crises is firstly to re-examine its nature and the study method of its own subject as an historical science:

1. The study method of economics must be that of a historical science. The objects studied by economics, including man as subject, the corresponding object, and the relation between men as subjects, all exist historically. The method of unifying logic and history demands that the abstract nature and mathematization of economics are limited. The principles, concepts and categories of economics are all the temporal products of history. There is no formula, or batch of formulae, that can be called its ultimate aim, and it is impossible for economics to get the truth all the time.

2. Economics itself is an historic being, with its own scope of knowledge and duties. From the front of view of its premises in essence, economics is market economics, while the market economy is not something ready-made, and will not be eternal. The existence of the market economics corresponds to the second stage of human development, namely, that of “personal independence founded on objective dependence.” Oskar Lange, Michel Foucault, and Kristol point out the capitalist nature of economics. As the product of this historical stage, economics has its own limit to knowledge, and problems that it cannot itself answer. It cannot bear duties that cannot be realized, not only at its own stage, but also in man’s developing stages. Therefore, any imperialist behavior by economics must look before leaping: economics must be conscious of its historic nature.

3. Indeed it is the historic nature of economics that is its only reason for existence at this stage. When we come back to its nature of the historical science, some will be worried about the existential reasonability of economics in reality. On the contrary, the nature of the historic science just stated that economics was necessary and basically correct at this stage because we are still at the stage of objective dependence on which economics was born and existed. It will be ‘reasonable’ [rational] to realize its nature as an historical science, makes some historic statements and amendments to its own basic hypothesis, principles and methods, and clarifies the conditions of its existence and falsifiability. Thereby it will be able to determine the boundary of the problems it can resolve as a reasonable abstract effort at this stage.

4. Economics and economic theories are not like a closed system. They must draw from other humanities and social sciences. Their nature as an historical science breaks the fantasy of an imperialism of economics. The crises in economics, which burnt economics itself, drew its attention to how to build itself. This does not mean that economics should shut itself up. On the contrary, economics as a sub-system of the humanities and social sciences is methodologically affected by philosophy, sociology and psychology. The politics, law and culture gradually become the variables of economic analysis, which can’t be ignored. Therefore, economics should draw from other

historical sciences, or at least exchange ideas with other sciences. Only in this way, can economics become a truly historical science, and overcome its own crises.

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Chapter 5

The Implication of Neglecting David Ricardo in the Interpretation of Karl Marx's Philosophy: A Comment on G. Lukacs's Interpretation of Marx

Tang Zhengdong

G. Lukacs's interpretation of Karl Marx's philosophy is, of course, deep: he sharply criticizes the dogmatic interpretation of Marx's philosophy put forward by "the Second International" from the two angles of ideology and social economic structure. He develops a new interpretation of Marx's philosophy whose basic concepts are "history" and "labor". In his interpretation, Lukacs often quotes Marx's economic manuscripts: he says clearly that economics is the center of Marx's philosophy. These phenomena create some difficulties in judging correctly Lukacs's interpretation of Marx's philosophy. Lukacs seems to have paid so much attention to the effect of Marx's economic studies in his philosophy, that Lukacs seem to have jumped out of the old interpretation of Marx's philosophy as just philosophy in his new interpretation. Lukacs's main content is that the interpretation of Marx's philosophy should be on the basis of economic thinking. In fact, if one meditates seriously on Lukacs's thought, one finds that Lukacs's understanding of the relations between classic economics and Marx's philosophy is not correct. We can say that he reads the content of classic economics and its philosophical meaning just from the angle of German classic philosophy, which is a quite different reading angle from that of Karl Marx.

In his book *History and Class Consciousness*, G. Lukacs develops the following train of thought: the angle of his reading the essence of English classic economics is modern German philosophy, especially that of Kant. In his view, the "Being in itself" in Kant's philosophy which can't be attained by human knowledge is actually the fetishist structure of capitalist society expressed only by philosophical words. Kant's dualist thinking of the relations between "Being in itself" and "Phenomena" actually means the fetishist consciousness brought about by the above fetishist social structure. According to this consciousness, capitalist fetishist reality existing as "Being in itself" cannot be touched by human reason, so it is an objective being which has no relations with human knowledge and practical activity. G. Lukacs thinks that classical economics also reaches only the theoretical level of taking capitalist society as "Being in itself". Both A. Smith and D. Ricardo see capitalist economic rule as a fixed fact which can only be taken as theoretical starting point, not as an analytical object.

Hence, Lukacs says that Hegel's contribution is rewriting such kind of thinking style of "Being in itself" in terms of historical discourse, that's to say, Hegel re-interprets Kant's concept of Being from the angle of totality

so that he can focus on the historical development of “relation”. In Lukacs’s point, Hegel changes the philosophical discourse of Being, putting forward an historical research method of society related to human activity and practice. Of course, Lukacs does not forget to point out the abstract idealist character of Hegel’s philosophy, in view of which what Karl Marx does is to focus on human practice instead of on Hegel’s practice of the absolute spirit. In Hegel’s thought, history expresses itself as self-development of the absolute spirit, but in Marx’s thought, history expresses itself as the self-development of the proletariat which is the identity of the historical subject and the historical object. This is the fundamental sense of Lukacs’s *History and Class Consciousness*.

In his late work, *Ontology of Social Being*, Lukacs accepts the critique of other scholars and begins to weaken the identity with the manner of Hegel’s philosophy and takes the concept of “labor” as his central concept. In his view, by doing so, he can certainly get rid of the critiques concerning his idealist character, because he thinks that through the concept of labor he has taken into his philosophical discourse nature now acting as the premise of social being, “Both in total level and in special level, social being always takes inorganic and organic nature as its premise.”¹ But immediately following this sentence, Lukacs adds a note: “The rule and concept of both organic and inorganic nature constitute the necessary basis of the social concept (in the sense of basically changing its essence).” In fact, what Lukacs does is just outline a correct theoretical line simply on the basis of conceptual and logical history, and not on the basis of the actual history, which is actually impossible. So, in essence, the train of thought about nature is still out of Lukacs’s main theoretical line. That is to say, Lukacs’s change of the main concept from “history” to “labor” doesn’t change the abstract and idealist character of his interpretation of Karl Marx’s philosophy.

The reason is that Lukacs takes the English classical economics and Kant’s philosophy together, and takes Hegel’s philosophy and Karl Marx’s philosophy together, which kind of thinking is actually wrong. In Lukacs’s thought, “Being in itself” in Kant’s philosophy which cannot be known by human reason is just the same as the economic thought of Smith and Ricardo; both have the character of fetishism. So, the transcendence of Hegel to Kant, the transcendence of Marx to Smith and Ricardo, is to replace a fetishist thinking style with “history”. In fact, Lukacs neglects here the difference in economic thinking between A. Smith and D. Ricardo. In essence, both Kant and Smith have an identical way of thinking, both express the fundamental freedom of the European enlightenment, the difference is that Kant’s idea is from the angle of philosophy, while Smith’s is from an economic angle.

Let us go further. Both of the above two scholars have the thought of recession as a natural character along with a rise of human subjectivity. That is to say, when they think of human sociality or human subjectivity, both take the natural character as their frame of reference. Because they put their thought in such a frame of reference, they actually cannot touch the real subjectivity of the human being and the real content of society.

Human nature or human sociality which is based on the frame of ref-

erence of natural character is an abstract human nature, because it is brought about not by analyzing realistic social history, but only by logical inference. In Kant's epistemology, "Being in itself" cannot be recognized and grasped, so Kant can talk about the reality of life and the totality of object only in the moral realm. This is due to the shortcomings of his own theory. That is to say, although Kant reveals in his *Critique of Pure Reason* the limitations of traditional rationalism, he still locates himself in such a traditional rationalist theoretical level, for which reason he cannot solve the paradox of traditional rationalism. Without a deep grasp of social development, Kant's practical reason outlined in the purely moral realm can touch only something related to metaphysical man. Kant's thinking train of "practical reason" can study only general or abstract man. In order to criticize commercial economic theory related to feudalism, A. Smith focuses on the relations between wealth and human activity, and makes an effort to show that only human activity constitutes the essence of economic social course. Smith does this through the theoretical line of "labor".

As to what the social economic really is in its essence, such kind of questions are certainly beyond Smith's horizon, at least in the sense of his theoretical needs. Smith does not try to show the inner contradiction among classes in the capitalist society. In his theory inference, Smith supposes the existence of a world which is very wealthy and then he goes to expound his theoretical aim. Smith gives up on understanding the essence of the real world. What he tries to clarify is just a supposed or theoretical world. Thus the social relations between human beings in his theory is only a metaphysical kind of thing. In his book *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, A. Smith does touch such theoretical objects as labor, capitalists and landlords, but he defines their relations only as bargaining relations, without catching their inner contradicted relations (as does D. Ricardo).

Lukacs does catch the inner identity between the thought of Kant and Smith, and this is positive. Like the "Being in itself" in Kant's theory, the "invisible hand" in Smith's theory also cannot be expounded or grasped. So we can say the "invisible hand" definitely is just the "Being in itself" of A. Smith. As Lukacs says, this is the ideological reflection of the capitalist social economic structure which is fetishist. Historical philosophical discourse cannot stem from Kant's epistemology, because his paradox is only antagonistic, not a really contradicted relation. So, neither Hegel's abstract historical view nor Marx's dialectic historical view posited on the realistic history can be brought about from Kant or Smith's epistemology.

According to Lukacs, the transcendence of Hegel over Kant means that Hegel rewrites Kant's static thinking mode in terms of a historical horizon. Concretely speaking, Hegel pulls Kant's static object which can be known only by Formal Logic and Mathematics, into somewhat totalistic relations so that a historical philosophical discourse can be drawn out on the basis of the relations between concepts. So, for Lukacs, the concepts of "History" and "Totality" are two of the most important concepts in Hegel's philosophy. When Lukacs unfolds this kind of thinking road, he actually puts classical

economists such as A. Smith on the same level as Kant; then Hegel's transcendence of Kant has the same meaning as Hegel's transcendence of the classical economists. I want to point out that Lukacs's kind of theoretical inference is questionable because when Smith thinks of the "Object" in commodity exchange relations, he is actually thinking of the relations between different kinds of people. Smith's fetishist consciousness about the capitalist economic order does not mean that he describes the "object" of economic activity only from the angle of the object or of the material, which is only view of commercialism that Smith ever criticizes. The starting point of Smith's thought is the relation between human labor which is the reason Smith can put forward such evolutionary ideas as the theory of labor value. Lukacs's thought here obviously has the limitation that he understands the philosophical content of classical economics only from the angle of German philosophy, and he actually doesn't enter the inner parts of classical economics itself. A. Smith's limitation lies not in his neglect of the theoretical angle of human relations when he studies the fetishist structure of capitalist society, but in not expounding human relations between real people who live in actual history with the inner contradictory relations among labor, capitalist and landlord. Hence he cannot catch the historical essence of the fetishist structure of capitalist society and cannot transcend the fetishist consciousness of capitalism.

Lukacs' interpretation of Marx's philosophy is in the above line of thought. He thinks that Marx is thinking on the same platform as Hegel, that "Historical materialism has close relations with Hegel's philosophy, because both take theory as the self-recognition of reality"². The problem of Lukacs's interpretation of Marx is just here, he actually just uses Hegel's mysterious train of logical inference to interpret Marx's discourse of historical philosophy. Accordingly, because reality is destined to self-growth, there is no necessity to enter the inner parts of social relations between people to discover their inner contradictions so as to be able to grasp the objective contents of historical materialism. He thinks that it's enough for him to point out the relation of totality which is concealed behind the "object", because the historical train of thought is ready-made (can be gotten mysteriously from abstract logic). Thus although he does not touch the level of the inner contradiction of totality, he still can constitute the historical discourse of these relations of totality. This mysterious logic gives Lukacs a platform on which to put together two items: "relation of totality" and "history".

What is the incarnation of this above mysterious strength? In Lukacs's view, it is the proletariat who embody the identity of historical subject and historical object. When the proletariat realizes its class mission, the objective history provides the objective condition for proletariat to fulfill their class mission. So, as history shows itself as the self-cognition and self-realization of the absolute spirit, it embodies itself as the self-recognition and self-realization of the proletariat. The proletariat becomes the starting and ending point of historical analysis. This train of thought can grasp only an abstract and mysterious history. The social relation it can grasp is only a metaphysical, abstract relation, because it gives up the analysis of the inner contradiction

of real history in which the objective historical condition of the proletariat is included.

The reason Lukacs makes such an interpretation of Marx's philosophy is that, because he cannot accurately interpret the philosophical content of A. Smith's economics, he cannot exactly catch the difference of philosophical meaning of D. Ricardo's and A. Smith's economics. It is only on the basis of modern German philosophy, not of classical economics, that the philosophical meaning of Smith's and Ricardo's economics could be thought of as the same thing. When Smith and Kant are put on the same theoretical platform, the basic theoretical line of thought focusing on relations between actual people which exists in classic economics has been concealed. Thus, Ricardo's transcendence of Smith on the question of social relations will be beyond the theoretical horizon of scholars. In fact, what Lukacs neglects here is an absolutely important thought sequence, because, as we point out above, in Smith's ideas the so called social relation actually is not the human relations existing in real social history, but only the ideal relation which expresses the enlightenment ideology of the bourgeoisie, from which an objective historical discourse cannot be drawn. Hence, although Smith touches human relations, his theory itself does not provide a method through which the fetishist construction of human relation can be transcended.

Compared with A. Smith, D. Ricardo's starting point is more materialistic. His theoretical premise is not any kind of supposed condition, but his economics is based directly on the scarcity of wealth. It should be noted that what Ricardo says is identical with the actual reality of capitalism at that time. Based on this, Ricardo analyzes deeply the contradiction among the three classes--labor, capitalist and landlord--although only on the quantitative level. Precisely in this regard, Karl Marx says that Ricardo "discloses and explains the economic antagonistic relations between classes"²³. Of course, D. Ricardo makes only a quantitative analysis of real social relations. As he has not yet touched the qualitative realm, he still has no capacity to deepen his theory to the theoretical horizon of historical materialism, from which the train of social relations and of productive forces can be combined correctly. When Karl Marx interprets the relation of Smith and Ricardo, he gets rid of the background of German modern philosophy and stands completely on the train of materialist thought of classical economics. This gives Marx the capacity to read out the philosophical meaning of Ricardo's economics and by transcending his thought, arrive at the ideas of historical materialism.

But Lukacs doesn't know this; he doesn't know that Marx's inheritance of Hegel's dialectics is not an external inheritance, but internal alienation. Hegel doesn't completely grasp the philosophical meaning of Ricardo's economics, but Marx does. In his *German Ideology*, especially *Poverty of Philosophy*, Marx starts to catch completely the philosophical meaning of Ricardo. In fact, if we take Ricardo's thought as our philosophical frame of reference, it will certainly not difficult for us to find that the Marx's thought interpreted by Lukacs doesn't even reach the level of Ricardo. The following is my explanation of the above idea.

Lukacs understands the “real objectivity” in Marx’s historical dialectics only from “objective form of fetishism”, that is to say, only from the so called fetishist consciousness of capitalist society. He understands human’s “sociality” and “historicity” only from the theoretical angle of the recession of the natural character and the rise of the human character. Hence, Lukacs cannot dig out the intensive nature of social relations. Nevertheless, he will not interpret social relation as inter-subjective relations between abstract subjects on the premise of some supposed condition, as does A. Smith. What Lukacs does is just to affirm this kind of relation of social totality. In his ideas, this kind of relation of social totality is ready-made; it needn’t be excavated from an analysis of the inner contradiction of the above social relations. From this angle of analysis, it will not be difficult to understand the following: Both in *History and Class Consciousness* and in *Ontology of Social Being*, Lukacs often quotes passages of Marx’s works whose content are about importance of social relations. For example, he is very willing to cite the following sentence: “Blacks are just blacks, only under certain social relations will they become slaves”⁴. Here it sounds as if he has entered the theoretical horizon of Marx’s social relations. But the key point is that when Lukacs quotes this sentence, he is content with pointing out that blacks will have different social status in different “total relations”, but he does not enter the inner parts of these “total relations” to find the intensive contradiction and historical development of these “total relations”. From this point of view, what Lukacs reads out of Marx’s view is not as deep as Ricardo’s idea, because Ricardo touches the realm of the inner contradiction of social relations.

Without focusing on these, Lukacs can only understand “history” as a kind of mysterious historicity based on pure logic. In fact, Lukacs’s two central concepts (“History” and “Totality”) sustain each other, but do not constitute an intensive organic relation. As said above, historical discourse cannot stem from Lukacs’s concept of social relation because this concept makes only a kind of affirmation of the total relation. But because Lukacs introduces in his theory Hegel’s metaphysical view of history, the contradiction mentioned above which can’t be solved in the horizon of historical materialism, will not puzzle Lukacs even for a minute. Lukacs’s concept of history is also supported by his concept of “total relation”. Because his concept of “total relation” refers to the essence of “certain relations between people”, this concept helps Lukacs to interpret “history” as the developing course of human society after destroying all kinds of fetishism. In Lukacs’s view, “history” is only a kind of irreversible course, “relation between people” is just the affirmation of an empirical social relation. In fact, in Marx’s real train of thought, there is a kind of intensive organic relation between history and social relation. Without the train of historical thought, the content of social relation will be impossible to grasp concretely and actually, such as the relations between people who are in actual contradiction such as labor and capital, landlord and farmer, slave and slave-holder. Sometimes, even if a scholar such as A. Smith refers to concepts such as capital and labor, it will still be impossible for him to touch the real theoretical level of the relation between capital and labor in

actual social life. In my view, the same is G. Lukacs. Karl Marx's concept of social relation is definitely constituted on the concept of history, but Lukacs does not understand this. His concept of "relation between people" or "total relation" is not ever restricted by the concept of "history"; with the concept of history it co-constitutes a thought system only after it has been developed by itself. On the other side, Marx's concept of history is also built on the basis of the concept of social relation; it is the objective movement of actual social relation with the push of inner contradiction that constitutes the real content of history. But as Lukacs does not know this, his concept of history has some mysterious Hegelian logical characteristics.

In the thought of different philosophers, even one concept can have a different content or meaning. It is important for us to remember this when we try to value correctly Lukacs's interpretation of Marx's philosophy. Lukacs's many philosophical discourses are pretty "great" and definitely have the outward appearance of Marx's philosophy, but if we see through this question from the angle of historical materialism, there appears a big difference between Lukacs's philosophy and that of Karl Marx.

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NOTES

1 G. Lukacs, *Ontology of Social Being*, trans. by Zhang Xiping. ChongQing Press, 1993, p. 643.

2 G. Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness*, trans. By Du Zhangzhi, etc. Shangwu Press, p. 65.

3 Karl Marx, *Collected Works of Marx and Engels*, Vol. 26. People Press, 1973, p. 183.

4 G. Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 62.

Chapter 6

The Study of Western Marxist Philosophy in Chinese Academe, and its Defects

Wang Yuchen

The publication of Xu Chong-wen's¹ *Western Marxism* (1982) inaugurated the systematic study of Western Marxist philosophy in Chinese academic circles. From then on, there have been several controversies over the study of Western Marxism. And controversies advanced the study of Western Marxist philosophy, and had a great influence on the development of the contemporary Chinese Marxist philosophy.

From 1977, the study of Western Marxist philosophy was driven by the needs of political ideology. Xu Chong-wen, the founder of the study of western Marxism in China, once mentioned that the study of the Western Marxism began with a political task: "One day in 1977 or 1978, Hu Qiao-mu, who was the primary director of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences of the time, asked us to prepare a reference about 'Western Marxist thought' which had been learned of by a member of the Central collective leadership during his visit to Europe."² It was this need in politics which led to the introduction and the study of Western Marxism in China. At that time, the minds of the people were still restricted by some dogmas, which survived from the discussion of the problem of the criterion of truth. The Soviet Schoolbook System of "dialectic materialism and historical materialism" was the sole criterion to judge philosophy and cultural thought abroad, including Western Marxist thought. Western Marxist philosophy argued against the philosophical pattern of "dialectic materialism and historical materialism"; consequently it was criticized as it had been introduced into China. As to the nature of Western Marxist thought, Xu Chong-Wen pointed it out in *Western Marxism*.

The concept of Western Marxism is an ideological expression, rather than a geographical expression. It argued against "Neo-Kantianism" advocated by the Second International and the Mechanical Materialism advocated by the Communist International. As to the analysis of modern capitalism, the prospect of the socialism, and the strategy of revolution, it puts forward some points different from Leninism. In philosophy, it brings forward some views that differ from dialectic materialism and historical materialism of such Marxists as Engels and Lenin, and emphasizes the need to rediscover Marx's original design.³

"The world outlook reflected by it is not the Marxist world outlook possessed by the proletariat, but that of the radicals of the petty bourgeoisie and contains considerable anarchic ideas".⁴ Xu Chong-wen summarized the main content of Western Marxism as follows:

First, it included the analysis of the status quo of the western developed capitalist society and the exploration of the path of western revolution;

Second, it included the criticisms of the Soviet Pattern, the expectation of socialism and the “rediscovery” of Marxism;

Third, it included the distortion, the criticism, “the complement”, “the renovation” of the Marxist-Leninist dialectical materialism and historical materialism.

The conclusion reached by the above was that Western Marxist philosophy was treated as radical thought that opposed Marxism, distorted Marxism and was fused with idealistic thoughts when it first appeared in China. This point was stressed by Xu Chong-wen, and led to the criticism of western Marxism as it first appeared in Chinese academe. But this kind of criticism was political criticism rather than theoretical analysis because this kind of criticism was not based on an acute comprehension of the theories of Western Marxism, but only as separated from concrete social condition. From these, we can conclude that at that time western Marxism was still unfamiliar to the Chinese scholars and was treated as an anti-Marxism and anti-Capitalism in Chinese academe.

However, we should not ignore that the introduction of Western Marxism aroused the interest of scholars to study Western Marxism and influenced the development of Chinese Marxist Philosophy. Xu Chong-wen once mentioned that many institutes and colleges invited him to speak on western Marxism after he had accepted the task of studying western Marxism and finished some papers. It was under this social push that the study of “Western Marxism” changed from his temporary task into his speciality.⁵ Then his work, *Western Marxism*, was published and attracted a lot of attention. Many comments on this work were published in *Philosophical Trends*, *Outlook Weekly*, *Wide Angle*(H.K), and *China Forum* (T.W); moreover, many reports about Xu Chongwen’s study on Western Marxism appeared in *Qiushi*, *China Daily*, and *China Youth Daily*.

In those days, Western Marxism had great impact on Chinese academe and Chinese society though it was always mentioned with a critical tone. For example, the study of “humanism” and “dissimilation” in Western Marxism gave great impulse to the discussion of these two issues in Chinese academe in the early 1980s. Professor Zhang yi-bing,⁶ the famous Chinese scholar, once said that, “It was when I was a postgraduate that I first contacted this new field of philosophy, and it was in Xu Chong-wen’s *Western Marxism* (1982) that I got to know this thought. I was shocked at the wonderful achievements of Western Marxism in the study of Marxist philosophy. However, under the effect of the traditional pattern of the philosophy study, ... People always paid more attention to searching out the mistakes in western philosophy, so did I.”⁷ His doubt about the Soviet Pattern of Marxist philosophy which was considered as the standard to judge Western Marxism resulted in his restudying of Marxism classics and the publication of his influential work *Return to Marx*. Based on these, he restudied the classics of Western Marxism.

On the whole, from 1982 to 1986, the chief study of Western Marxism in Chinese academe was the introduction of some important works of Western Marxism, such as Althusser's *For Marx*, Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*, Lukacs's *The Destruction of Reason*, etc. During this period those works were translated into Chinese, whereas the deep study of those author's theories was still lacking.

After 1986, the study of Western Marxism in Chinese academe has entered a new phase. This was closely bound up with the change of historical conditions and of the academic context. Under the historical condition that the social reform had great success, people assumed new value and gained a comparatively profound understanding of the problem of what Marxism and Socialism are. With the advance of the reform and of the opening, the analysis of the various cultural and philosophical thoughts was necessary. Furthermore, under the climate of rethinking and reconstructing the system of Marxism in the field of philosophy, a good deal of discord arose over the idiosyncrasy of Marxists. All these led people to examine Western Marxism from various angles, and fostered the 1986-1989 nationwide controversy over Western Marxist philosophy. Xu Chong-wen's *Several Problems Existing in the Study of Western Marxism* published in *Studies on Marxism* triggered this controversy.

The main points of that article were as follows: The existence of Western Marxist thought is an objective fact whether people are for or against it. Western Marxist thought began with Lukacs's *History and Class Consciousness* in which Lukacs interpreted Marxism in terms of Hegelianism. Gramsci's "philosophy of praxis" contradicted all sorts of materialism; his "Practical monism" deviated from the principles of materialism. Interpreting Marxism with the principles of structuralism, Althusser led to his claims of an "anti-humanism in Marxist theory" and his discussion of the concept of the concept of interpellation. On the one hand, Western Marxism should not be treated as anti-Marxism because it really brought forward something worth consideration to be used for reference. On the other hand, it also should not be taken as contemporary Marxism because Western Marxism deviated from the principle of Marxism in order to interpret, renew and complete Marxism. Du Zhang-zhi questioned these above points in his article "Problems on So-called 'Western Marxism'—Discussions with Xu Chong-wen" published in *Modern philosophy* (No1, 1988) and "'Western Marxism' is a Vague and Questionable Concept" published in *Studies on Marxism* (No.1988.), thereby announcing the beginning of the controversy over the study of Western Marxism in Chinese academe.

Du Zhang-zhi's⁸ two articles mainly questioned the definition of "Western Marxism" and several points based on it expounded in Xu Chong-wen's *Western Marxism* and *Several Problems in the Study of "Western Marxism"*. Du Zhang-zhi pointed out that there were three kinds of use of the concept of "Western Marxism" in academe abroad. The first used it as "a geographical expression" which referred to the theories of independent Marxist and Communist Parties in western developed capitalist countries.

The second used it as counter-Leninism and viewed the emphasis of dialectics and “Subjective Revolution” as to essential character, just as did Merleau-Ponty. The third used it as “a historic and geographical expression”, just as did Perry Anderson. The concept of “Western Marxism” used in Perry Anderson’s *Considerations of Western Marxism* referred to the theories of those Marxists who came to be known in the West after Stalin had come into power in 1924. In this book, Anderson also focused on some representatives and theoretical features of Western Marxism.⁹ Du Zhang-zhi pointed out that the scholars and their theories on this list could not completely reflect the current development of Marxism in the West. Some theoretical features of Western Marxism mentioned by him did not exist, and some other features could not distinguish western Marxism from other forms of Marxism. Furthermore, Perry Anderson was a pure Trotskyite from which came his use of the concept of “Western Marxism”. Hence, Perry Anderson’s use of the concept, “Western Marxism”, was not widely accepted and was even subject to some attacks from western scholars. Du Zhang-zhi viewed Xu Chong-wen as following Perry Anderson’s use of the concept of “Western Marxism”, and his use of this concept was also questionable. Du Zhang-zhi stated further that we should not deny all the Marxism formed abroad because the interpretation, understanding and application of the truth may be various though the truth of Marxism is one. Whether a theory which resulted from applying Marxist principles to analyzing the state of western capitalism society belongs to Marxism or not, it depends on the knowledge of the state of western capitalist society and ultimately relies on praxis. Du Zhang-zhi also introduced the positive influence of Lukacs’s *History and Class Consciousness*. He viewed Lukacs not as an idealist, but as a faithful Communist and famous Marxist, just as Gramsci and Althusser.

Besides Du Zhan-zhi, Zhang Ben (Zhang Shou-zheng)¹⁰ also took part in this controversy with his two articles: “The Study Object of Contemporary Western Marxist discussion with Xu Chongwen” which was published in *Modern Philosophy* (No 2, 1988.) and “Why Shall We Study Western Marxism?” published in *People’s Daily* (Oct 28th, 1988.). In these articles, Zhang Shou-zheng confirmed the representatives and their works, as focused upon in Xu Chong-wen’s *Western Marxism*. He said that though these representatives’ theories were different from Marxist-Lenist dialectical materialism and historical materialism in philosophy and in politics, the difference between each and Marxist-Leninism were diverse. For example, Gramsci was surely a proletarian revolutionist; while Lukacs’s point in his *History and Class Consciousness* did not deviate from the proletarian thought at all, whereas the Frankfurt School should be regarded as the radical bewitching of the liberal bourgeoisie. Furthermore, a branch of the Marxist Party which was set up around 1920 also should be included in Western Marxism because they brought forward many theories and points alien to Stalinism, even to Leninism.

Based on these, Zhang Shou-zheng stressed that the study of Western Marxism should be grounded on the practice and the application of Marxism

in the West; only these ways can we find the abundance of Marxist thought and the multiplicity of the forms of Marxism. So he considered Western Marxism as the Marxism which developed with the birth of the Marxist Parties in western countries in the early twentieth century. As to the problem of how to judge Western Marxism; Zhang Shou-zheng suggested that we should judge it based on the complex and colorful condition of the development of Marxism in contemporary western society, rather than as a certain fixed pattern. What is more, he discussed the basic characteristics and the materialistic properties of Gramsci's Philosophy of Praxis in his article.

The central problems of the 1986-1989 controversy over the study of Western Marxism were as follows: What is Western Marxism? How should we think of the relation between Western Marxism and Marxism? The controversy over these problems necessarily concerned the problem of whether the concept of "Western Marxism" and the judgment of the nature of Western Marxism which Xu Chong-wen expounded in his *Western Marxism* accorded with facts and the problem of whether his judgment of the nature of the theories of those Western Marxist was correct. These problems concerned not only the concept of "Western Marxism", but also those regarding the standpoint, view, and methods we took to study and judge Western Marxism. Besides the problem of how to judge Western Marxism, many other problems also elicited heated discussion. Some problems were as follows: Is Lukacs the initiator of Western Marxism in the negative sense? Are Lukacs and Gramsci Hegelian Marxist? Is Althusser a Structuralist Marxist? At that time, this wide-ranging controversy had far reaching consequences in China. For instance, many articles relating to this controversy appeared in the important newspapers and magazines such as *People Daily*, *Guangming Daily*, *Studies on Marxism*, *Study of philosophy*, and *Social Sciences Abroad*, etc. The kind of controversy aroused people's enthusiasm to study Western Marxism. Furthermore, the discussion of the problem of "subjectivity" and the reform of the system of Marxist philosophy impelled people to examine the system and the nature of Marxism philosophy with a wider view, in turn deepening people's understanding of Western Marxist thought. This controversy also led to the publication of large numbers of representative works of Western Marxist theorists by Chongqing Press, Shanghai Translation Press, and Joint Publishing Company. A series of works written by scholars in Mainland China also were published by Yuliu Publishing Company, Tangshan Publishing Company, and Sengda Publishing Company. All of these laid a solid foundation for the further study on Western Marxism. Another important result of this controversy was the foundation of the subject "the study of Western Marxism". In this period, Peking University, Renmin University of China, Fudan University, Wuhan University and Institute of Philosophy Chinese Academy of Social Science all started to enroll postgraduates majoring in Western Marxism, and thus fostered a batch of specialists on the study of Western Marxism.

AFTER 1990

The study of Western Marxism in Chinese academe entered a new phase. On the one hand, based on the achievements of the former study, many works on the history of Western Marxism were published, and the special study of Western Marxism began. Consequently, the works on the theories of contemporary capitalism, socialist utopia, ideology, and cultural philosophy were published. What is more, the study of the theories of some representatives also began to lead to the publication of the works on the study of the theories of Lukacs, Althusser, the Frankfurt school, analytical Marxism, etc. On the other hand, with the establishment of Chinese market economy, the study of Western Marxism assumed a new aspect.

First, the study group enlarged. Before 1990, the researchers of Western Marxism were limited to academic Marxist philosophy; since 1990, some researchers engaging in the criticism of society and culture have been added to the study group with researchers in Marxist academic philosophy.

Second, the theme of the study changed. Before 1990, the theme of the study was the nature of Western Marxism and the interpretation of Marxist philosophy in Western Marxism; after 1990, the theme turned to modernity theory in Western Marxism. Western Marxists were described as the social culture critics or the New Leftist theorists who opposed market economy and modernization. Their theories were used to criticize the negative effect of Chinese market economy of the time and to defend elite culture.

Third, the value and significance of Western Marxist philosophy to modern China were vaguer. More and more researchers admitted the significance of Western Marxist philosophy for the pattern of the change of Chinese Marxist philosophy, yet quite a few researchers studied and judged Western Marxism in terms of modern rationalistic epistemology. Thus in these researcher's conclusions the value and significance of Western Marxist philosophy to modern China were uncertain. At the same time, the researchers who did not belong to academic Marxist philosophy discussed and studied Western Marxism with another theoretical system in which Western Marxist theory was treated as a kind of post-modern theory that opposes the market, science and technology, and consumption. Many important theoretical problems such as the origin, nature and intent of Western Marxism, and its theoretical pedigree were laid aside in this theoretical system.

Fourth, a new study paradigm emerged with the advancement of the study of Marxist philosophy in China. This was the philosophical inquiry paradigm of practical materialism. According to this paradigm, Marxism should not be interpreted in terms of a single pattern because Marxism would assume diverse theoretical forms under different historical and cultural condition in different societies. Hence, the appraisal of Western Marxism should be based on the analysis of social and cultural conditions.

Fifth, three centers of the study of Western Marxist philosophy came into being. The three research institutes were the Center For Contemporary Marxism Abroad of Fudan University headed by Professor Yu Wu-jin¹¹ and

Chen Xue-ming¹², the Philosophy Department of Nanjing University headed by Professor Zhang Yi-bing, and the Philosophy Department of Heilongjiang University headed by Professor Yi Jun-qing¹³. These three research centers have made great contributions to the advancement of the study of Western Marxism and the introduction of the latest information relating to Western Marxism.

After many years of study, several representative viewpoints came into being. The first is advocated by Xu Chong-wen. Since 1982, his works *Western Marxism*, *Western Marxism Tribune*, *Analyses and Evaluation of Western Thought with Marxism*, and the *Study of Western Marxist Thought*, have been published in succession. On the whole, his viewpoint about Western Marxism could be summarized as follows¹⁴:

First, Western Marxism is a “radical” left thought that interprets and renews Marxism with western idealist philosophy and treats this fusion as the guiding principle.

Second, Western Marxism correctly criticizes the Soviet pattern of Marxism as a vulgar materialism, but it distorts Marxism with idealism and intends to transcend the opposition of materialism and idealism. Thus it puts forward the theories of Practical Ontology, Practical Monism which exaggerate man’s subjective initiative and slip into idealism.

Third, Western Marxist theorists expound their views and points on the important practice, events, and problems that are different from the views of both Social Democrats and Communists.

Some of these points are correct, but others are wrong. The purpose of the study of Western Marxism is to absorb and learn all the correct and valuable things, to reject all the errors and draw a clear line of demarcation from them, and to study the problems which are ignored and distorted in order to be warned by these and to add to the understanding of the fundamental problems of Marxism. The problem with Xu’s points is that he discusses the defects and errors of Western Marxist theories, but little about its correct and valuable theories. Thus his discussion does not reveal the theoretical nature of Western Marxism, but draws a simple parallel between the points of western Marxist and those of Chinese Marxism. Xu Chong-wen is one of the forerunners introducing the study of Western Marxism, and has great influence on its study in Chinese academe. As a result, Western Marxism is generally supposed as a trend of anti-Marxism, discussed as the opposite to Marxism, and even imposed with several theoretical features which in fact belongs to Western “Marxiology”.

The second representative viewpoint is advocated by Zhang Yi-bin¹⁵ and Hu Da-ping. Both assert that Western Marxism is one kind of philosophical and cultural thought originating from the division of the Marxism in the 20th century, under the circumstances of the state monopoly capitalism, natural science breakthroughs, and kccertain puzzles in the international communistic movement. Meanwhile, Western Marxism, as one kind of historical philosophy and cultural philosophy, practices political criticisms of modern capitalism and dogmatic Marxism through combination with non-Marxist philosophical

thoughts in order to find out a way different from conventional Marxism and socialist realism. Otherwise, Western Marxism is one sort of theoretical criticisms of capitalism following the young Lukacs' *History and Class Consciousness*. Popularized in the main western capitalist countries, it tries to use contemporary theories to explain Marxism in a new way, and to probe into the problem of emancipation in capitalist society. In general, it is a leftist critical thought.¹⁶

This theoretical trend can be understood as follows: first, it is not a sole thought, but a theoretical movement with multiple clues and forms found by their connections with Marxism. Second, the correlation between Western Marxism and Marxism is only theoretical. Furthermore; in so far as Western Marxism has different branches, these connect differently with Marxism. For example, Lukacs took up Marxism's methodology, but the Frankfurt school and Althusser insist on the coherence of their theoretical standpoint with Marxism. Some members of this movement who pay more attention to social emancipation or ecological feminism insist on the coherence of their subjects with Marxism, and analytical Marxists even take Marxism as their study object. Therefore, as a theoretical movement, it is complex. Third, it may be understood as a new probe into the problem of how to practice the 'new way' in modern capitalist society. But as this attempt is conditioned by directly setting aside the proletarian revolution, it is presented as social, cultural and ideological criticism.

I do not agree with the viewpoint that considers Western Marxism as one theoretical thought critical of capitalism, and that acknowledges only a theoretical correlation between Western Marxism and Marxism. Certainly, social, cultural and ideological criticism are the main parts of Western Marxism, but as far as its theoretical origin or its theoretical tenet is concerned, all these criticisms are inferior to criticisms of modern western philosophy. Meanwhile, as a result of the dogmatic guided by the international communist movement that advocated 'one center' and 'one pattern', some Western Marxists such as Lukacs, Gramsci and Althusser deviated from the proletarian evolution. Although these theoreticians had to dissociate themselves from proletarian political practice and to make a pure theoretical study and criticism, they never left out of consideration the difficulties in the western labor movement. Besides, one who undertakes theoretical reflection and research still can be a Marxist, as proletarian evolution contains within it theoretical research.

The third representative viewpoint is put forward by Yi Jun-qing and Yi Ke-xin.¹⁷ Both of them analyze and criticize Western Marxism especially from the point of view of the practice of Marxism. As a result, they divide Western Marxism into humanitarian Western Marxism and scientific Western Marxism. They regard the process of Marxism's development as the history of various ideological branches' developed under different circumstances. And they believe that the division of Marxism and the coexistence of these two branches are owing to the incomplete thought of Marxist initiators, and that this division has thus provided different viewpoint for people to understanding and explaining Marxism. Furthermore, this division should also be ascribed

to various historical and cultural traditions that Marxism has been facing in its development. Again, because of the complexity of the international communistic movement, theories of Marxism in different countries have different presentations. Thus they consider the third reason for the division of the Marxism.¹⁸ As to how to treat Western Marxism, professor Yi Junqing holds that the existence of Western Marxism is an undeniable event, and that though there is diversity and difference among branches of Western Marxism, they have the same theoretical and thinking resource, i.e. Karl Marx's original thought. He holds that all the branches of Western Marxism still retain the same theoretical orientation and the same measure of value, which formed in the criticisms of existing society and culture. Although Western Marxism has its own defects in theory, it should be still admitted as an outcome of the development of Marxism under certain historical and cultural circumstances in the 20th century.¹⁹

This development is new and important, and has its proper place in the process of the human mind and to social theories. This viewpoint of Western Marxism takes it as a necessary result of Marxism being in different countries, nations and historical culture tradition, and as an inherent part of the process of Marxism's development. Therefore, this viewpoint is helpful for us to make objective and deeper study of Western Marxism.

PROBLEMS

Although studies on Western Marxism in China have made progress, the problems in the studies should also be considered. The details follow.

Firstly, there is a misunderstanding about the issue of what western Marxism as the object of a discipline should be in Chinese academic circles. The more popular view regards Western Marxism as the outcome of a western bourgeois radical fusing of the western idealism and Marxist philosophy. This results in Western Marxism being studied as a trend of contemporary western philosophy or post-modern philosophy, not as a developing pedigree of Marxist theory. Thus, the deviation of the discipline orientation leads to incapacity to understand and study Western Marxism correctly. And some irrelevant contents within Western Marxism are brought into related studies.

Secondly, there is a misunderstanding in research methods. Chinese academic circles study Western Marxist philosophy not against a grand background of the modern transformation of western society and the cultural transformation of philosophy, but as stagnating in the simple contrast of the specific viewpoints between Chinese and Western Marxism. This method lacks vivid theoretical dialogue and makes the theoretical study subjective.

Thirdly, it is helpful for the handle of vision the study to be much wider. A long-term popular view about the phylogeny of Marxism philosophy regards the Marxist phylogeny as the ideological phylogeny of revolutionary tutors and leaders. As a result it denies Marxism being exercised in the social histories and cultural traditions of different nations and countries. Thus the inevitable outcome of multiple branches of Marxism in that the development

of internationalism and nationalism is neglected. Correspondingly Western Marxism is treated as heterodox Marxism, also even driven out of the developing pedigree of Marxism. Due to limitation of vision there is more difficulty in entering more deeply into Western Marxism and understanding the real implication of its propositions.

As to the first question, we need to make clear the object of Western Marxism as a discipline. We must stipulate Western Marxism in the developing pedigree of Marxist philosophy. This is because it is based on the origin of Western Marxism: such early representatives as Lukacs, Gramsci and Korsch, or the leaders or theoreticians of the western communist party oppose copying directly the Soviet pattern and advocate exploring a socialist revolutionary path and suitable for western world in light of the western social historical conditions. According to this guiding ideology, they propose a Marxist philosophical and revolutionary theory different from the Russian. They emphasize the contemporary significance of Marxist philosophy and its surpassing western modern philosophy. Furthermore, they are against interpreting and understanding Marxist philosophy on basis of modern rationalistic epistemology. Simultaneously, in analyzing the characteristics of western social structure distinct from the Russian, they advanced the theory of "Total Revolution". Because of the intensification of dogmatism in international communism and of the Bolshevik movement pursued in western communist party, theories of the early western Marxism suffer criticism. The early theorists are either forced to make self-criticism or were expelled from the western communist parties. As a result, the whole western socialist movement deviates from the reality of western social development. Moreover, Western Marxist theories have to develop out of western communist pears and gradually form a sort of western Marxist theory that is different from Soviet Marxism. It should be pointed out that, with the social historical conditions and cultural traditions in different countries and districts, Marxism will appear to develop disparate patterns during the course of its internationalism and nationalism.

Owing to the chains of dogmatism, Western Marxist theory is criticized from its emergence within Marxism, especially not via theoretical discussion but by the political criticism. Western Marxists seem to be anti-Marxists, but this is not in accord with the reality of western Marxism. This is because, as to the purpose of the study, they probe mainly into the path of realizing freedom and liberation of the western proletariat. As to the background of their theories, the dominant aspect is historical materialism in spite of the influence of the philosophy of western humanism and historicism. They pay great attention to the distinction in principle between Marxism and western modern philosophy and emphasize the originality of Marxism as well as its magnificent historic significance. As to their faith, they have a firm faith to Marxism in spite of their different personal experiences. So there is no efficient reason or does it not conform to historic facts to describe them as so-called anti-Marxists or Marxist heterodoxies that merge western idealism with Marxist philosophy as guiding their thought.

The criticism of Western Marxism in western communist parties and the international communist movement, results not only in Western Marxism losing the connection with the western organized labor movement, but also in Western Marxism transferring to the study of pure philosophical theory and of specific problems in western social reality. Moreover its members also gradually expanded from the theorists in western communist party to progressive western scholars. They criticize capitalist society express sympathy for Marxism and socialism. On one hand, they treat Marxist studies with a serious attitude; on the other hand, because of their less political chains, these explanations of Marxism have their own characteristics and form various Marxist theories endowed with these. Accordingly the language system of Marxist philosophy is thereby extended. However, it must be pointed out that their theories endowed with such characteristics do not originate from random subjective pretence, but from the following two aspects.

1. The thought of Marxism's founders has its own course of development which will be a foundation for the emerging of Marxism with these characteristics; secondly, the explanations on Marxism by the western Marxist theorists are closely linked to the problems of western society and to native historical cultural tradition. Not only does Western Marxism appear to be more characteristic, but it also appears clear in the purpose and interests of its theory. If the interest of the early Western Marxism lies in the freedom and liberation of the proletariat as a totality, the posterior generation of Western Marxism focuses on how to make the individual free from the social government; it is highly integrated and simplified in order to realize individual freedom and liberation. These different goals of their theory give their own emphases in their Marxist philosophy. The anterior Western Marxist theorists were more concerned with the study of the basic theoretical problems of Marxist philosophy, while the posterior generations of Western Marxism stress the critical standpoint of Marxist philosophy. Not only is the origin of posterior theory more complicated, but also the nature of theory varies with the individual. Ultimately, it must be pointed out that with the development of international communist movement especially after the 20th Soviet Communist party Congress, the western communist party gradually shook off the chains of the dogmatism and independently probed the socialist revolutionary path suitable for their own country. All these bring an abundant development of Marxism in contemporary western world.

To sum up, so-called Western Marxism consists in western theorists gradually shaking off the chains of the dogmatism, analyzing western social historical conditions with Marxist theory, making use of native cultural traditions, and forming philosophical theory and revolutionary strategy and tactics during the course of exploring western revolutionary path and of freedom and liberation. All this constitutes the object of western Marxism.

If the pedigree of Marxist development in 20th century is treated as originating from the historical materialism of Marx and Engels, and if the pedigree is regarded as a multi-branch development course under different social historical conditions and cultural traditions, Soviet Marxism and Chinese

Marxism should be looked upon as the mainstream of its development, since separately they solve their problems of the time. Therefore, Western Marxism should be regarded as Marxism under exploration and inherent to the course of the 20th Marxist development.

2. As to the second question, we must convert the subjectivist method of study into the methodology of practical philosophy. The former is simply practiced as comparative study of Sino-Western Marxism, but the latter is practiced in the concrete context of the history and theories of western Marxism is accompanied with the transformation of the western society from modern society into post-modern society. In this period of transformation, the system of rationalistic value that dominate western society has been established, and the productivity of capitalism and at the same time material wealth has achieved high growth. Along with this development, the system in question gradually brings out its inner defects and a sequence of so-called modern problems. Under this background, there emerge many philosophical and social thoughts that are based on the reflection, criticism and reestablishing of reason. Meanwhile, oriental society is in the process of transformation from pre-modern society into modern society. So, the problem the oriental society faces is not how to reflect and criticize reason, but how to establish the rationalistic culture and philosophy therein. A more important problem is that how to localize, i.e. how to practice Marxism under the particular circumstance of orient society. Because of the different pattern of social development, the interests in Marxism western and oriental society is different. Oriental Marxist philosophy bases its theories on the way of thought of modern rationalists. It tries to answer the question of how to grasp the natural and social law, and especially gives much thought to the political superstructure, especially of regime. Comparatively, Western Marxism is based on the way of thought of modern practical philosophy. Its emphasis is on how to realize the freedom and emancipation of human beings through fulfilling Marxism's function of criticism.

In restructuring to Oriental Marxism, what it thinks much of is not political but cultural superstructure. Historically, the conversion of western philosophy and culture always results from the transformation of the society. This kind of conversion is embodied by the transcendental criticism of modern rationalism by contemporary western philosophy. And this kind of criticism requires contemporary western philosophy. And this kind of criticism requires that philosophy return to the human life world, by fighting against the lines of foundationalism, logocentrism, rationalism and essentialism in modern philosophy. Such criticism forms various philosophical movements in contemporary western society. Simultaneously, their explanations in Marxist philosophy were influenced to some different extents by the respective cultural traditions of Western Marxism theorists, such as Lukacs with Hegel's phenomenological method and western humanism, Gramsci and the cultural philosophy of western historicism and the Italian Marxist philosophical tradition, Althusser and western positivist philosophy and especially the method of structuralism, the Frankfurt School and western humanitarianism

and Freudian psychoanalysis, ecological Marxism and the North-American populist tradition, analytical Marxism and the British-American analytic philosophy and so on.

Comparatively, Oriental Marxist philosophy was formed in the theoretical context of criticizing the pre-modern culture of oriental society and establishing a modern rationalist culture. Therefore, the nature of Western Marxist philosophy could not be rightly understood by simply comparing only the theoretical viewpoints of Oriental with western Marxism, and by rigidly limiting their vision within modern rationalism's philosophical field.

3. As to the third question, we must realize a dual conversion: on the one hand, we should treat the development of Marxist philosophy which derived from Marx's historical materialism as a development of various branches of Marxism under different social historical circumstances. In some sense, Western Marxism is the product of using the radical Marxism theories under western social historical circumstances. From this fact, an equal conversation between different theoretical forms of Marxism is required. On the other hand, we should not treat the developmental history of Marxism as a history of some kind of purely right thought, but respect the historical facts in the development of Marxism. If we take Marxism as an eternal right thought, then we underestimate Marxism itself that is never a finished system. It would be a rough and vulgar treatment to take Marxism as such; this cannot be the answer for the development of Marxism. Marxism's development is actually realized in the battle of right line with the false, and in the interweaving of success with failure. Therefore, when we speak of Western Marxism as an inherent part of the development of Marxism in the 20th century, what we insist on is that we should study and treat western Marxism theories in the context of Marxism itself, and not in the context of modern western philosophy or post-modern philosophy. Only thus may we push ahead the study of Marxist philosophy.

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NOTES

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Part II

The Content of a Contemporary Marxist Philosophy

Chapter 7

The Marxist Negation of Metaphysics

Yang Haifeng

Abstract: There are two kinds of metaphysics, one is based on limited survival, which is the theoretical core of Heidegger; the other is Hegel's metaphysics of absolute limitless idea. Although Heidegger criticized Hegel's rational metaphysics, they both have the same characteristics at the deep logic level. The revolution of Marx's philosophy subverted not only rational metaphysics, but also Heidegger's. From the perspective of Marx, metaphysics is the reflection of the social reality. Therefore, the subversion of metaphysics means critical transformation of the social life. Contemporary construction of Marx's philosophy should not be on the basis of Heidegger's existentialism. We must keep Marx's non-metaphysical stand and face the problems in the post-metaphysical times.

In *The Letter on Humanism*, Heidegger said that the nature of metaphysics as a system was first thought absolutely and formed into language by Hegel. As this metaphysics was true, history as defined by Hegel was also true. But metaphysics of the absolute was inverted by Marx and Nietzsche, each of whom belonged to the history of truth of Existence. Based on this, Heidegger posed the question to us: how to comprehend the relation of Marx's philosophy and the past metaphysics? Had Marx inverted the past metaphysics, or did he accomplish the past metaphysics? Behind this question, there is a more profound one, if Marx had inverted metaphysics, how about the relation of Marx and Heidegger? If we want to develop Marx's philosophy, these questions must be answered. Marx had entirely negated metaphysics, not only the inversion of Hegel's metaphysics of the absolute, but also Heidegger's metaphysics. This is a basic point for Marx's philosophy as facing contemporary thought.

TWO KINDS OF METAPHYSICS

'Metaphysics', meaning 'after physics', dated from the book of Aristotle, *Metaphysics*. *Metaphysics* is the title of the book, not a term of Aristotle. In all 14 chapters, Aristotle discussed not only the ontology of the world, but also the formation of knowledge. In the later the philosophical discussions, medieval paid attention to the ontology of the world. Modern times paid attention to the formation of knowledge, especially the cause of knowledge, which is a central thesis of Kant's philosophy. In Classic German Philosophy after Kant, philosophers thought that the foundation of knowledge existed in ontology, so metaphysics became the basis of Classic Germany Philosophy, and attained its peak in Hegel's philosophy.

As regards this process, Heidegger said that metaphysics was the science of causes, from which human thought got to knowledge of things. The science included two levels: one was the knowledge about existence, and the other was the high type knowledge about existence, which was defined as a whole. So the nature of metaphysics is knowledge of existence about existence. Heidegger understood metaphysics from the tradition of knowledge theory, so the forming condition of metaphysics must be such as to bring existence forward as an opposite and make it relate to one as representation. From here, the human imagines itself as a spectacle, in which the existence inevitably gets rid of itself, and then appears as image, so that the Human represents existence as object. That is to say, in the constitution process of metaphysics, subject and object become opposite poles. Just as the Human gains consciousness that it is a subject, so the object becomes mirror image of subject's consciousness. Heidegger traced metaphysics to date from Plato. Before Plato, existence itself came forth; there was no mirror relation between existence and the Human, the two got along in an open horizon. But after Plato, existence began to be defined as representation. Aristotle completed the constitution of metaphysics, and after a long process metaphysics attained to peak in Hegel's philosophy.

To this metaphysics, Heidegger thought that it always peered at higher existence, and then from the highest existence oversaw the lower existence, but forgot 'being'. This is the history of western metaphysics. In *Being and Time*, after inspecting the concept 'being' in traditional philosophy, Heidegger said: 'The very fact that we already live in an understanding of being and that the meaning of Being is still veiled in darkness proves that it is necessary in principle to raise this question again.'¹¹ Heidegger thought that understanding being in traditional philosophy was open to question, being must be understand in a new way. From there, two kinds of metaphysics appear.

One is absolute metaphysics. This metaphysics wants to know and master the absoluteness. It negates finitude, which is appearance,-- its truth lies in absolute reason. It is a process from finitude to absoluteness, and then to know everything, Hegel described the process. According to Habermas, there are three supporting points for traditional philosophy to attain this goal: the theory of the origin of philosophy, convergence of existence and thought, and the sacred meaning of the theory life. Identity is the basis of the world; it is also the premise and condition assuring that the world composes a totality. But the origin is not the beginning of its germination, but the abstract pedestal which omits time and space as cause of the finitude world. This is the abstract relation of the 'one' and the 'many', but the relation is ideal; the unity lies in abstract reason. Habermas pointed out that we categorize things according to the ideal order of the thing itself, which order lies deep in matter and contains the promise of universal identity. The ideal abstract nature endows existence with other characteristics, such as universality, necessity and immortality²². If the ideal nature defines the concrete characteristics of things, cognition is self-consciousness, spirits, or absolute idea. Then we can understand why in German Philosophy self-consciousness acted as the first place, or the absolute

idea. Hence philosophy is contemplation and theory of mode of life. Theory established its primacy, and the praxis of life was despised.

An opposite metaphysics to the traditional one is that of Heidegger, which metaphysics of finitude is. Traditional metaphysics negates finitude; it thinks of being only as absolute existence, and then transferees being into existence. For Heidegger, being is always presence, being can be understood only by a limited existence; that is the *dasein*. If we make Being an object, which is placed there before us, we cannot understand being and must negate finitude. When Heidegger re-bounded metaphysics, he really opened a modern metaphysics, which admits finitude as its proper foundation.

So if we discuss whether Marx negates metaphysics, we should discuss not only Marx inversion of traditional metaphysics, but also his inversion of modern metaphysics. This is what we must make clear.

MARX'S INVERSION OF METAPHYSICS

First, we should discuss how Marx inverted traditional metaphysics. Inasmuch as Hegel's philosophy is the last expression of absolute metaphysics, we will discuss the relation between Marx and Hegel. Hegel's philosophy is the result of modern philosophy which dates from Bacon. He stressed that feeling and experiment are the origins of knowledge, but he has two hidden premises. One is the totality of feeling; each feeling corresponds to each part of the object; without the totality of feeling, there is no appearance of an object. The other is Man who must be rational; otherwise feeling has no basis. But Bacon did not discuss the two premises. By deep inversion, reason is the basis of the two premises. Because Man is rational, he can feel and observe the world, and totalize what he feels and observes; hence idealism is the truth of modernity, and thus we can understand why Bacon's materialism resulted in Berkeley's idealism. This is why idealism obtains his legal station, and it answers the deep question of modern materialism. In the *Phenomenology of Mind*, Hegel pointed out that reason was the foundation of each feeling, which is the summary of history of philosophy.

What then is the question of Hegel's philosophy? To clarify the problem, we should trace how Hegel expressed the origin of his philosophy. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel wrote that if we wanted to learn of the world, we must begin with reason. For example, if we saw a house in this place, and when we got to another place, we saw a tree in this place, at that time, the concrete object had changed, but 'this' hadn't changed. 'This' isn't a concrete thing, but an idea; if it is not the idea of 'this', we cannot know and express the world. So the concrete thing is appearance, and concept is the nature of thing. From this, Hegel began his contemplation of philosophy as an absolute reasonable metaphysics. But in Hegel's philosophy, there is a serious theoretical confusion; he identified the process of cognition with its expression: Hegel demonstrated how one expresses when he faces the world. In this process, language occupies the first place, and as language is composed of concepts, idea is first. But the process of expression cannot take the place

of the generation cognition. 'This' is not a sign at first, it is a result of abstraction of the process of cognition, so we must discuss how the idea of 'this' is constituted in the life world. When we discover the process, we would have the foundation of traditional metaphysics.

Marx rejected Hegel's philosophy. First he was aware that each reason was not the nature of an object, and that it was an illusion to talk about reason independently. After his critique of Hegel's philosophy of right and the humanism of Feuerbach in *The German Ideology*, Marx criticized the Young Hegelians, saying 'All this took place in the realm of pure thought'³³. German criticism had never quit the soil of Hegel's philosophy; the Young Hegelian thought that a revolution of thought would change the world, this is an illusion. 'Because they imagine that men's relationships, all their activities, their chains and barriers are products of men's consciousness, the Young Hegelian quite logically put to men the moral postulate that they exchange their present consciousness for human, critical or egoistic consciousness, and thereby remove these barriers. This demand to alter consciousness is essentially a demand to reinterpret what already exists, i.e. to recognize or acknowledge it by means of a different interpretation.'⁴⁴ Marx was aware that if we exaggerate reason, just as Habermas discovered, philosophy would think the life of contemplation to be the means of redemption. A revolution of consciousness would be repression of ancient myths.

In fact, this thought also inversed early Marx's metaphysics. Early Marx wanted to criticize the active social life from the rational self-consciousness emphasized by the Young Hegelian, and constitute an ideal society that could embody the human ideal. Through studying the economic process of capitalism, Marx realized that any search to fix metaphysics in a floating society, is a fancy. When the Young Hegelians realized the relation of German philosophy to German reality, the revolution of pure reason would appear as its mythical nature. 'The production of ideas, of concepts, of consciousness is at first directly interwoven with men's material activity and commerce: it is the language of real life. Here, conceptualizing, thinking, the intellectual intercourse of men still appear to emanate directly from their material conduct and relation ... Consciousness can never be anything other than the conscious being, and the being of men is their real life process.'⁵⁵ 'Consequently, morality, religion, metaphysics, and the other ideological constructs and forms of consciousness that correspond to them no longer retain the appearance of independence. ... It is not consciousness that determines life, but life that determines consciousness.'⁶⁶ So the self-government of metaphysics was inversed by Marx. Reason is not the domination of social life, but the product of social praxis. What is important is not the deduction of metaphysics, but the social process that produces metaphysics. Here, social historical life is the premise of understanding metaphysics. In this sense, Marx de-centralized metaphysics. Thus Foucault said that Marx, Freud and Nietzsche were the three pioneers of temporary theory; they each act to de-centralize, and get rid of thought as the principal of organization and creation⁷⁷.

But as Marx did want to reconstitute metaphysics, he pushed the in-

version to a higher level. According to Marx, to negate metaphysics is to negate social life. In his later works, his thought spread on two levels: one to discover the relation between social life and metaphysics, and to locate metaphysics on a praxis bases; the other to discover the inner possibility of inverting social life. Only when we invert the social life whence metaphysics arises, can we entirely negate metaphysics. So Marx could not reconstitute metaphysics; what he was interested in was to de-constitute the present social life by his critical spirit.

From Marx's critique to Hegel's metaphysics, we can see that the question of traditional metaphysics is not its forgetting of being, but forgetting to reflect on its foundation—social life. It is not to find a new basis to criticize metaphysics, but to transform the active social life whence metaphysics arising. Where Heidegger would want to fine a new foundation for metaphysics, Marx would criticize him. So Marx negates not only traditional metaphysics, but also that of Heidegger.

POST-METAPHYSICAL ERA AND CONTEMPORARY UNDERSTANDING OF MARX'S PHILOSOPHY

The two kinds of metaphysics embody the two different views of the two stages of capitalism. In Hegel's era, capitalism expanded throughout Europe with a strange power. Each state had to enter the process of industrialization, and this is a process of dis-enchantment. In his early period, Hegel did not care about material life; he negated capitalism and yearned for the community life of Greece. He thought of religion as the link sustaining community life. But when he reached Frankfurt, after studying the Class Political Economy, especially the thought of Smith and Ricardo, he realized that capitalism embodied the social future. But for Germany, in order to avoid a contradiction, it must criticize individual reason; the absolute idea is the result of this critique! The absolute idea embodies the confidence of man faced with capitalism. This confidence could not be resisted by any romantic poet, so Hoelderlin's poem could not be disseminated. The absolute idea consisted of the social spirit of early capitalism. This is an impelling feeling, and just as in his symphony, Beethoven expressed the spirit of music with powerful rhythm. There is contradiction, there is conflict, but the end is the compromise of antagonism.

But the development of capitalism did not attain to ideal. The First World War caused 'reason' to be disbelieved. Nietzsche challenged reason with Nihilism, Husserl said that European culture is in crisis; Freud challenged reason with the unconsciousness and said that development of cultural was the depression of nature desire. An absolute idea can't occupy the dominant space, and man began to attend to individual existence. Against this background, Heidegger used the finitude of '*Dasein*' as the foundation of metaphysics. To step out of the anxious mood, Heidegger thought that we must return to being. If Hegel's metaphysics embodies confidence of capital,

then Heidegger's metaphysics as the rejection of capital embodies romantic memory of pre-industrial society. This metaphysics cannot face capitalism.

The development of capitalism is divided of three stages: the freedom capitalism Hegel and Marx had discussed; the organization capitalism Heidegger lived; and today we face the third stage of capitalism, in which, international concerns dominate man's life. This is a post-metaphysical era, and totality has no role; it is an illusion to reconstruct ontology. We must step out of metaphysics, use Marx's method to analysis contemporary society, and then reconstruct the theory of 'critique'. This is the main trend for developing Marx's philosophy.

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NOTES

1 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. By John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, SCM Press Ltd, 1962, p. 23.

2 Jürgen Habermas, *Nachmetaphysisches Denken*, Frankfurt, 1988, pp. 35-41.

3 Karl Marx, *Early Political Writings*, ed. and trans. by Joseph O'Malley and Richard A. Davis, Cambridge, 1994, p. 120.

4 Karl Marx, *Early Political Writings*, p. 122.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 124.

6 *Ibid.*, p. 125.

7 C.C. Lemert and G. Gillan, *Michel Foucault: Social Theory as Transgression*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1982, p. 23.

Chapter 8

Marx's Philosophy and Ontology¹

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Abstract: This thesis begins with a discussion of the translations of the term “ontology” in Chinese language, and argues that its translation as “*bentilun*” (in Chinese PinYin orthography) can be supported by ample evidence from the history of doctrine and the tradition of Chinese culture. Therefore, it is necessary to keep this translation on condition that one distinguish strictly “ontology” as a branch of philosophy from “*bentilun*” as a special morphology of philosophical theory. Examining the history of metaphysics, this thesis draws a clear line of demarcation between “traditional ontology” and “modern ontology”, and reveals the main characteristics of traditional ontology. It holds that although the reformation of Marx's Philosophy was realized through criticizing traditional ontology, his philosophy did not abolish the concept of ontology as a branch of the discipline. The ontology of Marx's philosophy is a theory that considers natural being, social being and human being as a unity. This theory emphasizes understanding the meaning of being from the perspective of a pattern. The main idea of ontology of Marx's philosophy is that of a practical outlook and practical model of thinking.

First, the concept of ontology and its translations will be reviewed. As regards its derivation, we could find that *Ontologie* in German and in French both came from the word *Ontologia* in Latin, which originated from the Greek. In the literal meaning of Greek, this word means the “*logos*” of “*on*”. In Greek, “*on*” corresponds to “being” in English. As to its signification, according to Heidegger “*on*” has a twofold meaning that can signify both “being in general” and “the ground of being”. The former is close to essence while the latter to origin. From the angle of history, Goclenius was the first one who used the term “*Ontologia*” in philosophy in 17th century. Since then this word was used and developed by subsequent philosophers. Although this term appeared in the 17th century, yet its correlative questions had been studied from ancient Greece.

The sticking point here is to pay attention to the demarcation between subject and theory. As a branch subject or as a universal noun, “Ontology” is counted in the historical tradition of western philosophy. Here all the problems discussed are public, but the concrete solutions and viewpoints are different. The former corresponds to the level of subject and the latter to the level of theory. These two levels must not be confused or substituted from one and other. That is, different ideas, schools and opinions could be brought under the same problem. So it could be said that traditional ontology and modern ontology are two branches. Of course these two branches are very different in dealing with the problem of Ontology. This difference could be illustrated as following: (1) What to be → beings → substance—traditional ontology; (2)

How to be → the mode of being → relation—modern ontology. Obviously both begin with the problem of being and end with Ontology, while their approaches are very different.

The essential characteristic of traditional ontology is to seek the eternal substance, pursue the transcendent nature, establish the base of knowledge, and take the absolute truth as the ultimate *telos*. Traditional ontology ended with the critique of modern philosophy, Marx made the crucial critique of traditional ontology in his remarks on Hegel's philosophy. His critique of Hegel's speculative method is actually the critique of traditional ontology although Marx himself never used the term of ontology explicitly in his new philosophy.

Being in Marx's philosophy is the real world of real beings. Concretely speaking, it is sensible world, objective world or human world that is integrated on the base of human praxis. The keystones here are natural being, social being and human being. There are some important similarities between Marx's ontological approach and Heidegger's ontology, that is, to understand the meaning of being through the mode and relation of beings. In any case, the standpoint and thinking mode of praxis characterize the ontology of Marx's philosophy.

Recently, the problem of ontology has been the focus of the basic theory of philosophy in China. In fact, it is not so difficult to find the fact that the problem of relationship between Marx's Philosophy and the "*bentilun*" has always been a major focus debate from the 1980s to the 1990s in Chinese philosophy circles, and even becoming the unavoidable "knot" on which all the arguments engage in building their own theory on the essence of Marx's Philosophy. The new research on the ontology is obviously difference from the old arguments because some of the scholars who began to clarify the derivation of ontology attended to the Chinese translation and meaning of the term of "*bentilun*" at the more fundamental level in order to determine better what is "ontology". At the same time as scholars studied western philosophy, logic and philosophy of science, research on ontology has improved further with crossing-disciplinary characteristics. As some of the scholars put it, the research on ontology now is in the course of "tracing to its source and creating its future" which will have great influence on our philosophical research.

Further, examining the problem of ontology in the context of the transformation of Western Philosophy from traditional to modern, we have reason to say that the major theoretical problem raised by modern philosophy is the fate of the metaphysics. For a long time in the history of philosophy metaphysics, especially its core problem of ontology, had been "the emperor" as "first philosophy". However, this had to face the challenge of the development of modern philosophy. So, clarifying the corresponding problem of ontology is the basis on which we can understanding well not only the deference between modern and traditional Western Philosophy, but also the essence of Marx's philosophy which emerged during the transformation of Western philosophy from traditional to modern.

WHAT IS “BENTILUN”?

Though the term “bentilun” has been overused in related research on ontology in China, we have to begin this thesis with a discussion of the translations of the term “ontology” in the Chinese language. The term “bentilun” universally used by Chinese academic circles is not inherent to the traditional Chinese Philosophy, but is a translation from the term of “ontology” in western languages. Is such a translation good or not? Does it precisely reflect the original idea of the term of “ontology” in western thought? Or does it generate a related problem in Chinese when we think about ontology? The above problems are all under debate. It ought to be acknowledged that such debates are not only about correspondence of terms, but are related as well to understanding the fundamental theory of philosophy, which is the reason why it became the focus discussion. Once having clarified the problem of translation, can we also clarify the related concept and term? If so then what is “ontology” will naturally be clear. However, all of these depend upon a comprehensive examination of the “ontology” problem from the word’s origination, meaning, the history of the idea and the related language context.

First, as to derivation, we find that *Ontologie* in German and in French both came from the word *Ontologia* in Latin, which in turn depended upon the Greek. The term means the “logos” of “on” as far as the literal meaning of Greek is concerned. In Greek “on” and “onta” means “being” and “beings”. In English, they are verbs, and also participles and gerunds. The plural of the verb “einai” means “to be” in English. Therefore, a precise translation of “ontology” in Chinese depends on an accurate understanding of its root “on”. However, “on” is a polysemant that can refer to “*Shi*” or “*Shizhe*” (which in Chinese PinYin, means “*Sein*” or “*Seiende*”), “*Zai*” or “*Cunzai*” (which in Chinese PinYin, means “*entis*” or “*being*”) and “*You*” or “*Cunyou*” (which in Chinese PinYin, means “*have*” or “*possess*”).² Accordingly, “Ontology” has many translations in Chinese such as “*wanyoulun*”, “*cunyoulun*”, “*cunzailun*”, “*shilun*” and “*bentilun*”. Literally, the term of “*bentilun*” is furthest away from the root of “ontology”, though it is very popular.

According to some of the scholars, it is the Japanese scholars who first translated the term of “ontology” into “*bentilun*”, and this translation was so popular in Japan from the end of 1800s to the first half of 1900s, that it has influenced Chinese philosophers till today. However, after the 1930s, Japanese philosophers began to adopt the term of “*cunzailun*” instead of “*bentilun*” referring to “ontology”, and after the 1950s, the term of “*bentilun*” disappeared in Japan.³ As early as the 1930s in China, some scholars such as Cheng Kang also argued that translating the term of “ontology” into “*bentilun*” is not appropriate. Recently, the problem of the translation of “ontology” became continual in China once again. Some Chinese scholars insist on translating the “ontology” as “*bentilun*”; some believe that the term for “ontology” should be “*cunzailun*”; while others hold that it should be translated into “*shilun*”, because according to them the term “on” means “*shi*”. The third viewpoint has prevailed in recent years. In fact, however learned the term *shi*, all Chinese

scholars feel that the translation of “*shilun*” is so awkward that they have most difficulty in using it. It is certain that the discussion of the translation of “ontology” will continue, and there will be a long way to go before there is agreement on it. In fact, the translation of “ontology” will not be a “single one” unless the term “on” is no longer polysemous. Regarding all of this, we might well adopt the term of “*cunzailun*” (means “theory of being” in English) and refer to “ontology” as one of the branches of the discipline of philosophy, so that we can discuss the related problem in the Chinese context conveniently.

Second, considering the meaning of the term “ontology”, the word “on” has a double meaning in Greek according to Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), that is to say, “on” not only refers to being in general, but also to the ground of being. The former is close to “essence” while the latter to “origin”. Obviously, there is an important difference between the former and the latter. Confusion of these two resulted in the fact that traditional metaphysics inquired into “beings” or “Seiende” rather than “Being” or “Sein”. Therefore, we must distinguish these two branches of “ontology”. Otherwise, we’ll misunderstand “ontology” though neglect of “the ontological difference”.

Third, considering the history of doctrine, the term “Ontologia” in western literature was first found in the *Philosophy Dictionary* (1613) in Latin edited by Rudolphus Goclenius (1547-1628), a German philosopher. In this dictionary, Goclenius invented the new word of “Ontologia” (meaning “theory of being” or “theory of Sein”) by integrating the word of “onta”(meaning “beings”, “Seiende”)--the plural of “on” (which means “being”) -- with the Greek “logos” (which means “learning”, “truth” or “reason”). Another German philosopher, Abraham Calovius (1612-1686), identified the term “Ontologia” with “Metaphysica” in his *Metaphysica of Gods* (1636). In 1647, another German philosopher, Johann Clauberg (1622-1665), invented the other new word of “Ontosophie” by integrating the word of “onta” with “sophia” (meaning “wisdom” or “knowledge”) in Greek. The word “Ontosophie” also means “wisdom or knowledge on being or Sein”. “Ontosophie” was also used by the French philosopher, Jean-Baptiste Duhamel (1624-1706), Rene R. Descartes (1596-1650) referred to “metaphysical ontology” as “the first philosophy on substance”. Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz (1646-1716) and his successors Christian Wolff (1679-1754) tried to build an integrated metaphysics on the general sense of beings, and the essence of the world by way of pure abstraction. Wolff divided philosophy into theoretical philosophy and practical philosophy, with theoretical philosophy including logic and metaphysics. Ontology, Cosmology, Rational Psychology and Natural Theology are all covered by metaphysics. Wolff actually regarded Ontologia as a basic and relatively independent branch discipline of philosophy and defined this branch discipline of philosophy as “science of ‘entis’ in general as ‘entis’”.⁴

The outstanding characteristic of the classification by Wolff is regarding “Ontologia” as a part of “Metaphysics” at the level of discipline. Such classification had great influence till today, after Wolff’s era. Wolff’s

definition of ontology was very popular in western academic circles and most western scholars believed ontology to be a branch of metaphysics. Some even equate ontology to metaphysics, or refer the whole of “metaphysics” to “ontology”. However, it is by examination of the history of doctrine that we can understand precisely the special meaning bestowed on the term of “Ontologia” in philosophy history.

Though the term of “Ontologia” was not found until 1600s, the research on related problems had been begun in ancient Greece. After becoming popular in the 1700s, this word was overused by Western scholars when they described classical Greek philosophy. According to them, problems concerning ontology had been considered by ancient Greek philosophers. For example, the item of “ontology” in *The Great Britain Encyclopaedia* (15th ed.) says that “this term is firstly invented in 1600s, however, it identifies with ‘the first philosophy’ or metaphysics defined by Aristotle of B.C.400”.

Aristotle stated definitively that the problem of “ti to on ” would be the question perpetually to be pursued. “First philosophy” is a discipline focused on the problem of “to on hei on”. According to Aristotle, the problem of “substance” (“ousia” or “substantia”) is just the core problem of “on”, and thus also the central problem of first philosophy: he said “The problem of ‘what is on?’ is nothing but the problem of ‘ousia’.”⁵ what is “ousia”? Philosophers give various answers, “idea”, “monad”, “absolute spirit” etc, but all regarded it as “substance” (or “ousia”) one after the other. The way to understand “on” (or “Sein”) in terms of “substance” was fixed in such answers, and “substance” was regarded as the ultimate cause of the universe, something divine.

So we can say that the emergence of the term “Ontologia” in the 1600s indicates that the research on “substance” in traditional Western Philosophy had reached the stage in which ontology becomes the special historical morphology of metaphysics. Therefore, it is exact to use “*bentilun*” as the Chinese name of this research at this stage. In other words, it seemed that the study about “on” in Western Philosophy, from Plato to Hegel, had developed into a theoretical pattern of particular connotation and particular definition. This pattern reflects the historical characteristic and thinking-mode of traditional Western Philosophy in dealing with this problem, and thus it may be called—and truly ought to be called—“*bentilun*” or “substantialism”

Finally, considering from the conventional meaning of the words and phrase in Chinese traditional culture, the philosophical branch named “ontology” above corresponded to “*bengenlun*” (in Chinese PinYin) in ancient Chinese Philosophy. *Bengenlun* means the pursue of the fundamental cause and ultimate ground of the cosmos,— thus its meaning is identical with the term “*bentilun*”. According to ancient Chinese philosophers, the “*bengen*” (which in Chinese PinYin means “origin”) of the universe can be reduced to something invisible and shapeless but very different from everything in the world (such as “*qi*”, “*li*” or “*xin*”—which in Chinese PinYin, means “gas”, “reason” or “mind”). We can conclude that these ideas are identical with the

western philosophers who regard the “substance” as the “highest being”, playing the role of the ultimate cause and ground of everything. According to some scholars, the word “*benti*” (in Chinese PinYin) corresponds to “*kexing*” (in Chinese PinYin). The former means the state of the eternal itself; the later means the state of change irregularly.⁶ This idea is similar to Aristotle’s idea that “ousia is everlasting, but changing in shape and properties”. Therefore, it is seemed rational and appropriate to use the Chinese word “*bentilun*” to understand and interpret the morphology of philosophy regarding inquiry into the ultimate being as the great mission of the history of Western Philosophy, although these terms do not equate exactly to each other.

In a word, regarding “ontology” as “*bentilun*” is the fact of matter in the history of doctrine, and can be supported by, and from, the Chinese cultural tradition. That is the reason why this Chinese translation can be popular.

THE DEMARCATION BETWEEN TRADITIONAL ONTOLOGY AND MODERN ONTOLOGY

All of the above shows that we shall not treat the Chinese term “*bentilun*” simply, which has a strong basis in the history of scholarship. According to the discussion about this translation, most scholars agree that it is mistake to translate “ontology” into “*bentilun*” and identify the ontology as a branch of discipline in the west with the Chinese term “*ben-ti-lun*”. So like their Japan colleagues, some of the Chinese scholars have also argued for the abolition of the term “*bentilun*”.

However, this argument is not supported by the present thesis, rather, which maintains rather retaining the term “*bentilun*” and endowing it with appropriate meaning. The term “*bentilun*” may have the two following meanings:

First, it refers no longer to “ontology” as a branch discipline (which we now translate into “*cunzailun*”), but rather to the morphology of the philosophy of substantialism or centered on substance.

Second, it is a sub-concept belonging to “ontology” (i.e. “theory of being”). That is to say, it is the branch discipline of “the learning about beings (or ‘Seiende’)” and it stands side by side with the other branch discipline of “the learning about being (or ‘Sein’).” This idea is rather in accord with the new development of modern philosophy and science.

It is Heidegger who discovered the “ontological difference” between “on” (or “Sein” or “being”) and “onta” (or “Seiende” or “beings”) by “investigating the history of ontology”. According to Heidegger, there were many sources of thought when Presocratic philosophers examined the problem of “on” (or “being”). However, the inquiry on “onta” replaced the inquiry on “on” from Plato and Aristotle to Hegel in Western traditional metaphysics. The core meaning of “onta” in the so called “substantialist metaphysics” is “substance”, “entity” or “reality”, although “onta” has many meanings. Therefore, it is appropriate to refer “*bentilun*” in Chinese to the morphology of philosophy about the “onta”. “*Bentilun*” in this sense is a philosophy whose

aim is to pursue the ultimate entity; its mission is to provide the foundation for knowledge; and its goal is to arrive at an ultimate interpretation. So we can call it “philosophy of ontology”, and identify it with “traditional metaphysics”.

It is important to make clear the difference between discipline and doctrine. As a branch discipline and therefore as a common noun, “ontology” means that the related research has developed in the tradition over a long time in Western Philosophy. In this tradition, the related problem discussed is public while the answers to this problem and the ideas about this are various. The former is something we call the problem at “the level of discipline”, while the latter is at “the level of doctrine”. They are completely different and do not allow being mixed up. That is to say, we can have different viewpoints and therefore develop different doctrines, schools and ideas, though we are discussing the same problem. It is the same the other way round.

In fact, various doctrines and patterns with different traits in philosophy had been developed in the history of ontology. Traditional metaphysics is one of these cases. Oriented by “onta” and “substance”, traditional metaphysics adopted the “way of substantialism” in answering the related questions. However, in modern Western Philosophy, positivist-analytic philosophy “rejects metaphysics” though Willard van Orman Quine retained the term “ontological commitment”. Phenomenology, existentialism and hermeneutics built a new way for the discussion of being by criticizing traditional metaphysics. The key characteristic of this new way is its emphasis on relation rather than substance, its focus on patterns of being rather than “onta”. So we must distinguish ontology as a branch discipline from the specific answer to related problems. After understanding that “ontology” can be called “*cunzailun*” (or “theory of being”) as a branch discipline of philosophy, we can refer to the above two as “traditional ontology” and “modern ontology”. Their difference could be illustrated as following:

What is “on” → beings (or Seiende) → substance—traditional ontology
 on ontology
 How is “on” → modality of being (or sein) → relation—modern ontology

We can summarize this as: (1) What to be→beings→substance—traditional ontology; (2) How to be→the mode of being→relation—modern ontology. It is obvious that they both begin with the problem of being and end with Ontology while their approaches are very different.

In the scope of ontology, both “traditional ontology” and “modern ontology” are sub-disciplines of ontology. However, many scholars have realized that there is a fundamental difference between the traditional philosophy and the modern philosophy in the west in answering the question about “ontology”. That means, there are not only two differences, but also diverse ways to answer the question about “ontology”. One is traditional Western philosophy; the other is modern Western philosophy.

For example, we can quote two passages from Heidegger's *An Introduction to Metaphysics* which will show how Heidegger tries to distinguish the "Ontologie" (which we translate as "*cunzailun*" in Chinese) as a branch discipline of philosophy from the specific answers to related problems:

The question is whether Being can count only as the most universal concept that unavoidably presents itself in all particular concepts, or whether Being has a completely different essence, and thus is anything but the object of an "ontology", if one take this word in its established meaning.

The term "ontology" was first coined in the seventeenth century. It designates the development of the traditional doctrine of beings into a philosophical discipline and a branch of the philosophical system. But the traditional doctrine is an academic analysis and ordering of what for Plato and Aristotle, and again for Kant, was a question, though to be sure a question that was no longer foundational. The word "ontology" is still used this way, even today. Under this title, philosophy busies itself with the composition and exposition of a branch within its system. But one can also take the word "ontology" "in the broadest sense", "without reference to ontological directions and tendencies" (cf. *Being and Time*, 1927, p.11). In this case "ontology" means the effort to put Being into words, and to do so by passing through the question of how it stands with Being [not just with beings as such]. But until now this question has found neither agreement nor even resonance; instead it has been explicitly rejected by the various circles of academic philosophical scholarship which pursue "ontology" in the traditional sense. Hence, it may be good in the future to forgo the use of the terms "ontology" and "ontological." The two modes of questioning which, only now are becoming clearer, are worlds apart and should not bear the same name.⁷

The idea of Heidegger is so clear when we pay a little attention to the italicized word and phrase in passage. Unfortunately, as "ontology" was translated as "*bentilun*" the meaning of these two passages was so vague that the real idea of Heidegger was obscured to some degree. According to Heidegger, "question" is a certain concept based on the level of discipline, while "doctrine" and "directions and tendencies" are some special patterns of answer. Here, Heidegger assents that his new pattern (or new tendency) is different from the traditional ontology.

Considering Heidegger was an antagonist of traditional metaphysics and traditional ontology, we should not confuse his philosophy with the

traditional ontology. In fact, Heidegger had realized the trouble resulting from the chaos of terms. He said in his annotation of "On The Essence of Ground":

When "ontology" and "ontological" are today appealed to as catchwords and titles for various orientations, these expressions are employed in an utterly trivial manner that fails to appreciate any problematic whatsoever. One thrives on the erroneous opinion that ontology as the question concerning the being of beings means a "realistic" (naïve or critical) "attitude" as opposed to an "idealistic" one. Ontological problematic has so little to do with "realism" that precisely Kant, in and through his transcendental way of questioning, was able to accomplish the first decisive step since Plato and Aristotle toward explicitly laying the ground for ontology. Defending the "reality of the outer world" is not yet an ontological orientation. "Ontological" — taken in its popular philosophical meaning — means, however (and this betrays the hopeless confusion), something that must instead be called *ontic*, i.e., a stance that lets beings in themselves be what and how they are. But this does not yet raise any problem of being, let alone attain the foundation for the possibility of an ontology.⁸

Here, Heidegger not only criticizes the prevalent understanding of "ontology", but also argued that traditional "ontology" is "something that must instead be called *ontic*, i.e., a stance that lets beings in themselves be what and how they are ". However, the mission of modern ontology is to "raise problem of being". Obviously, understanding the idea of Heidegger just through the traditional "ontology" must result in a series misunderstanding and mistakes.

In order to avoid this misunderstanding, Heidegger called his new philosophy "fundamental ontology". The fundamental ontology emphasizes "fundamental". We can regard it as "foundation of ontology" because its mission is to provide the basis for metaphysics. According to Heidegger himself, his work is to raise "Grundfrage", while traditional metaphysics only asked "Leitfrage". Traditional ontology just emphasized the "onta (beings)" while neglecting the "on (Being)". As it was therefore without its real basis, Heidegger called it "rootless ontology".

Actually, there is major difference between the traditional ontology and the fundamental ontology of Heidegger. It is Heidegger who broke away from the traditional substantialist thinking pattern, and understood the state of the human being from the relation of "being-in-the-world", because the meaning of the thing is reflected by pattern of human communications, and the meaning of the human being also reflected itself by the pattern of his being. In a word, the meaning of the beings is its pattern of being. In the

meantime, Heidegger also broke away from the traditional conceptual mode of thinking, and emphasized the role of experience in daily life — such so called irrational elements as annoyance, fear and degradation — in understanding being. Therefore, it must be result in mistakes if we understand Heidegger's existential philosophy in the sense of ontological philosophy.

According to W. J. Richardson, the term “fundamental ontology” was used by Heidegger only in his early works such as *Being and Time* (1827) and *Kant and the problem of Metaphysics* (1929). After 1929, Heidegger no longer used this term because of its confusions. Richardson explains:

But after 1929 the word disappears completely. In 1949 we are told why: the word “ontology”, even with the epithet “fundamental” to explain it, makes it too easy to understand the grounding of metaphysics as simply an ontology of a higher sort, whereas ontology, which is but another name for metaphysics, must be left behind completely.”⁹

We must take this seriously in order to free ourselves from the confusion about the terms of “*bentilun*” and “*cunzailun* (ontology)”.

THE BASIC CHARACTERISTIC OF TRADITIONAL ONTOLOGICAL PHILOSOPHY

There are many references,—such as “substantialist metaphysics”, “fundamentalism”, “essentialism” and “Logos-centralism”— in the basic characteristic of traditional philosophy from Plato to Hegel. These references do not contradict each other, but show the characteristic and essence of this philosophy from different levels and perspectives. Considering the basic idea of this philosophy and the assumption of its supporting theory, it is appropriate to call it “traditional ontological philosophy (*bentilun*)” as a morphology of philosophy.

It is not necessary to set out all parts or all questions of this morphology of philosophy when understanding it comprehensively, but it is necessary to understand its core spirits and ideas. These reflect and direct the ultimate aims of this philosophy, around which other problems and viewpoints arise. What then are the core spirits and ideas of the traditional ontological philosophy? The answer is: “substantialism (*bentilun*)”. That is to say, substantialism could be seen as the representative of the traditional morphology of western philosophy.¹⁰ In order to understand the basic characteristic of this morphology of philosophy, we have to examination what the idea and outlook of this philosophy stands for and symbolizes.

The origination of the Western Philosophy is related to the theory that surpasses the primitive religion and mythology which interpreted the formation and change of the world in fable and symbol in order to understand the world as a unity as whole. Many people (including some philosophers) have realized through their daily life the change and the diversity of the universe.

But is there a unity; is there a basis for a universe? In terms of philosophy, to answer these questions is to surpass the diversity of the intuitions of sensation so as to grasp the single reality, to surpass the changing phenomena and grasp the eternal substance. This is called “substantialism (*bentilun*)” in philosophy; it is the answer to the problem of being in Western Philosophy.

The questions of traditional ontological philosophy are as follows: what is the ultimate cause or foundation of the phenomenal world? What is the ultimate substance or origin of the experienced world? Because such ultimate cause or substance is not understandable by sensation, it is structured logically and the conceptual substance thus formed becomes the ultimate principle of the interpretation of the phenomenon world. The main point of traditional ontological philosophy is to interpret everything in terms of the ultimate substance and to reduce everything to a variable thereof.

Aristotle is the founder of this ontological philosophy, in defining the “ousia” as the core of the metaphysics. He defined philosophy as the theory of the ultimate cause and principle thereby establishing the fundamental idea that “philosophy is not but metaphysics and ontology”. This sense of the object and mission of the philosophy as inquiring into the transcendental substance behind phenomena but dominating the universe as its ultimate basis is the outlook of ontological philosophy. This has become the leading idea of philosophy since Aristotle and developed into the important tradition of the philosophy in the evolution from ancient to modern Western Philosophy.

It was a misunderstanding in Chinese academic circles that the center of the modern philosophy is the theory of knowledge, as if traditional ontological philosophy no longer had any role. This is not true, because the transformation of the modern philosophy and Hume's and Kant's critique of ontology did not change the fundamental nature of traditional philosophy as “metaphysical ontology”. In fact, the transformation of the center of the modern philosophy does not mean changing its presupposition. The “metaphysical ontology” has always been the support of the traditional Western Philosophy, whether in ancient or modern times. The argument of the eternal and transcendental substance begins with Plato and Aristotle. Such ingrained “mode” of argument penetrated the whole development of classical Western Philosophy before attaining its pinnacle in Hegel. Therefore, Kant criticized “ontology” while assuming the being of the “Ding an sich,” affirmed the end of the traditional “metaphysics”, while trying to build “the future metaphysics as science”. That is to say, the transformation central to modern philosophy did not change the presupposition of “metaphysical ontology”, but only the way of discussing ontology. This means that modern philosophy does not directly inquiry what is substance, but discusses how to know the substance -- not interpret anything spontaneously with impersonal substance, interpret the world consciously with human's reason. This transcendental philosophy developed into a modern “metaphysics”.

Richard Rorty summarized the basic characteristic of traditional western philosophy in many different ways: Such philosophy “has been seeking a set of unified ideas . . . (which) can be used to adjudicate or criticize

individual behavior and life, and social customs and institutions, they also can provide the frame of thinking, which is used to reflect on individual morality and social politics by people”; Philosophy is regarded as “a basic discipline” which gives us “not only the assemblage of opinions but also knowledge about the most important things”, “such paramount knowledge system can set up conditions for thinking morality and politics for all times”; Such philosophy considers itself as “a super science or a main branch of discipline”, “what it cares about is the most important problems”, which is regarded as “perennial, eternal problems” isolated from the changes of history and society; “Philosophy as a discipline thus sees itself as the attempt to underwrite or debunk claims to knowledge made by science, morality, art, or religion”; “Philosophy can be foundational in respect to the rest of culture because culture is the assemblage of claims to knowledge, and philosophy adjudicates such claims”; Philosophy is regarded as discovering “the first principle” which can be used to find answers of all questions, “The duty of philosopher is to state or explain this principle. Above all, Rorty thinks that this is a kind of “temptation of summing up all things and creatures as the first principle or of seeking a natural stratum of order in human actions.”¹¹

The criticism of traditional metaphysical ontology by contemporary philosophy declared its end of interest in inquiring into an eternal and transcendental substance, aiming to provide the foundation of knowledge and to reach the ultimate truth as its ultimate concern. Also modern philosophy opened a new door for the history of philosophy. At the beginning of the new era stands Karl Marx. However, the role of Karl Marx’s criticism of traditional philosophy for contemporary philosophy has not been realized and discussed fully due to the way of interpreting Marx’s philosophy in terms of the idea and mode of traditional philosophy. This may be the greatest misfortune for Marx.

KARL MARX’S CRITICISM, AND HIS SURPASSING OF TRADITIONAL ONTOLOGICAL PHILOSOPHY

Very few people would deny that Marx’s philosophy is a great revolution in the history of philosophy. However, there are many different, even opposite opinions about the essence of his revolution. After understanding the essence of the traditional Western philosophy, we have to face one sharp question: is Marx’s philosophy a traditional ontological philosophy; can we interpret or understand Marx’s philosophy with the idea and paradigm of traditional ontological philosophy? The answer is “no”. Marx’s philosophy is not a traditional ontological philosophy; rather, it was by criticizing traditional ontological philosophy that it realized its great revolution in the history of philosophy (specifically, at the turn from modern to contemporary Western Philosophy).

It is mainly through criticizing Hegel’s philosophy that Marx criticizes traditional ontological philosophy. So, it is very important to clarify the fact that how Marx evaluated the philosophy of Hegel. Though Hegel’s

philosophy obviously is not reduced to pure ontology, the attitude of Hegel is traditional when he faces the traditional ontological philosophy challenged by Hume and Kant. When traditional ontological philosophy had to face this challenge, Hegel tried to overcome the weakness of the traditional reason by changing the tool of reason. That is to say, Hegel tried to find and build a new reason to resolve the hard problem of ontology and to save it from its crisis. It is also to be said that Hegel reconstructed the idea of the traditional ontological philosophy in a new way. His interest was not in changing the traditional ontological philosophy but only in changing the way to discuss it. Under the principle of the "substance is subject", Hegel built the meta-system of idealism based on the "absolute spirit" and integrated the old ontology, epistemology and logic based on subjectivism. Such philosophy of idealism discussed the self-movement and self-development of the "absolute spirit". So, Hegel is the agglomeration of the traditional ontological philosophy.

Hegel's philosophy can be divided into three parts: science of logic, philosophy of nature and philosophy of spirit. Among these three, the science of logic is the core. Hegel's *Science of Logic* is the key to judging whether his philosophy has characteristics of ontological philosophy. As to the relationship between logic and ontology, Hegel put it precisely when he talked about Aristotle's philosophy, "The main object which Aristotle has in view is the definition of what this substance (ousia) really is. In this ontology or, as we call it, logic, he investigates and minutely distinguishes four principles."¹² Here, Hegel acknowledged that logic is nothing but ontology. Though he did not refer to it, the role of the logic is to replace that of ontology. His *Science of Logic* includes "objective logic" and "subjective logic". The former is to replace "the metaphysic of past" (above all, "ontology"). As he said, "Objective logic, then, takes the place of the former metaphysics which was intended to be the scientific construction of the world in terms of thought alone. If this science, then it is first and immediately ontology whose place is taken by objective logic—that part of this metaphysics which was supposed to investigate the nature of 'ens' in general; 'ens' comprises both being and essence, a distinction for which the German language has fortunately preserved different terms. But further, objective logic also comprises the rest of this attempted to comprehend with the forms of pure thought particular substrata taken primarily from figurate conception, namely the soul, the mode of consideration."¹³ According to Hegel, logic is nothing but ontology, and the meaning of the logic is wider than of ontology.

Such idealism is also a system of the pure logical deduction resulting from the idea's self-movement constructed by Hegel. In this system, the deduction of pure logic is seen as dominated and controlled. Its tenets not only cover the nature but also human society and the human mind. It is the system of pure reason, and we must understand it as the realm of pure minds. In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant leaves some leeway for the "metaphysics" though he once criticized traditional ontology and the metaphysics. Kant even regarded his criticism as the foundation of his science as future metaphysics. For Hegel, the mission of rebuilding the "metaphysics" was already fulfilled.

Hegel had once actively appraised the importance of metaphysics: “There was seen the strange spectacle of a cultured nation without metaphysics -- like a temple richly ornamented in other respects but without a holy of holies.”¹⁴ Though the saying “a holy of holies” is a metaphor, for Hegel, it clearly shows that philosophy always exists as the highest king of any other disciplines and not only provides the foundation for the latter, but also dominates them. Such understanding shows the idea of philosophy of traditional ontology.

The major mission of the criticism of Hegel’s philosophy is to disclose the essence of transcendental philosophy and the traits of breaking away from an idealist philosophy. For his time in college, Marx had a keen sense of the self-contradictory character of Hegel’s philosophy as “discovering everything” but “say nothing actually”. This contradiction, in fact, is the general characteristic of traditional ontology. The reason this contradiction existed is that traditional ontological philosophy is constructed by deduction from a purely transcendental category. In this system, all the developments are innate links of the whole. So, it had ample evidence to claim to “discover everything”. However, this discovering of the transcendental has no relationship with the empirical world. Therefore, it is actually “say nothing” about the empirical world.¹⁵

After working for the *Rheinische Zeitung für Politik, Handel und Gewerbe*, Marx began “thinking originally about actual reality”. As such an approach had to conflict with Hegel’s idealism, Marx began to criticize Hegel’s philosophy. This criticism began with critique of Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right* and his reverse of the relationship between “idea” and “reality”. “The idea is given the status of a subject, and the actual relationship of family and civil society to the state is conceived to be its inner imaginary activity. Family and civil society are the presuppositions of the state; they are the really active things; but in speculative philosophy it is reversed ... the conditions are established as the conditioned, the determining as the determined, the producing as the product of its product”.¹⁶ In the preface to *Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right*, Marx disclosed the mysticism of Hegel’s philosophy, “He has made the subject of the idea into a product and predicate of the Idea. He does not develop his thought out of what is objective [aus dem Gegenstand], but what is objective in accordance with a ready-made thought which had its origin in the abstract sphere of logic”.¹⁷

The idealism of Hegel’s philosophy is the best example of the traditional philosophical ontology. The criticism of this dialectic idealism by Marx is nothing but criticism the traditional philosophical ontology. Marx, then argued that philosophy should research the concrete logic of particular things. In the *Economic & Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, Marx went on to write his criticism of the Hegelian system. In Hegel’s philosophy, man and the nature are all regarded as the externalization of absolute spirit, that is to say, object (i.e. ‘me’) is deduced from subject (i.e. ‘I’); however, the subject is absolute spirit rather than man or nature. Then, the real relation is reversed. Marx said:

This process must have a bearer, a subject. But the subject only comes into being as a result. This result -- the subject knowing itself as absolute self consciousness -- is therefore God, absolute Spirit, the self-knowing and self-manifesting idea. Real man and real nature become mere predicates -- symbols of this hidden, unreal man and of this unreal nature. Subject and predicate are therefore related to each other in absolute mystical subject-object reversals of a subjectivity reaching beyond the object. Absolute subject is a process, as subject alienating itself and returning from alienation into itself, but at the same time retracting this alienation into itself.¹⁸

The Holy Family written in 1844 is very important in Marx's works. It is in this work that Marx discovered the secret of speculative idealism which regard to concept as substance, "In the speculative way of speaking, this operation is called comprehending Substance as Subject, as an inner process, as an Absolute Person, and this comprehension constitutes the essential character of Hegel's method".¹⁹ Marx wrote:

If from real apples, pears, strawberries and almonds I form the general idea 'Fruit', if I go further and imagine that my abstract idea 'Fruit', derived from real fruit, is an entity existing outside me, is indeed the true essence of the pear, the apple, etc., then in the language of speculative philosophy — I am declaring that 'Fruit' is the 'Substance' of the pear, the apple, the almond, etc. I am saying, therefore, that to be a pear is not essential to the pear, that to be an apple is not essential to the apple; that what is essential to these things is not their real existence, perceptible to the senses, but the essence that I have abstracted from them and then foisted on them, the essence of my idea — 'Fruit'. I therefore declare apples, pears, almonds, etc., to be mere forms of existence, *modi*, of 'Fruit' My finite understanding supported by my senses does of course distinguish an apple from a pear and a pear from an almond, but my speculative reason declares these sensuous differences inessential and irrelevant. It sees in the apple the same as in the pear, and in the pear the same as in the almond, namely 'Fruit'. Particular real fruits are no more than semblances whose true essence is 'the substance' — 'Fruit'.²⁰

The reason why I have quoted these passages is that they precisely and clearly show Marx's standpoint in rejecting traditional metaphysics and ontology. Contemporary philosophy mainly originated in "rejecting metaphysics". This means that the contemporary philosophy rejects the

traditional ontology and transcendental philosophy. It is Marx's philosophy that firstly discovered the symptom of the metaphysics and began to criticize it. In fact, Heidegger early realized the role of the Marx's philosophy. Heidegger said: "Throughout the entire history of philosophy, Plato's thinking remains decisive in its sundry forms. Metaphysics is Platonism. Nietzsche characterizes his philosophy as a reversed Platonism. With the reversal of metaphysics that was already accomplished by Karl Marx, the uttermost possibility of philosophy is attained."²¹ Some Chinese scholars also argued:

In the history of philosophy, Marx and Auguste Comte (1798-1857) had rejected the metaphysics at the same time ... in the view of the times, the rejection of metaphysics by Marx and Comte happened at the same time, in the view of interests, ... Comte limited his rejection to the fields of experience, knowledge and the 'empirical' while Marx provided us with the new way that philosophy ought to focus on the 'real world', the 'world of its times' and the 'human world', and to 'pay all its attention to human beings themselves' after rejecting metaphysics.²²

Contrary to the idealism of Hegel, the real life philosophy "from the Earth rises to Heaven" rather than "from Heaven down to Earth". Marx said, "consciousness is the recognized being, and the individual being is its actual life-process".²³ So the essence of Marx's philosophy is focus on real life; it is never the same with Hegelian speculative system of philosophy.

Unfortunately, the role of such critique had been neglected for a long time. According to the literature, Marx had never used the term of "ontologie" or "ontologisch" in a positive sense when he discussed his new philosophy.²⁴ However, some of his successors like Georgii Valentionovich Plekhanov (1856-1918) interpreted his philosophy under the traditional ontology. In fact, after 1930s, such ways of interpretation got further in the Soviet Union and then had great influence on China.

THE THEORY OF BEING IN MARX'S PHILOSOPHY

Marx's philosophy differs from traditional ontology that once existed in the history of philosophy. Traditional ontological philosophy is the idealist system constructed by the evolution of a pure category. However, such idealist system faced critique in Marx's philosophy. Through criticizing traditional ontology Marx deconstructed or sublated traditional philosophy. Of course, this does not mean that Marx abolished the branch discipline of ontology in philosophy, because reform doesn't mean abolish. It is the same when saying that Marx's philosophy "ended" but did not "abolished" the old philosophy.

Ontology as *bentilun* (meaning traditional ontological philosophy) is a special morphology of philosophy while ontology as *cunzailun* is a branch among the disciplines of philosophy. According to the former, Marx's

philosophy is not the traditional ontological philosophy. According to the latter, Marx's philosophy, like any other philosophy, has its own ontology as its fundamental theory. As an important representative figure of the Western Marxism, Hungary philosopher Georg Lukács (1883-1971), had once referred a branch of disciplines of philosophy to "ontology" in his famous *Zur Ontologia des gesellschaftlichen Seins*. Lukács said:

The attempt to summarize Marx's ontology, in a theoretical sense, leads one into a somewhat paradoxical situation. On the one hand, it must be clear to any unbiased reader of Marx that all of his concrete statements, understood correctly and without the fashionable prejudices, are in the last instance intended as direct statements about an existent, i.e. they are specifically ontological. On the other hand, however, we find in Marx no independent treatment of ontological problems. Marx never undertook a systematic or systematizing definition as to their specific place in thought, their distinctness from epistemology, logic, etc.²⁵

According to Marx, "being" is "actual existence"²⁶ as real world that is different from "being" in traditional ontology. That is to say, for Marx, "being" is nothing but "actual world", "objective world" and "human world" based on the practice of human beings. In this world, "nature", "society" and "human" are all real beings connected by practice. Therefore, the theory of being of Marx's philosophy is a theory that discusses the unity of natural being, social being and human being. The outlook of praxis is the key to understanding the ontology as *cunzailun* (theory of being) in Marx's philosophy.

Firstly, as to natural being, "nature" in Marx's philosophy, is not breaking away from the practice of Man, but "man's nature" or "anthropological nature". Marx said, "nature too, taken abstractly, for itself -- nature fixed in isolation from man -- is nothing for man."²⁷ The prevailing understanding such a phrase of Marx's is that Marx merely says that nature would have no significance without man, rather than to say that nature would not exist without man. In other words, such phrase is the meaning of a value theory but not of ontological meaning. In fact, this is a misunderstanding. According to Marx's philosophy, it is suspect to question the existence of nature without man. Obviously, such a question would not be put forward by a pre-history of human beings, and such a question could not be answered without the practice of human beings. Strictly speaking, inquiry the essence of the-would-there in the pre-history of human beings is just the mission of the scientific cosmology rather than of Marx's and contemporary philosophy.

So, we can say that it is very important for Marx to criticize the thinking pattern of Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-1872) on nature. According to Marx, when he examined nature, Feuerbach regarded it as the object of a single perceptual intuition breaking away from man, human practice and history. Marx said: "For that matter, nature, the nature that preceded human

history, is not by any means the nature in which Feuerbach lives, it is nature which today no longer exists anywhere (except perhaps on a few Australian coral-islands of recent origin) and which, therefore, does not exist for Feuerbach."²⁸ So we can suggest that the saying of "nature fixed in isolation from man is nothing for man" not only as to its value meaning, but also as to its ontological meaning. Marx said, Feuerbach investigated nature as isolated from practice, "never discussing man's world, but turning to external nature outside man's control."²⁹ Therefore, the nature under his understanding is still "abstract nature" or "the product of mind of nature".³⁰ Given the credit to the outlook of praxis, "the problem about some self-estrangement being about some being that controls the nature and man, and some non-substance containing the nature and man, is impossible based on praxis."³¹

Secondly, as to social being, the "social" and the "historical" understanding of being in Marx's philosophy are the process and the result of human practice. They are not abstract substances outside of human praxis. Marx said: "history is nothing but the action of individuals in pursuit of their aims."³² "The whole of world history is nothing but the formative process of man by his labor, is the product of nature for man."³³

Contrary to the abstract way of examining the social relationships or social structures, for Marx "social relation means the co-operation of many individuals".³⁴ As to social structure, it "always result from the life-process of several individuals".³⁵ So-called "social being" is nothing but "real life-process".³⁶

Finally, the human being as understand by Marx's philosophy is not the abstract man living alone or never changing, but living in the reality world. The real man is also practiced man: for Marx, man is not only "sensitive object" but also "sensitive practice". Practice is the basic existence pattern of man and his fundamental activities. Only from the outlook of practice can we precisely understand the reality of man. "Man comes into existence only when a certain point is reached. But once man has emerged, he becomes the permanent pre-condition of human history, likewise its permanent product and result, and he is pre-condition only as his own product and result."³⁷ "As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with what they produce and with how they produce. The nature of individuals thus depends on the material conditions determining their production."³⁸

As the species-being, man's whole character as a species resides in the nature of its life activity. Man as the special species distinguished from animal, also has his own "species-character" which, however, is the product of practice rather than some determined pre-existence, because "it is in his fashioning of the objective that man really proves himself to be a species-being".³⁹ In short, Marx rejects the mode of thinking that found abstract human nature to be based on some fixed substance, while insisting that discussing the real nature of man be base on the activity of Man and its changing form.

As objective human action, practice made man become a so-called "objective being" which, as relational being, reflects man's subjectivity and

then identifies man's being and its nature when facing the objective world. "Where there exists a relationship, it exists for me: the animal does not enter into "relations" with anything, it does not enter into any relation at all. For the animal, its relation to others does not exist as a relation."⁴⁰ The relation makes man an objective being, "without being objectively related, its being is not objective", "A non-objective being is non-real, non-perceptual, and non-being except something abstract for the imagination".⁴¹ Real man is always objective being, and such a human being is a relational being. The development of relations determines the state of man's real being. "Essence of man is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In reality, it is the ensemble of the social relations".

It is not so difficult to conclude from the above that Marx's philosophy opened a new way for research in ontology. The key traits of this new way, though somewhat similar to Heidegger's philosophy, is in knowing 'being' based on the form of being and the state and relation of being. The real world is man's world. Practice is the most fundamental form of man's world and is its ultimate basis. The outlook of practice and its mode of thinking are the keys to Marx's philosophy. Therefore, it is from the perspective of practice rather than from abstract opposition between mind and being that Marx concluded that, "One has not, as in the idealistic view of history, in every period to look for a category, but one must remain constantly on the real ground of history; one does not explain practice from the idea, but explains the formation of ideas from material practice".⁴² It is by beginning with an understanding of this new way, deeply and completely, that we will be able to proceed in our research into Marx's philosophy.

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NOTES

1 This thesis was selected by "The 2nd Marx's philosophy forum" (held in May, 2002 by the Department of Philosophy, Fudan University).

2 Cf. Zhao Dunhua, *Distinguish "Shi", "Zai" and "You" based on Metaphysics*, Scholars (Xueren), Vol. 4. Nanjing, China: Jiangsu Literature and Arts Press, 1993.

3 Cf. Liu Liqun, *The translation name of "bentilun" Discrimination*, Philosophical Researches (Zhhexueyanjiu), 1992 (12).

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5 Cf. *The Ancient Greek and Roman Philosophy*, Beijing, China: The Commercial Press, 1982, p. 263.

6 Cf. Zhang Dainian, *Collected works of Zhang Dainian*, Vol. 4, Shijiazhuang, China: Hebei Renmin Press, 1996, p. 520.

7 Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, translated by Gregory Fried and Richard Polt, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 2000, pp. 41-42.

8 Martin Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, edited by William McNeill, Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 368.

9 William J. Richardson, *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought*, Martnus: Nijhoff/The Hague, 1963, p. 15.

10 Cf. Yu Xuanmeng, *Research on Ontology*, Shanghai, China: Shanghai Renmin Press, 1999, p. 76.

11 Rorty, Richard, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Preface for Chinese edition, trans. by Li Youzheng, Beijing, China: SDX Joint Publishing House, 1987, pp. 11-15; English edition, Introduction, Princeton University Press, 1980, p. 3.

12 Georg Wiilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Vorlesungen Über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, Herausgegeben von Hermann Glockner Fr. Frommanns Verlag [H. Kurtz], Stuttgart, 1928, s. 319. *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Chinese edition, trans. by He Lin and Wang Taiqing, Beijing, China: The Commercial Press, 1983, p. 288.

13 Georg Wiilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Science of Logic*, vol.1, trans. by Yang Yizhi, Beijing, China: The Commercial Press, 1966, pp. 47-48.

14 *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

15 As to the field and the characteristic of traditional ontological philosophy, Mr. Mou Zongsan said: “at the beginning, the system of the evolution of the pure logic category did not involve object and said nothing to the world outside of the system itself. What is it discovering on earth? By serious examination, we can say that it discovers nothing but the ‘self-unfolding of pure reason’, it unfolds nothing except itself.” (See Mou Zongsan: *Collected works of Mou Zongsan*, Beijing, China : Qunyan Press, 1993, p. 58.)

16 Karl Marx and F. Engels, *Collected works of Marx and Engels*, Vol. 1, Beijing, China: Renmin Press, 1956, pp. 250-252.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 259.

18 Karl Marx and F. Engels, *Collected works of Marx and Engels*, Vol. 42, Beijing, China : Renmin Press, 1979, p. 176.

19 Karl Marx and F. Engels, *Collected works of Marx and Engels*, Vol. 2, Beijing, China : Renmin Press, 1957, p. 75.

20 *Ibid.*, pp.71-72.

21 Martin Hedegger, *Basic Writtings*, ed. by D.F. Krell, New York, 1977, p. 433.

22 Xiao Qian, *Research on Practical Materialism*, Beijing, China : Renmin University of China Press, 1996, p. 29.

23 Karl Marx and F. Engels, *Selected works of Marx and Engels*, Vol. 1, Beijing, China : Renmin Press, 1995, p. 72.

24 It is just in his early works such as doctoral dissertation and

Economics & Philosophy Manuscript of 1844, Marx used the term of 'ontologie,' 'ontologisch'. In fact, Marx gave up these terms in his mature works.

25 Georg Lukacs, *The Ontology of Social Being*, translated by David Fernbach, London: Merlin Press, 1978. Vol. 2., p. 1.; *Zur Ontologia des gesellschaftlichen Seins*, Chinese edition, trans. by Bai Xifang etc., Chongqing, China: Chongqing Press, 1993, V. 1, p. 637.

26 Maybe we can take the following passage written by Engels for a supplementary example, "When we speak of being, and purely of being, unity can only consist in that all the objects to which we are referring—are, exist." quoted from Yu Xuanmeng, *Research on Ontology*, Shanghai, China: Shanghai Renmin Press, 1999, p. 169.

27 Karl Marx and F. Engels, *Collected works of Marx and Engels*, Vol. 42, Beijing, China: Renmin Press, 1979, p. 178.

28 Karl Marx and F. Engels, *On Feuerbach*, Beijing, China: Renmin Press, 1988, pp. 21-22.

29 *Ibid.*, p. 42.

30 Karl Marx and F. Engels, *Collected works of Marx and Engels*, Vol. 42, Beijing, China: Renmin press, 1979, p. 179.

31 *Ibid.*, p. 131.

32 Karl Marx and F. Engels, *Collected works of Marx and Engels*, Vol. 2, Beijing, China: Renmin Press, 1957, pp. 118-119.

33 Karl Marx and F. Engels, *Collected works of Marx and Engels*, Vol.42, Beijing, China: Renmin Press, 1979, p. 131.

34 Karl Marx and F. Engels, *On Feuerbach*, Beijing, China: Renmin Press, 1988, p. 24.

35 *Ibid.*, p. 15.

36 *Ibid.*

37 Karl Marx, *Theory on Surplus Value*, Vol. 3, Beijing, China: Renmin Press, 1975, p. 545.

38 Karl Marx and F. Engels, *On Feuerbach*, Beijing, China: Renmin Press, 1988, p. 11.

39 Karl Marx and F. Engels, *Collected works of Marx and Engels*, Vol.42, Beijing, China: Renmin Press, 1979, p. 97.

40 Karl Marx and F. Engels, *On Feuerbach*, Beijing, China: Renmin Press, 1988, p. 25.

41 Karl Marx and F. Engels, *Collected works of Marx and Engels*, Vol.42, Beijing, China: Renmin Press, 1979, pp. 168-169.

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Chapter 9

On Truth, Goodness and Beauty

Cui Xinjian

There are common and basic ideas of the various types, forms and subjects in a culture, which constitute its general nature. M.J. Adler, a scholar of the USA, calls them “**Great Ideas**”. Truth, goodness, beauty can be included in this category. While they are not special parts of the culture, they exist in and infiltrate all types of culture, so they can be called a “**common language of human beings**”. **Their continual pursuit not only constitutes the basic frames and contents of the culture, but also creates the eternal themes and difficult problems of philosophical history.**

I

Strictly speaking, the problem of truth, goodness and beauty is not a purely philosophical one, while these **three seem to be in a certain close relationship with philosophy**. Only philosophy can discuss this problem intensively and systematically. On the other hand, this problem takes so **important a position in philosophical study that to some extent, one can say that philosophy is the study of truth, goodness and beauty**. **Generally speaking, the philosophical discussion about the problem of truth, goodness and beauty has some outstanding characters:**

First, this discussion holds truth, goodness and beauty as a whole. The problem of truth, goodness and beauty is a universal question without limitation as to subjects, time and nations. As far as the breadth, profundity and difficulty of the topic is concerned, other sciences can discuss **certain of its aspects, but only philosophy can discuss it overall.**

Second, this discussion has the meaning of *Weltanschauung*. Understanding and discussing truth, goodness and beauty from this viewpoint, philosophers **show their basic *Weltanschauung*** and have a crucial influence on that of others and on methodology.

Third, this discussion is always connected with that of freedom, inter-subjectivity, and relationships between man and the outside world, etc. Based on different understandings of **these questions, philosophers may have different explanations about truth, goodness and beauty**, because, like the problem of freedom, the problem of the truth, goodness and beauty arises during human activities and needs to be explained by **their activities.**

In philosophical history, most philosophical schools and philosophers try to resolve the problem of truth, goodness and beauty, though there are great differences in their angle of study and viewpoints. All know that the problem of ontology is the key point of the ancient western philosophy. Affected by this, truth, goodness and beauty were always explained as an inherent

character of the outside world, and their unity as that of the outside world itself. Modern philosophy concentrates on epistemology,-- thus rationalization and subjectivity are its major character. Accordingly, truth, goodness and beauty are understood as three aspects of human reason or three attributes and abilities of the subject. Their unity is that of the **subject itself**. Contemporary philosophy pays much attention to how to achieve harmony between the human and the outside world, the relationship between subject and object. Under these **circumstances**, truth, goodness and beauty are explained as the concrete unity of subject and object, that is, the unity of truth, goodness and beauty is the overall reality of **the human and the world, subject and object**. In contrast with western philosophy, Chinese ancient philosophy has as its outstanding character the **pursuit of the state of the unity of Heaven and Mankind**. So, Chinese philosophers take truth, goodness and beauty as different levels of this **Heaven-Mankind** unity, and this unity is regarded as the highest state. From these ideas, we can see that the problem of truth, goodness and beauty shows its different theoretical style in different times and nations, and thus that **philosophers have differing understandings**.

From the study above mentioned, we can know that the problem of truth, goodness and beauty contains two more related aspects. One is the nature of the truth, goodness and beauty, that is, what they are; the other is whether and how they can be unified. As to the first aspect, the problem about the common nature and about special nature of the truth, goodness and beauty should be discussed also. **These two connected aspects are the fundamental content of the philosophical discussion about truth, goodness and beauty. It's on these two aspects that philosophers argued in different times, among different schools.** And from the next part, we will discuss the question of the truth, goodness and beauty in these two aspects from the philosophical viewpoint.

II

What then is truth? What is goodness? What is beauty? These have long been discussed in the history of philosophy. The arguments include two aspects. One is the **common nature** of truth, goodness and beauty; that is, are they subjective or objective? The other is the special nature of the truth, goodness and beauty, namely the differences among them. Between these two aspects, **philosophers have paid more attention to the first**.

Most philosophers think truth, goodness and beauty are philosophical categories on the same level, which correspond to each other and have a common nature. But they do not agree on what is this common nature. **The so-called subjectivists hold that the truth, goodness and beauty are all subjective and relative, decided by a person's likes and dislikes; there are no objective standards and differences between truth, goodness, beauty and falseness, evil, ugliness. Such relativism and scepticism are undoubtedly false, because, conceding that truth, goodness and beauty are entirely subjective means that the same thing not only can be taken to be true, good, beautiful, but also can**

be taken to be false, evil and ugly. So if there were no objective standards for judging, there would be no truth, no goodness or no beauty; they would all be canceled.

The so-called **objectivists hold that** truth, goodness and beauty are entirely objective. They are intrinsic attributes of things having no connection with human existence and subjective consciousness. This idea is also false because it takes truth, goodness and beauty as intrinsic attributes of things, neglecting the fact that they relate to people. If truth, goodness and beauty were pure objective, human beings would have no need to pursue and create them.

Other people think that truth, goodness and beauty are both subjective and objective. Obviously, we can't **deny this idea**. **But merely putting the** two above-mentioned ideas together mechanically in a compromise can not advance our knowledge, because what the most important is to explain why the truth, goodness and beauty are an organic unity of the subjective and objective. It is just on this key point that many philosophers stop or go astray.

Marxist philosophy concedes that truth, goodness and beauty are a unity of the subjective and objective aspects; **meanwhile, it emphasizes** that human **practice are the roots of this unity**. Only when we go from humankind's **practice can we properly explain their common nature**. Marxist philosophy thinks that truth, goodness and beauty are neither a subjective fabrication, nor objective being without connection with man. In the final analysis, they emerge and develop in human activities, its positive fruit what show concretely the unity of subject and object. Marxist philosophy solves the problem whether truth, goodness and beauty are fundamentally subjective or objective by pointing out what makes them emerge and develop, and revealing this common nature.

III

The discussion of whether truth, goodness and beauty are subjective or objective seeks to decide their common nature; that **about their definitions** is to decide their special nature or differences. Even the philosophers who agree on truth, goodness and beauty's **common nature do not have a similar** idea on this specific explanation.

What is truth? Truth is an ancient and basic philosophical category. Both ancient and modern philosophers use this category in various meaning. So we must distinguish and analyze these usages before making clear the nature of truth.

A. *Truth of life and truth of fact*. In our daily life, when we say 'truth', we generally mean '**this person or this thing really exists**', **that is, to confirm** his or its real existence. In this circumstance, 'truth' is **generally equal to** 'existence'. **This usage is the most common definition of 'truth' in our life, so** we can call it the truth of life. The truth of fact refers to a subjective description and explanation which corresponds to objective facts. The difference between

the truth of fact and the truth of life lies in the fact that the former contains what it confirms, **that is, it reveals the thing's nature; the latter only confirms** its real existence.

B. *Truth of logic and truth of language.* The truth of logic and the truth of language have been two important categories in modern philosophy since the rise of **logical positivism and analytical philosophy**. The truth of logic indicates that a judgment or problem accords with fundamental rules and procedure of man's **thought to achieve accuracy in** logic. The truth of logic is a logical category, and takes an important position in building and appraising science-hypothesis. The truth of language indicates that sentences accord with grammar and daily usage to achieve clearness and simplicity. The truth of logic and the truth of language are the self- co-ordination of subject's concepts. However, there are differences between them. The truth of language only indicates whether the style of expression of the thought is proper or not, but the truth of logic means whether the process of the thought accords with procedure and whether it is accurate.

C. *Truth of science and truth of art.* When saying the truth of science, we usually understand it in terms of scientific **hypothesis**. The truth of science means that we reveal the connections inherent in objects accurately. The truth of science requires that scientific theories be conformable, repeatable, reasonable and understandable. As a result, the truth of science requires not only the truth of fact but also the truth of logic and language. And the truth of fact is the most important among these "truths". **Compared with the** truth of science, the truth of art pursues the reality of the feelings. And when saying the truth of science, we usually understand it under the circumstance of artistic fabrication. In this respect, it means neither logical reasoning, fabricating randomly, nor simulating or mirroring the objective fact and actual life, but means recreating or rebuilding that **syncretizes personal experience and reality** by the imagination. Appraising the truth of the **scientific hypothesis' rationality and that of artistic** imagination in the individual, we usually use the truth of science and the truth of art as the basic standards respectively.

D. *Reality and truth.* As a requirement and appraisal of the subject's reflecting the object, reality emphasizes that the reflection should show up the object. As far as this point is concerned, the mirror and camera seem better than man in reflecting the **object accurately**. **So reality refers to the total copying** of the prototype. However, truth means that the subject reflects the objects' nature and law correctly and positively, and that the **subject reproduces the** object in the concept. As the positive fruit of human's **cognition**, truth means that the subject's **conception accords with the nature of the object**. This is a basic category of epistemology.

Undoubtedly, these various usages of truth reveal the connotation of truth from different perspectives, but we can't **take any of these concrete** usages as philosophical "truth". **So we must make clear the connections** between these concrete usages before grasping the philosophical connotation of 'truth'. **To reveal the special nature of** truth, only to analyze in terms of meaning is far from adequate. We must grasp it from the **subject's activities**,

from the contradiction and relationship between subject and object. **Seen from the perspective of the subject's activities and the contradictory relationship between subject and object, 'truth' is the highest target pursued by the subject's cognition, the resolution of the contradiction of subject and object in the cognition. These are the philosophical connotations of 'truth'. Specifically, it contains three connotations:**

First, truth refers to the fact that the contradiction between subject and object is overcome in humankind's **cognition and that they are unified as a whole**. In this process, human **cognition starts from pursuing truth** which it tries to achieve; that is, human beings want to tackle the fundamental contradiction between subject and object and realize a unity of the them. So, as for the content, **'truth' is a philosophical category reflecting the relationship between subject and object, and indicating this unity in the process of cognition.**

Second, as for the form, **'truth' refers to the outcome of unifying the subject and the object, and refers to the subjective thought as according to the object, that is, it refers to truth. Verity is the final result of the unity between the subject and the object in the process of cognition.**

Third, as for its nature, **'truth' means that the subject abstracts and reflects the object by concepts. In the course of cognition, we obtain the truth through the following process: the subject abstracts the object scientifically in order to make clear its inner nature, and reflects this in concept. In this process, the former stage of abstracting the object scientifically is the premise, while reflection by concepts is the result: if there were no premise, there would be no the result. Upon obtaining the result, we have obtained truth. It is through this stage that truth differs from goodness and beauty.**

Contrary to truth, falseness refers to subject and object separated from or opposed to each other. **That is, when we divide the subject and the object or exaggerate one party, falseness is produced. So falseness means that the subject and the object do not correspond to each other, which means distortion of the fact.**

From the above, we can conclude that **'truth' displays the essence of cognition that is the pursuit of rationality, which in turn refers to the laws inherent in the development of the things. Through the continuous pursuit of the truth, we further our cognition and our reason can be pushed forward also.**

What's goodness? Not only such ancient philosophers as Socrates and Confucius, but also contemporary scholars discuss 'goodness', but few discuss this problem from the viewpoint of philosophy. Before discussing the philosophical connotation of 'goodness', we would review some concrete usages of goodness.

A. **Goodness of life and goodness of personality.** In our daily life, when we discuss goodness, we always relate it to good. Good manners, good behavior, good persons are always taken as 'goodness'. The good and goodness usually refer to the manners, persons and behavior which are good for man. When we use goodness to appraise a person's personality and

character, we mean he or she is a noble-minded person. And the ‘goodness’ of a person is **always embodied through the following behavior: when one’s needs contradict others’ or the needs of the majority, he can give up his right and interest to some extent to benefit the others or the majority.** As a result, the goodness of personality refers to a special character, namely, **sacrificing one’s own benefit to benefit others. This behavior can be set as example.**

B. **Goodness of motive and goodness of result.** When we follow the goodness of motive, we wish to satisfy our needs, others’ and society’s. The goodness of the result refers to the fact that the subject has achieved this aim through his or her activities. There is a **certain but not necessary corresponding relationship** between these two kinds of goodness. Because good motive does not necessarily lead to a good result, and a good result may not come from a good motive. But we should **not separate them entirely, for they correspond to each other under many circumstances.**

C. **Goodness of ethics and the goodness of benefit.** The goodness of benefit refers to the value relationship between man and things, meaning that the nature of the **object accords with the subject’s benefit and requirements.** In this sense, what can benefit humankind can be called goodness of benefit. The goodness of ethics means that the subject’s **behavior accords with the laws** which they must observe. So this kind of goodness indicates the relationship between human beings and refers to the appraisal of **one’s behaviors.** From the **connotations of these two kinds of goodness,** we can see there is a clear difference between them. The goodness of ethics mainly tackles the contradiction between man and the things, while the goodness of benefit mainly tackles **contradictions between human beings, yet, they relate to each other.** **Without the goodness of benefit, the goodness of ethics will become vast and empty, and without the goodness of ethics, the goodness of benefit will become pragmatic or even evil.**

Obviously, these concrete usages of goodness reveal the connotation of goodness from certain aspects, but they can **not grasp its nature.** If we want to reveal its special nature and grasp its philosophical connotation, we must pay attention to the subject’s **activities and the relationship between the subject and the object, especially their contradiction.**

From the perspective of the **subject’s activities and contradictory relationship** between the subject and the object, we can learn that goodness is the highest target the subject **pursues through practice, and is the resolution** of the contradiction between subject and object, that is, the resolution of the contradiction between freedom and necessity. **This is the philosophical connotation of goodness; concretely, goodness has the following three connotations:**

First, goodness means that the **subject and the object are unified and the contradiction between them, that is, of freedom and necessity is resolved.** In practice, human beings try to resolve the fundamental contradiction between subject’s freedom and the object’s **necessity, between subject’s requirements and the object’s nature, and unify them as a whole.** In this sense, human beings start their practice from goodness and try to achieve goodness. Thus, seen

from the content, as the outcome of subject's **practice**, goodness indicates a **harmonious status achieved between the subject and the object**, reflecting the character of the relationship between the freedom and necessity.

Second, as for the form, **goodness means that the subject and object unify, referring to the various material and spiritual products the subject creates**. As new objects reformed by humankind, these products are the **embodiment and condensation of the unity of the subject and the object**, satisfying people's requirements and displaying people's will. So the products of practice embody goodness.

Third, as for its **nature**, goodness means that **the subject reshapes and possesses the object**. In practice, we **reshape objects according to our requirements and possess them to satisfy our need**, through which we acquire the goodness and unite freedom and necessity. Here, **reshaping the object is the premise, while possessing it is the result**. Only in possessing the subjects can we achieve the situation of goodness.

To better know the connotation of goodness, we should review the meaning of 'evil'. **Evil is contrary to goodness**, meaning the subject and the object conflict or oppose each other in practice. **When necessity affects freedom passively or the object counteracts the subject, the evil arises**.

From what had been discussed above, we can conclude that the connotation of the good and the evil in the sense of philosophy are different from that in ethics. In ethics good and evil are moral appraisements of human behavior, while in philosophy they refer to the nature or status of subject and object's relationship in practice. **Goodness displays the fundamental aim and essence of human practice, that is, it displays the human pursuit of that which accords with their benefit or requirements**. So it displays the **human mission in practice**. It is the **continuous pursuit of goodness that pushes forward humankind's requirements and practice**.

What is beauty? Pythagoras, a philosopher in ancient Greece, has already brought out and studied the problem of beauty. The *Book of Change* is the first to study the judgment of beauty in Chinese philosophical history. What is beauty? When can we say that it is beauty? These problems are still the research focus in current philosophical academia and aesthetics studies at home and abroad.

A. **Beauty of satisfaction and beauty of mysteriousness**. 'Beauty' as mentioned in our daily life refers **first to obtaining some satisfaction, especially that in the sense of emotion**. This means that as an emotional experience of subject, beauty always connects with satisfying a certain requirement of the subject, which embodies the relationship between the beauty and the requirements of subject. **Thus, there is no obvious difference between 'beauty' and 'goodness' in real life**. Understanding beauty as requirement-satisfying shows that **aesthetic activity is split off from activity of practice**. Thus there is no difference between goodness and beauty, or rather, taking goodness as beauty shows that this kind of beauty remains at the elementary level. In fact,

beauty does not mean satisfying the subject's requirement. In some occasion, the harder it is to get something, or the more unlikely it is to meet the real needs of people, the more mysterious and charming it could be, which will lead us to the sense of beauty. This can be called the beauty of mysteriousness, which then can be regarded as transcending and supplementing to the beauty of satisfaction.

B. Beauty of joy and beauty of sublimity. Beautiful things always make people feel relaxed, happy, joyful and comfortable, and people can take some pleasure in them. Hence people often bring beauty and joy together, or take joy as beauty. Comic beauty is the beauty of joy, the two of which seem to have some natural relationship. The person without the sense of beauty will not know real joy; also, the person who never experiences joy will inevitably comprehend beauty in a unilateral way. Of course, the beauty of joy is not its only form. A thing makes people feel sublime, solemn, great and heroic though it may not bring joy to people. It can also inspire the sense of beauty, which we name the beauty of sublimity. The beauty of tragedy is a beauty of sublimity. The beauty of joy and the beauty of sublimity complement each other in edifying and sublimating people's emotion. If we take the beauty of joy as the fresh and relaxing light music, which stands for freedom and harmony, then we can say that the beauty of sublimity is the profound and moving classic music, which stands for thought and strength.

C. Beauty of harmony and beauty of creation. 'Beauty is harmony.' People usually define beauty according to the harmony in things or objects themselves. Beautiful things are always characteristic of equilibrium, coordination and integrity in content and form, or in shape and structure, all of which constitute harmony. Harmony is the common trait of the beauty of nature, the beauty of human body and the beauty of art. Harmony appears in the following ways: firstly, the object and its background are coordinate; secondly, the form or structure in the object itself is equilibrrious; thirdly, its shape is integral and fulfilled. Harmony is a kind of beauty in itself; it means the accord or unity between the inner and outer scale of the subject. The beauty of nature is mainly that of harmony; it is not the product of human activity but is all natural. The beauty of art is not only the beauty of harmony, but also the beauty of creation that embodies the nature and power of human creativity.

The beauty of creation lies in what man makes, embodying his wisdom and power; it forms its essence and human nature, and contains his understanding and reach towards beauty. Taking creation as beauty actually affirms and praises humans themselves. The beauty of harmony is a feast for eyes, while the beauty of creation makes people feel cordial and proud as they bear its internal consistence. The beauty of creation must embody harmony, or else, it would not be beautiful; and this beauty of harmony can be both natural and man-made.

As a philosophical category, 'beauty' summarizes and abstracts the various above-mentioned concrete modes of beauty and its different aspects, and reveals its most common nature. Beauty should have an harmonious form

and structure identified with its content. **While it is an emotional experience of subject, it can not be summed up in emotional impulse. To grasp the special nature of “beauty”, we still must start off the activities of subject.**

Seen from the activities of subject and the subject-object dichotomy, ‘beauty’ **has three connotations:**

First, it refers to conquering and tackling the subject-object dichotomy in the aesthetic activities **in order to achieve the unity of the two**, that is, to reach the unifying state of human nature and the nature of things, and the unifying state of emotion and emotionlessness. **‘Everybody likes the beautiful things.’ Pursuing beauty is the aim of aesthetic activities of subject; it tackles the fundamental contradiction within them, that is, the contradiction between human nature and the nature of things, between emotion and emotionlessness.** This too is **the embodiment of the subject-object dichotomy in the aesthetic activities.** Thus, **as to the content**, beauty signifies the unity between subject and object in aesthetic activities, and reflects the nature of the relationship between human nature and the nature of things, between emotion and emotionlessness.

Second, as for the form, beauty is the fruit of unifying the subject and object in the aesthetic process, through which we obtain the beautiful as articles or works of art, **etc. It exhibits the agreement between the inner scale of the object and the emotional scale of the subject.** Beautiful scenery, beautiful things, beautiful works, **etc, all are expression forms of beauty.**

Third, **as to its nature**, beauty is the transcendence and transference of the subject towards object and the emotion of the subject itself. **The acquisition of beauty, the unity of human nature and the nature of things, the unity of emotion and emotionlessness all realized through the transcendence and transference of subject towards object and the emotion of the subject itself.** The fundamental contradiction between human nature and the nature of things lies in the fact that the object is emotionless in essence, while the subject is undoubtedly emotional. The aesthetic activity is to make the object become emotional and accord with human nature by giving them man’s emotion and special nature. **Transcendence towards the emotion of the object is the premise**, and the transference is the result. Beauty means transcendence beyond the boundary of man and things, **transferring man’s emotion to things.**

Contrary to beauty, ugliness refers to the status in which subject and object are opposite or not well coordinated. It refers not only to imperfection or disharmony in form, but also to being against human feelings, distorting and suppressing human nature in content. In essence, ugliness is that the inner emotional scale of subject and the outer scale of object **are not in accord with each other.**

To sum up, as philosophical categories, truth, goodness and beauty are **not equal to** epistemology, ethics, **aesthetics, or to** science, religion, or art. Truth, goodness and beauty come from the activities of the subject and the contradiction between the subject and the object, all of which are concrete expressions of the unity of the subject and the object. Differences between them are as follows: truth is the expression of the unity of the subject and

the object in cognitive activities; goodness is the expression of this unity in activities of practice; beauty is the expression of this unity in aesthetic activities. Truth, goodness and beauty summarize the content of the unity of the subject and the object respectively from three angles. Relations between truth, goodness and beauty are both serial and parallel. Each of them owns its distinctive attribute, and **can not be covered or substituted by the other two.**

IV

Like the problem of the nature of truth, goodness and beauty, the problem of their unity is another focus when philosophers discuss this problem. Pursuing and exploring the unity of the three is **not only an ancient philosophical problem, but also one that is ever new.** However, **what is the unity of truth, goodness and beauty; what is its basis? In other words, is this unity a random supposition and assumption or is it a feasible ideal?** These most basic problems are always neglected. In fact, the argument about the questions themselves is equally significant to the argument over their solutions. If the questions were false, **undoubtedly there would be no correct answer or solution.**

What does the unity of truth, goodness and beauty indicate? Looking from its first being brought out and then discussed by most philosophers in the history of philosophy, we can know that this unity includes the following four concrete aspects: Firstly, truth, goodness and beauty share a **common nature.** They rely on each other and **can not be separated; they have an inner relation and consistence. This is the lowest layer of unity.** Secondly, truth, goodness or beauty have **their own special nature, and obviously they mutually supplement each other.** Only when the three supplements each other can they build a complete picture of the fruit of human activities. This unity is **on the primary layer.** Thirdly, truth, goodness and beauty infiltrate into each other and mix together. There are ingredients of goodness and beauty in truth, and ingredients of truth also infiltrate into goodness and beauty. We **can not divide them completely. This unity is on the secondary layer.** Lastly, **they penetrate each other in essence, and are identical to the highest degree.** This means that the most flawless truth is also the greatest goodness and beauty, and vice versa. It is **unity at the highest level. There are two false ways to understand this unity:** One is that of **comprehending the unity merely from a single aspect.** For example, the unity of truth, goodness and beauty is taken as being completely the same, or this unity is substituted with the idea of Kant that 'beauty is the unity of truth and goodness.' Likewise, understanding this unity as the unity of epistemology, ethics and aesthetics or as the unity of science, religion and art is also false. The unity of truth, goodness and beauty is and can only be a philosophical problem; **it is not a problem of the relationship between different disciplines.** The internal consistence of human culture is only a concrete expression of their unity.

Why this unity is possible can be understood only through the subject and its activities. Firstly, seen from the subject itself, any subject has

three psychological traits: intellect, that is, the rational or cognitive ability of subject; emotion, that is, **the affection ability of subject**; will, that is, the volition of subject. The **psychological activities of subject are the unifying process of intellect, emotion and will; they rely on, and interact with, each other. At the same time their existence builds the psychological basis from the three arise. If there were no intellect, emotion and will, there would be no truth, goodness and beauty. Seen from various angles, the abilities of human intellect, emotion and will develop harmoniously as a whole and organize into a unity. The unity of intellect, emotion and will of the subject itself provides a physiological basis and inner psychological mechanism for the unity of truth, goodness and beauty. Secondly, seen from the active structure of the subject, human cognitive activity, activity of practice or aesthetic activity respectively bear their own trait, yet are consistent with and supplement each other to constitute an integral unity. The consistence and unity of these activities in their fundamental objectives are the realistic foundation for the unity of truth, goodness and beauty, because in the final analysis truth, goodness and beauty are all products of human activities. At last, though each has its own trait, there is a common nature among them, which is also this important basis. Obviously, there are objective bases and chances for the unity of truth, goodness and beauty, but this does not mean that this unity can be naturally achieved. On the contrary, this unity can be realized only through continuous striving and pursuit in human activities.**

Truth, goodness or beauty is the unity of the subject and object and in its own aspect, thus only the unity of truth, goodness and beauty is the integral unity of subject and object, or, **in other words, the expression of the unity of the subject and the object to the highest degree. Seen from the perspective of the subject-object relationship, the unity of truth, goodness and beauty is the harmonious growth of the subject and the object. As for subject, to pursue unity of truth, goodness and beauty is to pursue liberty. Therefore, the essence of this unity is to achieve the liberty of human beings, and to make humans the real masters of nature, society and themselves.**

Liberty is the highest ideal for human to pursue, **but there are great bifurcations among people's understanding towards liberty. Some take liberty as obeying and use outside necessity and bondage; some regard it as doing what you want, that is, obeying the inner impulse of will; others hold that liberty is to resist, confront and transform the outside necessity, or to keep the necessity itself within limits; some maintain that liberty exists only in the ideas of the subject. These perspectives are not wholly unreasonable, but none of them grasps the nature of liberty.**

In fact, as a philosophical category, liberty refers to the liberty of humankind and of human activities. Liberty is achieved by struggling instead of endowing, and is always connected with **the self-mastery, self-determination and self-reliance of human beings. Liberty is both endless and relative. Therefore, the realization of liberty means getting rid of and surpassing the fixed bondages both external and internal. But we can not equate it to being at the subject's pleasure, which is actually obedience or submission to the inner**

impulse of will. **Real** liberty is to establish harmonious relationships between the subject and the object and to fulfill the unity of the truth, goodness and beauty. Truth, goodness and beauty are all the expressions of liberty achieved by the subject, but they are all unilateral and limited. Only the unity of truth, goodness and beauty is the most complete and highest liberty. **It is the essence** both of the unity of truth, goodness and beauty and of liberty.

Seen from the connotation and essence of this unity, **its realization** is inevitably a concrete historical process. In **other words**, the unity of truth, goodness and beauty is a concrete and historical unity, which is endless with the development of the relationship between the subject and the object and that of the subject's **activities**. **This** unity is concrete because any positive fruit of the subject's **activities at specific times was a fundamental solution to the** contradiction between the subject and the object, which may condensed and exhibited truth, goodness and beauty to different degrees, or may fulfill this unity to a certain extent. We say that this unity is endless, because the three also refer to the spiritual state of subject. As a state of mind highly **universal** and abstrac, the spiritual state is obviously **different from tangible targets**. People can fulfill tangible targets, **but can not fully reach some spiritual state**. **The pursuit of the spiritual state will never end.**

Of course, there are different levels of the spiritual state. Its being endless indicates that **humans can never reach its highest level**. **The supreme** truth, the supreme goodness and the supreme beauty, all of which are the uppermost forms of the **spiritual state**, are **actually the highest state of the** subject. **Their original meanings in the perfect and highest sense is the utmost** of truth, goodness and beauty. **At this perfect level, the three are identical**. Or else, they can't be named the supreme truth, the supreme goodness or the supreme beauty. In this sense, people's **pursuit of this highest state necessarily** reaches **the same goal by different routes**: the supreme truth, the supreme goodness and the supreme beauty are **one not three, namely the supreme** unity of truth, goodness and beauty. To sum up, to **pursue the supreme** truth is to pursue the supreme goodness and the supreme beauty, and to pursue the unity of truth, goodness and beauty.

From what have been mentioned above, **we can conclude that the** unity of truth, goodness and beauty is not merely the ideal mode of subject-object relationship, but also a kind of ideal personality which people are pursuing. The unity is the ultimate home both for *Weltanschauung* and for **philosophy of life**. It is **both the ultimate ideal for human beings and the highest state of life for an individual**. As long as **human beings survive**, the unity of truth, goodness and beauty shall be a common topic and goal for **all peoples**.

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Chapter 10

The Theory of Will

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The theory of will is an ancient, yet fairly modern philosophical issue. It is an important branch of philosophy that contains many debates and is misunderstood constantly, and it is as well an important philosophical legacy from Karl Marx. In our times, the theory of will has become an important branch of philosophy to be reconstructed. The main reasons are as follows: voluntarism and other theories of will in western countries have bogged down; the theory of will in contemporary China is still in a poor state; global and individual problems in contemporary practice become more and more serious; the contradictions between the urgent needs of contemporary practice for a reasonable theory of will and the lagging development of such theory, and so on. By re-understanding Marx' Philosophy, establishing and applying practical thinking mode and paying more attention to realistic problems, we should be able to re-discover, expound and advance deeply and systematically Marxist practical theory of will.

THEORY OF WILL IN THE CONTEMPORARY ERA

In the contemporary era the theory of will has become an important branch of philosophy to reconstruct. This judgement is based on the status quo of the theory of will, and it is as well a critical reflection on human nature, human life and contemporary philosophical spirit¹. According to Karl Marx, the human being has will and can make his living objects of his own will. It is important to the intrinsic natures of a human being that differentiate one's life activities from those of creatures. The intensity and rationality of will have much to do with a human beings' potential subjectivity, subjectivity and their freedom. Since modern times, with the unilateral development of instrumental reason, misapplication of the will and the effects of anti-subjectivity stand out to an unprecedented degree.

From the viewpoint of the theory of will, the will of contemporary human beings interrelated with instrumental reason is developing in two extreme directions. On the one hand, as the ability to control the world by one's own will and activities increased greatly, mankind becomes dizzy with success, and "lofty aspirations and great ideals" of conquering the whole world at will becomes much more bloated. As a result, voluntarism is overflowing, instrument reason is developing unilaterally, a great many things go contrary to one's wishes, and human nature is evolving freakishly. On the other hand, a prevalent condition of life in our times is annoyance, violence, sex, fornication, entertainment, alienation, separation and obduracy. In a sense, depression has become a sticking point of contemporary human beings, and will is obstructed.

In these transitional times, the contradiction between will and decision has become an inevitable social phenomenon as the necessary basis of will and the power of decision have been thoroughly destroyed. In spite of that many people still cherish such creeds as "Where there is a will, there is a way," that things will frequently go contrary to their wishes still occurs. Practical life frequently shows that "where there are such longings and unfulfilled needs, the will is exactly not the way".

As for modern China, in a negative sense, modernization as catching up with and surpassing the advanced level in the world has been at great spiritual cost. The loss of ideals, inclination of belief, a crisis of confidence, degeneration of morality, decay of art, weakness of will and so on, --they are no longer overstated in prosperous times. The confluence of technological conciliarism, economic chauvinism, and gastronomy has even led to a series of problems of modernity that never appeared before, which has become the living condition of contemporary Chinese people. In a positive sense, whether to develop a socialist market economy or to construct a socialist democracy depends on cultivating a good many relatively independent and well-rounded subjects of interests and of will: "liberating the will" and "normalizing the will", as well as "liberating thought". Only thus can the positivity, initiative and creativity of all the Chinese people be really and fully mobilized, and the continuous and harmonious development of the whole of Chinese society be assured. In fact, any progressive social revolution or reform is sure to reflect the common interests and wills of the majority of the members of society, and no successful social revolution or reform can but effectively mobilize and centralize the will and power of the masses. Just as Mao Ze-dong and Deng Xiao-ping often pointed out, "It is our aim to create a political situation that has centralization and democracy, discipline and freedom, united will and individual happy mood."² Deng Xiao-ping emphasized that, "it is the political situation of socialist democracy, which we should try our best to realize today and in the future."³ From the viewpoint of the theory of will, the relation between democracy and centralization and between right and obligation, in the final analysis, reflect the relation of wills and interests of different social members in politics, law and other aspects. To construct socialism with Chinese characteristics, relative to the former highly centralized and rigid system, it is not only a rational reconstruction of the relations between individual and collective wills and between the national and social wills. It is also inevitable and rational to promote the freedom of will and full development of the Chinese masses. This is a great objective which can be realized only by rationally reflecting, criticizing and normalizing human wills.

That the problems in human nature and practice become much more protruding, reflects deeply the irrationality of human will and the inherent contradictions and crises in modes of human living. These force people to oppugn their ability of self-determination and self-control, and spur people to criticize their own will. This plight has much to do with the neglect, distortion and misapplication of the human will, it shows that contemporary philosophy which pays much attention to human beings and their life world is still very

imperfect. In the meantime, all the theories of will, such as voluntarism, decline due to their defects, and cannot provide proper tools for thinking or valuable guidance.⁴ For example, voluntarism and other western contemporary theories of will are only the non-dialectical negative forms of traditional western theories of will. Though they argue against the mode of subject-object separation in traditional philosophy, they fall into a new mentalism; They disclose and criticize incisively and vividly the dogmatism and absolute rationalism in modern philosophy, and often make for a certain relativism or absolute non-rationalism; they unilaterally accentuate individual activity, creativity and the absolute freedom without any restriction, and get into a new metaphysics and autism. The contemporary famous philosopher Paul Ricoeur's "Philosophy of Will" expounds human will from the viewpoint of phenomenology, which reflects the effort to combine human reason and non-reason⁵, but his understanding and explanation of the nature of self-determination and self-control of the human will, and his understanding and explanation of the true meaning of will in activity of potential subjectivity and subjectivity are not complete or thorough.

The reciprocity of the contemporary "individual problems" and "global problems" becomes unprecedented difficult, which makes an urgent request for contemporary philosophy to re-ascertain the issue of will as an important philosophical theme and to construct a rational form of theory of will.

THEORY OF WILL IN CHINESE THOUGHTS

In the history of Chinese philosophy, the issue of will is a very prominent and important theoretical and practical problem. Chinese philosophers constructed their own theories of will that differ from western philosophy. These exerted important influences on the development of Chinese traditional society. However, the theory of will has been neglected in China since modern times, which has influenced philosophical research and social development in China.

In Chinese traditional philosophy, many philosophers thought much of the close relations between will and human virtue, human activities, right and wrong, good and evil. They attached much importance to the training of the human will, character and morals, and put forward their own thoughts on will, intention, wish or ideal. For example, Confucius emphasized will; he said: "the marshal of an army can be deprived of will, but layfolk cannot be deprived of the will." (Analects of Confucius: Zihan) Mo-tse emphasized will; he thought: "No one can have great wisdom if his will is not strong. No one can succeed if his words are not honest." (Mo-tse: Luwen) More than many modern thinkers, ancient Chinese thinkers highly emphasized the significance of will on demonstrating and realizing moral ideal and the perfection of a moral personality. On the whole, the understanding of will in ancient Chinese philosophy, especially orthodox Confucianism, had obvious rational characteristics. But it contained also some factors of voluntarism. For instance, "Do not do as you would not be done unto by others" is usually regarded as a Chi-

nese “golden rule”. On the surface, it seems that man is considerably tolerant and has self-knowledge. But if we get to the bottom of the rule, we can find out that it does not exclude or even imply and affirm a will to power. In fact, “Do not do as you would not be done unto by others” used to be expressed in English as “do as you would be done unto by others”, which just means “do to others as you would want to be done unto by others” in nature. In the course of the development of Confucianism, both the obvious rational characteristics and the implied factors of voluntarism in the forefront of Confucianism were further developed.

The rational characteristics in Confucianism arrived at its extreme in the Song- Ming periods: Li Xue, Zhu Xi, Cheng Yi and other idealist philosophers in Song and Ming dynasties attached much importance on the functions of reason and denied human instinct, they generally ignored such characteristics of will as self-determinations. Idealist philosophers belittled human will, emotion and desire, maintaining that reason commands will and emotion and further they were against utilitarianism and fell into asceticism. In theory, they substituted “the principle of unconstraint” for “the principle of consciousness”, restricted human instinct by ethical reason, and put an end to human emotion and will by intelligence. In a word, “keep up Tian-Li, put out human desire,” in Yang Ming-Xin Xue, human exceeding and individual characteristics were highly canonized. It was thought that will cannot do without the action of reason, and it didn’t depart far away from the rational route on the “debate between will and reason”, but undoubtedly it opened a way to voluntarism, and its successor further advanced the theory towards a clear and specific voluntarism, which provided a traditional spiritual resource for the voluntarists in modern China. In the middle of 19th century, Gong Zi-zhen, a famous poet and philosopher, advocated a violent social and cultural critique. He advocated the “selfhood” and “mental efforts” which heralded modern Chinese voluntarism. Continuing the headstream initiated by Gong Zi-zhen, both reformists such as Liang Qi-chao and Tan Si-tong, and bourgeoisie revolutionists, such as Zhang Tai-yan, further stretched out and spread abroad voluntarism on the basis of evolutionism.

In the first half of the 20th century, the research into theory of will in China mainly introduced western voluntarism, which had obvious impact on Chinese society. At the beginning of the 20th century, Liang Qi-chao, Wang Guo-wei and some other famous thinkers began to spread the voluntarism of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche in China, which had much to do with the break up and collapse of feudalism in the terminal stage of the Qing dynasty. Around the period of the WuSi Movements, the thought of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Bergson were popularized in China as never before. Many progressive thinkers, such as Chen Du-xiu, Li Da-zhao, Lu Xun, Mao Dun and Guo Mo-Ruo, highly praised the rebellious consciousness and the enterprising spirit of voluntarism: they took it as a spiritual weapon to criticize the feudal ethical code, tried to reconstruct the character of the country and to enlighten the thinking of the people. Some scholars even tried to construct an individualistic system of values based on free will. In the forties of the 20th century,

the School of Warring States Strategy, whose representatives were professor Chen Quan, Lin Tong-ji and Lei Hai-zong, added the thoughts of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. Because of the special background of times, the Chinese intelligentsia's understanding of voluntarism had obvious political signs, and the understanding of Nietzsche's philosophy as fascist had a deep impact on modern China.

With the establishment and consolidation of the social system in China since 1949, Chinese philosophical research came under the direction of Marxism for the first time. However, under the influences of traditional economic, political or ideological elements, **the issue of will was excluded** from the main philosophical problems in Chinese academia until the period of reform and 'opening'. Research on the theory of the will in China at that time mainly introduced and criticized voluntarism: it was often non-systemic and unilateral, and contained many mistakes. At the same time, will was explained only from the viewpoint of a mechanical materialism or theory of knowledge. The characteristics of unconstraint, self-determination and self-control of the human will could not be roundly illuminated and innovative studies of the theory of will were infrequent. As a result, there were only a few philosophical papers and monographs on this subject in modern China, and misunderstanding was popularized in the public and academia. Many people thought "will" is associate with "voluntarism": "the theory of will" is equal to "voluntarism", and voluntarism is a ridiculous and retroactive fascist philosophy. In a rather long period, the theory of the will, along with voluntarism, was not studied in principle, and it was done an injustice as well. The lack of study of the theory of will inevitably restricted the whole development of contemporary Chinese philosophy.

The reform and open policy bring the Chinese people a rich and colourful life, and has created a predominant social environment for research in Chinese learning, including the research into the theory of will. In the early eighties of the 20th century, the research of modern western philosophy of the will thawed gradually. In 1980, Chen Cun-fu put forward the idea in his paper "A Critique of Voluntarism" that voluntarism should be analyzed concretely, and "philosophical critique" shouldn't be replaced by "political critique" in the research on voluntarism. In 1986 and later, an important change happened in the evaluation of voluntarism in Chinese philosophical circles. For example, Zhou Guo-ping published "Nietzsche: at the turning point of the Century"⁶, and "Nietzsche: a Tragic philosopher" written by Chen Gu-ying was published by Beijing SanLian bookshop in 1987. Both books analyzed Nietzsche's philosophy in a positive manner. By then, Chinese philosophical circles no longer regarded Nietzsche as a Fascist philosopher and the tendency to deny voluntarism completely changed to a certain extent; however, some scholars evaluated and praised voluntarism exorbitantly. Since the 1990s, quite a few scholars have been strongly conscious of the problems in Chinese research on the theory of will, and they appealed for an overcoming of ideological bias so as to research the theory of will systematically and profoundly. Chinese philosophers recently have made some progress in researching into the theory

of will: for instance, they expound the material foundation and the passivity of human will; they translate and introduce quite a few classics of western philosophy of will; they publish some books explaining the thought of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Bergson; they criticize voluntarism quite roundly and rationally; they probe the issue of will from some concrete angles. In a word, their understandings of will are gradually deepened. In particular, the re-discovery and contemporary explanation of Marx's philosophy as a practical materialism provide an advanced thinking tool for us to study and understand the will. Thus the theory of will has become an important point of growth in the research and development of contemporary Chinese philosophy.⁷

QUESTIONS FOR A CONTEMPORARY CHINESE THEORY OF WILL

Reconstructing the theory of will in contemporary China, some problems need to be properly resolved:

Question one: orientation of the subject. The orientation of the theory of will determines whether it can be further developed. In my opinion, the theory of will itself is not an independent form of philosophy. Probing into it redounds on the whole development of contemporary philosophy, but neither is theory of will itself equal to the contemporary form of philosophy. The theory of will is an important branch of Marxist philosophy, but is not Marxist philosophy itself. Thus the theory of will is very important and should not be neglected, but its status should not be overdrawn lest it be taken for voluntarism.

Question two: the meaning of the research regarding the theory of will for historical materialism. In Marxist philosophy, will not only has the determinations "I think" or "I know", but also indicates "I desire", "I want" or "I wish". Human beings are historical subjects who have will, human activities exhaustively contain will, and all the social history is created by human beings through their own intentional activities. This is an important characteristic of human society and social laws different from nature and natural laws. Grasping the relation between social history and human will from the viewpoint of practice is a fundamental difference between Historical Materialism and Historical Idealism. As for the meaning of the theory of will for Historical Materialism, such problems should be studied deeply: will and man, will and social being, will and practice, will and reason, will and cognition, will and power, will and evaluation, will and belief, will and social impetus, the activity of human will and the conditionality of social historical law, will and the rationality of human activities, free will and human liberation, and so on. Researching the issues of will should be based on Marxist Historical Materialism. Such research can advance the understanding and explanation of Historical Materialism, and further hasten its contemporary development.

Question three: transformation of the paradigm. There were serious defects in the basic standpoint, thinking mode, and theoretical theme in traditional theories of will which couldn't be overcome by partial patches. The

rational form of a theory of will not only should contain the rational ingredients in voluntarism and other “old theories of will”, but overcome their non-dialectical and non-historical shortcomings, and include new themes, new standpoints and new methods that the “old theories of will” could not have. In other words, reconstructing the theory of will has to be based on the ultimate transformation of its paradigm.

RECONSTRUCTING THE THEORY OF WILL

Marxist theory of will is the horizon that contemporary theory of will cannot surpass.⁸ Karl Marx took human practice as the chief object of his philosophy, and further turned human practical modes into “practical thinking mode”, which emphasized that all objects, realities and world-views should be “understood as practice”. Marx did not understand human will as confined to the scope of spirit, or explain the relation between man and the world only from the point of human will, but understood and explained human being and will from practice. It was the essence and key to his thoughts to construct and apply a consciously practical mode of thinking.

Marxist theory of will is a thoroughly material, dialectical, historical and practical theory. Practical quality is the key point that differs his theory from other theories of will; it is also the most effective visual angle for understanding its material, dialectical and historical qualities. Based on the scientific viewpoint of practice, Marx constructed and followed the practical thinking mode to realize the practical turn of the theory of will. In fact, Marxist theory of will is a practical theory.

Digging out, expounding and further promoting Marxist practical theory of will is the rational way to re-construct the theory of will. The reasons are mainly as follows:

Firstly, in the history of philosophy, the practical theory of will is the most advanced paradigm. The trends of thought of rationalism and voluntarism probed into the nature, structure, function and meaning of will at different levels and phases. Though opposite in nature, they reinforced each other in many of their contents. Voluntarism denied modern rationalism, but the denial was too absolute and started all over again and did not surpass modern rationalism in deed. Practical theory of will provided a dialectical denial to modern rationalism and was not the result of criticizing voluntarism, but in fact, it contained the rational contents of voluntarism and acted as a rational critique of voluntarism, i.e. it also provided a dialectical denial of voluntarism as well. As a matter of fact, the practical theory of will is still the horizon of the contemporary theory of will and cannot be surpassed. But then voluntarism did not fade away with the popularization of Marxist philosophy, but became one of its main rivals in the last century. In this way, digging out and expounding deeply and promoting Marxist practical theory of will can help to find an important cut-in point for Marxist philosophy to have a conversation with voluntarism and other western philosophies, and ensure that voluntarism would be overcome in theory and in practice. In order to re-construct the

theory of will, it is an inevitable and rational choice to retain and advance the practical theory of will.

Secondly, practical theory of will is an important growing point for Marxist philosophy. On the one hand, as the issue of will is one of the main problems to which Karl Marx devoted his attention all his life, probing into the issue of will continually and deeply is an important task in the construction and development of Marxist philosophy. Young Marx emphasized theory of will by reflecting upon and criticizing his own viewpoint on will, Marx finally came to understand will based on practical theory and practical thinking mode, which accelerated his turning to a materialist from a revolutionary democrat, and further turning into a practical materialist, namely, a communist from an ordinary materialist. On the other hand, constructing a practical theory of will deepened and developed the basic categories, viewpoints, methods and principles of Marxist philosophy. Marxist philosophy researches into the relations between human beings and the world in terms of practice, inevitably demands research into all the activities of human beings, including those of the human will. The Practical theory of will is a new theory of will which understands and explains will from practice. Such problems as to the rationality and irrationality, activity and conditionality, dissimulation and its negation were beyond the capacity of traditional theories of will. It was practical theory of will that for the first time resolved such problems perfectly and rationally in philosophical history. Yet the Practical theory of will is not Marxist philosophy itself, but only one of its branches. Human will is connected with human spiritual activities, such as human instinct, desire, sensibility and mind, and human practice, so Marxist philosophy based on Marxist practical theory is also connected inherently with the other parts of Marxist philosophy, such as Marxist practical theory, historical viewpoint, epistemology, axiology, theory of evaluation, theory of decision, and so on. The construction and deep development of the practical theory of will helps to accelerate the development such branches and to perfect Marxist philosophy. On the whole, the meanings of the construction and deep development of a practical theory of will not only consists in the theory of will itself, but is conducive to a deep development of the branches of Marxist philosophy, and the further of Marxist philosophy.

Finally, the practical theory of will is an important breakthrough in intensifying the critical and normative function of Marxist philosophy. The internal intertexture of its study of will and the critique of practice is an important characteristic of the practical theory of will. The rational understanding of human practice contained the will and the rational construction of viewpoints of practice and will were the key for Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in realizing their great revolution in the history of philosophy. By then, the viewpoint of practice and will had become the most important parts in the system of Marxist philosophy. At the present time, globalization and global problems provide an objective premise and foundation for the development of the practical theory of will, and provide an objective call and stimulates for it as well. Purifying, exalting and rationally explaining the problems contained

in human practice advanced the foundation of the Marxist practical theory of will, and it will make the practical theory of will to gain new content and forms in accordance with the demands of contemporary times. The practical theory of will reflects and criticizes theory and practice deeply. It inclines the theory of will to rational practices and in turn, practice develops a perfect theory of will, and furtherly accelerates the rationalization of social practice and the liberation of the human will.

PRACTICAL THEORY OF WILL

Deeply expounding and developing practical theory of will, and turning to Marxist practical theory of will from traditional “abstract theory of will”, is the rational way to reconstruct the theory of will in contemporary times.⁹ Based on such an understanding and judgement, I dedicated myself to researching into practical theory of will, and published the book *Practical Theory of Will* in 2002.¹⁰ The first monograph on the theory of will in China, it combines history with argument and theory with practice, it summarizes and reflects the theories of will in the history of Chinese philosophy and western philosophy for the first time in China, and it also digs into and expounds the Marxist theory of will for the first time. It points out that Marxist theory of will is a practical theory of will in nature, which is the advanced paradigm of theory of will. Then, by adhering to the paradigm, it deeply analyzes the essence, characteristics and functions of will, the conflicts and joining of wills, the rationality of will and its freedom, and then goes on to further construct a system of Marxist practical theory of will.

Practical Theory of Will consists of an introduction and seven chapters. Its main contents are as follows:

Introduction: “From abstract theory to practical theory of will” mainly expounds that the issue of will is an ancient and fairly modern philosophical issue, but that voluntarism and other theories of will in western countries and in China are still poor for their respective special reasons. Hence, the development of a contemporary philosophy and practice of will is in an urgent need.

Chapter 1: “Historical evolution of the western theory of will and and its morass” tries to review and reflect on the western history of the theory of will. It shows that all kinds of western theories of will are “abstract” in spite of having some rational contents. In essence, they all belong to “abstract theory of will”. The development of contemporary practice is in great need of the guidance of a new, realistic and practical theory of will.

Chapter 2: “Practical turn of the theory of will and its revolutionary meaning” expounds Marxist philosophy deeply. It points out that the Marxist theory of will is based on Marxist theory of practice: it understands and explains human being’s will as a practical mode of thinking. Marxist theory of will thinks of “changing the world rationally” as its theoretical theme, and emphasizes the importance of the working class’ will and its historic mission. The Marxist practical theory of will realizes the practical turn of the theory of

will; it is a material, dialectical, historical and practical theory. The practical theory of will surpasses all kinds of traditional western theories of will and voluntarism. The chapter argues that Marxist practical theory of will is the most advanced form of philosophy of will and very important to philosophical theory and actual practice.

Chapter 3: “What is will: from the viewpoint of practice” probes into a series of important problems of will, sticking to the paradigm of Marxist practical theory of will. The chapter argues that will is a kind of human being’s spiritual force originating from social practice. The human will selects a certain aim consciously and then stimulates and adjusts human enthusiasm and efforts to control a certain object and realize the aim it selects. Will is a kind of accumulation and concentration of human being’s needs, wishes, demands, ideas, beliefs and so on. It is an important internal basis of human subjectivity. The author argues that, according to Marxist practical theory, human will presents some evident characteristics as it acts on the human’s specific activities. For example, on the one hand, will is casual and impetuous; on the other hand, it is self-conscious and self-adjusting. In addition, the human will is self-selective and socially restrained, spiritual and active, destructive and constructive, changeable and inflexible.

Chapter 4: “Conflict and unification of wills” and 5: “Amalgamation of wills and the historical composition of forces” inquires into the activities of the human will and the relations among different wills. They point out that both conflict and unification among different wills are basic forms of the interaction of human wills. Following that, by deeply analyzing the will’s interaction and amalgamation deeply, they probe into the internal relationship between human will and social law, and put forward a subjective explanation of social law. They put forward a clear and rational explanation of the famous judgement that “social law is not determined by human will”.

Chapter 6: “Rationality of will” researches into will from the angle of evaluation. It bears out the legitimation and need of seeking the rationality of the will. By deeply reflecting relevant problems in the history of humankind and the history of philosophy, and further by researching into the standard of volitional rationality and comparing it with practical rationality, it expounds what rationality of will really means. Rationality of the will should not be understood in the meaning of will “conforming to” reason. The rationality of will builds on understanding and holding the character and essence of human will and practice. As an evaluative conception, rationality of will refers to a rational anticipation, reflection and evaluation that human will is justifiable, acceptable, realizable and effective. The chapter emphasizes that rationality of will can be sought only from specific recognition and practice, and seeking the rationality of will also is a kind of seeking rationality of human recognition and practice. The rationality of will is interrelated with the rationality of human cognition, evaluation, decision and practice.

Chapter 7: “Freedom of will and human liberation” reflects on the debate between theories of freedom of will and determinism. It emphasizes that the antagonism between the theory of freedom of will and mechanical

determinism should be surpassed by persisting in Marxist practical theory of will. Then, by adhering to the principle of “starting from practice”, and analyzing the activities and relations of actual human beings, the chapter illuminates the essence of freedom of will and the way to realize it. The author argues that freedom of will not only is a freedom of idea, but a freedom of human existence. In essence, freedom of will refers to the state of a human being “acting on his or her own will”. It is a historic process which can be realized historically only through concrete human objective activities. The boundary of freedom of will is determined by the internal contradiction and the development of social practice.

In this book, on the one hand, many problems of will are deeply reflected upon. On the other hand, based on contemporary practice, it maintains that Marxist philosophy must be re-understood, and tries deeply to explore and systematically expound the classical Marxist theory of will, especially, its analyzes and deep criticism of voluntarism which often is misunderstood and has led to many negative consequences. This research is intended to enhance the critical and normative functions of the Marxist theory of will, and further to advance the rationalization of contemporary practice and the realization of human freedom, by systematically expounding Marxist practical theory of will.

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Chapter 11

A Reconsideration of Marx's Idea of "The Association of Free Individuals"

Yu Jianxing

Abstract: The whole of Marxist theory centers on the emancipation and freedom of human beings, the naming of his highest ideal as the 'association of free individuals' being the clear proof. However, it would be superficial to announce Marxism as a 'humanism of individualism' according to Marx's pursuit of 'free development of each'. The 'free development of each' put forward by Marx when describing the 'association of free individuals' refers to individuals' re-subjecting their social relations which have been changed into material powers owing to private ownership and alienation. In this sense, the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all. In this very sense, too, the foundation of the real community is required as the presupposition so as to relate his theory of freedom to the theory of the elimination of private ownership and the alienation and elimination of class and finally, the state.

INTRODUCTION

In *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Marx and Engels declared: "In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all." (Marx & Engels, 1984) However, this vital statement failed to come sufficiently into people's notice for quite a long time. When summarizing Marxist elaboration in the characteristics of communism, it is usually neglected, intentionally and unintentionally. The reason for saying that it is neglected intentionally is that some people believe that Marx and Engels have reversed the relationship between 'the free development of each' and 'the free development of all'. Fortunately, the case has now changed to a great degree. This statement has been taken as Marx and Engels' classical elaboration on the characteristics of communism, and Engels' treasuring of this statement in his later years has now received much emphasis.

However, the emphasis on Marx's idea of 'association of free individuals' does not necessarily mean real understanding of this idea, as the contrary of error is unquestionably truth. Many expounders have developed the viewpoint of 'an individualist standpoint' out of the thought of 'association of free individuals' and thought it defended 'humanism'. Yet, the problem is not to make a choice as to whether Marxism is humanism or not. By comparison with the traditional explanation that Marxism is thought as economic deter-

minism ‘seeing things, but not people’, it is really an advance that Marxism is expounded as humanism. The key to the problem is: Can Marxism be boiled down to humanism? If so, then what is the representation of revolution realized in the history of ideas by Marx? This problem remaining unsolved.

This paper proposes a reconsideration of Marxist thought of ‘association of free individuals’. By this, we hold that ‘association of free individuals’, as the basic symbol of communist society which differs from any other previous patterns of society is Marx’s social ideal constructed as a stand ‘beyond humanism’.

THE MODERN REVOLUTION: SUBJECTIVITY AND CRITICISM

Society and the individual, as well as their relations are the basic problems to be expounded in every sociopolitical theory. Historically, from Plato to Hegel, conceptions for solving these problems in the history of sociopolitical theory can be roughly summed up in three types: Society must exist for the sake of individuals; individuals must have their ends and ways of living set for them by society; or else society and individuals are correlative, organic, to one another, society requiring the service and subordination of individuals and at the same time existing to serve them. (Dewey, 1988, p.187)

From a historical viewpoint, the distinction between the extreme individualistic and extreme socialistic theories is delineated by the modern subjectivity revolution. Ancient political theoreticians demonstrated the notions of the priority of society and state over the individual. According to Plato, justice not only exists in individuals, but also in the state, which has priority over the individual. Therefore justice for the state is written in larger letters and recognized more easily than justice for the individual. Since the individual cannot gain Good alone, but gets it only from society, goodness for the individual means taking on one’s own obligations. Aristotle proposed that though the polis and the individual both treat Good as the common goal, the polis essentially has priority over the individual. According to Aristotle, the human being is in the most literal sense a political animal that tends to polis life: ‘The man who is isolated--who is unable to share in the benefits of political association, or has no need to share because he is already self-sufficient--is no part of the polis, and must therefore be either a beast or a god’. (Aristotle, 1999) Thus the possible basis of free action is a free inter-subjective relation. That is to say, it is association of free individuals, rather than free individuals, that is the first to be free. Undoubtedly, for Aristotle, ethical or free action stems from political association, and his theory of ethics belongs to politics; it is a theory not about a moral subject, but about the association of free individuals.

The modern revolution subjectivity changed the understanding of the relations between the individual and the society or state. The collapsed ancient ethics is substituted by an atomic society in which the society or state is regarded as a tool of the individual, which instead is the chief aim. As Hegel described this transformation in *The Phenomenology of Mind*: ‘The universal

being thus split up into the atomic units of a sheer plurality of individuals; this inoperative, lifeless spirit is a principle of equality in which all count for as much as each, i.e., have the significance of Persons.' (Hegel, 1999, p.501) The ideology based on the individual is liberalism "It was a philosophy which was utilitarian in its ethical outlook, atomistic in its social philosophy, analytic in its science of man" (Taylor, 1993, p.1). This ideology can be roughly taken as resulting from the Enlightenment and bourgeois political revolutions.

It is not difficult to find historical need and rationality for the substitution of the extreme individualistic theory with an extreme socialist theory realized by modern subjectivity revolution. So far as the 'image of men' is concerned, the philosophy of subjectivity and humanism define "the principle of the self-subsistent inherently infinite personality of the individual, the principle of subjective freedom" let alone the great progress in regime achieved by the revolution. (Hegel, 1971, para.185) However, this modern view not only does not achieve the truth about 'image of men' and the relation between society and individual, but also entails about serious consequences "in thought, inspired by which he builds up the world of reality". (Hegel, 1956) Therefore, contrary to the modern view, emphasis upon the pre-cognitive basis of subjectivity and the priority of the society over that of the individual's autonomy became the main connection between contemporary philosophers' writings. (Dallmayr, 1992). If we look back on the history of criticism on the philosophy of subjectivity and humanism, Hegel would unanimously be accepted as its forerunner.

As mentioned above, Hegel regarded the appearance of modern liberalism, individualism and humanism as being historically inevitable. At the same time he also pointed out that such modern viewpoints did not have the notions of mind or concept. The thoughts of the Enlightenment and subjectivity incarnate the externality of spirit by prompting the spirit to present its inner thoughts, to develop individuality and a dynamic role. Without the stage of externality, spirit would not develop and realize the unity of subject and substance. Nevertheless, the thoughts of the Enlightenment and subjectivity comprise only one link in the development of spirit, which is filled with contradiction and even confusion. According to Hegel, individualism has falsified the nature of society and the state as well as of the individual as regards the foundation of socio-political theories. Hegel believed that self-consciousness does not stem from individuals; that individual rights do not have priority over society; and that society is not a simple aggregate of individuals. Furthermore, this "pure insight" knows the pure self of consciousness to be absolute and brings in the notion of "absolute freedom". Thus "absolute freedom" can produce "neither a positive achievement nor a deed; there is left for it only negative action; it is merely the rage and fury of destruction". (Hegel, 1999, p.604) For example, the French Revolution, which began with the declaration that everyone is free and equal and ended with the terrorism of the Jacobins, showed the deficiency of this abstract idea. (Yu Jianxing, 2000)

Through clearing the heritage of political philosophy in Europe during the 17th-18th century, especially Kant's 'moral world outlook', Hegel re-

constructed the theory on the individual and society as well as their relations. Having reviewed the genealogical basis of self-consciousness, Hegel pointed out that neither “I” or “thinking” (in Descartes’ principle “I think, therefore I am”) can become the first principle of philosophy; and that the forming of the concept of ego and self-consciousness cannot depart from the relation of self with others and that of self-consciousness with its opposite side. Hegel asserted, “Ego that is ‘We’, and ‘We’ that is a single Ego”. (Hegel, 1999, p.227) This means there exists a real universality between ego and others. Reciprocal recognition between ego and the other means both ‘I’ and the other are subjectivity, which is intersubjective. The inter-subjectivity pattern substituting for the (single) subjectivity pattern incarnate in the political theory that Hegel distinguished between *Sittlichkeit* and *Moralität*, and emphasized the priority of the former. Sure enough, on the one hand, this means Hegel wanted to carry on ancient Greek ethical thought, for the last time that the world saw an effortless and undivided *Sittlichkeit* was among the Greeks. Hegel’s phenomenology of mind (*Geist*) overcomes Kant’s theory of moral conscience (*Gemüt*). This means “society must be such that men relate to it as to a larger life in which they are immersed”. (Taylor, 1993, p.80) On the other hand, however, Hegel also saw that ancient Greek ethical thought was deficient in subjectivity, and longed for a ‘*Sittlichkeit*’ revival in a new manner.

That is to say, although he emphasized the principle that ethical life has substantial relationships, Hegel brought about an entirely new twist in this substantial concept that substance should be simultaneously understood as subject. This means that Hegel’s concept of liberty realizes a historical and epochal synthesis. When compared with the ancient idea, Hegel’s concept of liberty about ethical substance elaborates subjectivity, and when compared with modern idea, it elaborates the substantial principle. (Xue Hua, 1988) Hegel managed somehow to combine both Plato and Kant. (Taylor, 1993, p. 82) This embodies the distinct character of Hegel’s political theory, which is taken as a reflection on the development of modern political theory, even the development of human thoughts. (Yu Jianxing, 2000) By briefly reviewing the development of political theory from Plato to Hegel as above, we can see that, before Marx, Hegel had discussed the progressive aspect and the defects of subjective humanism with ‘an individualist standpoint’, which is a symbol of modern thought. Marx, as a real inheritor of Hegel’s philosophy, instead of a regressive the humanist standpoint, continued to deepen the criticism of subjectivity and humanism. In the following, we shall examine how.

CONCRETE CONCEPTIONS OF THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY

Hegel attempted to realize a historical and epochal synthesis. Did he succeed? As Dewey criticizes, Hegel’s “organic” conception seems to meet all the objections to the extreme individualistic and extreme socialistic theories, avoiding the errors alike of Plato and Bentham. But, all are committed to the logic of general notions under which specific situations are to be brought. In Hegel’s conclusion, the meaning and value are attached to the general notion,

rather than to the concrete situation; they thereby cover up the defects of the latter and disguise the need in serious reforms. The effect, if not the intention, of Hegel's idealism as applied in social philosophy was to provide a bulwark for the maintenance of the political status quo against the tide of radical ideas from revolutionary France. (Dewey, 1988, p.187-189)

In this respect, we see that Marx greatly advanced Hegel's socio-political philosophy. It is evident that Marx's political philosophy originated from Hegel, whose criticism of individualism and liberalism and revelation of the social nature of the individual evoked Marx' strong sympathy. But in contrast to Hegel, Marx defined the individual and society with great concrete content. That is to say, Hegel introduced the concept of "the other" as another self-consciousness, revealed the formation of the ego and of self-awareness, and identified human beings as social in the form of the unity of ego and others or self-consciousness and its opposite yet. He only expounded "how the form or attitude of self-consciousness in the first instance appears", (Hegel, 1999, p. 218) which belongs to the genealogical theory of self-consciousness instead of to social history. Even the fable on the relationship between master and slave is only a hypothesis of "the first man", it cannot successfully explain the advent of freedom and bondage. "The only labour which Hegel knew and recognized was abstractly mental labour." (Marx, 1975) In contrast to Hegel's method of approach that the starting point was consciousness taken as the living individual, Marx conformed to the notion of the real life of real living individuals themselves, and consciousness was considered solely as their consciousness. (Marx & Engels, 1964, p. 38)

Marx believed that the first premise of human history is the existence of the living individual. The social structure and the state are continually evolving out of the life-process of definite individuals, "but of individuals, not as they may appear in their own or other people's imagination, but as they really are; i.e., as they operate, produce materially, and hence as they work under definite material limits, presuppositions and conditions independent of their will." (Marx & Engels, 1964, p.36-37) There is no doubt that Marx regarded the existence of the "individual" as the base of his theory. But "Individual" has no methodological interpretation for to meaning. On the contrary, the "individual" can be defined only in the processes of material production and the social relations which thus result. Marx once said, "what they (individuals) are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with what they produce and with how they produce. The nature of individuals thus depends on the material conditions determining their production". (Marx & Engels, 1964, p. 32) According to Marx, definite individuals live under definite relations of production. In *Theses on Feuerbach*, Marx wrote, the essence of men is an "ensemble of social relations". Production is only possible as the result of inter-personal communications. Therefore, the individual as viewed from its actuality, is 'the summation of all social relations.'

Marx also pointed out that all the social relations are objective:

These relations are not relations between individual and individual, but between workers and capitalist, between farmer and landlord, etc. (Marx, 1984, p. 159)

Society does not consist of individuals, but expresses the sum of the relationships and conditions in which these individuals stand to one another. As if someone were to say: for society, slaves and citizens do not exist: both are men. They are both men, if we consider them outside society. To be a slave and to be a citizen are social determinations, relations between human beings A and B. Human being A as such is not a slave. He is a slave in and through society. (Marx, 1986, p. 195)

By emphasizing the priority and objectivity of social relations, Marx distinguished the conceptions of a personal individual and a class individual in *The German Ideology*. Marx said, individuals are under definite classes. If from a “philosophical” point of view one considers this evolution of individuals in the common conditions of existence of estates and classes, which followed one another, and in the accompanying general conceptions forced upon them, “in this way one can give history some hard clouts on the ear.” (Marx & Engels, 1964, p.92-93) It is ‘a great insult to human history’ to deny that personal development accompanied the existence of “class” and “rating” and conceived it as the development of the entire human race or its group. In *Capital*, Marx even regarded individuals as the personifications of economic categories:

...Here individuals are dealt with only in so far as they are the personifications of economic categories, embodiments of particular class-relations and class-interests. My standpoint, from which the evolution of the economic formation of society is viewed as a process of natural history, can less than any other make the individual responsible for relations whose creature he socially remains, however much he may subjectively raise himself above them. (Marx, *Capital*)

In this sense, social relations have priority over individuals, i.e. social relations (society) are not merely a “social framework” with respect to individuals, but stand as the very structural “ensemble” which constitutes individuality itself. Individuality is precisely a product of the ensemble of social relations. Undoubtedly, Marx opposes this category to that of the “isolated individual” of a Robinsonades who appears as an individual without social connectedness. There is no such “theory of the individual” in Marx, but there is a theoretical treatment of the individual. (Molina, 1990)

Furthermore, the contribution Marx made to the advancement of Hegle’s criticism on subjectivity and humanism can also be seen in his advocacy that the extreme individualistic theory of modern thinkers has its

profound social historical source. According to Marx, the theory of modern thinkers', which was based on the isolated individual, is the anticipation of "civil society", in preparation since the sixteenth century and making giant strides towards maturity in the eighteenth. He said, 'The further back we go in history, the more does the individual, and accordingly also the producing individual, appear to be dependent and belonging to a larger whole. ... It is not until the 18th century, in "bourgeois society", that the various forms of social nexus confront the individual as merely means towards his private ends as external necessity. But the epoch which produces this standpoint, that of the isolated individual, is precisely the epoch of the hitherto most highly developed social (according to this standpoint, general) relations. Man is a "political animal" in the most literal sense: he is not only a social animal, but an animal that can isolate itself only within society.' (Marx, 1986, p. 18)

However, why is it that the age with the most advanced social relations has to have the viewpoint of the "isolated individual"? Marx found an explanation in the ideology of commodity, money and capital. According to Marx, in money relations in a developed system of exchange (and this appearance leads democracy astray), the ties of personal dependence, distinctions of birth, education, etc. (all the personal ties at least appear as personal relationships), are in fact broken, abolished. The individuals appear to be independent...[this independence, which altogether is merely an illusion and should more correctly be called unconcern, in the sense of indifference], appear to collide with each other freely, and to exchange with each other in this freedom. (Marx, 1986, p.100)

But, Marx also pointed out that the existence of independent individuals in the developed exchange system in the civil society "is merely an illusion and should more correctly be called unconcern, in the sense of indifference". In truth,

The dissolution of all products and activities into exchange-values presupposes both the dissolution of all established personal (historic) relations of dependence in production, and the all-round dependence of producers upon one another. The production of each individual producer is dependent upon the production of all the others, just as also the transformation of his product into a means of subsistence for himself has become dependent upon the consumption of all the others. (Marx, 1986, p. 93)

The absolute mutual dependence of individuals, who are different from one another, constitutes their social connection. (Marx, 1986, p. 94) This means Marx intended to reveal the objectivity of the social bond between individuals (through the media of "the tension provided by the interaction between universal need and supply") by distinguishing indifference between individuals and personal independence, and then point out the social historical origin of the isolated individual's idea of modern philosophers and surpass

it too. Marx also revealed the serious consequence of individualistic ideology and demonstrated the need to overcome “civil society”. He said the serious result of ideology of the “isolated individual” is fetishism, such as commodity fetishism, currency fetishism, and capital fetishism. “Every individual possesses social power in the form of a thing”. This produces “dependence mediated by things”. (Marx, 1986, p. 95) This means that the production of the individual “is not directly social, not the offspring of association distributing labour within itself. The individuals are subsumed under social production, which exists outside them as their fate; but social production is not subsumed under the individuals who manage it as their common wealth.” (Marx, 1986, p. 95-96)

The objective relationship of dependence is nothing but the social relation independently confronting the seemingly independent individuals, i.e. their own reciprocal relations of production which have acquired an existence independent of, and separate from, them. Yet the abstraction or idea “dominates the individuals” (Marx, 1986, p.101) Therefore, in order to achieve the overall development of the individual, we must eradicate the society based on exchange value, turn social relations into people’s common relations as such which are in their control; that is to say, to build an association of free individuals.

THE DISENCHANTMENT OF STATE

Marx stressed that objective social relations comprise individuality itself and that the overall development of individuals presupposes the destruction of societies based on exchange value and the establishment of the association of free individuals. This reveals Marx’s inheritance of Hegel’s theory of social politics and the traditions thereof dating back to the Platonic-Aristotelian period. However, as he went beyond Hegel’s abstract idea by defining individual and society accurately, Marx’s advancement of Hegel’s social and political thought lies in the fact that his ‘association of free individuals’ is in no case a refurbished version of Hegel’s concept of state.

Based on his critique of modern subjectivity theories, Hegel pointed out that actual and concrete freedom consists in the ethical entity. The supreme form of this ethical entity is the state. Hegel said, “Self-consciousness finds in the state, as its essence and the end and product of its activity, its substantive freedom”. (Hegel, 1971, para. 257) Hegel’s worship of the state reflected the actual situation of Germany after the Napoleonic war and the Germans’ bitter national humiliation and their hope for a unified nation. Yet through Hegel’s state idea could not make contact with ‘totalitarianism’ simply, there existed in Hegel’s idealist state a conclusion that was “committed to the logic of general notions under which [were] specific situations”, as Dewey called it. Hegel said that what he examined was the Idea of the state:

In considering the Idea of the state, we must not have our eyes on particular states or on particular institutions. Instead

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we must consider the Idea, ...the ugliest of men, or a criminal, or an invalid, or a cripple, is still always a living man. (Hegel, 1971, para. 258. A)

For Hegel, bad behaviour may disfigure the state in many respects, but they do the Idea of the state no harm.

Until his work in the *Rheinische Zeitung* Marx's thoughts had been under the influence of Hegel. Through his editing Marx came to realize that state is not a universal thing which places itself above the private, classes interests. The state of Prussia had been debased to act with the characteristics of private ownership. Marx, however, still insisted that such behavior of a state was not in accordance with its nature. In March 1843 as the *Rheinische Zeitung* was closed down by the Prussian government, Marx readily retired from the social stags to his study. His reason for doing so was that Hegel's stand in the Philosophy of Right was insufficient and he wanted to work out the nature of state and its relationship with society. His 'study' work resulted in the manuscript of the *Critique of Hegel's philosophy of Right* and the articles published in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*, in which Marx concluded that neither legal relations nor political forms could be comprehended either by themselves or on the basis of a so-called general development of the human mind, but that on the contrary they originate in the material conditions of life, the totality of 'civil society'. Furthermore, based on his initial study on civilian society, Marx discovered the limitation of political revolution and political emancipation, put forward the goal of endless revolution for human emancipation and found that the proletariat is the social force capable of carrying out the complete emancipation of mankind.

Afterward, Marx, through his political economic analysis of the civil society, definitely realized the basis of private ownership, of the state; and that the state was just a tool of the ruling class. So Marx treated Hegel's ideal state as an 'illusory community' or 'substitute for community'.

In the previous substitutes for the community, in the state, etc., personal freedom has existed only for the individuals who developed within the relationships of the ruling class, and only insofar as they were individuals of this class. The illusory community, in which individuals have up till no combined, always took on an independent existence in relation to them, and was at the same time, since it was the combination of one class over against another, not only a completely illusory community, but a new fetter as well. (Marx & Engels, 1964, p. 91)

In contrast to the various 'illusory communities', Marx brought forward the concept of 'real community'. According to Marx, the transformation, through the division of labor, of personal powers (relationships) into material powers, can be dispelled not by dismissing its general idea from one's mind,

but only by the individuals again subjecting these material powers to themselves and abolishing the division of labor. This is not possible without the community. Only in a community does the individual have the means to cultivate his gifts in all directions; only in the community, therefore, is personal freedom possible. "In the real community the individuals obtain their freedom in and through their association." (Marx & Engels, 1964, p. 91-92)

From the above discussion we can see that Marx stressed that individual freedom can only be obtained in the community or the free relations between individuals. A state, which is worshipped as god by Hegel, is just a tool for the ruling class, and so, is not only an entirely illusory community, but also a new fetter for the ruled class. As a result, the realization of human freedom and emancipation is bound to presuppose the dying out of class and state. As early as July, 1844, Marx, after his first economic analysis of civil society and realizing the basis of private ownership on which a state exists, pointed out that, in order to overcome the contradiction between personal and public interests, the state must perish of itself. Marx also wrote in *The German Ideology* that the proletariat in order to assert themselves as individuals, "must overthrow the State". (Marx & Engels, 1964, p. 95) In *The Poverty of Philosophy* he wrote: "The working class, in the Course of its development, will substitute for the old civil society an association which will exclude classes and their antagonism, and there will be no more political power properly so-called, since political power is precisely the official expression of antagonism in civil society." (Marx, 1984, 212)

Thus the concept of the 'association of individuals' has been clearly expounded through the discussion on the critique of modern individualism and liberalism and the disenchantment with the state. Society or community has priority over the individual and individuality is composed of social relations, not the versa. Of course society's priority over the individual is a conceptual category rather than a temporal one. A human being is not only a gregarious animal, but also an independent animal in a society. Society is fundamental for every individual. Therefore, the 'free development of each' put forward by Marx when describing the 'association of free individuals' refers to individuals' "re-subjecting" their social relations that have been changed into material powers owing to private ownership and alienation. In this sense, the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all. In this very sense, too, the foundation of a real community is required as the presupposition for relating his theory of freedom to the theory on the elimination of private ownership and the alienation and elimination of class and state finally. Since the freedom of every individual can be achieved only in and through a community of themselves, the community independent of individuals and societies in which classes and their antagonism exist is 'illusory'; hence the fetter restraining the free development of every individual. Thus Marx's concept of an 'association of free individuals' hits home at the individualism which treats the relations between individuals and society or state in an means-end terms, and Hegel's state idealism which, with the integration of history and age as its target, regards state as the unsurpassably highest form

of the realization of freedom. Accordingly, we can reasonably suppose that, based on Hegel's political philosophy, Marx successfully summarized the whole developing history of political thoughts and further, surpassed history by bringing forward and demonstrating a post-political social ideal.

At the beginning of this paper we mentioned the traditional interpretation of Marxist theories. It is undoubtedly ignorance or prejudice to interpret them as an economic determinism which spurns individual freedom. The whole of Marxist theory centers on the emancipation and freedom of human beings, the naming of his highest ideal as an 'association of free individuals' being the clear proof. However, it would be superficial to pronounce Marxism as a 'humanism of individualism' according to Marx's pursuit of the 'free development of each'. This understanding completely omits the revelation of the 'image of men' made by Hegel and Marx; Besides, in methodology, it cannot overcome the deficiency of all modern political philosophy including Hegelianism committed to the logic of general notions of society and individuals as well as their relations. These misunderstandings, in terms of Marx, are the illusive reflection of social alienation and antagonisms.

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Chapter 12

Love: Partial or Equal? A Comparative Study of Confucian Love, Mohist Love and Christian Love

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Abstract: This paper is to discuss the following issue: if people should love each other, should the right way of loving be partial or equal? Partial love means that the love one gives to others is unequal, while equal love means that the love one gives to others is equal. This issue was first addressed by Motse who advocated equal love, and condemned Confucianism for its partial love. Mencius defended Confucianism against Mohist's challenge, and he charged Motse saying equal love ignores one's father. Confucian partial love, rooted both in the Chinese family system and in human nature, has been received as a basic moral principle by the Chinese, while equal love has been ignored since the decline of Mohism. If this issue is applied in the Bible, we can see the love in the Bible is equal love,-- that is a Christian contribution to the Western civilization. However, neither partial love nor equal love alone is sufficient for human life, so theoretical demarcation and practical harmony between partial love and equal love maybe is a good choice for the people in this age of globalization.

The thesis of this paper is that if people should love each other, what is the right way: should love be partial or equal? Partial love means that the love one gives to others is unequal—to someone all, to someone none, or to someone more, to someone less; while equal love means that the love one gives to others is equal. As a matter of fact, this question was addressed by Motse (c. 468-376 B.C.) more than two thousand years ago. Though our times are so far from Motse's times, and modern life is quite different from ancient life, the question Motse addressed is still alive in the world, and is included in everybody's feelings and deeds. So I wish to remind people of this ancient question, analyze it, and seek some answers. In this paper, I will discuss this question with a comparison between Chinese thoughts and Christian thoughts. This paper consists of the following: 1. Motse's thoughts of equal love versus partial love; 2. Confucian refutation against Motse; 3. the transformation of the question in the later times of ancient China; 4. the resource of partial love and equal love in the Bible; 5. the influence of the Christian principle of love in modern Western society; 6. the problems concerning this question in the life of today's world. 7. my suggestion: theoretical demarcation and practical harmony between the two kinds of love. Please note, I have to clarify that the quotations of Chinese material are taken from some different translators, so translation of the same concept may not be completely consistent with one another.

MOTSE'S THOUGHTS: THE ACADEMIC BEGINNING OF THE QUESTION--PARTIAL LOVE OR EQUAL LOVE

The problem of partial love or equal love exists objectively. However, Motse was the first scholar who treated it as an academic issue. Mohism was one of the most important schools in the pre-Qin days. Han Feitse said: "Confucianism and Mohism are the most distinguished systems of the time."¹ Mencius had to acknowledge the fact that "The words of Yang Chu and Mo Ti fill the empire. If you listen to people's discourses throughout it, you will find that they have adopted the views of the one or the other."² But today, when people mention Chinese culture, they always speak of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, and seldom speak of Mohism. Most of Western scholars know Confucianism, but hardly know Mohism. The best example is that Microsoft Word cannot recognize the word Mohism. For the sake of those who are not familiar with Motse's thoughts, I would like to start the discussion from the introduction of some Mohist basic concepts.

The Translation and the Connotation of Motse's Central Concept

It is a common understanding for scholars that *jian ai* is the central concept of Mohism. But there is no common translation of this Chinese word. Some translators interpret it as universal love, for example in *The Ethical and Political Works* of Motse translated by Yi-Pao Mei,³ while others translate it as all-embracing love, for example in *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy* written by Fung Yu-lan. I do not want to judge which is better, but just want to emphasize that each of them shows some aspects of the connotation of the concept, and there is no perfect translation. So, no matter how we translate the concept, most important is to grasp the deep understanding of the connotation itself. In the following, I will tentatively use universal love as the English translation of *jian ai*; of course, its connotation is not limited to what the word universal implies. According to my understanding, universal love is rich in different implications. In other words, it contains many properties. In the controversy between Confucianism and Mohism, equality is one of the implications or properties of universal love, which is what I will focus on in this paper. I will concentrate on one implication or property of universal love, namely equality in universal love. Only in this sense, do I say that universal love is the same as equal love.

The Meaning of Equal Love

In brief, equal love means that all the people love each other equally, and this kind of love is without any partiality, favoritism, bias or discrimination. Motse said: "It is to regard the state of others as one's own, the houses of others as one's own, the persons of others as one's own self."⁴ "Every one regards the states of others as he regards his own, ...every one regards the capitals of others as he regards his own, ...every one regards the houses of

others as he regards his own...⁷⁵ Based on this teaching, if someone loves only himself but not others, or loves himself more than others, someone loves only his parents, brothers, sisters, children and relatives but not others', or loves his own persons more than others', some one loves only his goods, house and land but not love others', or loves his own possession more than others', some one loves only his community, party, class and nation but not others', or loves his own attribution more than others', or some one loves only his opinion, morality, religion, culture and civilization but not others', or loves his own ideas more than other's, then we can say that his love is not equal love.

The essence of equal love is the relationship between the self's own and others'. If you treat anyone or anything belonging to others as your own, no matter who or what is involved, your love may be called equal love. Motse's equal love does not deal mainly with the situation of love being more or less, but with the situation of love being all or none.

Partial Love and Kindheartedness of Confucianism

The opposite of equal love is partial love. Partial love can be divided into two kinds: one is that people may love themselves but not others, and the other is that people may love themselves more than others. The former is the logical extreme of the latter, because the end result of decreasing love must ultimately be no love. Motse's criticism aimed directly at the former, though it is logically related to the latter. Motse said: "At present feudal lords have learned only to love their own states and not those of others. Therefore they do not scruple about attacking other states. The heads of houses have learned only to love their own houses and not those of others. Therefore they do not scruple about usurping other houses. And individuals have learned only to love themselves and not others. Therefore they do not scruple about injuring others."⁷⁶ In Motse's view, feudal lords, heads of houses and individuals were those who practiced partial love. Then who advocated the viewpoints of partial love theoretically? Motse condemned Confucians. It is well known that the central concept of Confucianism is *ren (jen)* or *ren ai*, which is usually translated into benevolence or kindheartedness. Fung Yu-lan's translation is human-heartedness.⁷⁷ I would use kindheartedness as the translation of *ren* or *ren ai*. In all fairness, the focal point of kindheartedness is not the partiality of love, but the extension of love. In other words, Confucianism did not guide people to love others as little as possible; on the contrary, it urged people to extend their love to others as much as possible. On the other hand, the root of the kindheartedness of Confucianism is the love of children for their parents, and the model is the proper relationship between father and son. Confucianism has another important concept, *qin qin*, of which the second *qin* is a noun and means parents, the first *qin* is a verb and means regarding someone as parents in a proper way, and the meaning of the concept is that everyone should treat his parents as well as possible. On the basis of this kind of feelings, people should do their best to expand their scope of love to all the others under the

sun. Thus the distribution of love is objectively graded and is unequal among people. So it is clear that kindheartedness contains an implication or property as gradation or partiality. In this sense, it is right when Motse regarded the kindheartedness of Confucianism as partial love. Motse had a slogan: "Partiality is to be replaced by Universality."⁸ Of course, Confucians would prefer its love to be regarded as graded love rather than as partial love.

In fact, Motse did not oppose kindheartedness at all. What he opposed was the partiality within kindheartedness. A Confucian named Wu-ma Tzu said to Motse: "I cannot practice all-embracing love. I love the men of Tsou (a nearby state) better than I love those of Yueh (a distant state). I love the men of Lu (his own state) better than I love those of Tsou. I love the men of my own district better than I love those of Lu. I love the members of my own clan better than I love those of my district. I love my parents better than I love the men of my clan. And I love myself better than I love my parents."⁹ This passage can be regarded as a self-vindication of Confucian partial love with the exception of the last sentence which does not accord with Confucian filial piety.¹⁰ Mencius said: "Treat the aged in your family as they should be treated, and extend this treatment to the aged of other people's families. Treat the young in your family as they should be treated, and extend this treatment to the young of other people's families."¹¹ The difference between the two statements is that Wu-ma Tzu's deduction is from distance to closeness, and from outside to inside, hence it seems to be negative, while Mencius's deduction is from closeness to distance, and from inside to outside, hence it seems to be positive. In any case it is clear that graded love or partial love is a principle of Confucianism which is what Motse opposed.

The Reasons of Motse's Argument

Motse opposed partial love and advocated equal love because he thought that partial love is the root of calamities in his times while equal love is the way of eliminating the calamities and procuring benefits for the world. Let us listen to what Motse had to say.

Motse said: The purpose of the magnanimous is to be found in procuring benefits for the world and eliminating its calamities. But what are the benefits of the world and what its calamities? Motse said: Mutual attacks among states, mutual usurpation among houses, mutual injuries among individuals; the lack of grace and loyalty between ruler and ruled, the lack of affection and filial piety between father and son, the lack of harmony between elder and younger brothers—these are the major calamities in the world. But whence did these calamities arise, out of mutual love? Motse said: They arise out of want of mutual love. ... When feudal lords do not love one another there will be war on the fields. When heads of houses do not love one another they will usurp one another's

power. When individuals do not love one another they will injure one another. When ruler and ruled do not love one another they will not be gracious and loyal. When father and son do not love each other they will not be affectionate and filial. When elder and younger brother do not love each other they will not be harmonious. When nobody in the world loves any other, naturally the strong will overpower the weak, the many will oppress the few, the wealthy will mock the poor, the honored will disdain the humble, the cunning will deceive the simple. Therefore all the calamities, strife, complaints, and hatred in the world have arisen out of want of mutual love. Therefore the benevolent disapproved of this want. Now that there is disapproval, how can we have the condition altered? Motse said it is to be altered by the way of universal love and mutual aid. ...When feudal lords love one another there will be no more war; when heads of houses love one another there will be no more usurpation; when individuals love one another there will be no more mutual injury. When ruler and ruled love each other they will be gracious and loyal; when father and son love each other they will be affectionate and filial; when elder and younger brothers love each other they will be harmonious. When all the people in the world love one another, then strong will not overpower the weak, the many will not oppress the few, the wealthy will not mock the poor, the honored will not disdain the humble, and the cunning will not deceive the simple. And it is all due to mutual love that calamities, strife, complaints, and hatred are prevented from arising. Therefore the benevolent exalt it.¹²

In this paragraph, there are two levels of love: the first level of love is mutual love, and the second level of love is universal love. The want of mutual love is a general reason of calamities, while the want of universal love is a particular reason of calamities. If we bypass the second level of love, we can think there is no divergence between Confucianism and Mohism, but if we give consideration to the two levels of love, we shall find that there are both common-ground and divergence between the two schools, though both Mohists and Confucians would focus on the divergence than the common-ground between them, so that Motse reduced Confucian kindheartedness to partial love and put all the faults on partial love, and furthermore to Confucianism. Then Mencius dealt with Mohism as Mohists had dealt with Confucianism, even doubly. My opinion is that mutual love is the common-ground of Mohism and Confucianism, and the divergence is not as big as they thought, though neither Motse nor Mencius would agree with me.

Distinctions between a Few Relationships

It is inevitable to distinguish the relationship between partial love and equal love from the relationships between kindheartedness and universal love and between Confucianism and Mohism. The latter two relationships are very complicated, and the former relationship is a single aspect of the latter two. We can abstract the first relationship from the latter relationships, however, we cannot equate the first relationship with the latter relationships, including not equating partial love with kindheartedness, let alone with the whole school of Confucianism. Likewise, we cannot equate equal love with universal love, let alone with the whole of Mohism. The discovery of the relationship between partial love and equal love is Motse's contribution to human history of thoughts. This dialectic relationship as an academic issue had evoked heated discussions and led to grave consequences throughout history.

MENCIUS'S REFUTATION AGAINST MOHISM

Mencius (c. 372-289 B.C.) is the lesser sage, named second to Confucius (551-479 B.C.) in Confucianism. Some modern scholars called him the Paul of Confucianism.¹³ Mencius regarded it as his duty to oppose Yang Chu and Mo Ti, and his criticism was very sharp and bitter. He said: "Yang's principle of 'each one for himself' amounts to making one's sovereign of no account. Mo's principle of 'all-embracing love' amounts to making one's father of no account. To have no father and no sovereign is to be like the birds and beasts. ...These pernicious opinions mislead the people and block the way of human-heartedness and righteousness."¹⁴ Let us try to have a further understanding of our topic through analyzing this quotation.

The Social and Political Reasons of Mencius's Criticism

Mencius opposed Yang directly for defending the status of sovereigns, and opposed Mo directly for defending the status of fathers. In the ancient Chinese society, two kinds of systems dominated the whole society: one is family system (or systems of family and clan) of which father is ruler, and the other is social estate system or hierarchy of which sovereign is ruler. The former is the foundation of the latter. In such a society, it seems only natural and normal that the status of father is higher than the status of son, and the status of sovereign is higher than the status of subjects. In other words, in this kind of society, sovereign is expected to have legitimate love from everybody with no exception, but Yang's principle of "each one for himself" implies that everyone has the right of not loving others including sovereign, so Mencius surely found this principle was wrong; and then, both father and sovereign were to expect more love from each of his family members or subjects than anyone of the family member or subjects can get from one another, but Mo's principle of universal love instructs people to love each other equally,

so Mencius also found this principle was intolerable. "A great part of Confucianism is the rational of this social system, or its theoretical expression."¹⁵ Confucius said long ago: "Let the ruler be ruler, the minister be minister, the father father, the son son."¹⁶ In the Han Dynasty, Tung Chung-shu's "three cardinal guides", including that ruler guides subject, father guides son, and husband guides wife, extended this idea further from Confucius's original idea. It is thus obvious what Mencius defended is not only a basic principle of Confucianism, but also a common ethic of the society he lived in. We can see that the systems Mencius argued for are the social and political foundation of practicing graded love or partial love.

The Philosophical or Metaphysical Reasons of Mencius's Criticism

In Mencius's criticism, his social and political reasons are direct, but these reasons would be invalid once these social and political systems cease to exist. Will Mencius's argument for graded or partial love be invalid simultaneously? My answer is no, because Mencius had based his criticism on other reasons--philosophical or metaphysical reasons. When Fung Yu-lan talked about the fundamental difference between Confucianism and Mohism, he said: "To extend the love for one's family so as to include persons outside it as well, is to practice that 'principle of *chung* (conscientiousness to others) and *shu* (altruism)' advocated by Confucius, which in turn is equivalent to the practice of human-heartedness. There is nothing forced in any of these practices, because the original natures of all men have in them a feeling of commiseration, which makes it impossible for them to bear to see the suffering of others. The development of this 'beginning' of goodness causes men naturally to love others, but it is equally natural that they should love their parents to a greater degree than they love men in general."¹⁷ This paragraph is a brief interpretation of Mencius's philosophical and metaphysical reasoning for why he opposed equal love and advocated graded or partial love. The latter emerges from the human heart, is a natural feeling, is a beginning of kindheartedness, and is carried out from loving parents.

This reasoning is very convincing and beyond the limits of social and political conditions. As long as human beings exist, it is absolutely certain for everyone to have a natural tendency of loving one's parents, and loving one's parents more than others'. By comparison, Motse's reason of equal love is mainly utilitarian. According to Mencius, graded or partial love is a moralizing instinct or unity of necessity and oughtness, while according to Motse, equal love is a way to procure benefits and eliminate calamities for the world, and a result of intelligent consideration without inherent mandatory power, though it has its grounds in human nature.

The Establishment of the Principle of Partial Love: One of the Consequences of Mencius's Criticism

There are at least two obvious consequences of Mencius's criticism

against Mohism: one is the establishment of graded or equal love as a important moral principle, and the other is the decline of Mohist school and the lack of equal love in Chinese society, though Mencius's criticism may not be the sole cause of these consequences. From ancient times to the present, everywhere under the sun, all children naturally love their parents and also naturally love their parents more than they love others', and all parents naturally love their children and also naturally love their children more than they love others', but only does Confucianism raise this natural human feeling to a system of moral principles, among which graded or partial love is the key principle. In Confucian academic history, the principle of graded or partial love was first put forward by Confucius and was completed by Mencius, between which Motse's principle of equal love was the antithesis. A famous story is reported in Confucius's *Analects*. Duke Ye said to Confucius: "Among the people of my country there is an upright man. His father stole a sheep, and he bore witness against him." Confucius responded: "Among the people of my country the upright men belong to another sort. Father and son screen each other from blame and punishment. Their action is just due to uprightness."¹⁸ According to Confucius, the true uprightness refers to the moral feeling emerged directly from human heart such as the love for parents, and this sort of feeling is obviously partial love. In other words, in Confucius's mind, partial love for parents or children is more moral than equal treatment and justice in social life and legal practice. Mencius followed Confucius and said: "The benevolent loves every one, but takes the emergency of his parents and worthy persons as his top priority task."¹⁹ In the later ages, Confucians took delight in talking about this principle, and even set Shun, a legendary sage king in ancient China, up as the best example of practicing partial love.²⁰ According to the legend, Shun's father committed murder, and he carried his father to escape and hide. From then on, partial love or priority of parents and worthy persons as a moral principle had become a very popular and ordinary standard for Chinese people to deal with every affair in their life.

The Decline of Equal Love: Another Consequence of Mencius's Criticism

It is undoubted that Mencius's criticism is a heavy blow to Mohism, and is one of the causes which led to the decline of Mohist school and doctrine. In fact, the effect of Mencius's criticism is that he discovered theoretically the conflict between equal love and the morality of the family system, and proposed a good reason for people to refuse equal love. It is a pity for the Mohists to make no powerful response to Mencius's challenge. Of course, we cannot exaggerate the effect of Mencius's criticism upon Mohism. The other causes of the decline of Mohism equally merit attention. For example, in Confucianism the social and political foundation is family system and hierarchy, so then what is the social and political foundation of Mohism? Fung Yu-lan said: "During the feudal age of the Chou Dynasty, kings, princes, and feudal lords all had their military specialists. These were the hereditary warriors who constituted the backbone of the armies of that time. With the disintegration

of feudalism that took place in the latter part of the Chou Dynasty, however, these warrior specialists lost their positions and titles, scattered throughout the country, and made a living by offering their services to anyone who could afford to employ them. This class of people was known as the *hsieh* or *yu hsieh*, terms which can both be translated as ‘knights-errant.’”²¹ “Mo Tzu and his followers, however, differed from the ordinary knights-errant in two respects. In the first place, the latter were men ready to engage in any fighting whatever, only provided that they were paid for their efforts or favoured by the feudal lords. Mo Tzu and his followers, on the contrary, were strongly opposed to aggressive war; hence they agreed to fight only in wars that were strictly for self-defence. ...”²² “For Mo Tzu, *jen* and *yi* signify an all-embracing love, and the man of *jen* and man of *yi* are persons who practice this all-embracing love. This concept is a central one in Mo Tzu’s philosophy, and represents a logical extension of the professional ethics of the class of *hsieh* (knights-errant) from which Mo Tzu sprang. This ethic was, namely, that within their group the *hsieh* ‘enjoy equally and suffer equally.’ (This was a common saying of the *hsieh* of the later times.) Taking this group concept as a basis, Mo Tzu tried to broaden it by preaching the doctrine that everyone in the world should love everyone else equally and without discrimination.”²³ Since a powerful centralized government was established in Qin and Han, *hsieh* as a class was dissipated, so Mohist school lost its original social and political conditions, and Mohist doctrine became a lost body of knowledge.

An Unsolved Question: Partial Love or Equal Love

Although the Confucian principle of graded or partial love became a dominant idea in Chinese mind, while Motse’s principle of equal love was almost forgotten, the question concerning partial love and equal love, in fact, was not settled, but was only shelved. Firstly, Motse only indicated the possible consequences of partial love and equal love. However, he does not tell us: If partial love is a part of human inherent nature, how can we get rid of it? If the inherent nature cannot be gotten rid of, while the portion of love for one’s parents is the same as each of the ones of others’ parents, wouldn’t all parents in the world be very angry at their children? On the analogy of this, if some Chinese does not love China more than he loves Canada but loves them equally, or some Christian does not love Christianity more than he loves other religions but loves them equally, wouldn’t other Chinese or other Christians be angry at him? Anger is undoubtedly a negative feeling, and is one of the roots of calamities. The real intention of practicing equal love is to eliminate calamities, but its factual results are probably a number of new calamities.

Secondly, even though Confucian partial love complies with popular needs in ancient Chinese society, Confucians did not find the way to solve the problems condemned by Mohists. Partial love, indeed, may undermine the foundation of social equality and legal justice, suppress the growth of public utilities and public spirit, and even lead to conflicts or wars. Whatever does

partial or graded love mean? Whatever does equal love mean? What is the real relationship between the two kinds of love? What is the respective sphere for each of the two to be applied in? What problems will be involved with them in the course of social development? All the questions are extensions from the same kernel—love: partial or equal? The question of partial love or equal love was like a partly bloomed flower in the ages of Motse and Mencius, of which the more petals would burst forth in the much later ages.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THIS QUESTION IN THE LATER TIMES OF ANCIENT CHINA

Although the discussion between Motse and Mencius did not continue in the later periods of Chinese history, the tension between partial love and equal love kept its existence in people's lives. It is worthy of emphasis that the model of the tension between the two sorts of love was transformed from the controversies between different schools into the coordination between different points inside Confucian doctrines. These include the relationship between loyalty to sovereign and filial duty to parents, the relationship between righteousness and feeling, the relationship between public and private interests, the relationship between principle and desire, the relationship between justice and perversion, and so on. These theoretical difficulties involve more complicated social problems which include the relationship between public sphere and private sphere, the relationship between the systems of politics and law and the systems of family and patriarchal clan, and so on. It is clear that the former ones are almost related to equal love while the latter ones are almost related to partial love. As a matter of fact, Confucians did their best trying to solve these problems, but failed, because they could not put two contradictory foundation stones into their moral system. In making a general survey of Chinese history, it is not difficult to find that the principle of partial love is the dominant principle and has been long supported by a solid ontological idea and a strong cultural tradition. To practice equal love has always been extremely hard in Chinese society, because it lacks the powerful supports of ontological ideas and cultural traditions ever since the decline of Mohism. Perhaps the difficulty in practicing equal love is just the price for abandoning Mohism.

THE RESOURCES OF PARTIAL LOVE AND EQUAL LOVE IN THE BIBLE

Is it necessary to discuss the above topic from the perspective of Western culture? I have to say that it is not necessary for a certain article, but it is absolutely necessary for the question itself. Though our discussion begins from some basic concepts of ancient Chinese thoughts, the ideas concerning the question of partial love or equal love arise from the awareness of some problems in modern China as well as the whole world, and from the reference of Western thoughts and culture. In other words, under the issue of

Westernization and globalization, the petals of this question burst forth fully. Is it necessary to discuss this question from the perspective of Christianity? Yes, certainly. Christianity is not only one of the two main fountainheads of Western culture, it also plays a very important role in modern Western society. To make the question manifest itself in the context of Christianity, I would like to focus on the relevant resources in the Bible.

A General Survey

In Western society, the system of family and clan has never been so powerful and so important as that in ancient Chinese society. Even though there are some unsystematic teachings and instances of partial love, there is no distinct moral or religious system advocating partial love in the Western world. In other words, if partial love is natural and normal for human beings, Western people are no exception, but none of Western schools regarded partial love as a basic moral or religious principle. Due to the lack of theory of partial love in the Western world, there is no similar contention on the question of partial love or equal love among schools like in China. We can, at least, affirm that the debate on this question as an academic event has not occurred in the Western academic history. It seems that Western people are not very interested in this issue as are the Chinese. This also reveals some important differences between Chinese social system and Western social system, between Chinese moral ideas and Western moral ideas, and between Chinese academic intention and Western academic intention. The awareness of the differences is the premise of our further discussion. The resources in Western thoughts, including Christian thoughts, are indispensable for us to deepen our understanding of this issue. It is not only because there are a number of schools of thought concerning equal love, but also there exist potential conflicts between partial love and equal love.

Instances Relative to Partial Love in the Bible

The basic idea of love in the Bible, especially in the New Testament, is undoubtedly equal love. In fact, if we regard love in the Bible as a concept containing abundant connotations, equal love not partial love is certainly one of its implications or properties. It is interesting to note that there are many vivid stories of favoritism, bias or partial love in the Bible which are worthy of being pointed out. When Isaac was old and his eyes were dim, he wanted to bless his elder son Esau, but his wife Rebekah showed favoritism to their younger son Jacob, and taught Jacob to disguise himself as Esau. So Jacob gained Isaac's blessing by cheating. Jacob was renamed as Israel by God after he wrestled with God.²⁴ Another story is about Joseph, Israel's son. "Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made a richly ornamented robe for him. When his brother saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him."²⁵ Then Joseph was sold to Egypt by

his bothers, and having gone through all kinds of hardships, he became the prime minister in Egypt. Many years later, as Joseph “looked about and saw his brother Benjamin, his own mother’s son, ... Deeply moved at the sight of his brother, Joseph hurried out and looked for a place to weep. He went into his private room and wept there. After he had washed his face, he came out and, controlling himself, said, ‘serve the food.’ ... When portions were served to them from Joseph’s table, Benjamin’s portion was five times as much as anyone else’s.”²⁶ “Joseph gave them carts, as pharaoh had commanded, and he also gave them provisions for their journey. To each of them he gave new clothing, but to Benjamin he gave three hundred shekels of silver and five sets of clothes.”²⁷

With these instances, I do not want to prove any simple similarity between Chinese culture and Christianity, but want to argue that partial love is natural and normal in human life, which is understood, tolerated or acknowledged by God. Meanwhile I have to indicate that, on the one hand, Rebekah’s partial love for Jacob and Israel’s partial love for Joseph resulted directly in rivalry between brothers. -- Do not forget Motse’s condemnation! -- On the other hand, Joseph’s partial or graded love on Benjamin touches us to the depths of our souls.

Honor One’s Parents and Love One’s Neighbor as Oneself

Christianity also emphasizes filial piety. In the Ten Commandments, the first four deal with the God-man relationship, and the rest are for the man-man relationship. The first commandments on human relationship is about filial piety. “Honor your father and mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.”²⁸ Nevertheless, this kind of filial piety does not imply partial or graded love. In other words, Christianity does not address filial piety from the perspective of partial or graded love. At the same time, Christianity emphasizes another more famous principle, namely “love your neighbor as yourself”. The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: ... “Do not defraud your neighbor or rob him. ... Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly. Do not go about spreading slander among your people. Do not do anything that endangers your neighbor’s life. ... Do not hate your brother in your heart. Rebuke your neighbor frankly so you will not share in his guilt. Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.”²⁹ These words state clearly that Christianity advocates justice, fairness and equal love between others and oneself, and opposes perversion, partiality and favoritism. In this sense, the Bible shares this Mohist idea.

The command of “Love your neighbor as yourself”, I think, is an important teaching of Christianity. Furthermore, the following rationale behind this command calls us into deeper thought. “When an alien resides with you in your land, do not mistreat him. The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native-born. Love him as yourself, for you were aliens in Egypt. I

am the Lord your God.”³⁰ “You are to love those who are aliens, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt.”³¹ This is concise and comprehensive statement which accommodates all the joy and tears of generations of Israelites as aliens in Egypt. It is thus clear that equal love as a moral principle or even a religious creed is natural and understandable as to Israelites who had some deepest experience as aliens, just like partial or graded love is natural and understandable as to Chinese people who lived in the systems of family and clan.

The Development of the Idea of Love in the New Testament

In both the Old Testament and the New Testament, the essence of the Christian idea of love is identical. Under this condition, we should notice that there are some differences of the idea of love between the Old Testament and the New Testament. I, at least, am certain that in the Old Testament, there was a big gap between Israel and other states who fought alternately against Israel, and God loved only Israel but did not love those hostile states. In other words, God’s universal principle is equal love, but when the Israelites face an emergency, He shows favoritism to His chosen people. There seems to be some tension between equal love as principle and partial love as expedient. This case is contrary to Confucian case in which equal love is usually regarded as expedient while partial love is naturally regarded as principle. Of course, this tension is better to be interpreted as the tension belonging to Judaism. In any case, in the New Testament, this tension disappeared.

The way of releasing the above-mentioned tension in the New Testament is that Jesus put forward a completely new idea: Love your enemy. This new idea, according to my understanding, distinguished Christianity from Judaism, and made Christianity to go beyond the limit of a single nation and become a world-wide religion. What is more important is that this idea carries logically the principle of equal love through. Jesus said: “You have heard that it was said, ‘eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If some one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you. You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”³² By the way, “Do to others as you would have them do to you” is called the Christian Golden Rule, and always be thought as the Western version of “Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire” of Confucius. But as a matter of fact, the statement by Jesus is a foundation of equal love, while the statement by Confucius

is a foundation of partial or graded love, though they sound like one another very much.

Jesus strengthened the idea of equal love. “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all you mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”³³ It is equivalent to say that “Love the Lord your God” is the cardinal principle of dealing with God-man relationship while “Love your neighbor as yourself” is the cardinal principle of dealing with man-man relationship. There still are a lot of similar expressions in the other parts of the New Testament. “The commandments, ‘Do not commit adultery,’ ‘Do not murder,’ ‘Do not steal,’ ‘Do not covet,’ and whatever other commandments there may be, are summed up in this one rule: ‘Love your neighbors as yourself.’ Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.”³⁴ “The entire law is summed up in a single command: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”³⁵ These expositions integrated Jesus’s new thoughts of equal love with those in the Old Testament, and promoted the principle of equal love up to a new horizon.

The climax comes when Jesus gave his disciples a new command: “Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”³⁶ “This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother’s were righteous.”³⁷ “Love one another” revealed more clearly the equality of Christian love.

A Restricted Sociological View of Equal Love in the Bible

I mentioned before that the principle of partial love of Confucianism is closely related to the systems of family and clan, while the principle of equal love of Mohism is closely related to community of knights-errant. By contrast with the above two schools, the principle of equal love in the Bible, I think, is closely related to Israelites’ social formation and particular experiences, and perhaps related to the organization of the early Christian church. According to the records in the Old Testament, Hebrew society was a nomadic society, and consisted of twelve tribes. The conflicts between early Israelites and other nations, to some extent, were conflicts between nomadic tribes, who did not but hoped to have a fixed place to live, and agricultural nations, who had a fixed place to live and were not willing to share with others. In nomadic life, the boundaries between individuals or families are not so clear as that in agricultural life, so boundary disputes are common. I used to research Tibetan tribes, and am familiar with these sorts of cases. Due of this reason, just the relationship between neighbors but not any other sort of relationships was focused on by Israelites. By comparison, ancient Chinese society was settled and agricultural. Family system and hierarchy made the

relationships both between father and son and between sovereign and subject a general concern. The latter two relationships are unequal while the former relationship is naturally equal. The other very distinct factor raising the concern about relationship between neighbors to the level of moral and religious principle is Israelites' special experiences as aliens in Egypt as mentioned above.

As for the intention of the new command "Love one another", Jesus's expression is clear: "By this all men will know that you are my disciples." "Love one another", at least, means emphasis on solidarity and unity of Christians which is necessary for a newborn religious group to keep its existence and develop. Furthermore, "Love one another" was pronounced as a new universal principle, and even the relationship between Jesus and his followers was transformed from master-servants into friends. Jesus said: "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and hear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. This is my command: Love each other."³⁸ This transformation is very important, and it means that there are two models of love: one is the love between neighbors, and the other is the love between friends. Both of the models are characterized by equality. Confucianism also regards the relationship between friends as one of five basic social relationships, of which the others are sovereign-subject, father-son, elder brother-younger brother, husband-wife, but this kind of relationship between friends, according to Yung Yu-Lan, can be conceived of in terms of the one between elder and younger brothers.³⁹ So there still is some subtle difference between Confucian idea of the friend-friend relationship and the Christian idea of the one.

In short, the term love in Christianity, as well as in Confucianism and in Mohism, has plenty of connotations. If we apply the question of equal love or partial love in it, we can see clearly that Christian principle of love is equal love in spite of the lack of the controversy between equal love and partial love. At the same time, I have to indicate that Christian principle of equal love does not imply that the people who believe in Christianity have only equal love in their mind and practice but not any partial love. As the above-mentioned instances prove, partial love, even if not as a moral or religious principle, exists naturally in human mind and practice, and Christians are no exception.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLE OF LOVE IN MODERN WESTERN SOCIETY

In the later ages, Christianity was gradually disseminated in Europe and in the whole Western world, and Christian tradition became one of the two important traditions of Western civilization besides Hellenic tradition.

Directly or indirectly, Christian principle of equal love involved itself in all the modern Western systems of ideology, laws, politics and so on which take equality as their essence. In other words, Christian equal love is a foundation stone for the systems of equality in modern Western society. For example, in the famous slogan “liberty, equality and fraternity”, equality and fraternity are related to Christian principle of equal love. “All are equal before the law” as a legislative and judicial principle is certain to have carried forward the relevant good tradition of Christianity. In Western society, it is quite easy to notice that equal and mutual aid between members in various communities is very popular, and the Christian church and groups play an active role in many communities.

If we divide social life into a private sphere and a public sphere, equal love may be rated as a basic principle of the public sphere. A remarkable feature of social development is the expansion and multiplication of the public sphere. It is quite evident that a solid and powerful principle of equality is an important driving force for social development, especially for modernization. Hence this opinion may lead to a new approach to explain why Western modernization succeeded while Chinese modernization is so difficult, which perhaps as a hypothesis can be parallel with Weber’s proposition on Protestant ethic and capitalist spirit.⁴⁰On the whole, the influence of Christianity hand in hand with other resources explains why modern Western society is noted for equality or equal love.

THE PROBLEMS RELEVANT TO THIS QUESTION IN LIFE IN TODAY’S WORLD

Based on the above analysis, we can reach a simple conclusion: after the controversy on the issue of partial love or equal love between Confucianism and Mohism, the Chinese chose partial love as a basic moral principle, while without the context of a similar debate, Western people, with the help from Christianity, formed another basic moral and religious principle: equality or equal love. A simple conclusion of the above comparison has not yet solved the basic issue both in this paper and in today’s world.

Relevant Problems in Modern China

For half a century, China has been a socialist society. Under socialism, equality is a basic principle, upon which the Chinese had built a system covering nearly every field of society. This is a revolution against the traditional principle of partial love. But this revolution did not achieve the desired results. Nowadays, we lost many good elements of partial or graded love, yet could not establish the principle of equal love. In the private sphere, people are, in common, short of human sympathy, while in the public sphere, the phenomena such as appointing people by favoritism and perverting the law for favoritism can be found everywhere. Chinese society needs both partial or graded love and equal love, and must put each of them in their proper positions.

Relevant Problems in Modern Western world

Western countries, especially the U.S.A., are dominating powers in today's world. For the West, including Americans, even though equality is a human right, the voice appealing for more equal treatment has not weakened.⁴¹ Moreover, because there is no influential dimension with respect to partial or graded love in Western morality, religion and culture, individualistic indifference among the members of a family or 'clan' is common in America and the West in general.

Relevant Problems in International Relationship

We are living in the age of globalization. What is the real equality among nations or countries? Shall the Americans, who flaunt the banner of equality, love other countries equally as they love their own country? Shall Muslims love other religions equally as they love Islam? If everyone impossibly loves one another equally as he or she loves his or her own, how could we avoid those problems evoked by Motse? On the other hand, if every one does not love his or her country more than other countries, especially if the people in poor and backward countries do not hold more responsibility for their country than for other countries, would not Mencius condemn the bleak prospect of "no motherland" just as he did "no father, no sovereign"? In a word, rather than to say that the issue of partial love or equal love has been solved, it is better to say that it has burst forth into human reality with full force.

SUGGESTION: THEORETICAL DEMARCATION AND PRACTICAL HARMONY BETWEEN PARTIAL LOVE AND EQUAL LOVE

There is no way to solve the question of partial love or equal love completely, but we should try our best to solve problems relevant to this question as much as possible. I would like to make a suggestion in this paper tentatively as a solution.

The Essence of Theory and The Essence of Practice

Every theory seeks logical unity, or it will fall into a contradictory state. Due to this reason, neither Motse nor Mencius could hold both equal love and partial love, lest their theories would be self-contradictory. So according to theoretical logic, Mohist theory and Confucian theory cannot accommodate each other. On the other hand, every kind of human practice involves innumerable substances and attributes, of which each theory can reveal some certain aspect but not the whole. So any theory could not be sufficient for even a single activity. Due to this reason, Confucianism or Mohism alone cannot solve the problems of the practice of love. In other words, any theory of love is not symmetrical with any practice of love, and any practice of love

needs a lot of theories of love as their guides. Either Confucianism or Mohism wanted to exterminate its rival, but history has proved that monopoly without rival is not good.

The Essence of Partial Love and the Essence of Equal Love

Both partial love and equal love is based on human nature, and each has both positive value and negative value. Generally speaking, partial love is necessary and suitable for the private sphere, while equal love is necessary and suitable for public sphere. So the moral principle of partial love, like the Confucian principle, ought to limit its practice in the private sphere, while the moral principle of equal love, like Mohist or Christian principle, ought to limit its practice to the public sphere. Both Confucianism and Mohism wanted to apply their own principle in both private and public spheres respectively, but history has also proved that the effect is not good.

Theoretical Demarcation and Practical Harmony

Mohism is Mohism, Confucianism is Confucianism, and Christianity is Christianity, no matter how they change and improve themselves. If every theory is one-sided relative to practice, a demarcation among them is very important. As long as we limit every theory to a proper scope, we can profit from all of them and reduce their demerits to a minimum. Different theories, which are logically independent from each other, can be integrated into a harmonious state in practice in order to improve human life. Supposed someone is a son, a husband, and a father, and he has to deal with the relationships between his family members, he had better, I think, to be a Confucian, thus he can fulfill his family duty and can enjoy family happiness. Supposed this man is an official at the same time,-- he had better to be a Mohist, thus he will “not gang up with father or elder bother, not side with the rich and noble, not favor handsome looks,”⁴² but just act with justice, and become an upright official. Supposed the man is still concerned about all mankind and the other world, perhaps it is a good choice for him to be a Christian, so that he can “be brought to complete unity”⁴³ for, with, and by God. Such cases can be supposed more and more, and the theories involved in human life are not limited to the above three. In short, just as for this person, the state of harmony in diversity is a better ideal, even though the theories he follows alternately in his life are logically different from each other. Balance! Both between partial love and equal love and between theoretical demarcation and practical harmony! This is my suggestion.

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NOTES

- 1 *Han Feitse*, chap. 1.
- 2 *Mencius*, chap. iiiib.
- 3 *The Ethical and Political Works of Motse* translated by Yi-Pao Mei, London, Probsthain, 1929.
- 4 *Motse, Universal Love II*. This translation is from *Selected Readings from Famous Chinese Philosophers with Annotations and English Translation*, volume 1, General Editor Shi Jun, People's University of China Press, Beijing, 1988, p. 76.
- 5 *Motse, Universal Love III*. The translation is from *Motse, Neglected Rival of Confucius*, by Yi-Pao Mei, Hyperion Press, Inc., Westport, 1973, pp. 89-90.
- 6 *Motse, Universal Love II*. This translation is from the same book as 4, p. 74.
- 7 *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy, Selected Philosophical Writings of Fung Yu-lan*, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 1991, p. 236.
- 8 *Motse, Universal Love III*. The translation is from *Motse, Neglected Rival of Confucius*, p. 89.
- 9 *Motse, Gengzhu*. This translation is from the book as 7, p. 269.
- 10 Fung Yu-lan noticed this points. *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy, Selected Philosophical Writings of Fung Yu-lan*, p. 270.
- 11 *Mencius*, chap. ia. *Ibid.*, p. 270.
- 12 *Motse, Universal Love II*. This translation is from the same book as 4, pp. 75-77.
- 13 *Motse, Neglected Rival of Confucius*, p. 87.
- 14 *Mencius*, chap. iiiib. This translation is from the book as 7, p. 269.
- 15 *Ibid.* p. 215.
- 16 *Analects of Confucius*, xii. *Ibid.*, p. 236.
- 17 *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy, Selected Philosophical Writings of Fung Yu-lan*, pp. 270-271.
- 18 *Analects of Confucius*, xiii.
- 19 *Mencius*, chap. viia.
- 20 *Collected Commentaries on the "Four Books"*, by Zhu Xi, Yuelu Press, Changsha, 1985, p. 179.
- 21 *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy, Selected Philosophical Writings of Fung Yu-lan*, p. 246.
- 22 *Ibid.*, p. 248.
- 23 *Ibid.*, p. 250.
- 24 *Genesis 27:1-29, 32:28. The NIV Study Bible, 10th Anniversary Edition*, Zondervan Publishing House, Michigan, 1995, pp. 45-46, p. 56.
- 25 *Genesis 37:3-4; Ibid.*, pp. 61-62.
- 26 *Ibid.*, 43:29-34; *Ibid.*, p. 71.
- 27 *Ibid.*, 45:21-22; *Ibid.*, p. 74.
- 28 *Exodus 20:12. Ibid.*, p. 115.

29 *Leviticus* 19:13-18; *Ibid.*, p. 169.

30 *Ibid.*, 19:33-34; *Ibid.*, p. 170.

31 *Deuteronomy* 10:19; *Ibid.*, p. 255.

32 *Matthew* 5:38-48; *Ibid.*, pp. 1446-1447.

33 *Ibid.*, 22:37-40; *Ibid.*, p. 1472.

34 *Romans* 13:9-10; *Ibid.*, p. 1728.

35 *Galatians* 5:14; *Ibid.*, p. 1788.

36 *John* 13:34-35; *Ibid.*, p. 1621.

37 *Ibid.*, 3:11-12; *Ibid.*, p. 1910.

38 *Ibid.*, 15:12-17; *Ibid.*, pp. 1623-1624.

39 *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy, Selected Philosophical Writings of Fung Yu-lan*, p. 215.

40 See Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1958.

41 See *Equal Treatment of Religion in a Pluralistic Society*, Edited by Stephen V. Monsma and J. Christopher Soper, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998.

42 Motse, *Exaltation of the virtuous ii*.

43 *John* 17:23. *The NIV Study Bible*, p. 1627.

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11. *Holy Bible*, new revised standard version and Chinese union version. China Christian Council, Nanjing, 2000.

Chapter 13

The Existential Turn and Practice-Existentialism

Zou Shipeng

Abstract: against the background of the theme “transforming contemporary philosophy and reforming contemporary social and cultural construction”, we can deduce the key to the existentialist turn is its reform of ontology, from a transcendental, substantial and abstract theory to a sensible, practical and existential ontology based on the life-world. There was an abundant existential materialism in ancient Greece regarding being and ontology. This was replaced by a substance theory during the history of Western philosophy, until the contemporary existential turn. But this was only the beginning and it has a non-rational side. Postmodern philosophy is now bringing the existential turn to an end. Marx’s philosophy, which has transcended Western philosophy and contains a new human philosophy, can play an important role in this historical turn. Hence, we consider Marx’s existentialism to be practical-existentialism in its nature.

THE QUESTION OF THE EXISTENTIAL TURN

The existential turn, once mentioned in Kierkegaard’s works and then intensified in Heidegger’s, is an important issue closely related to existentialism. But here I want to point out that from the point of view of the reform of the life-world of the whole of contemporary philosophy we cannot limit the existential turn to existentialism, but should relate it to contemporary philosophies. In general, existentialism opened the existential turn, but did not close it. An analysis of the practical existential structure of Marx philosophy which follows will suggest that practical existentialism can be regarded as a direction of the contemporary existential turn.

Even in academia, some popular discourses which seem clear remain ambiguous. The existential turn is just this kind of discourse. In these years, it has been mentioned on different occasions and sounds very reasonable and basic. But up to now, in Chinese academia, the existential turn hasn’t been the subject of a developed research project.

Firstly, we should call attention to some misunderstandings of the theme.

1. Against a broader background, the existential turn has been regarded as one of many shifts or turns: human, practical, cultural, life-world, value, linguistic and so on. The existential turn resembles the above to which it shares a family resemblance. But compared to the above thematic turns, the existential turn seems accidental. Hence, now more and more people begin to feel tired of discourses about turns, in which situation research regarding the existential turn becomes much more difficult.

2. In special circumstances, the existential turn is regarded as a philosophical turn which started with Kierkegaard and was intensified in Heidegger. But in this way the existential turn is limited to the range of existentialism, which has had a limited affect. Like the historical turn of ontology, the existential turn has gotten into trouble; its needs to transcend existentialism and develop in its real historical direction.

3. Another misunderstanding of the turn is that of a transformation from traditional abstract metaphysics to life-world. This understanding of existence is still the old and common understanding, that is, a reduction of the existence of human beings to animal life. This is an incorrect understanding of contemporary existence, because the existential turn transcends the common understanding of existence.

Based on these distinctions, we can describe the existential turn as follows: it comes from existentialism, but is not limit thereto, but relates to the transformation of ontology in the whole of contemporary philosophy. It is also rooted deeply in the transformation of the structure of society and the long cultural tradition and practice. Thus the existential turn is basic in contemporary philosophy. We must assure that this understanding of the existential turn is suited to the reasonable direction of contemporary philosophy.

Three dimensions need to be made clear: the turn that had been presented, that which is being realized, that what will be left unrealized. This research will begin on clearing up the first dimension and then turn to latter two which are very important for the self-understanding of contemporary philosophy.

The existential turn that had been presented was undoubtedly connected with existentialism. Kierkegaard began the existential turn and in his view Socrates is the apotheosis of the existential philosopher because he stressed the unit of existence and reason. By dividing reason from existence, Plato began the tradition of rationalism. As existence had been only a total substance. So if it needs to regain a spiritual dimension contemporary philosophy should consider stressing the existential and the experience of meaning of the lone person. This is just what Kierkegaard did. His lone person is connected with the non-reason of Schopenhauer, both of whom were transcended by Nietzsche. For Nietzsche, only the superman can dominate the will and become an existential person. The life of this existential person may be tragic, but it is by no means pessimistic. Emphasizing the power of the will Nietzsche rebelled against the whole Western rational tradition. His philosophy melted into modern humanism which included some degree life philosophy, philosophical anthropology, philosophy of value and phenomenology.

The inner relation between existentialism and the rest of modern humanistic thought required detailed research. The core of modern humanism is consciousness and understanding of life; this is the self-evidence of contemporary culture. The premise of modern humanism is to rebel against traditional objective philosophy. As Heidegger expanded the rebellion to the reflection and construction of ontology, we can regard Heidegger's basic ontology as a result of the existential turn in the range of existentialism.

At the same time, we know that Heidegger was tired of personal existentialism due to a turn in his thought when 30. This suggests that basic ontology may be the end of the existential turn in the form of existentialism. But this is not the last word. Here the 'end' would be easily regarded as 'finished' or 'broken off', and then existentialism would be considered as the whole endeavor of the existential turn of contemporary philosophy. But the process of contemporary thoughts indicates that this would be a serious mistake. Here 'end' does not mean 'finished' or 'broken off', because the problem that roused the end of the theme has not yet disappeared. It changes to a new form and then continues the process, though in a new direction. So here 'end' means the transform of the problem. In this light, the turn in the thought of Heidegger can be regarded seemingly as a transformation from the ontology of *Dasein* to the ontology of linguistics. The deep significance of this turn is from a sensible explanation of the personal existential construction to interpreting the root meanings of linguistics. Further more, against the background of a linguistic turn and relativism, we find that the existential turn of the entire contemporary philosophy goes forward and expands in more directions.

THE CONTEMPORARY SITUATION OF THE EXISTENTIAL TURN

The existential turn of contemporary philosophy has now finished. On the one hand, even though the existential turn belongs to modern humanism which includes existentialism, especially existentialism, has affected the existential turn deeply, and how it will expand in new directions is still in process. On the other hand, the existential turn of the whole of contemporary philosophy is still intermixed in the complex condition of linguistic philosophy and some other philosophical thoughts such as postmodern philosophy. Also we find the development of relativism and nihilism has had a complicated and negative affect on the existential turn.

As suggested above, the existential turn is expressed by existentialism, but we should not limit the existential to existentialism. To some degree, existentialism first opened and then broke off the existential turn. It became fashionable and then was abandoned by the intelligentsia, and even the masses. It would seem that the existential turn was tied to the fate of existentialism, whose abandonment has generated the impression that the existential turn has finished. In this view, the transformation from existentialism to linguistic philosophy would be the sign of the end of existential turn. But the turn from existentialism to linguistic philosophy did not transform, but only transferred it. to transform would mean changing both theme and connotation; whereas transfer means that the theme still existed, but the paradigm and method with which the question is analyzed and settled have changed. The theme of both existentialism and linguistic philosophy is existence; the difference is that the former cares about its personal and non-rational dimension of existence, wherever linguistic philosophy cares about its constructive and rational dimensions. Both existentialism and linguistic philosophy want to get rid of,

and to transcend the traditional philosophical paradigm of the philosophy of consciousness or epistemology. Existentialism attempts to find a new form of sensibility and expression, linguistics philosophy wants to set up a new form for philosophical analysis. During the process of the existential turn, existentialism marked its completion, and linguistic philosophy pointed to its opening of a new dimension.

To some degree, linguistic philosophy takes on a more meaningful and complicated task than existentialism. The linguistic turn indicates that the character and function of contemporary philosophy has changed historically, but the premise of linguistic philosophy should be made clear by the existential turn. In the view of linguistic philosophy, philosophy is not only metaphysics, but also includes such important applications as methodology, axiology, ethical, and linguistic analysis. At the same time, the function of contemporary philosophy has changed from criticism to therapy. But for the results of this condition we should appeal to the existential turn because the character and function of contemporary philosophy is rooted in a deep change of the mode of existence, that is, from transcendental to sensible existence, from personal to regime, from closed to open, from national to global, and so on. So the linguistics turn should be regarded as an expressive form of the existential turn, the latter being the foundation of the former. But if linguistics philosophy has covered the existential turn, we should think of uncovering it. This would suggest that the linguistics philosophy may even contain a new metaphysics.

To some degree, linguistic philosophy is also the dominant philosophy of the technological age. But just as language hasn't got rid of instrumentality in the modern cultural system, linguistics philosophy in becoming the most important trend in contemporary philosophy became its most instrumental as well.

But there is also a non-functional condition in this contemporary philosophy. Firstly, the instrumental attitude indicates the reality of the life-form, so to some degree linguistic philosophy reflects everyday life. But there is still a paradox when we use language to illustrate the technological life-form and at the same time use it to represent the meanings of everyday life. Even in our everyday life, we have our desires which cannot be satisfied, especially modern technological life. So there is the inevitable paradox that language can't eliminate the clash between the desires of life and the life-form. On the other hand, we find phenomenological philosophy as more effective in the existential turn than Anglo-American linguistic philosophy. Phenomenology stresses language too, but it seems not the contemporary language which reflects the contemporary life-form, but the ancient Greek headstream that reflects the ancient Greek life-form. This phenomenon is the atavism of language, reflecting the crisis of contemporary language rooted of the crisis of existence.

Secondly, contemporary linguistics philosophy points out that language is the home of being. This is the very deep insight that linguistics is also enriched with existential abundance. But the presentation of language and such of its products as discourse, character, text and voice are also without

the meaning of existence. Language has the function of interpreting existence while it can self-criticize. These phenomena indicate that language is just a form of expression. Together, the two functions of language, interpreting and self-reflecting, reveal a paradoxical structure in existence.

Furthermore, the rise of the linguistic turn and linguistic philosophy was against the background of postmodern relativism, which includes self-satirizing, difference, and complex paradox. Postmodern philosophy intensifies personal authenticity which obviously developed from the personal existence of existentialism. The problem is that personal authenticity is not the real person, but only a discourse or even an ideology of personality. As the goal of arising personal authenticity is to intensify and advance a de-constructive tactic, personal authenticity should not be regarded as something utopia, nor is it action. We can connect personal authenticity with another familiar word: life-world. Personal authenticity seems to be the answer to a riddle of life-world, but this question should be cleared up. *Lebenswelt* is a normal word in traditional philosophy that has now become popular.

The life-world turn, which suggested by the late Husserl, expanded broadly after existentialism, linguistic philosophy and especially postmodern philosophy. But in the non-theoretic situation of the postmodern age, the life-world turned out to be desultory, empty and passive discourse. It even covered over the merits of the existential turn, reflecting a certain relativism and even nihilism. So, today the constructive endeavor in the existential turn needs to be identified and overcome the negative effects of post-modernism.

THE MEANING OF THE EXISTENTIAL TURN

The existential turn of contemporary philosophy is an historical transformation of philosophical ontology. We can analyze this transformation from three aspects:

To transfer the mode and notion of existence.

All forms of ontology are determined by a corresponding existential mode and notion; the contemporary transformation of ontology is based on this transition. Generally speaking, the transformation of the contemporary mode of existence is from the absolute deficient condition of traditional existence to the relatively deficient condition of modern traditional existence. The former was the default of the materials and conditions of life, together with the monotony of the spiritual life which material insufficiency limited. The less deficient condition means that material life is no longer a problem, but that this kind of relatively abundant material life can not be translated to a relatively spiritual life. One's spirit life does not accept and sustain one's material life; even though one has a complete spiritual life, one can not get rid of existential anxiety and is deeply baffled in one's spirit. In the absolutely deficient condition, a transcendental metaphysics dominates our spirit. But in the relatively deficient condition, in waiting for the development of the form of spiritual life, one loses oneself in a condition of anxiety and bafflement.

But at the same time, one finds a new tendency where one's abundant and different existence is within reach of unity and rational understanding. The transition from absolute to relative deficient existence, from the view of the transformation of ontology is from a transcendental, substantial and abstract ontology to an existential ontology with a sensible, active and human form. The corresponding transformation of the notion of existence is to give up the normal notion of existence which regards the human existence as just ordinary life, and to understand the out-standing self-fulfillment of the existence of the human's being. At the same time, the anthropocentrism which was intensified by modernity tends towards to a well-rounded humanism stressing the harmony of human beings, nature and society. This entail a transformation of the notion of development from simply economic development to sustainable development, as is reflected in the transformation of the mode and notion of existence.

To develop the potential of traditional philosophy.

Tradition has a supernatural vitality; its original creativity and complexity include and affect all possible directions of the development of culture. Every cultural tradition has its root in the ontological structure of traditional philosophy. We can analyze this in traditional Western philosophy to discover what kind of possibility and complexity it expressed of traditional ontology. Through research in Greek philosophy and linguistics we find that the philosophy of Being and existence were same in ancient times. For example, the existential turn of contemporary philosophy stresses that the word existence should be understood as transcending oneself, rather than the Latin word *existere* which meant what has been finished (Carn). But from the ancient Greece linguistics of 'be' and 'become', we achieve the contemporary understanding of existence primarily and dramatically not only in linguistics, but also in the view of life philosophy. Here the existential turn means a renaissance of the ancient philosophical tradition, but by no means as a return to the ancient world. Rather based on the tradition and its fluidity it goes towards the multiformity and possibility of the cultural tradition. Thus the existential turn by no means abandons the Western philosophical and cultural tradition, because for a sustainable endeavor, the existential turn ought to connect with *nous*, the spirit of Greek philosophy, the life experience of the middle ages, the romantic humanism of the Renaissance, and the rational spirit of German classical philosophy. Thus the existential turn is a new mode of understanding through which we can open and relive the spirit of the tradition of philosophy that pervades both traditional and the modern philosophy. We seem to have exaggerated the difference between the two. However, the existential turn is still a modern turn of the Western philosophical spirit. In the transcendental and substantial tradition of later Western philosophy, we observe that existence as the form of substance was divided from Being as a transcendental form. Both the form and the system of ontology restricted self-consciousness and the constitution of existentialism because they both embodied the notional philosophical system where the active life was substituted by a logical

process. In this process in which the historical, presentational, and personal dimensions all disappeared. Thus, the transformation from the substantialism of traditional philosophy to existentialism should be regarded as that of philosophy from traditional ontological and epistemological philosophy to the contemporary philosophy of existence.

To open the historical human direction.

The existential turn of contemporary philosophy has come into a crisis expressed by postmodern relativism and nihilism. Generally, both spiritual symptoms of what occurred seasonally in Western history and is manifest in the historical transition of special ages. Now, in the global age, the whole of human culture is tainted to some degree by a postmodern relativism and nihilism. First, however, we should trace this symptom to contemporary Western culture and philosophy. There are difficult problems for contemporary philosophy and culture which plunged Western philosophy and culture into crisis because Western culture could not escape its inner history for a Western-centrism. From nationality, localization and territory to real humanity, this is the same task faced by both Western and Eastern thought. The deep meaning of the existential turn is how to interpret the contemporary turn of the cultural tradition.

This crisis of the Western existential turn has opened the way towards Eastern culture and philosophy. The existential turn of whole human being should refer to Western existentialism and be limited to the West. In a sense, the deconstructive work of postmodern philosophy is a reaction to West-centrism which is the multiformity of human cultures. This multiformity is not constructed theoretically, but is a task of praxis. So the existential turn and cultural transformation of the whole human being should include an Eastern dimension. In later Heidegger's philosophy, there is an appeal to Eastern philosophy, especially to Daoism, but this is taken on not by Western but mainly by Eastern philosophers. Yet, for most of the Eastern philosophical tradition this opening seems too difficult. It is precisely here that we should consult Karl Marx and especially his philosophy of praxis.

PRACTICE-EXISTENTIALISM: A THEORETICAL ATTEMPT

Up to now, globalization has been a question globalization is homogeneity, not multiformity. Neither West nor East can find a way to understand the other. But in Marx's philosophy of practice we find a possible way to communicate the Western with the Eastern in a contemporary view; this is based on the existential turn. Marx's philosophy of praxis not only comes from Western philosophical tradition, but also transcends, thereby indicating a way in which Western culture can take a human direction. Marx can even be named a contemporary Socrates, in the sense that he has become an important dimension of contemporary thought, providing the important functions of warning, curing and adjusting. At the same time, Marx's philosophy has also led the modern non-Western's transformation, not only of ideology, but

also of action. It was no accident that China selected and accepted Marx 80 years ago. On the one hand, modern China could not find thought resources directly from ancient tradition, on the other hand, Chinese could not accept a purely Western thought. Thus Marx's philosophy of praxis became Chinese thought.

The existential turn is deeply connected with Marx. Regarding existentialism as the beginning of the existential turn, is only to consider one dimension of the present turn and its intensified non-rational thought. In a broader social and cultural background, we should ascertain that the real beginning of the existential turn is Marx. But the problem is that, firstly, the initial meaning of Marx for contemporary existentialism was despised by modern thought. Though some modern philosophers seemed to connect their thought with Marx, nevertheless Marx is regarded as only a secondary figure. Secondly, the deep relation of Marx to present philosophy is being covered, not only by ideology, but also by the academy. Hence, we find that the dialogue between Marx's philosophy of practice and contemporary Western philosophy have not been prepared. The dialogue is not only critical, but constructive; its discovery and implementation will be very helpful in getting rid of the relativism and nihilism of contemporary thoughts.

In the active promotion of the reform of contemporary philosophy, Marx's philosophy of praxis includes a transformation of ontology deeply connected with that of contemporary philosophy. On the one hand, the transcendental, substantial and abstract ontology is also a target for criticism by Marx's philosophy of praxis. To transcend the ontological structure of the whole of ancient philosophy is the key task of Marx's philosophy of praxis as well as its critical dimension. On the other hand, the target of the ontological turn of contemporary philosophy, namely, a sensible, practical and existential ontology, is the original meaning of Marx's philosophy of praxis as well as being its constructive dimension. While academia stressed the critical dimension of Marx's philosophy of practice, at the same time it looked down on its constructive dimension. This renders a poor understanding of Marx's philosophy of practice.

Here, I would stress its constructive dimension the ontological theory I call practice-existentialism. This theory is not named by Marx—one can not find the title in Marx's text—but it should be regarded as the deep theory of Marx's philosophy of practice. I consider it even the contemporary construction of Marx's ontology. Practice-existentialism stresses subjectivity, self-transcendence, sensible-reality and also sociality. It includes such complex but harmonious unities as harmony of human beings and nature, of person with society, of practice with spirit, of personality with totality, of reason with non-reason, of personality with inter-subjectivity, of freedom with inevitability, of nationality with humanity, of human's socialization with social humanity, and so on. The constitution of practice-existentialism is an active, opening and historical life structure among human beings, nature and society. Practice-existentialism includes the complexity and possibility of the existence of

human being's. Practice-existentialism is a rational, historical existential-ontology, which can be regarded as a metaphysics of the life-world.

As the guide of the existential turn in contemporary philosophy, practice-existentialism draws the path of the human being. The existential turn of Western philosophy is limited to the background of Western philosophy; based on the background of Marx's practice-existentialism however it becomes a universal dialogue and communication between contemporary people. It is not only full with differences, but sometimes leads them to clash. In contrast with existentialism which usually is restricted to the sensible personality and linguistics, practice-existentialism seeks to enlarge philosophical understanding. Concrete action and the self-liberation of human beings change the mode of thought of metaphysics into one of practice and culture, the essential character of contemporary culture and social life. Thus, in the light of Marx, existentialism becomes a new paradigm with broad and deep meaning. Essentially practice-existentialism became the basic theory of the liberation of human being's.

There is no limit to the existential turn, so research on the turn is not regarded as a task or project, but as thoughtful and historical action regarding the existence of the human being. If the human being's existence and practice is in a difficult situation, the existential turn remain unfinished. This is its historical character.

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Today there is urgent need to attend to the nature and dignity of the person, to the quality of human life, to the purpose and goal of the physical transformation of our environment, and to the relation of all this to the development of social and political life. This, in turn, requires philosophic clarification of the base upon which freedom is exercised, that is, of the values which provide stability and guidance to one's decisions.

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