On the Future of Chinese Marxist Philosophy Study

Ye Ruxian

Abstract

It has been a hot topic since the end of the 20th century to sum up the experience of philosophical study in the past and explore the tendency of Chinese Marxist philosophy study in the coming new century. And it seems this topic is still under discussion nowadays.

First of all, we need to summarise the past before any prediction can be made about the future if we realise the joined relationship among the future, present and past.

The time Marxist philosophy was introduced into China and had its great influence was near the time of the foundation of CCP. As Marx put it: “A theory will only be realised in a people in so far as it is the realisation of what it needs.” Marxist philosophy, especially historical materialism, brightened the Chinese intellectuals who were seeking truth about the liberation of China at that time, and drew them to such a common understanding that “only Marxism can save China”. And the fact that Marxism was quickly taken to be the principle of CCP well demonstrated its political feature from the beginning.

Such a staring point of the Chinese modern history determined the destiny of Marxism in China. Both the success of Chinese revolution and heading for socialist society were in a sense the result of the combination of Marxism and Chinese practice. And the combination also generated the Chinese form of Marxism: Mao Tse-tung’s thought.

In my point of view, the success of Mao Tse-tung’s thought was due to its inheritance and development of the essence of Marx’s practical materialism both in theory and practice. And such development was actually Marx and Engels’ Expectation of their inheritors.

After the foundation of PRC, Marxist philosophy became national philosophy, an overwhelming ideology within the nation. At the beginning, which I refered to the period of socialist transformation, both the theory and practice of Marxist philosophy were still flourishing because the war was just over and “seek the truth from facts” (practical materialism) was taken to be the basis for policy making. With the success of socialist transformation, the situation in China greatly changed. Unfortunately, Mao Tse-tung failed to estimate the change correctly. Owing to his lack of deep inquiry into the special situation of the country, the stratagem he devised about Chinese development was doomed to end up with romanticism. And it's easy to recognise the damage it caused when we focus on the tragic result of “Take Class Struggle as Principle” and “the Cultural Revolution” movements. In short, it was a setback in theory and practice that was violently against the practical materialism principle of Marxism.
The contribution of Deng Xiaoping was to restore the principle of “Seek the Truth from Facts”. His philosophy concerning socialist reform and construction was firmly based on Chinese situation, and the essence of which was also “Seeking the Truth from Facts”. Under the guidance of such a kind of philosophy of reform, the modernisation of China had a great achievement, and so did the Marxist philosophy itself.

Now we can learn the tendency of Chinese Marxist philosophy study in the future by the analysis of the following influential factors.

Firstly, the “Sinicization of Marxism” tradition was an important influential factor. From the short retrospection above, we find that Chinese Marxist philosophy study has brought about a tradition, the so-call “Sinicization of Marxism” tradition. I believe it stuck to the nature of Marxist philosophy of transforming the world, that is, it combined philosophical study with the Chinese situation and practice in order to be carried out smoothly in practice. Such a tradition resisted dogmatism in study and paid more attention to the destiny of human being and the development of society. As Marx had said, philosophy indeed was not the daydream outside the world, but the elite of its time. So philosophers are the product of their time and their people. This characteristic of Marxist philosophy determined the way of its study, which was required to face the historical features and special situations of different countries. Any so-called “academic research” indifferent to concrete circumstances had but very limited value as forum learning. In short, there’s no hope for any kind of philosophy disregarding the development of a nation or a society.

Secondly, the tradition of anticipation of the mass is another influential factor. There were tremendous successful experiences in both the wartime and the stage of construction. Since Marxist philosophy was regarded as “practical philosophy” and the mass was the subject of practice, Marxist philosophy was to some extent the “philosophy of the mass”. The following statements of Marx well demonstrated such a feature of Marxist philosophy. “As philosophy finds in the proletariat its material weapons, so the proletariat finds in philosophy its intellectual weapons.” And also “Philosophy cannot realise itself without transcending the proletariat, the proletariat cannot transcend itself without realising philosophy.” However, it doesn’t mean that every one of the mass needs to study philosophy or to be a philosopher, but the mass can use it as a tool to understand and change the world. In the future, there will be a lot more people learning philosophy and putting it into practice compared to those who are doing research.

Thirdly, the influential factor came from the themes of our time. It’s wildly accepted that peace and development are the themes of our time, although there are still threats of terrorism and regional wars. Development has become the most important thing for countries all over the world, especially for those developing countries. After over twenty years’ reformation, Chinese economy has had a great achievement. But China is still a poor country if we take the huge population (over 1.3 billion) into consideration. So, several generations’ efforts are still needed for the country to keep up with the level of the developed countries and to have a better life lived up to the “human” nature. In such a country with complicated situation, it’s a hard job to figure out how to develop. It’s obvious that Marxist philosophy study in China can’t avoid of restriction by the theme of
development. The main direction for Marxist philosophy study in China is to probe into the rule of Chinese development and the scientific development concept suitable for Chinese circumstances. Of course, the above-mentioned work should stick to kinds of philosophical research, rather than detail policies.

Fourthly, the open attitude of our time was also one of the influential factors. The “Reform and Opening up” policy created a loose situation for Marxist philosophy study in China, which emancipate philosophers from all kinds of dogmatism and spiritual despotism. During these years, philosophy study had a great development and resulted in a situation open to different perspectives and theories. Among the numerous and complicated works, many of which were about the “subjectivity” problem, including the subject of “practice”, “value”, “individuality”, “freedom”, etc. This tendency well revealed a switch of philosophical study, although some of them fell into absolutisation. And it was related to the historical development of society and reflected the spirit of the modern age. Such a tendency has had its influence on the policy of the central committee of CCP. The achievements of these efforts were found both in Jiang Zemin’s theory of “comprehensive development of human being” and “Three Represents”, and in Hu jintao’s “Human-Oriented” theory. Needless to say, the tendency will influence the themes of Marxist philosophy study in China in the future.

Fifthly, global communication and dialogue in the subject of philosophy was the final influential factor. Before the “Reform and Opening up”, Chinese scholars engaging in Marxist philosophy study knew little about western philosophy, including western Marxism. But later, when they found the abundant and colorful world of philosophy in the 1980s, they were shocked. Under such condition, some scholars, especially the youth, began to worship western philosophy, and what’s more, they usually became the follower of the western scholar he studied. So, a wildly accepted “western dogmatism” occurred to take the place of “eastern dogmatism”. In my view, there will be no future for both of them. Fortunately, we still have some independent, thoughtful, capable and ambitious young scholars who are engaging in Marxist philosophy study with a good knowledge about western philosophy. They focus on the circumstance of Chinese modernisation and the foreland of philosophical study with the effort to combine Chinese traditional culture and the elite of western philosophy. I believe that their effort is the direction for the future Marxist philosophy study in China.

To sum up, I tried to present my opinion in this paper about the tradition, status quo, influential factors and tendency of development of Marxist philosophy study in China. Any critique concerning this paper is welcome.
Morality and Revolution: Ethical Debates in the British New Left

Paul Blackledge

Abstract

In this paper I propose to examine the debate on the ethics of socialist politics as they were articulated within the British New Left after 1956. While the New Left famously emerged, in part, as a humanist reaction against the barbaric reality of Stalinism, the exact nature of the ethics of humanism to which its members subscribed was a source of contestation. Edward Thompson, in his essay ‘Socialist Humanism’, made one of the earliest and most powerful contributions to the New Left’s ethical politics in the first issue of the *New Reasoner* in 1957. However, despite the obvious honesty and power of Thompson’s moral indictment of Stalinism, his conceptualisation of a socialist morality was criticised within the New Left. Most prominent of Thompson’s New Left critics was Harry Hanson, who argued that while Thompson’s personal morality was beyond question, his conceptualisation of socialist humanism shared with the Stalinists a utilitarian, or consequentialist, ethics that lent itself to the justification of inhuman means by reference to some future ends of action. While Hanson thus made a telling criticism of Thompson’s argument, his alternative moral framework was marred by his attachment to a form of Kantianism, which evacuated it of any social, historical, and therefore human, content. From a Hegelian perspective, Alasdair MacIntyre articulated a distinct morality of revolution on the pages of the *New Reasoner*, which, while defending Thompson’s general standpoint, was aimed at offering an alternative to the limitations of both his consequentialism and Hanson’s Kantianism.

In the proposed paper I argue that this debate fed into and informed the New Left’s broader political concerns; concerns which remain much of their pertinence today. Specifically, I contend that a lacuna existed at the heart of Thompson’s socialist humanism which helped undermine his broader strategic orientation, but that while Hanson correctly identified the basis for this problem in Thompson’s weak analysis of Stalinism, his own alternative morality proved untenable as a guide to socialist practice. By contrast, MacIntyre provided the basis for a socialist humanism that avoided the pitfalls associated with either Thompson’s or Hanson’s positions. MacIntyre’s Marxist morality, or so I argue, provides a justification for revolutionary practice that is unfortunately absent from more recent discussions of the subject. One reason for this is perhaps that Anglophone Marxists came to engage with ethical arguments, MacIntyre had long since distanced himself from his earlier position, such that his early essays went largely unread by the Marxists who debated the connection between Marxism and morality in the 1970s and 1980s. My aim in this paper is to overcome this lacuna in the literature on the relationship between Marxism and ethical theory and to defend the power of MacIntyre’s early contribution to a Marxist revolutionary ethics. The paper builds upon arguments articulated in three other papers.
The Evolution of Practice Interpretation: the Models of Practice Interpretation in Marxism of China

Liu Sen-lin

Abstract

From Mao-Zedong to Deng-xiaoping, the meaning of practice used by the official Marxist philosophy of China, as Gadamor referred to, implied strongly anti-doctrine. Its primary content was constituted with the new experience because of contacting new things. This practice was essentially an epistemological conception which not only was discussed in the realm of crude theory, but attempted to remain an open space. The practice that was referred to the process of experiential accumulation and improvement had great infection until 1990’s.

In 1980’s, the subjective model of practice’s interpretation came to rise, which basis was individual subject. The practice was explained for the process and the product which individual inspired his inner power. Many litterateurs and philosophers interpreted the subject as the being of a “mind” or “thought” with superficial dignity, and it was uncontrolled by the social relation. After 1990’s, such subject was infused into the institutional content.

At the beginning of Li Da-zhao, the precursor of Chinese Marxism, the practice was expressed as “labor”. Li Da-zhao claimed that the traditional Chinese were greedy and lazy, and the practice of labor could heal this abuse. Such practical conception has been infused for the last twenty years the content of industrialisation and modernisation etc., and becomes more and more worldly. It is clear that the explanation forgets its transcendental dimension and meaning.

In the last ten years, the Life-world has been used to explain the practice because of the influence of Habermas, but its effect is not broad.

In fact, the model of moral-value theory which interprets the practice in the version of transcendental imperative has always been developed its existent space, even though it is elbowed out by the model of labor theory. And many scholars have paid attention to it.

Furthermore, there are some scholars who concern increasingly with the practical self-paradox. They view “practice” as a system with manifold contradictions and conflicts. Some contradictions are often magnified, and appear to the existence of self-paradox. The extrapolation (while not annihilation) of self-paradox is the fact that the modern practice reveals within adequate horizon. And now, to analyse the practical conflicts is to realise the important aspects of practice.
The Researches on Frankfurt School in China

Wang Xiaosheng

Abstract

The Frankfurt school research in China really began in 1980s. Since then, the research has passed three different periods. The first period may be called the “period of partial introduction”. In this period, one or several scholars introduced some ideas about Frankfurt school. These introductions have three magnificent soft points: Firstly, we do not have enough original works of the Frankfurt school, people learned some thing of it from the secondly western books; secondly, people usually adopted an radical leftist attitude to it, then could not make a just evaluation of it, thirdly, due to the lack of original works, people could only introduce what they happened to know some of the author of the school were neglected. The second period may be called “ the period of translation and partial research”, which began at the end of 1980s ,and lasted up to the end of 1990s. In this period, lots of works of distinguished authors of Frankfurt school were translated into Chinese. It helps a great to enhance our knowledge about Frankfurt school. But we have to say that, because we do not have a sound command of the ideas of the school ,because of we have difficulty in understand the ideas of it, there appear a lot of mal and wrong translations. Some people even based their studies on these translations and could not apprehend what they really meant. Of course , in this period , some serious scholars had done some good research on it, and made some specialised projects on it. Some good translations also appeared as well. A lot of basic things has been done for further study . Since the end of 1990, the situation has changed , we have made a lot of progresses in the area. We may call this period “the period of deep research and improving translation”. People have found that bad translation had hindered their research. Scholars of young generation are flying back to China from overseas. They not only have a good command of western languages but have a good understanding of the school’s ideas. They retranslate their books and introduce some new books. Even the books of the third generation such as Honneth are under discussion. The task we are facing are as follows, due to the different backgrounds of Frankfurt scholar, we found some of them are difficult to be understood such as Adorno; for further study, we need to enlarge the area of research, some of the scholars who are not so famous as commonly introduced and those who influenced the Frankfurt school and are influenced by the school should be paid attention to; a lot of specialised subject should be done, and good translations are needed as well, lastly and most importantly we need to further the social critics both in China and the world to deal with the problem we are facing.
Chinese Marxist Philosophy is the theoretical result of the sinicization of Marxist Philosophy. The sinicization of Marxist Philosophy means to combine Marxist Philosophy with Chinese reality including Chinese traditional culture and present practice, namely, to apply the stand, viewpoint and method of Marxist Philosophy to study Chinese reality and to enrich and develop Marxist Philosophy thereby. Keeping a foothold on Chinese reality is the basic reason why Chinese Marxist Philosophy is of distinctive Chinese characteristics, Chinese style and Chinese manner as well as the foundation on which Chinese Marxist Philosophy is qualified to be call as Chinese Marxist Philosophy. Thus, the dogmatism disregarding Chinese reality is always the natural enemy of Chinese Marxist Philosophy; to advance the development of Chinese Marxist Philosophy, we must resolutely oppose all sorts of dogmatism.

It could be said in a sense that the history of the development of Chinese Marxist Philosophy has been a history of opposing dogmatism. Dogmatism mainly took the form of bookishness during the period from disseminating Marxist Philosophy into China to the Great Cultural Revolution. Bookishness is the dogmatism as a style of study, and it treats the specific judgments or even specific words and expressions of Marxist classics as dogmas, and artificially cuts Marxist Philosophy off from Chinese reality. Mao Zedong incisively criticised this kind of dogmatism during Chinese revolutionary war years, and founded Mao Zedong’s Philosophy in the course of opposing dogmatism. Deng Xiaoping and Chinese philosophical circle firmly criticised this kind of dogmatism in the movement of mind emancipation after the Great Cultural Revolution, and thereby initiated the new flourishing situation of Chinese Marxist Philosophy.

The sediment of dogmatism has floated and even become the fashion in the research of Chinese Marxist Philosophy in recent years. On one hand, after the old-fashion dogmatism (bookishness) was driven out of front door, now it has passed through the hall into the inner chamber from back door in the stately name of “strengthening technicality” and in the form of “text worship”. Text worship is the dogmatism as a train of thought for the research of Marxist Philosophy, which is different from the old-fashion dogmatism, it doesn’t generally pay attention to Marxist classical texts, but maintain to take “returning to texts” or the research of texts as the basic train of thought for the research of Marxist Philosophy. Therefore, text worship is nothing but the refurbished version of the old-fashion dogmatism considering that text worship negates that the research of Marxist Philosophy should face Chinese reality. On the other hand, the new-fashion dogmatism, which could be named the fetish of foreign dogmas, is extremely prevailing. By the fetish of foreign dogmas I mean that some researchers unexpectedly treat the theories of some modern Western thinkers as dogmas in the research of Chinese Marxist Philosophy. The fetish of foreign dogmas prominently manifests itself as understanding Marxist Philosophy with the help of the concepts and methods of some modern Western thinkers,
appraising Marxist Philosophy according to the standards of some modern Western thinkers and praising Marxist Philosophy in accordance with the views of some modern Western thinkers. This kind of dogmatism shows some researchers are short of confidence in Marxist Philosophy and in turn is dispelling Marxist Philosophy. The old-fashion and new-fashion dogmatism has caused Chinese Marxist Philosophy to land in varies of predicaments. Only determinedly opposing and overcoming the two forms of dogmatism can Chinese Marxist Philosophy get off the predicaments and acquire new theoretical achievements.
On the Subject of the Sinicization of Marxist Philosophy

He Ping

Abstract

Since the 1990s, the sinicization of Marxist philosophy has been one of the most important problems in the study of Chinese Marxist philosophy. It has presented the subject of the sinicization of Marxist philosophy, which the sinicization of Marxist philosophy is not only the processor of creating the theory and practices of the Chinese modernisation, but also the reason of the Chinese modernisation. Therefore, we must combine the study of the sinicization of Marxist philosophy with the theory and practice of Chinese modernisation. This paper try to follow this main thread to explain the practice foundation and thought resources of the sinicization of Marxist philosophy and show the history, present and future of Chinese Marxist philosophy.

1. Chinese modernisation and Marxist philosophy. It is the historical choice of Chinese modernisation that makes Marxist philosophy leading ideology in China. We can divide Chinese modernisation into two phrases by the end of nineteenth century and the beginning of twentieth century. At the first phrase, as European capitalism invaded China and the Qing Dynasty cannot be able to resist European capitalist aggression, China gradually changed into a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society. This make Chinese radical intellectuals to aware the fact that Chinese traditional production mode and its culture cannot be able to produce modernisation, but make China to lost its chance to enter into modernisation. So, only accepting west advanced culture and changing Chinese traditional production mode, can China realise its modernisation. This status is the historical basis of Marxist development in China. The second phase is the era of Marxist sinicization. Since 1900s, Marxist philosophy has gradually become the reason spirit of Chinese modernisation, as Marxist philosophy theoretically and practically settled two main problems of Chinese modernisation: the one is the China’s sovereign state, which was the premise of Chinese modernisation, the other is the road of Chinese modernisation.

2. Chinese Marxist philosophy and the teaching book system of Marxist philosophy. The teaching book system was the creation of Russian Marxist philosophers in 1920s and 1930s. This system hade made a great impact on Chinese Marxist philosophers before 1980s, however, Chinese Marxist philosopher cannot passively accept it, but took it as method to create Chinese Marxist philosophy according to requests of Chinese modernisation, which showed in ontology, historical concept and political philosophy. This fact cannot allow us to equate the Chinese Marxist philosophy with the teaching book system of Marxist philosophy, more cannot lump together Chinese Marxist philosophy and Russian Marxist philosophy.

3. The relation between Chinese Marxist philosophy and west Marxist philosophy. Chinese Marxist philosophers undergo a process from refusal to acceptance in valuation on west Marxist. Before 1980s, Chinese Marxist philosophy had refused west Marxist
philosophy that was called as non-Marxist philosophy, but after 1980s, Chinese Marxist philosophy has more accepted west Marxist and criticised Russian Marxist philosophy. This change is radically decided by the reality of Chinese modernisation, although it has to do with the movement of emancipating the mind in China. It is just as the critique of culture and ideology have become more and more important in Chinese society with China’s transformation from Command economy into Market economy and changes in social structure, productive structure and people’s life mode since 1980s that Chinese Marxist philosophers have to face west Marxist philosophy for absorbing its thought resources.

4. The relation between Chinese Marxist philosophy and other’s philosophical thought in contemporary China. Chinese Marxist philosophy in its theoretical and practical creation underwent the heated argument with the Three People’s Principles, liberalism, Neo-Confucian and scientism, in which Chinese Marxists created the characteristic style and features of Chinese Marxist philosophy through both criticising and absorbing the achievements of other’s thoughts.

Of above four, the first presents the practical bases of sinicization of Marxist philosophy, the other three display the thought sources at home and abroad of sinicization of Marxist philosophy. All of these have fully proved both the necessity of the development of Marxism in China and that Chinese Marxist philosophy has wide historical background and rich thought resources of philosophy at home and abroad.

Zhang Xianyong

Abstract

Religion as “the opium of the people” is a famous quote from Karl Marx’ Critique of the Hegelian Philosophy of Right (1844). This succinct and metaphoric statement was later identified by Lenin as the cornerstone upon which the whole Marxist world view of religious issues is built up. The catchphrase of religion as the opium of the people has also been the theoretical basis for the religious policy making in the People’s Republic of China. In the 1980s a debate on the Marxian theory of religion was launched among Chinese Marxist theorists and religious scholars, especially those groups gathered in Beijing, Shanghai and Nanjing. Many articles were written, many essays were published, and many speeches were made in order to get the support from the authorities. The debate was so heated that some observers even referred it to the “third Opium War”, as the previous two are serious political events in the mid-19th century as typical cases of national painful disgrace imposed on China by western imperialist aggressors. Two decades later, a revisit of the debate still has much to reveal. We are more convinced today than before that much progress has been made during the period in terms of an appropriate understanding of the Marxian theory of religion. The former practice of applying Marx’ words as “labels” is no longer accepted among the Chinese students of Marx. The present religious policy made and implemented by the Chinese Communist Party and the central government is more moderate and effective, though, needless to say, there is still much room for further improvement. Such progress was initiated by a return to a closer reading of the original text of Marx, which sheds light on the following important issues concerning the Marxian view of religion: First, the opium is of the people instead for or against the people; secondly, the similar expressions using opium metaphors being attested in numerous works by both earlier authors and Marx’ contemporaries does not disown Marx’ originality in describing the nature of religion otherwise; thirdly, the opium functions not only as a stupefier but also a pain reliever and stimulant as well. The present and scholarly consensus regarding the nature of religion based on a more comprehensive understanding of the Marxian theory of religion comes only into being in China through this process starting about two decades ago.
The Commentary on Marxist Philosophy in the Soviet Era of Russia

Li Shangde

Abstract

The Chinese philosophical research on soviet philosophy is zigzag. Nowadays Russian philosophy (Marxist philosophy in the soviet era of Russia) remains a cold subject, however the research on it has been on the right path.

I. The establishment of the theoretical system of Marxist philosophy by soviet philosophers

The most distinguished contribution of soviet philosophy is the establishment of the theoretical system of Marxist philosophy. The text of systematic and integrated Marxist philosophical theory with a rigorous logistic framework, as we see now, came into being by the induction of soviet philosophers. It has been a stepwise progress: Plekhanov and Bukharin took the first step forward, two philosophical controversies in 1920s gave impetus to its development, and it was finally completed in the beginning of 1930s.

II. The politicizing characteristics of soviet philosophy

The development of soviet philosophy has been closely related with soviet society and politics, as well as the thoughts of the leaders of the Party and the nation. The change of political courses and the mention of any slogan would affect the development of soviet philosophy. Marxist philosophy in the soviet era of Russia is basically “obey-the-command philosophy” which pursues academic activities according to the resolutions, directions and plans of the Party and the nation. This can be embodied in the following three aspects: the interference of the extremely “left” politics, dogmatic annotation, and the misguidance of oral official instructions.

III. “The official philosophy” and “the real philosophy”

“The official philosophy”, which can also be called “mainstream philosophy”, “politicizing philosophy” or “national philosophy”, refers to the dominant philosophy that mirrors leaders’ wills and has the backing of political power. “The real philosophy”, which is opposite to “the official philosophy”, is incidental philosophy established by professional philosophers. It is the achievements of “real philosophy” that reveal the situation and law of philosophical development.

IV. Academic hegemony and discrimination

The politicizing of soviet philosophy led to academic hegemony and discrimination, which resulted in the abnormal development of Marxist philosophy in the soviet era. Although dialectical materialism and historical materialism thrived, the rest subjects didn’t achieve suitable attention, such as historical philosophy, cultural philosophy, philosophy of law, ethical philosophy, scientific philosophy, economic philosophy, administrating philosophy, political philosophy, social philosophy.

Xu Dou-dou

Abstract

In “Paris Manuscript” of 1844, K.Marx’s society theory was shown essentially among the relationships of human essence, natural world and physical science. K.Marx’s society theory is also in possession of communism nature. Therefore, at present, the constructing of harmonious society of china should be exhibited in the harmonious relationships of human and society, human and nature world human and physical science, should be represented in the process of practice courses of communism.
The Communicative Structure of Chinese Marxist Philosophical Discourse

John J. Hanafin

Abstract

This paper will argue that in Chinese Marxist philosophical discourse genre determines communicative structure. The prescriptive level of Chinese Marxist philosophical discourse is constituted by textbooks (jiaokeshu), readers (duben), or reading materials that are preceded by the term (tongsu), such as popular philosophical works (tongsu zhexue zhuzuo). The difference between these is that the former textbooks and readers generally attempt to present Chinese Marxist philosophical discourse systematically following a more or less conventional pattern of elaboration. The latter (tongsu), on the other hand, adopt various styles of presentation, such as question and answer, or a kind of dialogue based on the answers and explanations given to questions raised in real or imaginary readers letters, or again, in the form of a number of topics presented as chapters. But even these can still add here to the conventional sequence or order in the elaboration of their topics. However, making a vigorous distinction between the degrees of profundity of elaboration within this first level does not in any way affect the basic proposition that this level does indeed reflect a prescribed, that is, a conventional view.

The second level, the level of articulation, is the articulation of the themata (fundamental governing, informing principles) presented in textbooks (i.e., the prescriptive level), and is made up of the content of philosophical enquiry, discussion and debate found in newspapers, learned journals, collected essays, explorative monographs, conferences and their proceedings and so on. As in the case of the prescriptive level, it is helpful to point out the differences that exist within this level. Tantao (enquiry, exploration) is the term a Chinese theoretician normally uses when putting forward her views on a topic, the use of this term implies a critical look is being taken at the topic in question. A great many of the articles addressing philosophical questions published in China fall into this category. If any particular theoretician's "exploration" of a philosophical topic evokes a response, and a number of other theoreticians contribute articles in support of, as well as against it, then one may say a taolun (discussion) has developed. As well as pursuing discussion through published articles, symposia are often arranged around one or more contentious topic. It is difficult to gauge exactly at what stage or point, but some discussions turn into zhenglun (debates). The major debates in philosophy, can, in most cases, be traced back through a phase of preliminary discussion to a single original exploratory article.
Division of Labour and Alienation

Sean Sayers

Abstract

In a well known passage in *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels criticise the modern division of labour and envisage a future society in which it will be possible to ‘hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticise after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, herdsman or critic’. This passage has been widely criticised. The purpose of this paper is to explain Marx's account of the division of labour and its overcoming and to defend it against some common criticisms. In particular, it will respond to the arguments 1) that specialisation is necessary in an advanced industrial economy; 2) that specialisation is beneficial for human development; 3) that free choice of occupation is impractical and utopian.

Marx's views on division of labour will be explained in the context of his account of the historical development of capitalist society. The elimination of the division of labour is not merely an ideal for Marx, it is an actual tendency of industrial development. Nevertheless, Marx is also a powerful critic of the harmful human effects of the division of labour in modern industrial society. Marx's philosophy involves an ideal of all round human development. I shall explain this and compare and contrast it with related ideas in the philosophies of Plato, Schiller and Hegel.

For Marx, division of labour is connected with the development of private property and class division. It is form of social alienation in which workers are subjected to social relations which they create but which have developed beyond their control. The elimination of the division of labour involves the overcoming of such alienation. I shall explain these ideas and discuss the possibility of realising them.
Marx and Rawls on the Justice of Capitalism and the Market

By Ian Hunt

Abstract

Marx and Rawls appear to have quite different views of justice. Marx claims that the concept of justice functions ideologically to represent conduct required by the prevailing mode of production as universally binding imperatives. Rawls claims that justice is the first virtue of society, whose principles may be agreed to by all persons who impartially and rationally deliberate on the issue of fairly dividing the burdens and benefits of social cooperation. I argue that these apparently different position on justice can be reconciled, although important differences between the standpoints of Marx and Rawls remain.

Despite the differing influences on them of Hegel and Kant, the views of Marx and Rawls can be shown to converge. In proposing an explicitly political conception of justice, Rawls argues that acceptable principles of justice must be realisable in social institutions. This brings his ‘Kantian constructivism’ closer to the Hegelian view, on which Marx bases his rejection of universal, socially transcendent principles of justice.

I argue that both Marx and Rawls can be seen as asking what social institutions can realise principles of justice as fairness. Nevertheless, two important differences remain. Marx envisages a society which transcends the ‘circumstances of justice’, identified by Hume and Rawls, whereas Rawls regards this as utopian. Secondly, Marx claims that market relations should be transcended as the basis of society, since they inherently involve alienation of producers from the social process of production and from the product of their social labour.

However, while this might be possible in a society that transcends the circumstances of justice, Rawls claims that it is not possible in any society where a fair resolution of competing claims is necessary. I argue that the position of Marx and Rawls can be reconciled if we take Marx’s objection to markets as fundamentally an objection to the ‘fetishism of commodities’. I conclude that, apart from the utopian element in Marx’s conception of a future classless society, the positions of Marx and Rawls on the justice of capitalism and the market are quite close.
Retrospection and Perspective of the Studies of the Controversy on the Social Nature in China

By Tan Qunyu

Abstract

From the end of 1920s to 1930s, with the influence of the historical materialism, a controversy on the social nature took place in China. It was the result of thought conflicts on the past and the present of China and the quality of the Chinese rural society, among many people and groups with different political and academic backgrounds. During the controversy, different factions included The New Life, The New Ideological Trend, The Motive Force, The Chinese County, and so on. According to different sociological theories at home and abroad, they gave various understandings about the social nature of China and reflected their dissimilar standpoints on the social future of China. The controversy offers us plenty of thought resources. To this important thought controversy, a mass of scholars from different countries, based on their different political requirements, the topics of their time and the popular international theories, analysed and explained the controversy from different perspectives. Their studies provide us lots of inspirations, but unfortunately, they failed to focus on the deep relationship among these facts and the changes of interpretation happened in different theories. Maybe what was neglected before can tell us more abundant and deep inspiration about the controversy.
The relation between philosophy and life has become a hot topic in present philosophical academic world of China. Different scholars enter into discussion from different points of view. The topics such as philosophy and times, philosophy and life world, philosophy and reality, philosophy and man’s existence are all parts of the debate. This fact that the relation between philosophy and life has become a hot topic recently reflects the situation that philosophy has get away from life.

Certainly, this goes through a long process of development. Before reform and opening-up in 1978 philosophy had a very close but twisted relation with real life. Philosophy, as an almighty guide, was used in every aspect of life and its status, function and its relation with life had never been doubted. In the 80s of 20th century the relation between philosophy and life was not a problem at all, because philosophy and life developed at the same pace. From the criteria for truth to humanity and alienation and further to subjectivism, finally to practical materialism, all these topics discussed not only theoretical problems but also realistic ones. The whole period of 1980s was a time for self-awareness of Chinese people and an enlightenment period of China. Philosophy had not only witnessed this but also is an initiator and a fresh force. Because of its close relation with life, philosophy in the 1980s was optimistic, energetic with new ideas and opinions coming out one after another. Philosophers did not feel alienated or lost. But after 1990, the close relation broke. Some of the scholars summarised the situation of philosophy in the 90s of 20th century with remarkable academic results but fading out in thinking, which is not very accurate but partially true. After 1990 some scholars focused on academic research, or felt proud of their pure research, even ashamed of talking about reality and put philosophy against reality. The other group of scholars turned to vulgar. Loftiness, holiness and sense of historic mission were all gone from them. Academic research became a way of making money and living. Writing academic articles was for gaining technological titles. On these people the old, aggressive spirit disappeared completely. 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 knowledge and learning for philosophers to produce and entertain by themselves.

The problem of the relation of philosophy and life can be divided into two aspects. The first one is the relation between philosophy and philosophers. The second one is the relation between philosophy and life-world. As to the first aspect, I think that although philosophical activities exhibit itself somewhat as a means of living, it is in nature a philosophers’ way of existence or a way of perfecting himself. Before man’s living problem is solved, the philosophers’ way of existence may have the nature of making livings, but this can not deny their nature as means of existence, because people who
engage in it are pursuing perfection. This means we should not taking philosophy as a way of making living.

The other aspect of the relations between philosophy and life is the relation between philosophy and life-world. I think that the relations also contain two aspects from the view of the function of philosophy. First, looking from the whole social productive system, philosophy is a department of social division of labor. Second, philosophy is a general thinking about life-world. This means to think about the questions of man: 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 realise clearly that man or his perfection is the ultimate end of the life and social development by answering these questions continuously, and therefore make man correct his actions according to this realisation. This means that: First, philosophers should have the sense of responsibility and the professional consciousness. 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.

That is to say, answers to the relations between philosophy and life will decide on how we look at philosophy, how we work on it and to what academic height philosophy could reach and what kind of role it will play in society.
In modern philosophy, no thought was criticized as severely as "metaphysics". The reason why metaphysics has such a bad luck was due to its fatal limitations as follows: one was its contradiction to science, and the other was its alien characteristic to human nature. Science is a positive subject in pursuit of certainty (the “truth” of epistemology) proved by experience, but metaphysics focuses on the transcendental certainty (the “real” of ontology).

There were three ways to discuss human nature in modern philosophy. Firstly, human nature was “historical”; secondly, human nature was “generated”; thirdly, human nature was “open to changes”. In metaphysics, especially traditional metaphysics, transcendental reason, abstract identity and logical deduction were taken as deity, and under which everything couldn’t avoid of its “abstract domination”. Thus an abstract, diagrammatic, ultimate speaking “symptom” occurred. With such a “symptom”, the object (including human being and things) of the speaking also showed abstract, diagrammatic and ultimate features, which was in conflict with such features as historical, generated and open to changes in modern trend of philosophy. So, a conclusion of “misunderstood human nature”, “restricted freedom”, and “end the history” concerning metaphysics was drawn.

By pointed out the contradictions between metaphysics and both science and human nature, scientism and humanism launched the campaign of rejection of metaphysics. And the movement of post-modernism also served for the rejection.

In fact, there are no basic differences between metaphysics and human nature. Its generation and development is firmly based on human being’s existence. As what Heidegger put it, Marx has overturned metaphysics. But it neither meant that the history of metaphysics is over, nor proved the end of human’s understanding of their nature. In the philosophical perspective, Marx’s philosophy has an undeniable feature of metaphysics.
Interpretation of Chinese Marxism According to the Stages and Culture

Li ping

Abstract

The paper mainly discussed three issues. First, what is Marxism? In China, Marxism can be interpreted by two prerequisites: the theoretical base of Chinese Communist Party and the ideology of the Socialist countries. The spread of Marxism in China was initiated by the October Revolution in Russia. Chinese Communist Party accepted Marxism and regarded Marxism as its guiding principle and theoretical base. As the establishment of a new China, Chinese Communist Party became the ruling party in China, and then Marxism was extended from the party’s theoretical base into the nation’s ideology. It is believed the above process determined the interpretation, contents and theoretical features of Marxism in China.

Second, how Marxism can be interpreted in China? Since 1949, the interpretation of Marxism in China was separated into two stages. In the first stage, Marxism philosophers like Ai Siqi and Li Da took Marxism philosophy, political economics and scientific socialism, and their principles of conventional Marxism as the contents of Marxism in China. In the second stage, the thoughts and theories of Chinese leaders became the main contents of Chinese Marxism, i.e., Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory and Three Represents.

Third, how can the contemporary interpretation of Chinese Marxism be decoded from a cultural perspective and what critical reviews can be done? Three questions were discussed in the paper: a) what are the specificities of the interpretation of Chinese Marxism? The author proposed it has the salient partisanship, the political utilitarianism and the dominance of authority; b) how it related to traditional culture? The interpretation of Marxism in China reflected its correlation with the Chinese traditional culture, such as “theory should serve reality and practical issues” and “value is superior of object”; c) how can we critically review the interpretation of Chinese Marxism? The dominance of authority inhibited the development of Marxism, and the political utilitarianism limited the extension of Marxism.
On Globalisation of Labour: an Argument being both Marxist and Chinese

By Xu Changfu

Abstract

Nowadays it is an age of globalisation which, however, is a imbalanced one. The imbalance appears in various aspects including an important one that is the imbalance of the globalisation of capital and the globalisation of labor. This aspect of the imbalance is ignored by people because they have forgot Marx’s theory and do not pay great attention to the standpoint of developing countries like China. Here an argument, being both Marxist and Chinese, can probably be a help to discover it.

In Marx’s theory, (1) labor, productive activity, productive life itself, is the species-character of man, and in creating a world of objects and work upon inorganic nature, man develops and confirms his species-character; (2) in capitalist society, the products of labor are alienated as capital governing labor, namely an universalised and objectified economic power and social relations, hence capital becomes end and labor becomes means; (3) bourgeois human right, so far as it cannot make labor return to its free and conscious essence, is just privilege of capital, and such a society is not real human society yet; (4) capital, as the subject of exchange value, is capable to associate universally individuals and develop greatly productive forces, to result in world market and world history, and to finally prepare the condition for suspending alien labor; (5) communist society is an association of free men in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all, and each will realise his species-character - free and conscious labor.

According to above-mentioned theory, globalisation may be still conceived as a phase of the development of capitalist relations of production when capital breaks through the limit among nations and becomes cosmopolitan, so as to realise its complete universalisation. That the globalisation of capital requires the globalisation of labour, is an immanent implication of capital in the accomplishment of its logic. In other words, it is impossible that capital is globalised while labor is localised, and capital is cosmopolitan while labour is citizen. But actually, at the present time, globalisation is one-sided globalisation only of capital while labour is confined to national limits. This condition causes the opposition between developed capital-nations and developing labour-nations, and is a source of various conflicts between rich nations and poor nations. The point of the imbalance of globalisation is that the contradiction between capital and labour has transformed from that between capital-class (bourgeois) and labour-class (proletariat) as Marx viewed into that between capital-nations and labor-nations in our sight.

Capital has its right of globalisation that is a objective right or power of thing; and also has labour the right of globalisation, that is a subjective right of man, and that is asked correspondingly by capital for its own globalisation, furthermore is claimed by labourer for the future development of his human right and the consummation of his humanity.
Only when the two kinds of globalisation have been realised to the same extent, will such an ideal phase emerge as that globalised labour ascends as end while globalised capital descended as means, thereby globalised man governs globalised thing. If the globalisation of labor is objectively necessary and in conformity with humanity, contents of human rights should be revised for labour-nation, i.e. the right of working everywhere on earth should be promoted at least to the same level as the right of investment everywhere on earth. So clearly, history has not ended.

China is a developing country, a big labour-nation. It has provided the largest space for the globalisation of capital and also would expect more space of the globalisation of labour with its rational interests. Only by this, will globalisation tend towards balance.
Scientific Realism and Marxist Value Theory

By Margaret Moussa and Scott Mann

Abstract

This paper develops a critical analysis of Marxist value theory in light of ideas from the realist philosophies of science of Rom Harre, Roy Bhaskar and Hilary Kornblith. On the ontological side these include ideas of a hierarchy of different natural kinds as objects of different sciences and of such kinds as self-maintaining – homeostatic – structures. On the epistemological side, they include ideas of the role of analogy in the construction of theoretical hypotheses, of assessment of such hypotheses in terms of intrinsic coherence, simplicity, scope, consistency with established knowledge, testability and verification of unexpected predictions.

Starting out with consideration of the role of base and superstructure, surplus labour and surplus product in historical materialism, the paper looks at Marx’s value theory as theory of determination of exchange values in capitalist society. It explores the analogical foundations of the theory in natural science and critically assesses Marx’s argument for the need for value as a basis for systematic market exchanges over and above price as a mark-up on costs and monetarily effective demand. In relation to abstract social labour as creator of value, the paper considers problems of circularity in presupposing the social equalisation of labour through market relations when attempting to explain exchange in terms of such equalised labour. In relation to determination of exchange value by embodied value, the paper highlights difficulties with major attempts to solve the transformation problem.

The paper will focus upon the relation between exchange value and use value in respect of the material reproduction of capitalist societies. It seems that Marx correctly approaches this issue in terms of the distribution of use values via exchange values in his reproduction schemes. But because all of the terms of such schemes involve values rather than use values, it is not clear that Marx has adequately dealt with the conditions of possibility of material reproduction.

In respect of verification, value theory might also be seen as having a good track record – including the persistence and acceleration of business cycles, the great depression and attendant barbarism, the accelerated concentration, centralisation and globalisation of capital and other issues. But, again, it is far from clear that value theory was either necessary or sufficient to generate relevant predictions in these areas.
The Marxian Technological-Fix: On Capitalist Technological Development & Marx’s Ambitions for Production & Consumption under Communism

By Raj Sehgal

Abstract

G.A. Cohen claims that it is now time for Marxists to junk two traditional articles of their communist faith. The first article centres on a belief in the revolutionary role of the proletariat. This maintains that, at some point in time, a mass of industry-based wage-workers will rise up and revolt against the capitalist mode of production. A dramatic ‘D-day’ struggle will take place between capitalists and workers which will result in triumph for the workers and the subsequent institution of communist systems of production, distribution and consumption in human society. The second article of faith centres on a belief about the role of technology in a functioning communist economic order. Here Cohen maintains that Marx believed in the coming of a ‘Technological-Fix’ in which developments in technology will be so great that a condition of abundance in material goods will become available to human society.

Cohen claims that history has showed Marx’s beliefs about class and technology to be ill-founded. Cohen also claims that there is no prospect that such political and economic developments will occur in the future. According to Cohen, there is no longer a mass class of workers ready, willing and able to deliver “dramatic” revolutionary change. Also, Marx was hopelessly optimistic in his ambitions for technology: there are ecological limits to the goal of material abundance of which he was not aware. For Cohen, both facts show that Marx’s Scientific Socialism is largely, if not wholly, useless as a body of theory which can aid us in the delivery of communism to human society.

My view is that the two articles of faith which Cohen distils from Marx’s Scientific Socialism, and now uses to reject Marx, have only a slight basis in Marx’s own writings. Marx did hold the dramatic D-day conception of proletarian revolution but then came to reject it in his post-Manifesto writings on history and economics. Marx came to view proletarian revolution is much more evolutionary terms and to see the effects of revolutionary struggle unfold over an ‘epoch’ of social revolution. Also, Marx did not believe that technology would deliver the kind of abundance which Cohen attributes to him.

This paper is primarily about the second article of communist faith and Marx’s actual hopes for technology in the transition to, and functioning of, a communist society, although I will have something to say about the nature of labour struggle with capital which Marx developed in his post-Manifesto writings. In this paper I set out and defend Marx’s case for the role of technology in the transition to, and the functioning of, a post-capitalist communist society. In section (2) I show why Marx could not have held the ambition for technology and the dream of abundance which Cohen ascribes to him. In section (3) I set out and defend the real ‘Technological-Fix’ that Marx had in mind for the coming of communism. I claim that the Marxian Technological-Fix centres on a tendency...
towards the replacement of labour by capital factors within the capitalist mode of production. I claim that working class struggle is a necessary drive behind this tendency, and that this tendency is inevitable and desirable for future communism. I conclude in section (4) by outlining some of the opportunities and a major threat which the Marxian Technological-Fix presents for the economic base of human society.