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A Case Study of the Thought of
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THE DISCOURSE OF CHINESE MARXISM:

A CASE STUDY OF THE THOUGHT OF

CHEN DUXIU AND LI DAZHAO BEFORE THE TURN OF 1920

by

Alex Woshun Chan

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MASTER OF ART

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ABSTRACT
THE DISCOURSE OF CHINESE MARXISM:
A CASE STUDY OF THE THOUGHT OF
CHEN DUXIU AND LI DAZHAO BEFORE THE TURN OF 1920

By

Alex Woshun Chan

This thesis studies how Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao interpreted Marxism before the turn of 1920. Data are collected through comparative textual analysis, with particular attention to how specific words are used, and how arguments are arranged. I argue that their interpretation was shaped by a particular discursive pattern called moral discourse. This moral discourse was a product of complex interaction among the voluntaristic language bequeathed by traditional Chinese culture, the structural effects of a newly formed public sphere, and the historical conjunction of deinstitutionalization of discourse. Theoretically, this thesis is intended as a critique of the objective approach to sociology of knowledge. A discursive approach is proposed, primarily treating knowledge as discourse. The purpose is to persuade sociologists to take language into account seriously.

Preface

By conventional rule, a preface is put before the content. But I guess most authors write it at last of his drafting. In my case, I would like to take this opportunity to remind the readers that this thesis is about Chinese Marxism as moral discourse. Therefore, the focus is on moral discourse, not Marxism as such. As the following content should lay bare, I take the interpretation of Marxism by Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao as one moment in the vicissitude of discourse in modern Chinese history.

I would like to thank Professor Kevin Kelly, my Chair in the committee, Professor Steve Averill and Professor Chris Vanderpool for their generous support and precious criticism. In particular, Professor Averill pressed me most for a better thesis which left me with indelible impression of his utmost seriousness in research. This is what I really learnt from his good self. Thanks are also dedicated to Wang Guanghua, Lu Yan, Lee Pak Chul, and Tu Su-hao for their helps in various ways. Madison, February 10, 1991.

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CHAPTER I <u>Introduction</u>

This thesis is done with two purposes. Empirically, it is interested in how Chinese intellectuals made sense of Marxism at the early days when it was received into China. Chinese Marxism has long been characterized as a kind of voluntarism. I would argue that this voluntarism emerged during the turn of the 1920 due to an articulation of Marxism that was shaped by a moral discourse. This discursive pattern was a product of complex interaction among structural, language and historical factors. The second purpose is theoretical. It intends to demonstrate the inadequacy of an objective approach which has played a central role in traditional sociology of knowledge. This thesis argues that in addition to structural factors, sociology of knowledge has to take intersubjective factors, namely language, into account. A complex explanation with an emphasis on the interplay between social structure and language is proposed.

It has been generally admitted that the Chinese interpretation of Marxism is highly voluntaristic (Gouldner 1980; Meisner 1967: 266; Goldman 1973: 246; Schram 1967: 266). Robert Jay Lifton once argued that Maoism

'assumes two things:...the human mind as infinitely malleable, capable of being reformed, transformed, and rectified without limit. The second is a related vision of the will as all-powerful, even to the extent that The subjective creates the Objective.' (Lifton 1970: 153)

In short, this voluntarism is summarized as an emphasis on the voluntaristic energy of the self, as well as an optimistic belief in the potential of voluntaristic transformation of the reality. This thesis argues that voluntaristic interpretation of Marxism could be discerned even at the initial stage of its reception during the turn of the 1920. Moreover, this voluntarism was characterized by a systematic neglect of structural factors. Attention was consistently drifted to the moral force existing on the

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individual level, while structural force on the supra-individual level like institution or system was obscured. Comparing to the Marxist concepts of class and capitalism which are structural, the Chinese voluntaristic reading was obvious.

So far, there has been two explanations of voluntarism in Chinese Marxism. First, it is treated as a reflection of objective situation (Gouldner 1980; Meisner 1979: 101-16). This is also the domain assumption of the objective approach to sociology of knowledge. Second, voluntarism is explained as a Chinese value deeply rooted into the indigenous culture. Arguing against Weber's judgment of Chinese culture as stagnant, Metzger asserts that the voluntaristic impulse towards total societal transformation can be found within Confucianism, especially the Mencian line (1977: 211-4).

This thesis will argue for a third explanation, that voluntarism in Chinese Marxism is a product of a complex interaction between objective structural and intersubjective language factors. More specifically, I will contend that the voluntarism of Chinese Marxism could be discerned even at the beginning stage of its reception, due to a moral discourse which was determined by both the formation of public sphere and a corresponding voluntaristic language in a historically specific context of deinstitutionalization of discourse. This moral discourse, as I conceive, corresponded to an emerging public sphere in the culturally specific context of China in 1910s. In short, this thesis proposes a new approach towards the explanation of voluntarism in early Chinese Marxism. It was accounted as a moral discourse which was a product of a complex interplay among structural, language and historical factors.

CHAPTER II <u>Theory and Method</u>

<u>Objective Approach to Sociology of Knowledge</u>

Karl Marx and Karl Mannheim remain the most familiar figures when one comes to sociology of knowledge. Together their work indicated an objective approach to sociology of knowledge. This chapter intends to give a critique to this approach. In addition, a new framework is proposed which I shall call discursive. This discursive approach will be the theoretical framework of our analysis of the emerging character of Chinese Marxism at the turn of the 1920.

If there is one concept which can define the central focus of the objective approach to sociology of knowledge, it is probably ideology. The point of departure of this approach is the working assumption that knowledge is ideology. In addition, ideology is essentially defined by its determinate relationship to objective factors. It originates from an attempt to transcend the psychological and idealistic approach in which production of knowledge is conceived as mysterious, intuitive, or visionary. The revelation or prophetic model of knowledge with its origin in the religious tradition, together with the claim in the philosophical tradition, which can be traced back to Plato, of contemplation as the source of knowledge, are fundamentally challenged. In contrast, the concept of ideology is objective, in the sense that it can be explained adequately without reference to psychological elements. For the moment, we will stick to this minimal definition of the objective approach to sociology of knowledge, in which the attributed cause of production of knowledge is objective.

Ideology is not an empirical concept. No one can deny that the production of knowledge involves an active process of analysis and imagination. Ideology is entirely a methodological concept, based on the assumption that knowledge can be adequately

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explained by objective factors. This group of objective factors is variously conceived as base and capitalist mode of production in Marx's analysis, and existence and historical situation in Mannheim's work.

The notion of determination gives shape to the central problematic of this objective approach to sociology of knowledge. The Marxian dictum that social being determines social consciousness is perhaps the most condensed expression which highlights the whole paradigm. However, the central problem of the objective approach to sociology of knowledge also lies in the inherent ambiguity of this notion of determination.

In the Marxian tradition, there has been two conceptions of determination. Economism, which is connected to Stalinism and Marxism of the Second International, contends that the determinate relationship between base and superstructure is linear, unilateral and immediate. The superstructure is an "epiphenomenon," a linear reflection of the base. Everything can be deduced from an analysis of this base because the superstructure is unilaterally determined, and is a function of it. Furthermore, the relationship is direct and immediate. The superstructure is governed by the base through "objective" law rather than mediated through "subjective" will. In short, it can be called a mechanical determination.

As demonstrated in subsequent history, economism was severely criticized as untruthful to history, too mechanical in explaining human phenomena and too dogmatic. Two amendments were subsequently made. First, the idea of linear determination was replaced by the notion of "limitation of possibilities" (McMurtry 1978: 161-5). The base was conceived as determining the superstructure, not by directly and mechanically fixing all the particularities, but by excluding certain possibilities that were incongruent with it. Thus, determination referred to scope rather
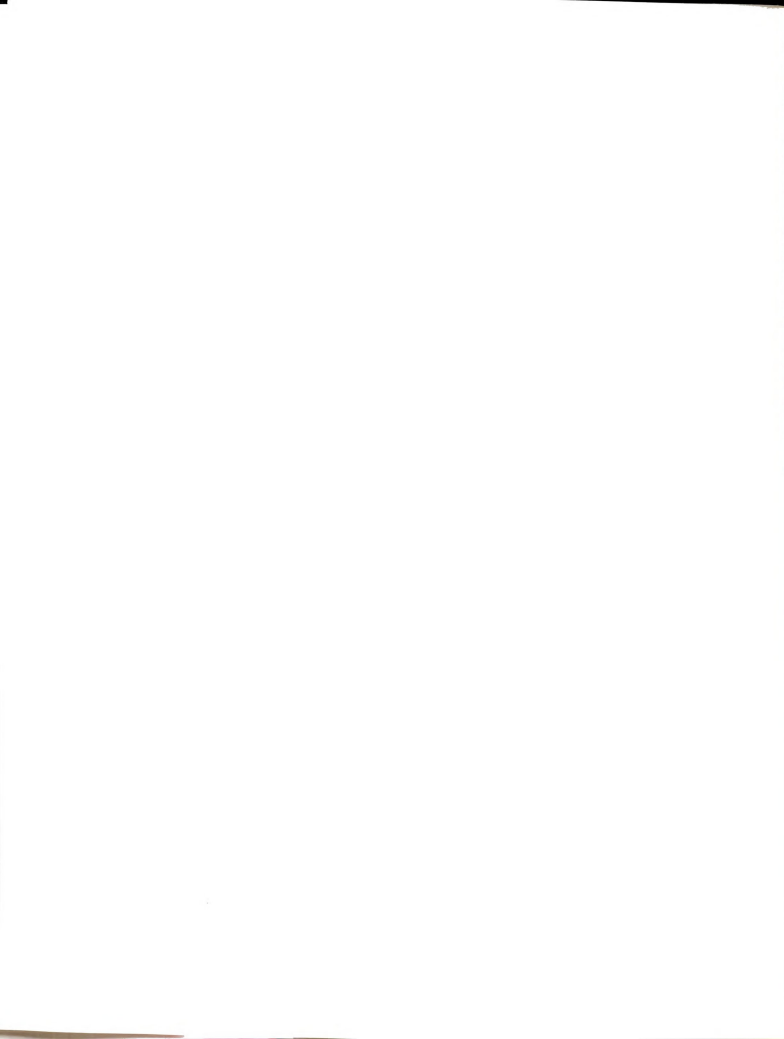
than to content. Second, bilateral determination rather than unilateral was emphasized. This was particularly emphasized in Althusser's notion of overdetermination (1969: 111). Accordingly, the relationship between base and superstructure was never one of essence and epiphenomenon. The non-economic, superstructural instances also had their "specific effectivities" so that they were determining as well as being determined. Economic structure was their conditions of existence, but they also constituted the very existence of it. Determination was never simple but always complex. Therefore, Althusser prefers the term overdetermination. We shall call it dialectical determination in contrast to mechanical determination.

Therefore, to say that Marxism indicates an objective approach to sociology of knowledge does not mean that it excludes subjective factors necessarily. But no matter how sophisticated the concept of determination is understood, and how dialectical it is interpreted, it remains asymmetrical as a kind of causal relationship. Marxists can never go as far as Weberians do to argue that ideal factors also play an immediate role in shaping history, as did the Protestant ethic in the emergence of capitalism, without losing their identity as Marxists. Two prominent examples of the conception of this asymmetrical relationship of determination are the thesis of determination-in-the-last-instance in Althusser's theory - in which the nature of the dominant sphere in structure, even if non-economic, is determined in the last instance by economic factors (Althusser 1969: 87-128), and causal primacy in Gerald Cohen's defence of historical materialism - in which productive force, even if not important in specific historical moment, is accountable for overwhelmingly determining the general history of human evolution (Cohen 1978: 134-72). Conceptually, determination must be asymmetrical because it is a matter of definition. Mutual determination, strictly speaking, is a logically contradictory term in Marxism.

In conclusion, Marxism has been criticized as committing the fallacy of essentialism and reductionism because the framework cannot incorporate non-material factors like language without shattering a whole set of assumptions in the original texts of Karl Marx, for instance the idea of history as a totality (Jay 1984) and the relationship between labor and historical materialism (Habermas 1979: 95-177). The Marxist concept of determination is too narrow. The scope of causal attribution has to be expanded.

In Mannheim's work, ideology is no longer a particular phenomenon within a general framework of historical evolution, but itself universal and ahistorical. He calls this universal concept of ideology total ideology. As his theory of ideology is no longer articulated, as Marx did, within a framework of historical materialism in which the ideological is supposed to give way to the real eventually, the distinction between the real and the ideological is excluded from his concern. The direct consequence is that his concept of ideology is totalized. Every subjective phenomenon is ideology. His intention is to describe objectively the determinate relationship between this total ideology and the objective factors. Unfortunately, Mannheim's concept of total ideology void of a framework of historical evolution leads directly to the ambiguity of his concept of determination.

Let us go back to Marx for clarification. Marx maintains not only a determinate relationship between ideology and objective historical situation, but that this determination is conceptualized within a functional framework. As Giddens examines thoroughly, functionalism is a vision originated from biology. It postulates a teleology supplied by a general theory of evolution, namely that everything existing must be functional in one way or another (Giddens 1977: chapter 2). With this teleological concept of function, Marx argues that ideology exists in determinate relationship with

objective historical situation because it is functional to the existence (survival) of this objective reality.

However, Mannheim borrows the concept of ideology from Marx but takes it out of the framework of human evolution. As a result, his concept of determination is inherently unstable because it is void of a defining framework. Merton summarized five possible conceptions within Mannheim's texts, namely direct causation, gratification of interest, focus of attention, determination by social structure, and emanation. However, they remained ultimately vague and fluctuating (Merton 1968: 543-62).

A critique of Mannheim sensitizes us to a broader definition of the objective approach to sociology of knowledge. It refers to the **nature** of the relationship between ideology and objective historical situation as objective. However, this objective relationship in Mannheim's case is watered down into a general and not very illuminating notion of correlation when it is taken out of a teleological framework of human evolution. The decision of his quest for scientific objectivity propels him incessantly away from a concrete concept of determination. With this fundamental defect, Mannheim's scientific project can only be incomplete.

Critique of the Objective Approach to Sociology of Knowledge

The fundamental ambiguity of the concept of determination in the objective approach to sociology of knowledge originates from a theoretical perspective in which the determinate relationship between ideology and objective existence are conceptualized as one between systems. David Lockwood proposed that there were two kinds of theoretical relationship with radically different implications that sociologists often confused. They were respectively system integration and social integration.

'Whereas the problem of social integration focuses attention upon the orderly or conflictual relationships between the actors, the problem of system integration focuses on the orderly or conflictual relationships between the parts, of a social system.' (Lockwood 1964: 245)

The crucial distinction between system integration and social integration is that the former is about relationship between systems that is objective, with its law of motion taking place independent of human will and over the head of men. For example, the relationship between economic development and increasing demand for democracy is one situating on the level of system integration. Another example is the contradiction between the development of productive force and the institutionalization of productive relations. This objective relationship can be formulated as scientific law or regularity with no need to refer to human consciousness for explanation. Social integration, on the contrary, refers to the relationship between social actors. This relationship cannot be explained adequately without reference to the subjective interpretation of the actors.

It is apparent that Mannheim shared with Marx an interest in objective relationship of social life. Probably, both assumed that the explication of this objective relationship was the sovereignty of science, and in order to be scientific, it was the only legitimate realm of study. Therefore, ideology and objective existence were juxtaposed as systemic parts in the hope that objective relationship in the form of scientific law could be discovered. Moreover, as a rule of scientific study, reference to subjective, ideal or psychological factors are systematically excluded. In short, both Marx and Mannheim deal with ideology on the level of system integration.

However, social reality is not solely system integration. Gradually, sociologists come to the conclusion that social reality involves the active interpretation of social actors on the level of social integration (Weber 1949, Schutz 1967). Moreover, this involvement is understood more and more as internal constitution rather than external

regulation, that is, reality is not regulated by social interpretation externally, but constituted by it from within (Bernstein 1976: 61-2, 136-41).

Moreover, this question is also raised by Marxists. As Erik Olin Wright and Andrew Levine argue, the transition from capitalism to socialism cannot be adequately understood by reference to objective interests only because these interests may fail to be translated into practical action (Wright and Levine 1980: 47-68). Therefore, a further study of class formation among individuals is needed, and this brings us back to the level of social integration.

Anthropologist Clifford Geertz also comes to a similar conclusion that leads us back to the dimension of active interpretation of social actors. He criticizes that theorists usually jump from assertion to observed consequence. What is missed in the general theories of ideology in social sciences is a detailed analysis of the process of mediation between objective historical situation and ideology. As a result, they become merely juxtaposed to each other. He proposes that the concept of ideology should be treated as a cultural system in which people make use of cultural symbols to accomplish certain functions of an ideology. Ideology is not just an entity automatically arising out of the objective need to satisfy certain functions, but a cultural accomplishment (Geertz 1973: 193-233). With an emphasis on the interpretation process, Geertz is bringing the analysis of ideology back to the level of social integration. The concept of determination has to be supplemented by the notion of interpretation.

Marx's functional concept of determination has to be further criticized because the functional postulate of teleology towards survival is mystifying. It also excludes the possibility of integrating analyses on both levels of system integration and social integration. Teleology on the system level is obviously incompatible with the active

interpretation of social actors on the level of social integration. There is nothing wrong with functional explanation if it provides the mechanism through which this "teleology" is realized. For instance, it is enlightening to argue as Poulantzas does that capitalist state necessarily serves the interest of capitalism, regardless of who is actually ruling in the state apparatus. The state "must" fulfill the function of capital accumulation because a failure will hamper the condition of its own existence. However, as long as one merely characterizes the general relationship between state policies and the fulfillment of the function of capital accumulation as teleologically "necessary," and fails to describe the mechanism through which these policies get passed within the state apparatus, it is mysterious and not scientific at all.

The same spirit applies to sociology of knowledge. It may be true that there is a determinate and "necessary" relationship between ideology and objective historical situation. Nonetheless, without describing the mechanism of determination, the general concept of determination remains vacuous. To wrap up our previous arguments, the central concept of the objective approach to sociology of knowledge is ideology which is defined by its determinate relationship with objective factors. However, the scope as well as the nature of this determination are dubious. The central problems of this approach are that knowledge is conceived as a systemic part, and efforts are made systematically to avoid addressing knowledge on the level of social integration. As a result, the problems of translation and mechanism are excluded.

The intellectual history of sociology indicates a riddle in theory. Many theorists start off from an attempt to bridge the gap between system integration and social integration, and finally slide back on either side. If previous approaches to sociology of knowledge are too preoccupied with system integration, it does no good to slide back to social integration. The objective approach to sociology of knowledge is surely

correct in emphasizing that men cannot produce knowledge in whatever way they want, that the production of knowledge must be related to structural factors. However, the concept of structure must be purged of its functionalistic implications when applied to empirical studies. We do not want to shy away from addressing the interpretation of social actors by brushing it under the carpet of a functional teleology. The point is to link up structure and interpretation in approaching sociology of knowledge.

The Discursive Approach

Probably, one of the causes of this sociological riddle can be traced back to the assumptions in the tradition of Cartesian dualism. Accordingly, the reality is composed of two discrete components, namely subject and object. System integration is assumed as referring to the realm of object, while social integration is conceived as pointing to the universe of subject. One may explain the objective by the subjective, vice versa. But it is impossible to develop an explanation that can give space to both subjective and objective factors without reducing one group to another.

However, it is questionable whether social integration can be understood correctly as the universe of subjective phenomena. Let us illustrate this point by referring to the concept of verstehen in Weber's sociology. Working within the approach of methodological individualism, Weber can be classified as the most representative sociologist interested in social integration. He consistently steers his efforts to a sociological analysis defined as attempting 'the interpretive understanding of social action in order thereby to arrive at a causal explanation of its course and effects' (Weber 1947: 88). Verstehen is the main working concept through which he gathers data. Unfortunately, it has for a very long time been understood as a psychological method of empathy, meaning that the researcher puts himself into the shoes of others

in order to acquire an immediate grasp of the inner meanings of a phenomenon within the heads of men. As a result of this subjective understanding of verstehen, this approach has been criticized as not amenable to the scientific principle of verification.

Until Alfred Schutz, he argues that verstehen as a general method of interpretation is not subjective. Nor is social integration a subjective phenomenon. The following paragraph is worth quotation in details because it beautifully summarizes the major elements of an intersubjective understanding of social reality.

'By the term "social reality" I wish to be understood the sum total of objects and occurrences within the social cultural world as experienced by the common-sense thinking of men living their daily lives among their fellow-men, connected with them in manifold relations of interaction. It is the world of cultural objects and social institutions into which we are all born, within which we have to find our bearings, and with which we have to come to terms. From the outset, we the actors on the social scene, experience the world we live in as a world both of nature and of culture, not as a private but an intersubjective one, that is, as a world common to all of us, either actually given or potentially accessible to everyone; and this involves intercommunication and language.' (Schutz 1962: 53)

In brief, Schutz is saying that social reality is composed of meanings, not subjective and accessible only to the subject who projects them, but intersubjective in nature and shared among social actors. Social integration is possible because intersubjectively shared meanings are rendered available for use by language and culture.

Therefore, social integration is not subjective in nature, but intersubjective. Unlike system integration which is governed by systemic regularities, social integration is structured by definite configuration of meanings sedimented over long period of time as language and culture. These linguistically and culturally mediated meanings are essentially intersubjective, and definite in form not amenable to subjective will. On the contrary, subjectivity is constituted by these intersubjective meanings.

With this new understanding of verstehen, of language and culture, and finally of social integration, I am going to elaborate in the following paragraphs a different

approach which I hope can link up system integration and social integration, structure and interpretation. I shall call it discursive approach.

First of all, this discursive approach to sociology of knowledge starts from a working assumption that knowledge is discourse rather than ideology. Here, discourse is defined by its determinate relationship, not only to structure, or objective factors as ideology does, but to language and culture as well.

Language is the essential element of culture. When we mention culture in the following thesis, we refer to language in its full sense. What is language? Language is the set of intersubjective rules that people intuitively practise in their everyday lives. It does not mean narrowly the kind of language we learn in grammar school, but the way we speak, talk, argue, persuade, all during our interactions with others. In essence, language is practical rather than formal, intersubjective rather than objective. This practical language includes all those rules that are inextricably linked to, and defined by social situations rather than detachable from them. It cannot be taught formally and systematically as language grammar. It can only be learnt through practice in everyday life.

Language refers to linguistically mediated rules that appear to the subject as common sense knowledge. He intuitively knows them, and practices them everyday but may not be able to articulate them. They are stored in what Anthony Giddens calls practical consciousness (1979:57-8), or more literally subconsciousness. For example, we know intuitively how to speak to people of different age, sex, status, people with certain psychological characteristics and even in different appearances. The rules are indeed complicated and sophisticated. We may not be able to articulate them immediately without at least a moment of reflection. But we do know how to follow these rules and practise them (Wittgenstein 1968; Giddens 1979: 67).

For the subject who follows these rules, language is a set of assumptions he uses in the context of everyday life. These assumptions are not unique to himself, but shared with other people in the society, and intersubjective in nature. They may not be articulate in his consciousness. But he practices them everyday intuitively and habitually. In short, these assumptions are practical rather than theoretical. They are an integral part of interaction among actors on the level of social integration.

Now, we may assert that while structural factors determine system integration, linguistic factors determine social integration. While structure is objective in the sense it occurs through its own logic over the heads of men, language is intersubjective as they function within the heads of men, but not reducible to personal psychological characteristics. The intersection between system integration and social integration, social structure and language, defines the concept of discourse.

Comparing to the notion of ideology, the salient strength of the concept of discourse is that it straddles both system integration and social integration. As a result, it conveys a sense that is more dynamic than the objective and somewhat deterministic notion of ideology. Discourse can be conceived as a product of institutionally-defined language, or linguistically-defined institution. When we speak the concept of discourse in this thesis, we are pointing not only to the objective historical situation, but the intersubjective rules and assumptions unique to a language as well. Moreover, we are referring to a complex process of interplay between them.

So far, my presentation has been directed at giving a justification for a shift of attention from ideology to discourse by referring to the respective concerns with system integration and social integration of society. In order to locate the concept of discourse more systematically in sociology of knowledge, I would like to make a preliminary comparison of three dimensions of human knowledge, namely thought,

ideology and discourse as follows: -

	Thought	Ideology	Discourse
1. Defining Core	idea . what is the claim?	interest . what interest does the claim serve	validity claim . how is the claim established as valid?
2. Nature of Core	propositional	functional	pragmatic[1]
3. Which level of society is the explanation found?	individual	system	conjuncture of system and lifeworld

What the concept of discourse implies, as distinguished from thought and ideology, is a more dynamic approach to sociology of knowledge. Knowledge is no longer staticly conceived as an entity of idea, but as discourse. Let us refer to voluntarism, the subject matter of this thesis, for some illustrations. Voluntarism has been conceived as an idea in the cultural approach, or as a cloaked interest in the objective approach. However, voluntarism as discourse sensitizes us that it can be a language practiced rather than a convicted idea. Besides its cognitive content, it has a rhetorical dimension that needs to be analyzed. Moreover, the discursive approach assumes that voluntarism as a convicted idea and a rhetorical language are not clearly cut in empirical reality. One may genuinely believe that he is speaking the truth, although he is also subconsciously aware that he is articulating the truth in a certain way, all for the sake of persuasion.

The significance of the discursive approach is that we can distance the

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[1] The pragmatic nature of discourse is different from the propositional nature of thought. While the meaning of an idea of thought can be judged as true or false on its own, the meaning of a discourse can only be understood in context. For instance, one may try various way to argue that a specific idea is "true." Whether it is really true is one thing, but the way to argue is another. It is in the latter case that all the historical, sociological and situational factors come into play in shaping a discourse.

explanation of voluntarism from human subjectivity (as the concept of thought implies) without totally denying the level of communication among subjects (as the concept of ideology does). In fact, we argue that it transcends the utility of the concept of ideology positively by serving much better, in its analysis of human knowledge, to link up system integration and social integration, structure and interpretation.

In part, the concept of discourse is borrowed from Jurgen Habermas as it points to the aspect of validity claims in knowledge. Habermas develops the concept of discourse in his general theory of rationality. However, the two concepts remain largely philosophical. This thesis intends to make empirical and historical use of the Habermasian concept of discourse. Habermas uses the concept of discourse to establish his normative conception of rationality (1974: 1-40; 1978: 1-68). In this thesis, we are interested in the discourse of Li and Chen as effort to establish the "rationality" of their arguments.

Taking a step further, the issue of validity of discourse points to the central importance of the concept of audience. It is the audience who determines what type of validity is relevant. When one is in the process of producing knowledge, the audience that he is consciously addressing to determines what kind of discourse he practices, and what kind of validity claim is more relevant. For example, in the western academic sphere where discourse is highly institutionalized, the knowledge producer knows that his audience is the experts and scholars who are sitting in university departments, the editorial boards of academic journals, and those figures who are holding the power of funds allocation for research, rather than the general public. This overwhelmingly shapes the pattern of his discourse.

Therefore, the relationship between audience and discourse is subject to an active

interpretation process. However, the audience is also a structural concept because it is related to the degree of institutionalization of society and its specific sectors. Although audience is incorporated into the active interpretation process of the subject, it is also an objective fact existing outside his sphere of discourse, and not amenable to his will. In short, the concept of audience locates the realm of interplay between intersubjective interpretation and objective structure.

Summarizing all the elements previously described, we may now come to a broader definition of discourse. It is defined as the action to establish the validity of knowledge which is directly related to an audience whose characteristics are shaped by a complex process of interplay between social structure and language. Language serves as a mechanism through which the structural effects are translated into practical action. As Western Marxists like Erik Olin Wright and Andrew Levine argue, the base must be mediated by the superstructure (1980: 47-68). Therefore, superstructure is critical in explanation of social reality. Weber describes concretely the dialectic between structure and language.

'Interests, material as well as ideal, not ideas directly control action. But world images, which are the product of ideas, have often served as the channels along which action is moved by the dynamics of interests.' (quoted from Schluchter 1979: 15)

So far, the arguments above remain theoretical and abstract. Moreover, the relationship between this interplay and the variables of audience and discourse is not substantiated. We will leave them until we come to the specific history of the reception of Marxism at the turn of 1920 for illustration. For the moment, let me highlight the intention of the above discussion. This thesis proposes that voluntaristic characteristic of Chinese Marxism during the turn of the 1920 can be understood as a result of moral discourse which emerged due to an interplay between structural and cultural factors. In short, we are proposing a discursive approach towards the

understanding of voluntarism in Chinese Marxism.

Method

    This thesis is an empirical study of how Chinese intellectuals made sense of Marxism when it was received into China at the turn of 1920. In particular, we will focus on the two most prominent Marxists, Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao. Chen was the first secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) formed in September 1921 in Shanghai. He was generally agreed as most influential to the early Chinese Marxists, including Mao Zedong. Li Dazhao was not as strategic a political figure in the early formation of the CCP. However, he was generally regarded as the major theoretician responsible for the characteristic interpretation of Marxism that emerged in the subsequent period. It has been argued that the major elements of Maoism, including his nationalism and voluntarism, can be identified in Li's reading of Marxism (Meisner 1967: xii).

    The reason for choosing Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao is obvious because of their prominent status in early history of Chinese Communism. However, the advantages of studying two figures rather than one have to be stated more explicitly. A single case study cannot control biographical factors. It is possible that a certain interpretation of Marxism is related to the age and experience of the interpreter, rather than any non-biographical reasons which are of more general significance. Chen was some ten years older than Li. Moreover, the psychological impact of the failure of the 1911 Revolution on them was different. As Chen Duxiu was more centrally involved in the Revolution, the subsequent disillusionment was much greater. Therefore, we can fairly conclude that there was probably a generational difference in the reaction to the same historical situation by Chen and Li. However, as we will demonstrate, in respect of discursive pattern, theirs both belong to moral discourse.

Generational difference was not significant here. On the contrary, the parallel study of the texts of both persons gives us a much stronger sense of how similar was their response to the objective historical situation.

Our study of the interpretation of Marxism by Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao is empirical in the sense that it is primarily based on analysis of original texts. We will derive their understandings of the concepts of socialism, capitalism, revolution, class and other important concepts of Marxism from their own texts and within their own con-texts. Moreover, we will pay close attention to the Chinese words as well as the rhetorical skills they used in pursuing their arguments. This thesis aims to uncover the cultural factors which are accountable for their readings. We assume that language is the major vehicle through which cultural assumptions are conveyed through generations. Culture has long been an elusive concept and is very difficult to be operationalized. This thesis starts off from the methodological assumption that culture is expressed through language, besides other ways. As Metzger asserts, cliches are not arbitrary but 'the verbalized symbols of shared cultural orientations' (Metzger 1977: 13). In addition, cultural assumptions can be detected in the rules that governs communication. Through an empirical analysis of these cliches and rules, we can uncover what are the age-old and taken for granted assumptions of Chinese culture.

This thesis is causal in nature because we aim to explain the moral discourse in the reading of Marxism by Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao. Causation can be established if we can demonstrate the correlation between cause and effect as well as their temporal sequence. Control is exerted in several ways. First, as we have said, personal and biographical factors are controlled by studying both Chen and Li. Second, the time span of study will be held constant. We will study the texts of both persons from the early 1910s to the early 1920s. Third, we will not pay as much attention to

their texts after 1921 when the organization of the Chinese Communist Party became a material force with disciplinary power in determining discourse. The early CCP was a loose group, gradually developing into a matured organization. Therefore, the further away from 1921, the less likely we will take their texts into account.

CHAPTER III <u>Chinese Marxism as Moral Discourse</u>

The purpose of this chapter is two-fold. Besides giving a definition of the concept of moral discourse, I will gather together evidence to show that from the early 1910s until 1921, the writings of Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao on Marxism can be characterized as moral discourse. Chinese Marxism has been identified as a kind of voluntarism. I shall also argue that, from the discursive point of view, the voluntaristic features of Chen and Li's Marxist thought are better interpreted as moral discourse. As regards the explanation of their Marxism as moral discourse, I shall leave it to the next chapter.

<u>The Concept of Moral Discourse</u>

Habermas argues that every speech is constituted by an inherent claim to validity. Every time one talks to another person, he means what he is saying. It is true, right, understandable and sincere. If he does not mean that what he is saying is for instance true, his words are meaningless, and he is not talking at all. Therefore, validity claim is always-already a dimension of every speech.

Habermas asserts that every speech implicitly makes four types of claim to validity, namely comprehensibility, truth, truthfulness and rightness. However, only the claims of truth and rightness require systematic redemption. Comprehensibility needs not be redeemed, one may say, because unless what one says is comprehensible, communication cannot even start at all. Truthfulness is a psychological trait that is not amenable to public examination. Whether one's speech is sincere cannot be examined through any other objective criterion except personal reflection and subsequent check with his deeds. In contrast, truth and rightness can be examined through discourse. Their respective criteria can also be discussed and redeemed

publicly and systematically (Habermas 1979: 1-68). In discourse, truth and rightness as validity claims are consciously intended, questioned and defended.

Habermas intends through the above ideas to argue that rationality is communication and discourse. This thesis is not interested in whether this normative theory of rationality is convincing or not. On the other hand, we are concerned with making empirical and historical use of his concept of discourse. In everyday life, people speak something that make claims to truth and rightness simultaneously. However, these claims are made subconsciously. In other words, communication is discourse without being conscious of its implicit claims. As we are going to see, the study of communication as discourse can reveal a lot about its structural and cultural backgrounds. Specifically, we are interested in how truth and rightness are represented and/or emphasized relatively, and why they are so.

For the moment, let me give a preliminary operational definition of truth and rightness. By the concept of truth, I mean the concern with logical consistency of arguments and the systematic form of its presentation. Rightness, on the other hand, is the exclusive concern with spelling out the correct values or ideas explicitly that is satisfactory to one's moral concern. We have mentioned that from the discursive point of view, the voluntarism of Chinese Marxism (revealed in the texts of Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu) was a moral discourse. What is moral discourse? It can be defined as a discourse to establish validity of arguments during which rightness is at the expense of truth[2]. Moral discourse is often illogical and unsystematic, but always clear in its suggestion of what should be the case and what should be done.

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[2] My definition of moral discourse does not imply any position on the issue of whether truth and rightness are logically incompatible. This is a complicated philosophical issue that is not yet resolved, and perhaps will never be solved.

The Handling of Truth - Logical consistency

Let us focus on the handling of truth in Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu's discourse first. I shall argue that they did not take truth seriously as the basis of validity of their arguments. First of all, logical consistency is almost excluded from their discourse.

For example, determinism was one of the main topics that Li Dazhao was concerned when he was seriously trying to understand Marxism. However, deterministic arguments were heralded as scientific at one time and condemned as paralyzing people's voluntaristic impulse at the other time. For example, Li Dazhao argued that the dissolution of the traditional Chinese institution of universal kingship and the three ropes of social relationship prescribed by Confucianism[3] were determined (biran biange) by material and economic change. It was inevitable because superstructure was, according to the Marxist principle, determined by material base (Li: 260-73). Shortly later, Li repeated this argument and further argued that new thoughts were determined to come. Li was satisfied with this law of evolution; he claimed that the determination of mind by environment was materialistic (weiwude) and scientific (December 1919).

If everything is determined, does it mean we should not do anything because human intervention is futile? Does not fatalism the logical conclusion of determinism? Curiously, Li Dazhao denied that the Marxist principle of base determining superstructure was determinism. It was not a ism (lun) but an explanation (jieshi). This Marxist principle was not a determinism because it determines everything except the subjectivity of the present from its scope of explanation. Then, what is the subject

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[3] The three ropes of social relationship prescribed by Confucianism are respectively between ruler and the ruled, father and son, husband and wife.

of the present? Practically, it means those who have discovered and learned the principle. Therefore, Li believed that the scientific law of evolution did not apply to his contemporary people. If they took the appropriate action, the law would be breached. Having this insight, Li criticized the translation of the materialistic conception of history as economic determinism because the wording was suspected of the tendency towards fatalism (sumenglun). And fatalism was bad because it implied a belief of the redundancy of human action (huodong). And he strongly criticized it as totally wrong.

However, it is not clear on what basis Li could make such distinction between ism and explanation. His arguments in summary seemed to be like this: For those he found distasteful, they were determined to go. For those he found attractive, they were not determined to come but contingent upon our efforts. Ultimately, the Marxist principle of base determining superstructure was not determinism because he found the ideal of communism appealing and needed the actions of everyone to fulfill it. But what if one argues that something bad is determined to come?

It is not surprising that Li Dazhao categorized this type of argument as explanation. In fact, this is rather predictable. Malthusian theory is an example. He accused that Malthusian theory of population lent support to military invasion (Li: 83). Accordingly, Malthus contended that as resources grew in arithmetic rate, and population grew exponentially, aggression and war were the only ways to reduce the surplus population. Obviously, Li considered the Malthusian theory an explanation because his criticism would be irrelevant if it were a determinism. But if our understanding of Li's judgment between explanation and ism is correct, he is blatantly inconsistent.

In fact, Li Dazhao was also inconsistent about Confucianism. He argued that

Confucianism was essentially a teaching about self-respect (Li: 43). Later, he condemned Confucianism as a symbol of autocracy (Li: 77). This judgment was repeated rather consistently in later years throughout his text. Apparently, Li changed his judgment about Confucianism in a rather abrupt way. With historical hindsight, we know it was because he found confucianism more and more distasteful, when the crisis of republicanism unfolded itself around January 1917 by turning Confucianism, through the calculating efforts of Yuan Shikai and the help of Kang Youwei, into an ideology supporting the restoration of monarchy. However, the fact that interests us is that when Li Dazhao changed his judgment about Confucianism in such a drastic and inconsistent manner, he did not feel being compelled to give justification. Logical inconsistency did not hamper the persuasiveness of his rhetoric. It was just irrelevant.

By now, the inconsistency of Chen Duxiu's text is quite well-known to the students of his thought (Feigon 1983: 108; Lin 1979: 79; Schwartz 1951a: 63). For instance, the concept of antagonism (dou) was applauded and attacked at different time. During his pre-Marxist stage when he was still preoccupied with Darwinian metaphors, he obviously had high regard of antagonism and resistance (kang). He argued that the triumph of Western colonialism was due to the pervasiveness of animalism (yeshou zhuyi). Japan could assumed the role of superpower in Asia also because the Japanese retained this beastly nature (shouxin). He characterized this beastly nature as the will to struggle and resistance (Chen: 25).

Later, he further elevated the concept of antagonism to the level of cosmological principle. He appealed to his audience the "fact" that even planets resisted the absorption by the sun (Chen: 27- 34). Apparently, this is a kind of animism which is bewildering. However, in the context of traditional Chinese culture, this was self-evident. After all, the Chinese even nowadays invoke the age-old assumption

sometimes that there is no ontological distinction between the cosmos and the society. Cosmology is human relationship writ large, and human relationship is a miniature reflection of cosmological phenomenon. If appropriately used, this rhetorical language can be powerful.

Finally, Chen was led by his logic of antagonism into extreme that he publicly advocated the value of conquest (zhengfu). Therefore, men zhengfu women; the white zhengfu the yellow; the Mongols, the Japanese zhengfu the Chinese; even within China, the northern people zhengfu the southern. Chen then came to the conclusion that the youth should self-consciously and steadfastly behaved like the conqueror (Chen: 44).

After the First World War, Chen's belief in social Darwinism was shattered. The dangerous and nihilistic logic of antagonism in Darwinism seemed to have played itself out in the fin-de-siecle of European civilization. For the first time in "On Idols" (August 1918), Chen came to condemn the value of antagonism. Aggressive nationalism previously justified by the principle of antagonistic competition was now wrong because it was solely an excuse for the monopoly of privileges by aristocracy and the right of external aggression (Chen: 229). Again, Chen felt at ease with his inconsistency about the value of antagonism. He was busy spelling out his latest truth.

Chen was converted into a Marxist after the May Fourth Movement in 1919. However, this process was not without difficulty. As he was now so aversive to the concept of antagonism (dou), he found himself difficult to accept the Marxian doctrine of class struggle (jieji douzheng). He even condemned the antagonistic consciousness - the value he advocated so feverishly just three years ago (Chen: 388-9). However, he did not indicate he needed to give explanation for his shift of position. Apparently, he was not troubled by his own logical inconsistency. The best evidence for his

easiness is that he made the decision to publish all these logically inconsistent arguments, even in one book.

In "On Politics" (September 1920), he made his shift again, this time advocating class war (jieji zhanzheng). Chen finally realized that without class struggle, democracy as the absolute equality between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat would never come[4]. However, his advocation of antagonism was now based on a radically different rationale. Antagonism was not good in itself, but useful. It must be used so as to realize the higher value.

In sum, Chen Duxiu shifted his position twice as regards the desirability of antagonism. However, he was not troubled by his logical inconsistency. As with Li Dazhao, he articulated his thought in a moral discourse. As we have defined, the characteristic of this discourse is that logical consistency is unimportant.

The Handling of Truth - Systematic Explanation

Moral discourse is not only characterized in its neglect of logical consistency, but in its peculiarly unsystematic form of explanation as well. The explanation is unsystematic because it explains but does not give the ground for its explanation. Moreover, it raises different concepts without considering their mutual implications to each other. Therefore, these concepts were unsystematically put together. In these aspects, the arguments of Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu are largely identical in their unsystematic forms.

(1) Revolution

Let us give some examples. The concept of revolution is central to the Marxist imagination. In classical Marxism, revolution is articulated within the paradigm of the

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[4] On Chen Duxiu's concept of democracy as absolute equality and its implicit populist assumption, refer to Xin Gu 1989.

dialectic between subject and object. Therefore, revolution is both objective - referring to the incessant growth of the forces of production beyond the fetters of relations of production, and subjective - the gradual emergence of class consciousness, which is the identity of class-for-itself.

However, for Li Dazhao, the concept of revolution was entirely idealistic. The first time Li invoked this concept was May 1916, two years before he was eventually drawn into an intensive reading of Marxism. Interestingly enough, the concept of revolution belonged to Leon Tolstoy which meant awakening (juewu), the emergence of the consciousness of moral rectification of the world and its realization. According to Li's quotation, Tolstoy asserted that there could be no other word that expressed the meaning of revolution except repentance (chanhui) (Li: 56). Revolution is repentance. But whose repentance? Whose awakening? Here, Li's idea was vague. But he implied that there was a mystic will behind history which was awakening. This mystic will approximates Rousseau's collective will and Hegel's Geist. In plain language, Li's message seemed to be like this: Everyone is awakening now. Revolution is coming now. He therefore urged his reader to be awakened (juewu).

After his increasing interest in Marxism, there was a shift of his conception of revolution. It was now specified as both moral - which meant moral rectification of mind, and social - which meant organizational renovation (Li: 175). Revolution is not only repentance, but restructuring of society as well. Therefore, Li proposed the dual renovation of objective and subjective reality (wuxin liangmiande gaizao). Although the organizational concept was emerging in Li's consciousness, it was merely (and quite arbitrarily) added to his concept of revolution as awakening. Li seemed to argue that people should now expand the scope of their awakening which included both the moral and the organizational factors. However, there was no elaboration on the

systematic relationship on the two sides of revolution. He seemed to forget the Marxist principle of base determining superstructure (Li: 195).

Chen Duxiu's conception of revolution and its subsequent revision were almost identical with Li Dazhao. It was initially entirely idealistic, referring to the moral will of eliminating (qu) inequality, domination and renewing (xin), elimination of the old and renewal (qujiubuxin), renewal (gengxin) and evolution (jinhua), eliminating (ge) such ideologies as autocracy and invasionism (Chen I: 14, 59, 135, 143; II: 29). After his growing interest in Marxism during the early 1920 in Shanghai, he also identified the institutional aspects like economy and organization of proletariat (Chen I: 563; II: 107). But as in the case of Li Dazhao, the influence of Marxism on Chen was merely that the scope of revolutionary consciousness should be expanded. So long as revolution was understood as a function of revolutionary consciousness, it was fundamentally idealistic.

However, they never asked the question of whether revolution was possible at all. One may concede that revolution requires increasing scope of consciousness, but then come to the conclusion that it is impossible for people to come to their revolutionary consciousness for the time being. Chen and Li seemed to get confused that if they were now aware that revolution requires revolutionary consciousness, it must be possible for everyone to acquire it. But this is not self-evident and necessary. Even if one concedes further that everyone can freely acquire this consciousness (juewu), is it powerful enough to burst asunder the existing order? If so, why? There is no systematic explanation. It was simply assumed to be so.

This optimistic belief in the power of consciousness and the possibility to acquire consciousness appears again in a different context. Both Chen and Li defined youth as the capacity of being awakened (juewu, zijue) (Li: 70, 72; Chen I: 2, 43, 58-62).

The Chinese character zi, meaning self, was used extravagantly in their text in such invoked ideas as self-respect (zizhong), self-determination (zizhu) and self-consciousness (zijue) when they were appealing to their young readers. There was an unmistakable focus on a god-like and omnipotent self in this age group. On the other hand, while Chen and Li identified the power of zi in the youth, they never discussed the possibility and constraints of the maturation of their self-consciousness. They simply assumed that ruthless criticism of the moral impotence of the youth and the deplorable historical situation was necessary and sufficient to incite revolutionary action.[5] But there was no systematic explanation of why it was so. If the mind was determined by environment, as they learned from the Marxist principle of base determining superstructure, how was it possible for the awakening of the youth to be sufficient to rectify the reality?

(2) Capitalism

Chen used the concepts of capitalism and capitalist the first time in April 1920. However, he identified capitalism as the practice of capitalist to concentrate capital. As such, capitalism was completely a behavioral phenomenon. Li Dazhao talked about capitalism and capitalist early after the message of the "victory of Bolshevism" was spread to China (October 1918). However, his understanding was entirely atomistic. Capitalism was understood as identical with capitalists rather than the capitalist mode of production. It was criticized as a personality parallel to the kings, the nobles, the bureaucrats and the warlords (Li: 109, 110, 114, 117, 120).

Again, after they read Marxism, capitalism was separated as a distinct concept from capitalists, and identified as institution (zhidu) (Li: 199, 263). However, the

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[5] Interestingly enough, the young Marx also maintained that ruthless criticism of the existing situation of Germany during the time was necessary and sufficient for rational change of society and history.

institutional concept of capitalism was always used for condemnation rather than for explanation. The discourse implied a moral need to reorganize the institution rather than a call to understanding how this institution determines the society. Even after the explanatory power of institutional factors was conceded, Chen and Li thought it was valid only in the past. From now on, the subjects of the present could learn through it. Practically, it mean the determining effects of institutional factors would be suspended in the future. Rupture of history was self-evidently possible and needed no explanation. What was assumed was an entirely autonomous realm of the subjectivity of the present. It was self-evident and needed no explanation.

(3) Socialism

Similar orientation can also be identified in their concept of socialism. Li Dazhao used the term socialism the first time in his "Comparison of the French and Russian Revolution." It was characterized as a mystic will, a personality, reminiscent of Hegel's concept of the Geist (Li: 102).

Later, he alluded to socialism when he explained the First World War. This time, he used another term laborism (lougong zhuyi), probably because he was still learning to speak the Marxian tongue properly, and could not tell the precise difference between different words. Here, the war was perceived as the melodramatic culmination of the advance of moral reason over entrenched human vices. It was the victory of laborism over capitalism. Again, socialism was characterized as a kind of mystic will, historically embodied or incarnated in the "labor societies" of Germany and Russia.[6] However, there was no explanation of why socialism could come so swiftly in Europe (Li: 110).

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[6] I suspect the "labor societies" of Germany and Russia referred to the movement led by German and Russian socialists, including the Bolsheviks.

The moral conception of socialism continued afterward (Li: 113, 137) until May 1919 when Li added a new element to his discourse of socialism, namely the renovation of organization (zuzhi gaizao) (Li: 174). Again, this was probably due to the influence of his study of Marxism during the end of 1918. However, as in the case of the concepts of revolution and capitalism, the articulation of the organizational aspect was simply added to the predominantly idealistic concept of socialism. There was no further elaboration, for instance, of the dialectic between morality and organization, between subject and object.

Interestingly enough, after his conversion to Marxism, he continued to articulate an idealistic concept of socialism, maintaining that its germination, in whatever form, was purely ethical (Li: 222). Even in the debate of the materialist basis of the socialist revolution, he asserted that China must have been ready for socialism because the misery (kutong) of Chinese people was already very great, even greater than the proletariat in other capitalist countries. In other words, socialism was essentially a subjective phenomenon. The more the misery, the greater was the moral anger, thus the revolutionary consciousness and the capacity for socialism[7] (Li: 356).

The idealistic concept of socialism was repeated in Chen Duxiu's arguments. It meant the value of social democracy in distinction from political democracy, the socialization and concentration of capital, the benevolence of the majority and was associated with the idea of historical evolution (Chen I: 375, 447 553, 559). Nowhere did Chen mention the scientific concept of socialism which was conceived by Engels as the potential determined to be realized within capitalism.

To sum up our discussion of the concepts of revolution, youth, capitalism and

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[7] This line of reasoning was succeeded by Mao who maintained that it was good for China to be poor and bleak (yiqiong erbai) because she would then be more apt for revolution.

socialism in the texts of Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu, it was a form of explanation that was asymmetrically biased toward the explanatory power of idealistic and subjective factors. Structural factors were nowhere mentioned. Even upon the influence of Marxism, they merely added the institutional factors into their idealistic framework. However, this group of factors only played two roles: first, as an element in the expanded scope of awakening as in the articulation of the concepts of revolution and socialism; second, to explain phenomena in the past, as in the case of capitalism. However, the power of the subjectivity of the present was never hampered or strained. Practical action was assumed to be an entirely autonomous realm empirically. If action determines history, history can never determine action.

What then is the nature of the subjectivity of the present? Why can it be so recalcitrant to the objective environment? If the past history was determined, why can we be so optimistic of the genuine rupture of history in the present? If the various idealistic and subjective elements that we have identified in the thought of Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu can be described as voluntaristic, it is a voluntarism that surely lacks systematic explanation. To this extent, it is a voluntaristic language rather than a system of thought that can be labelled as voluntarism. It is merely used conveniently.

Anyway, the consequence was that structural factors which might determine the subjectivity of the present were consistently excluded. The form of explanation was biased towards the idealistic and subjective realm, as was indicated in such concepts like awakening, youth, misery, the spirit of socialism, and the like. All in all, given the unsystematic form of explanation, and the neglect of logical consistency in their discourse, we conclude that the concept of truth as the basis of validity claim was only precarious. And it is necessarily so in moral discourse.

The Handling of Rightness

Moral discourse, as we have defined, is a discourse in which rightness is at the expense of truth. It is often illogical and unsystematic, as we have just demonstrated. However, its very identity is that it is preoccupied with its moral suggestion as to what should be the case and what should be done. In this discursive pattern, what is valid is predominantly what is right. Whether Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao intentionally neglect the truth value of their arguments is an issue beyond the scope of this thesis to speculate. Nevertheless, I do argue that their preoccupation with rightness constitute a certain constraint for the full articulation of truth. This is obvious in their interpretations of historical phenomena.

For instance, we have mentioned that Li Dazhao portrayed the Russian Revolution and the First World War as pointing to a melodramatic culmination of the advance of moral reason. In fact, within that article, Li never explained what he called the victory of Bolshevism. The historical event was turned into an object to be learnt rather than to be explained. What should be learned take precedence of what actually was happening and why.

'the spirit [Bolshevism] embodied can be regarded as that of a common awakening in the heart of each individual among mankind of the twentieth century. The victory of Bolshevism, therefore, is the victory of the spirit of common awakening (juewu) in the heart of each individual among mankind in the twentieth century.' ("The Victory of Bolshevism"; Li: 118)

Li also described the global socialist movement as a tide (chaoliu) (Li: 117). Li probably took the idea of revolutionary tide literally, because he did not explain the movement. He might well believe that a natural phenomenon did not require further explanation. To call it natural was already to explain. On the other hand, the moral suggestion was clear enough. It is rational to follow what is natural. If the revolutionary movement was a natural phenomenon, everyone should go revolutionary.

The preoccupation with action at the expense of explanation repeated in another context. Li argued that Marxism proved everything, including morality, to be transitory because it was determined by the change of the base. However, he seemed to be satisfied with using the theory practically for advocating change - as he did untiringly during the time, that he did not even try to explain change. It is a phenomenon to be learned rather than to be explained (Li: 256-273).

Again and again, there was a burning moral impulse that drove his attention away from theoretical explanation. Even when he came close to explanation, the need for moral condemnation and exhortation deflected the direction of his discourse. When he came to explain the traditional Chinese extended family as a superstructural phenomenon determined by the functional need of agrarian economy, his discourse was truncated in a rather abrupt and unnatural manner:

'The Chinese institution of extended family was an agrarian economic organization, as well as the social formation of Chinese society of the last two thousand years. All politics, law, ethics, morality, intellectual development, thought, customs and habits were epiphenomena formed on the basis of this institution of extended family. Look at the Confucian ethics which dominated the Chinese spirit for the last two thousand years! Wasn't every mean used to subjugate the lower to the higher? Wasn't it used to sacrifice the personality of the subordinate for the will of the superordinate? Wasn't everything based on the relationship between father and son in the extended family?' ("An Economic Explanation of the Causes of the Changes in Modern Chinese Thought")

The first two sentences were explanatory. However, the followings sentences were unnaturally pedagogical. The flow of the discourse was truncated compulsively by a moral impulse to condemn. Explanation was consequently traded off by the spelling out of what was right.

In the text of Chen Duxiu, such preoccupation with moral suggestion at the expense of explanation can also be found. For instance, during the second half of the 1910s, the concept of struggle was successively heralded, condemned, and finally instrumentally advocated. However, he never explained it.

All in all, both Li and Chen enthusiastically appropriate from Marxism moral implications for voluntaristic action. But they did not explain anything in a detailed manner. Even when they came close to an explanation, it was then truncated by a moral impulse to condemn or appraise. Moreover, the moral appropriation of the Marxist doctrines seemed only to reaffirm their pre-Marxist moral judgments. Marxism was only a new vocabulary used to speak an old language.

The moral discourse of Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao was even more clear in their interpretation of theories, all in the form of simple approval or rejection. Therefore, Marxism was correct because it demonstrated that the realization of socialism could not be accomplished without the participation of people (renmin) (Li: 191). The deterministic interpretation of Marxism was incorrect because it denied the activities (huodong) (Li: 191, 339). The materialist explanation of history was judged by its influence upon the human spirit (yu renleijingshen de yingxiang) and was good because it proved that men make their own history, and these men are common people (renmin). Idealistic explanation of history was bad because it paralyzed the moral effort (Li: 337). Whether they were or were not the cases did not bother Li.

The same moral preoccupation in the interpretation of theories repeats in Chen's text. Therefore, the idea of human right alerted everyone not to be slave. Darwinism alerted everyone to be self-determined because it proved that there is no God to rely on. Thanks to atheistic Darwinism, we could now strive towards infinite progress. Socialism was correct because it proclaimed to eliminate inequality and oppression (Chen I: 12-4). Malthusianism was incorrect because it discriminated against workers and poor people (Chen I: 442). What lurks behind all these interpretations of theories is the intuitive eye of a transcendental moral subject beyond human history, almost

god-like, judging every deviations of the corrupted world.[8] This was the self-understanding of Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao. Rightness was their primary and the ultimate concern.

From this perspective, we may also understand why both Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu emphasized so much on subjective factors. After all, action rather than structure was immediate to morality. The primary concern with correct values led the attention of Chen and Li rather naturally to the realm of action and subjectivity. This is the Chinese origin of voluntaristic interpretation of Marxism. This voluntarism was based on a Chinese concept of self/subjectivity that was god-like and virtually omnipotent.

To summarize the above analysis, both Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao interpreted Marxism within a moral discourse. This discourse emphasized overwhelmingly moral suggestion instead of explanation. It stressed as its conscious goal the spelling out of correct values, but took the truth of analysis lightly. What was valid was essentially the right argument, not necessarily the true one.

Chinese Marxism, Voluntarism and Moral Discourse

Chinese Marxism has commonly been described as a kind of voluntarism which is radically different from mechanical or structural Marxism. However, it would be misleading to imply that Chinese Marxism has a theoretical position systematic enough to be comparable to its assumed opponent. Stuart Schram once raised the question whether Maoism was a system on its own or a variant of Leninism (1969: 136-8). I would argue that if the identity of Maoism is voluntarism, then Maoism is

[8] Merle Goldman argues that the traditional self-image of Chinese intellectuals is a moral subject unbound by history but judging every single deviation of history from prescribed values. They internalize Confucian values and take it as their holy responsibility to denounce any political corruption committed by the monarchy. The implicit assumption is that the moral rectification of human society is necessary and sufficient for restoration of the goodness of humanity. In this regard, the self-understanding of Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao was typically traditional.

surely not a system because his articulation of voluntaristic arguments is not systematic enough.[9] In contrast, Stalinism is a system because his mechanical interpretation of Marxism is systematic. Therefore, the juxtaposition between Stalinism and Maoism as determinism versus voluntarism is questionable at least in the aspect of its systematic form. The voluntarism of Chinese Marxism is not a system.

Why is it so? One may argue that Maoism is necessarily unsystematic because during the days of waging a Communist revolution, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) must try to guarantee the availability of diplomatic, political and military resources from Moscow. Therefore, its voluntaristic orientation must not be systematic to be discernable as challenging the official interpretation of Marxism by the Russians. In other words, the Chinese Communists must try to claim the legitimacy of being "the Marxist-Leninist" party so as to ask for money. Therefore, the unsystematic character of the voluntarism in Maoism was instrumental in purpose.

However, the history of Chinese Marxism suggested a different answer. The non-systematic features of the voluntaristic interpretation of Chinese Marxism appeared even in the early day when Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu were still not the members of the Chinese Communist Party, and their thoughts were not constrained by political consideration. Their insistence on the identification of correct values, and the neglect of logical consistency and systematic form of presentation indicated that their prime concerns were values. Moreover, they also assumed voluntaristically that the realization of these values within objective constraints must be possible. Their beliefs

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[9] The non-systematic character of Maoism was noted by Schurmann as practical ideology (1966: 17-57). The practical character of Maoism was also pointed out by Brantly Womack to justify his own approach to Mao Zedong's thought (1982: xi-xviii). Concerning the superficiality of the reception of Marxism, read Arif Dirlik 1989: 43; Xin Gu 1989: 215-40), Zehou Li 1987: 7-49, and Maurice Meisner 1967: 56).

can be summarized in essence in Mao's words: the subjective creates the objective. However, their neglect of logical consistency resulted in a prominently unsystematic presentation. Voluntarism had not been spelled out of its logical implications systematically. Obviously, this unsystematic character of its voluntarism must be explained by something other than political factors.

Munro once suggested that a cultural factor might be possible. He argued that '[t]raditionally, theories and philosophical claims have been accepted or rejected in China less because of logically or empirically convincing demonstrations of their truth than because of their behavioral implications' (1977:1). However, even if intellectual primacy was given to behavioral implications (rightness?) than to truth, it does not necessarily mean that rightness should be at the expense of truth. On the other hand, given that Confucianism governed China for a long time, it is difficult to see how it could be sustained against the challenge of Buddhism and Taoism without being systematically articulated. For instance, neo-Confucianism was a systematic school of thought. Even the Mencian elaboration of Confucius' doctrine of humanity (ren), the arguments of the Great Learning and the Doctrine of the Mean were systematic, no matter how primitive they were in form. The topics that they covered were not just something to be learned, but to be explained as well. Moral discourse had been a rare phenomenon among intellectuals.

To argue that the arguments are not articulated systematically does not necessarily mean that its arguments cannot be understood systematically. The non-systematic articulation of voluntarism in Chinese Marxism, in the last instance, was intended for persuasion and validity claim. And in order to persuade, one must ensure that his audience understood his arguments systematically so that the validity of arguments could be established. If the articulation was not systematic, it must be

the case that the audience must have already understood the arguments systematically, so that to invoke them was sufficient for persuasion and validity claim even if the articulation was unsystematic. How was it possible? How was it possible that the simple invocation of rightness was enough for validity claim? If moral discourse was a rare phenomenon, why did it happen during the second half of the 1910s? We will attempt an answer in the next chapter.

In short, we argue the voluntaristic interpretation of Chinese Marxism during that period of time was conducted within a moral discourse. Chinese Marxism was not systematically articulated even as early as in the days of Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu. It was voluntaristic not because it could be claimed as a systematic thought (called voluntarism), but because its discursive pattern was moral. It was voluntaristic because of its discourse of the moral suggestion of what should be done, and its optimistic belief of the possibility of voluntaristic action.

CHAPTER IV Public Sphere and Deinstitutionalization of Discourse

Voluntaristic Language as Chinese Culture

In last chapter, I have argued that voluntarism as the identity of Chinese Marxism does not have a systematic character. I have also suggested that when they made such voluntaristic explanations, their audience must have already understood them systematically. How could this be possible? It is my argument that it was the case because they spoke a voluntaristic language that belongs to traditional Chinese culture. In fact, their voluntaristic arguments were not theoretical arguments at all, but in essence a kind of practical language. To put my point more precisely, they were rhetoric for the sake of persuasion. What they expressed were practical rules and assumptions that had been embedded within Chinese language. They were stored in the practical consciousness of ordinary Chinese people. As Anthony Giddens' concept of practical consciousness suggests, when people communicate, they intuitively know the way to speak although they often cannot articulate them systematically. For the purpose of rhetoric which is to incite rather than to inspire, it does not matter whether the content of the language is systematic or not because the audience have already understood it systematically.

Therefore, the concepts of awakening (juewu), activity (huodong), spirit (jingshen), renewal (xin) and change (bian) were most natural to an audience who had been accustomed to the voluntaristic language of how to attain moral success in one's life.[10] We have demonstrated that the concepts of revolution, capitalism and socialism

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[10] Metzger mentioned that moral success has long been the central concern of Chinese (1977: 208). Chang Hao also described the confucian conception of life as moral drama of struggle for success (1988: 183-4). This idea was also revealed in the texts of Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao as guiding their orientation to everything including interpretation of Marxism.
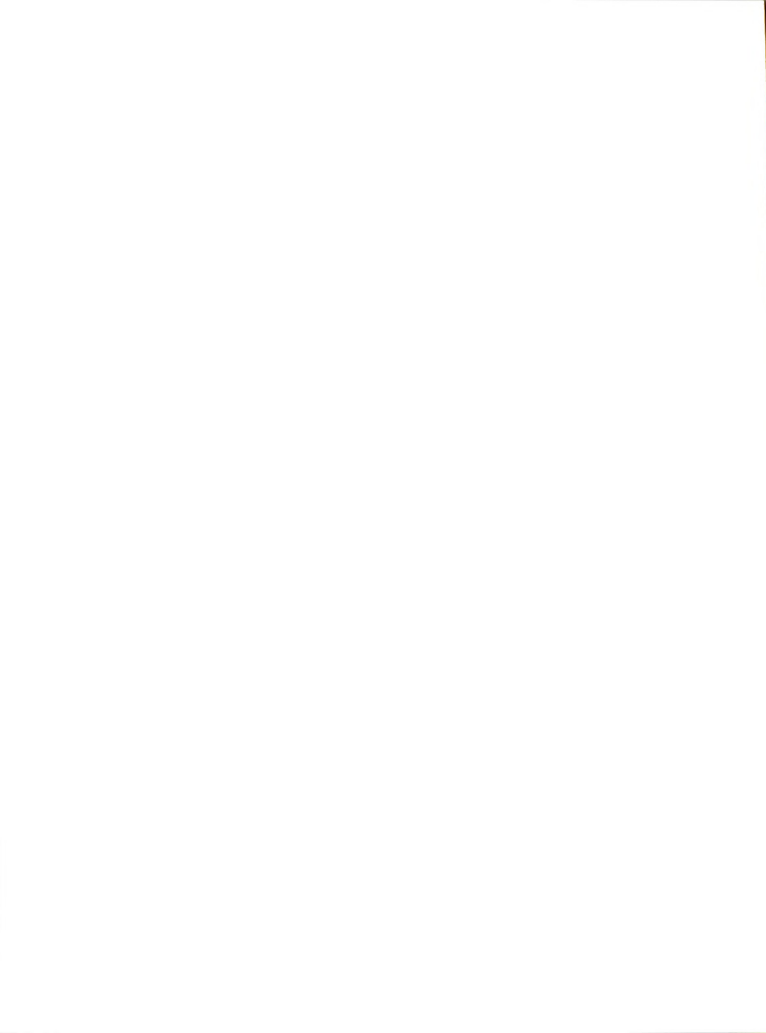
as revealed in the texts of Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao were emphatically subjective. No doubt, they were palatable to the pragmatic concern of this audience. After all, an overly structural emphasis was likely to be suspicious of being deterministic, fatalistic (sumenglun). Moreover, the Chinese tradition had celebrated the Confucian doctrine of self-cultivation (xiushen) for at least hundreds of years. It goes without saying that a discourse of self-cultivation can only be possible if one accepts the assumption that the human self is autonomous. Otherwise, self-cultivation is fruitless and irrelevant. If we understand this point, we should not be surprised that the assumption of the omnipotence and moral spontaneity of self (zi) occupied such a central place in their discourse. What Chen and Li spoke was in fact a kind of voluntaristic language that their audience found self-evident.

Can we conclude that Chinese Marxism as interpreted by Li and Chen was more Chinese than Marxist? In a sense, it is true if we focus on the historical origin of the content of discourse. But if we are aware of the complexity and heterogeneity of Chinese culture, it is clear that their discourse was a certain appropriation and particular expression of the tradition. It would be misleading to say that Chinese culture, or Confucianism, is a kind of voluntarism if we take into account the Confucian conception of self (zi) as a center of objective social relationship. Is not the assumption of hierarchy and submission as revealed in such concept of sangangwuchang[11] also part of Confucianism? How can we attribute the cause of the extremely voluntaristic, oftentimes iconoclastic discourse of Li and Chen to the tradition when it was once so conservative? Last but not least, did not Chen and Li accuse their cultural heritage most furiously as regards its suppressive quality?

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[11] Sangangwuchang literally means the three cardinal social relationship between ruler and the ruled, father and son, husband and wife, and the five elements in natural order, namely the heaven, the earth, the ruler, the parent, the teacher.

Therefore, in order to demonstrate the particularity of moral discourse in the context of Chinese tradition, I would like to analyze two lines of thought in historical Confucianism which had been dialectically combined.[12] I do not claim that they exhaust our understanding of Confucianism, nor the Chinese tradition. So long as my analysis can demonstrate that moral discourse is a particular phenomenon, and this particularity makes sense in historical context, I regard them as useful and adequate for our purpose. These two lines of thought prescribe different factor as what is essential to social order. The first is called tianren xiangying (the correspondence between the heaven and man). It emphasizes the primacy of social relationship over self consciousness. Social order can be maintained or restored if one knows the correct social relationship. Therefore, man is defined as the bearer of natural and objective social roles or the center of various social relationship. The essence of man is entirely relational. The cardinal value is rite (li), which in actuality means the institutions of universal kingship and three ropes. One can be truly human if he succeeds to adjust, or "correspond" to the rite and role expectation.

The second line of thought is called tianren heyi (the union of the heaven and man). It emphasizes the primacy of self consciousness over social relationship. Social order is possible if everyone is moral. Therefore, man is defined as the bearer of moral consciousness. He is conceived essentially rather than relationally. The central value is humanity (ren). One can be truly human if he succeeds to realize this value of humanity within his inner nature rather than fulfill the external rite, or role expectation. If he succeeds, he enjoys the "union" with the heaven.

In history, these two lines of thought in historical Confucianism were

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[12] The distinction between these lines of thought is borrowed from Chang Hao (1989).

dialectically combined. One can conceptually distinguish them, but in practice, they appeared more as different emphases.[13] On the other hand, their implications are radically different. If carried to logical extremes, the tianren xiangying line of thought will become extremely conservative. Man will be a slave of social order and social expectation. The tianren heyi line of thought will in contrast become extremely voluntaristic, with radical implication even to the extremes of iconoclasm and revolutionary action. Social order becomes the uninterrupted expression of moral consciousness. Anyone who successfully persuade others of his superior moral consciousness can rightfully shatter the whole society to rebuild his abstract utopia, if he wants. Historically, these two emphases had been mixed in Confucianism without discrimination. They had been maintained in its subtle balance between extreme conservatism and extreme voluntarism.

Upon the western intrusion in the nineteenth century, the concepts of universal kingship and three ropes were destroyed by the increasing awareness of their particularities and comparative deficiency in the light of alternative social order in the West.[14] As a result, li (rite), or pejoratively lijiao, became increasingly meaningless and obsolete, and reactive, while moral consciousness was magnificently inflated subsequently as the remaining basis of building social order. Behavior could now be considered moral even if it was dubious in the light of role expectation defined by

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[13] Despite that, there were different historical periods when one aspect was emphasized clearly at the expense of another. Chang Hao suggested that the Han interpretation of Confucianism by Dong Zhongshu can be cited as example of the tianren xiangying line of thought. The Neo-Confucianism of Sung is an example of the tianren heyi line of thought.

[14] Concerning the literature on the idea of universal kingship and its decline, Yu-sheng Lin (1979)and Hao Chang (1987: 5-8) are relevant reference. Lin and Chang call the collapse of the belief in universal kingship the crisis of Chinese consciousness, and the crisis of orientational order respectively.

traditional institutions. The dissociation of moral consciousness from the constraint of pre-established social expectations and norms had its historical origin in Wang Yangming's theory of innate moral knowledge (liangzhi) in the Ming dynasty, and was radicalized by Huang Zongxi.[15] Chang called this line of intellectual development the left-wing Wang Yangming Confucianism (zuopai wangxue).[16]

Now, I shall argue that Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao's moral discourse in their interpretation of Marxism can be understood as originating from this leftist interpretation of Confucianism. The assumptions of an omnipotent subjectivity of the present totally unbound by the past history, the implicit optimism in the genuine rupture of history and complete moral rectification of the corrupted reality, the persistent condemnation of existing social institution, all reflected the leftist orientation vividly. What was in focus was a leftist concept of social order which was grounded solely in moral consciousness, uncompromisingly radical and anti-establishment. In fact, the early Li Dazhao before 1918 was even more explicit in his commitment to this line of reasoning borrowed from the Confucian tradition. The best evidence is his long essay "People's Nature and Politics" written in 1913, which looked very much like a manifesto of his left-wing Wang Yangming Confucian belief. The characteristic emphasis on hierarchy in orthodox Confucianism was unequivocally condemned as

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[15] The radicalism of Huang Zongxi's interpretation of Confucianism was revealed in his book "Propositions for a More Propitious Age" (Minyi Daifanglu) when he denigrated the institution of monarchy (Grieder 1981: 34-7). this was perhaps the germination of the attack on the universal kingship. It is now clear to the students of Chinese history that Huang exerted significant influence on the thought of Liang Qichao who then shaped the minds of Chen Duxiu, Li Dazhao and Mao Zedong.

[16] The title of zuopai wangxue should not be mistaken as a formalized school of thought. Rather, it is used to label an element within a broader intellectual tradition of Confucianism, namely its unprecedentedly inflated concept of moral consciousness that carried the radical implication of criticizing the institutional elements of Confucianism. In different occasions, Chang Hao called the same element the monistic pathos (1971) and universalism (1987).

autocracy (zhuanzhi) and replaced by a new moral conscience (minyi). However, this new moral consciousness was obviously borrowed from the Confucian tradition.[17]

So far, I hope I have accomplished the task of demonstrating the indigenous origin of the voluntaristic language of Chen and Li, without hypostatizing Chinese culture as a homogenous entity. However, a genetic approach cannot replace the causal explanation of why this left-wing Wang Yangming Confucianism was succeeded and eventually emerged in the thoughts of Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu. To say where it comes from does not answer the question why it comes.

Moreover, the left-wing Wang Yangming Confucianism was not a moral discourse. The systematic character of the thoughts of Wang Yangming and Huang Zongxi was undeniable. Even if it was voluntaristic, the discourse was not only moral. As I have mentioned, moral discourse had been a rare phenomenon in the intellectual history of China. Even until the generation of Kang Youwei in the 1890s, moral discourse was not obvious. For instance, Kang's arguments about institutional reform and the three-stage theory of historical evolution were intended to be an articulation of truth rather than a rhetorical language, and rightness was established only on the basis of the truth value of these arguments. Why was the arguments of Chen and Li in the 1910s degenerated into moral discourse? Why was voluntarism transformed into a moral discourse? Even the texts of Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao did not show a uniform style of moral discourse. For instance, Li's long essay "People's Nature and Politics" which looked very much like a manifesto his left-wing Wang Yangming Confucian assumptions, and Chen's polemical reply to Kang Youwei against the movement intended to establish Confucianism as state religion both emphasized more

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[17] In fact, Li Dazhao did invoked Wang Yangming's concept of liangzhi elsewhere (Li: 17, 31), but rarely concepts from other traditions. This is an additional proof that he was influenced more by the tradition of Wang Yangming's thought.

on the establishment of the truth value of their arguments rather than the rightness of their positions. Moral discourse came under a very specific historical situation.

Moral Discourse and Public Sphere

It is the argument of this thesis that moral discourse emerged during the turn of the 1920s because of various effects associated with the emergence of public sphere. Public sphere is defined as a sphere in society where there is exchange of ideas, discussion of issues that everyone is concerned, and the formation of opinions. The activities of public sphere is distinguished by the fact that it needs no conscious coordination. It is public because it is open to everyone who is interested. Every piece of information in public sphere is by definition accessible to everyone who is willing to find it out. The opinions in public sphere may be deliberately and predominately shaped by certain interest groups. But no one can coordinate the overall activities of this sphere. This fact remains the very identity of public sphere. It is also the structural consequence of this fact which interests us in the explanation of moral discourse.

The public sphere began to emerge in Chinese society several centuries ago. Since the late Qing period, there had been restructuring of state-societal relationship, with a new sphere of civil activities growing at increasing rate and continually separate from the monarchy. This was due to several socio-economic reasons: First, demographic growth, especially that of the gentry class. As a result of over-supply, the state-sponsored civil service examination failed in its function to coopt them adequately. A significant portion of the elites remained outside the imperial bureaucracy, thus adding to the self-ruling ability of the society. Second, increasing commercialization of economy and the subsequent urbanization. As a consequence, the gentry class was given an alternative means in their pursuit of wealth and power.

They could become rich and influential, not by serving the monarchy, but by doing business. As a result, the gentry class was becoming more and more separated. This relative separation of the gentry class from the monarchy was shown in the gradual expansion of elite public managerial activities (Rankin 1986: Introduction), and the gradual devolution of state power into some local gentry which was expedited after the Taiping Rebellion (Kuhn 1970: 211-25). Third, with the intrusion of western imperialism, the imposed entrepot trade increased. This further shook up the monopoly power of the monarchy in distributing wealth, and strengthened the separation of the society from the monarchy meanwhile. In short, increasing population, escalating commercialization and decreasing state power rendered the emergence of public sphere structurally possible (Rowe 1990: 314-29).

However, public sphere was a relatively young phenomenon in China.[18] It came only after 1895 (Li & Nathan 1985: 361; Nathan 1985: x). Accordingly, there were three reasons. First, the defeat of China in the Sino-Japanese War in 1895 sent shock waves through the whole country. After almost thirty years of import of western technology and armament, China crumbled totally in the war with Japan. The humiliation was aggravated by the fact that Japan was an enemy which China had been looked down on for centuries. This made people fanatic with the root causes of the defeat, and consequently motivated the formation of a politically conscious public sphere. Second, the technological advancement rendered the press available as a new medium of public discussion. Together with urbanization and the weakening of state power, increasing number of urban cities organized sphere of public discussion.

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[18] William Rowe recently published a review article, linking Habermas' concept of public sphere to the recent historiography of China (1990: 309-29). He implied that public sphere had a long history in China. However, as a sphere of public exchange of ideas, public sphere is still a relatively new phenomenon in modern Chinese history.

As a consequence, a new form of communication called press or journalism appeared. Unlike the academies (shuyuan) in the past, it was for the first time generally accessible to the non-gentry class. The readership included the gentry as well as merchants, even students, youth and women. The impersonal pattern of communication ensured that discussion could be more lively, more direct, and less scrupulous in the consideration of status and face. Moreover, unlike the academies which was small in scale, enjoyed more personal familiarity and intimacy among students and teachers, and more homogenous in the cultural background of these people who came from the gentry class overwhelmingly, now the anonymity and heterogeneity of audience in the public sphere rendered it more crucial for the men of letters to choose an appropriate discourse. If they failed to attract their audience or convince them in this new cultural setting, they were bound to fail in this battlefield of arguments. It was in this structural context that moral discourse could become so prominent.

Many studies have been done on the thoughts of Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao. But scholars rarely paid attention to one single fact: that their thoughts, including the interpretation of Marxism, was developed wholly within this new settings called public sphere. Unlike Kang Youwei, Zhang Zhidong, or the generation in the 1890s, their ideas were presented in short articles in journals and newspapers rather than in books. Li Dazhao never published a book; for Chen Duxiu, the only book that he published was his autobiography during his later years. If their intellectual labor was framed by this new pattern of argumentation, what was the effect? It should be clear by now that the effect was shown in the moral discourse of their ideas. Moreover, it was this moral discourse which shaped their interpretation of Marxism.

The immediate consequence of the coming of age of public sphere was the

socio-structural transformation of the empirical concept of audience. Between the two generations of 1890s and 1910s, there was a rupture in the intellectual history of China in that the reproduction of knowledge was no longer monopolized by the gentry class. No matter how dominant they were, the gentry had to consider for the first time other people, including students, youth and women who had all been traditionally defined as inferior, both morally and intellectually. This change also gained impetus and justification in Liang Qichao's theory of solidarity (qun) together with its implication for the reconstruction of the traditional concept of authority (Chang 1971: 73-120). If ordinary people had to be mobilized for the political sake of the wealth and strength (fuqiang) of China, there would be no reason to forbid them to assume the role of audience in intellectual discussion. In fact, Liang Qichao was the first who published newspapers, developed the new and much easier style of writings, and asserted that the non-gentry class had to be called upon by all means to take part in the salvation of the nation and its modernization (Nathan 1985: 132-55).

The characteristics of this new group of audience was that they were huge in number, totally anonymous, and heterogeneous in respect of subcultures. Karl Mannheim once argued that competition among free-flown intellectuals in the public sphere explained the diversity and heterogeneity of intellectual development of the west (1985: 12, 269). Stanley Milgram also asserted that heterogeneity of social life led to tolerance, while anonymity provided space for eccentricity (1970: 1461-8). However, this was apparently not the case in China. The effects of these structural variables of size, social anonymity and cultural heterogeneity were not immediate and uniform. They were subject to cultural interpretation.

The result of this cultural interpretation was that the structural effects of the public sphere and audience were translated into moral discourse. First of all, with the

traditional assumption that valid knowledge came from moral sagehood rather than from scientific spirit, validity was associated with moral virtues. As the new audience was anonymous, the only way to appeal to them of the validity of one's argument was to prove his moral superiority rather than to invoke the criterion of truth. Therefore, a moral impulse to exhort or condemn was not an aberration from the effort to establish validity of arguments, but rather one of its integral effort. Truth may not equal morality. But without morality, one is surely not eligible for the truth claim.

Secondly, as the new public sphere were no longer monopolized by the gentry class and consequently heterogeneous in subcultures, there was no common language to resolve intellectual disputes. Methods as practiced by the empirically oriented Han Learning in the mid-Qing Dynasty were no longer available as the traditional institutionalization of discourse in academia was disrupted. Nor was there any consistent framework like the Sung Learning that could be used to establish or refute a claim. In the age of cultural iconoclasm, only moral discourse of awakening, self-respect, unselfishness and moral action was capable of establishing consensus because these moral values were the only things they all shared.

Therefore, it was no surprise that when Li Dazhao was accused by Hu Shi of not studying concrete problems, but wasting time talking abstractly about Marxism, he replied that 'therefore, we must be dare enough to practise our ideals rather than merely to theorize.' However, the debate was not between theory and practice, but about what should be practiced. While he advocated radical and revolutionary practice, Hu suggested moderate and piecemeal action (Li: 228-35). Amazingly, Li resolved the dispute by emphasizing practice as a value. He tried to convince Hu and his readers through moral discourse.

In his comment of Liang Ji's suicide, Chen Duxiu also approved his "unselfish" act of suicide (Chen I: 369-72). However, he brushed aside the key issue in this incident, namely that Liang Ji's death was intended as a remonstration against cultural iconoclasm that Chen Duxiu was practicing. With historical hindsight, we know that Liang Ji failed. The path of modern Chinese history was inexorably moving away from his moral utopia - a perfect moral community defined by Confucianism. However, he succeeded in putting his opponents back within the constraint of moral discourse. Unselfishness was still the universal value that no one can disagree. Now, Chen felt more pressed to announce his "unselfish" motivation which became almost the sole basis of validity of his arguments. Rightness, not truth, was the primary emphasis, into which were inserted every other piece of argument. In effect, Chen was locked within a moral discourse.

Thirdly, given the unprecedented proximity between intellectuals and society provided by the public sphere, the cultural image of intellectuals as responsible for providing moral leadership became more likely to be realized. As a result, the public sphere turned their attention to the invocation of values rather than the tedious analyses of facts and information. With the anticipation that their influence was now more accessible to millions of people, moral exhortation and condemnation were rather unconsciously and compulsively channelled into their discourse. The central point of this argument is that the turn to moral discourse was not accidental, but predetermined.

Finally, the cross-class nature of discourse also meant that the audience included younger generation of students, youth and even women. This cross-generational feature also added to the moral burden of Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao. Therefore, truth must give way to rightness and specification of practical actions. After all, the distinction

between the morally respected (junzi) and the ordinary people (xiaoren) had been sedimented through thousands of years that it was difficult for Chen and Li to eliminate this consciousness when they were addressing to the younger generation. The unequal status in discussion also created a moral impulse to teach rather than to discuss, to give instruction (jianghua) rather than to have dialogue (duihua).

To summarize, for determinate cultural reasons, the public sphere was perceived by Chinese intellectuals as technical means to achieve moral rectification of the world. It was used as a tool of moral control rather than a realm of free exchange of ideas. In the last instance, it was a manifestation of power and domination, even though in the name of rightness. As a result, discussions in public sphere were motivated by an interest in control which was uncongenial to intellectual diversity and tolerance. They became propaganda (Nathan 1985: 133-51).[19]

It must be emphasized that there is no necessary connection between public sphere and moral discourse. We have mentioned Mannheim's explanation of the historical origin of free-flown intellectuals and Milgram's prediction of increasing tolerance and eccentricity in public sphere. In fact, they can be cited as counterfactual arguments in support of the explanation in this thesis, that the structural effects of the public sphere on communication in a different cultural context would be totally different. Moral discourse was a product of a complex interaction between objective structural and intersubjective cultural factors.

To summarize the above analysis, the emergence of public sphere, together with a new composition of audience, introduces new variables into discourse, including

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[19] The moral character of press and journalism as noted by Andrew Nathan (1985: 133-51) echoes Metzger's argument that the Chinese concept of modernization as pingtianxia (moral rectification of the world) which was essentially moral (Metzger 1980: 282-5).

anonymity, cultural heterogeneity, structural proximity among classes, and generation. However, their effects on discourse are not immediate, as what Mannheim and Milgram predicted. Rather, they are mediated through cultural assumptions that are stored in the practical consciousness of people in the same cultural tradition. These practical assumptions serve to translate the effects of these variables of the public sphere into moral discourse. The moral discourse of Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao cannot be explained by structural factor alone.

Moral Discourse and Deinstitutionalization of Discourse

Now, I would like to complicate the above arguments by introducing one more factor, namely the deinstitutionalization of discourse. To anticipate the following arguments, I would argue that the structural effects of the public sphere are specific not only in a particular cultural context, but in a particular historical context as well. Cultural context specifies where the effects take place, and the historical context specifies when they take place. Moral discourse emerged in a generation of Chinese people when public discourse was deinstitutionalized. Before we go on, let us elaborate the concept of deinstitutionalization first.

Habermas makes a distinction between theoretical discourse and practical discourse. While the truth as a validity claim is singled out and examined in theoretical discourse, practical discourse is concerned with the vindication of the claim of rightness. However, it is impossible to examine both truth and rightness at the same time. Only one validity claim can be examined at one time, while other claims must be held constant. Now, the moral discourse of Chen and Li was obviously practical because of their emphasis on rightness. Moreover, their practical discourse presupposed a common definition of truth, so that any people who wanted to participate in the discussion of rightness could share the same concepts and theoretical

framework the common rules of measurement, and common logic of verification and/or falsification. They might or might not be available, depending on what Habermas calls the institutionalization of discourse (Habermas 1974: 16-9).

However, in the moral discourse of Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao, rightness was at the expense of truth. This is a phenomenon that needs to be explained. Chen and Li probably believed that their discourse of rightness was true. However, their discourse, as we have demonstrated, was in fact illogical and unsystematic. One possible reason was that they were not careful enough, or not intelligent enough. But given that they both successfully mastered the devotion of hundreds of thousands of intellectuals of the age, this explanation is most unlikely.

I would suggest that a more plausible explanation has to be sought in the deinstitutionalization of discourse. In traditional Chinese society, there was institutionalization of discourse within the gentry class. Academia (shuyuan) which was once prosperous was a clear example. This institution was important because it provided a common "definition" of truth. In the first place, this was possible because the gentry class shared a common cultural identity called Confucianism. However, as is now well-known to the students of Chinese history, this gentry class began to disorganize during the 1890s. This fragmentation gained momentum after the failure of the Hundred Days Reform in 1898.[20]

As a result, there was destitutionalization of discourse. The common "definition" of truth became ambivalent. When the public sphere swiftly emerged as the

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[20] Reference to the fragmentation of the gentry class can be found in Maurice Meisner, Mao's China and After. For a local but more detailed description of the process, read Joseph Esherick, Reform and Revolution in China: the 1911 Revolution in Hunan and Hubei, chapter 1. Indirect reference of the fragmentation of the gentry class can also be found in the topic of the emergence of modern Chinese intelligentsia. Read Hao Chang, 1980: 373; Jerome Grieder, 1981: 240.

predominant institution of discourse, there was constant pressure to prove the validity of one's arguments by emphasizing the rightness of the claims, but not enough time and patience for careful examination of arguments and re-establishment of the "definition" of truth. What remained was a more generalized yet more imprecise moral discourse that the people could appeal to for validity claims. In fact, it was bound to come due to the emergence of public sphere and the deinstitutionalization of discourse. Eventually, moral discourse emerged.

If this argument makes sense, it also answers why Li's long essay "People's Nature and Politics" and Chen's polemical reply to Kang Youwei against the movement intended to establish Confucianism as state religion emphasized more on the establishment of the truth value of their arguments rather than the rightness of their positions. Concerning historical Confucianism which both protagonists and antagonists were familiar, a common framework was more immediately available so that Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao's discourse could appeal to truth. But when they moved to new topics like democracy and science, discourse of truth became extremely difficult. In the age of deinstitutionalization of discourse, moral discourse became almost inevitable. The gradual transition of their arguments into moral discourse, when the topics shifted from the more familiar to the less, gives our arguments more credibility.

Concluding the explanations given in this chapter, let me summarize them as follows: all in all, the moral discourse of Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao was a consequence of complex interaction among cultural factors (the voluntaristic language), structural factors (the public sphere) and historical factors (the deinstitutionalization of discourse).

CHAPTER V <u>Conclusion</u>

The final chapter of a thesis is usually its conclusion. But what should be added to our previous discussion of the moral discourse of Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao about Marxism? It is my belief that besides the evidence and logical consistency of the arguments, a thesis should also be understood and criticized in respect of its implications. I have mentioned that the purposes of this thesis are both empirical and theoretical. In the following paragraphs, let me discuss the empirical and theoretical implications that I have in my mind right at the beginning of the drafting of this thesis.

During the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), different political factions were involved in fierce political struggle. All claimed to be "proletarian," "revolutionary" and "red." Every minute deviation from ritualistic political behavior was treated as evidence of the "counterrevolutionary" and purged. Of course, no political group could stand long in struggle. In principle, there was just no clear definition of what was meant by revolutionary. 'The moral drama continues, and while it is still discussed in terms of the Marxist rhetoric of class struggle, it is no longer entirely clear which segments of society are the social bearers of human evil and which segments are the bearers of virtue. People of wrong class background are still subject to discrimination, but the right background is no guarantee of virtue. The bourgeois disposition of soul can find its lodgement in any established organization including the Communist party itself. Indeed, one can only be sure of the leader himself.' (Schwartz 1968: 377).

Political struggle is also a form of communication, if we do not suppose that communication must be peaceful. After all, it is also a process of exchange of arguments, threats and, in the last resort, weaponry. What is peculiar is that during

the turbulent days of the Cultural Revolution, the communication was so dramatically moral. Political struggle was a struggle for the claim of moral superiority, and what was moral was defined by the great teacher and leader Chairman Mao Zedong.

In a sense, the Cultural Revolution resembled the moral discourse of Chinese Marxism by Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao in the accentuation of rightness. The difference was the scale. It is not my argument that there was a causal relationship between the two events which are separated from each other for almost half a century. That is just beyond the scope of this thesis. But it is my intention to draw the attention of researchers who are interested in the historical change of Chinese society in the twentieth century to this peculiar aspect, namely the accentuation on rightness in discourse and communication, including even political struggle. Moreover, if the moral discourse of Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao could be explained by the emergence of public sphere and deinstitutionalization of discourse, could they be related in any way to the explanation of the Cultural Revolution? Furthermore, one must not forget the various debates in the 1930s (about the difference between science and religion, between the Eastern culture and the Western culture, and the nature of traditional Chinese society), and the wide-scale discussions among the intellectuals in the 1950s (about the political nature of literature, and other topics)? It would surely be intriguing if research can be done on the interconnection among these various incidents. If we relate the phenomenon that we have discussed to the broader context of Chinese history in the twentieth century, it seems to me that discourse is an unexplored theme that requires further investigation. This is the hidden ambition of this thesis.

It should also be clear by now that the focus of this thesis is not Marxism, nor the voluntarism of Chinese Marxism. It is the change of discursive pattern in modern

Chinese history which is the concern of this thesis. We are not interested in whether Chinese Marxism is proper Marxism or not, nor whether the voluntaristic element is derived and faithful to the original spirit of Marx. That kind of task should be left to intellectual historians and those who believe that they know the "true" Marxism. We study Chinese Marxism insofar as it is taken as moral discourse. We investigate the moral discourse of Chinese Marxism insofar as it represents a moment in the broader pattern of historical change.

In respect of the theoretical part, this thesis is intended to emphasize language as an important factor in sociological explanation. For a long time, sociologists assume that social world is objective. Apparently, they need the assumption because this is the reason why social science is possible. After all, is not science objective? If the social world can be studied scientifically, it must be objective. However, what does it mean that the social world is objective? There are two radically different answers. The first is metaphysical. It argues that the social world is objective, just like the natural world. Therefore, if we can rightly say that there is a gravitational law in the natural world, there must be some laws of equal status in the social world. Since gravitational law is universal and ahistorical, and social laws must be so, history must be excluded from the social world. Note that the argument is metaphysical. It does not argue that there are some ahistorical dimensions in the social world. It asserts that the social world has no history.

The second answer is less extreme. It avoids metaphysical assumption. The social world is objective only in methodological sense. As science is an objective method, it can only abstract from the infinite social reality and study the objective aspects. The spirit of this answer is that the social world may or may not be different from the physical world, but the method of social science must be the same as that of

natural science. Methodologically, there is only one logic of science.

Obviously, the first answer is ridiculous. We will just leave aside. For the second answer, it is appealing intuitively. There should be only one scientific method. After all, physics does not recognize social boundary. To say that there is a difference between bourgeois and proletarian physics, or between Chinese physics and American physics is ludicrous. By the same token, there should be no distinction between Chinese and American statistics.

But what about Chinese and American sociology? Now, I believe one should be more cautious to reject this distinction as well. After all, it is reasonable to argue that Chinese and American sociology are answers that have been sought for different questions. If the questions are particular, the answers are bound to be particular. While the questions for statistics and physics are more technical, and more amenable to universal definition, the questions that sociologists try to answer are more rooted in concrete history. Unlike physics and statistics, sociology is inherently value-laden and political. There can be universal and value-free perspective in physics and statistics because physicists deal with the physical world, and statisticians deal with data. But sociologists deal with the social world. The physical world and data are not inherently meaningful; there is no laughter or tear in the world of objects or data. But the social world is inherently meaningful; and there is human suffering or happiness in the social world. It is not because, or not only because(?) I am particularly tender-minded that I observe this fact; it is the implacable logic that draws me to the conclusion. One can surely abstract away from laughter and tears when he studies the social world. But he should be aware of the cost. He is no longer studying the social world as such, but the abstract model as the social world.

I must declare that I am not challenging the use of model in social scientific

research. I am challenging the use of abstract model as if it were the social world. The precise difference between the conscious and unconscious use of abstract model is that in the latter, the problem of definition is excluded. Those unconscious researchers are only interested in the relationship among concepts. But they do not know that concepts need to be defined before they can be investigated in respect of their interrelationship. And worst of all, they do not know that definition involves hermeneutics. There is no hermeneutical problem in natural science before it deals with object. An atom is an atom; it cannot be otherwise. The point here is that the definition of an object is more or less unproblematic. But the modern society is not an industrial society. Nor is it a capitalist society. It can be defined so by bourgeois and Marxist sociologists respectively. Inequality can also be defined as stratification or exploitation. But what goes into the respective definitions are commitments to what is meaningful, which rightly belongs to the realm of hermeneutics. When one is studying the social world, one cannot avoid making judgment of what is meaningful and defining his topic well before he can deploy the scientific method. These steps which precede the use of scientific method are hermeneutical operations. I hope the reader will be clear by now that I am not challenging the use of scientific method. I gladly appreciate all the technical achievements in social science, including research methods, statistics and model-building. But I insist that what is unique to social science is that it must be preceded and constituted by hermeneutics (Habermas 1989).

I go into details to establish this point - that social science is constituted by hermeneutics - because it is of crucial importance to my argument that language is integral to sociological explanation. If one admits that the social world is meaningful, and different societies have different meaning systems, it is a matter of principle that objective factors may produce different effects, depending on the cultural specificity

of the context.[21] Therefore, I deem it is of paramount importance to integrate language as a variable into sociological explanation. As I have asserted, the drawbacks of the objective approach to sociology of knowledge is that in order to be scientific and objective, it excludes all non-objective factors from its framework. The consequence is that the specificity of determination is obscured. I have also asserted that the effects of public sphere and deinstitutionalization of discourse would very likely be different if they take place in a different cultural context. In a sense, moral discourse was a Chinese product shaped by the voluntaristic language bequeathed by left-wing Wang Yangming Confucianism. It was this language which translated the structural effects of the public sphere and the deinstitutionalization of discourse into moral discourse. Without this factor, the explanation must suffer in respect of its specificity.

The arguments of this thesis may be wrong or insufficient in the light of new evidence. Or it may not stand the careful reading in its logical consistency. The hope of a dedicated researcher is not to prove that he is always correct, though I hope my arguments are not seriously wrong. It is his aim to point out new facts, new factors that have been ignored, and stimulate reflection of the present through increasing understanding of history.

--THE END --

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[21]I only assert that it may be so because a stronger assertion risks the danger of falling prey to cultural idealism. It would be idealistic to maintain that cultural configuration is the necessary and sufficient factor in sociological explanation. After all, there are some objective interests like food, sex and understanding that are not culture-bound and have their own specific effectivities. To deny material factors and admit solely cultural factors is idealistic. But it is equally idealistic to admit that material factors can explain everything. This admittance is possible only if one maintains an "ideal" image of man, say man is instrumentally rational.

APPENDIX:

. bian	變	. biran b_ange	必然變更
. biran fasheng	必然發生		
. chanhui	懺悔	. chaoliu	潮流
. Chen Duxiu	陳獨秀		
. Dong Zhongshu	董仲舒	. dou	鬥
. douzheng	鬥爭	. duihua	對話
. fuqiang	富強		
. gaizao	改造	. ge	革
. gengxin	更新	. guojia zhuyi	國家主義
. Han	漢	. Hu Shi	胡適
. Huang Zongxi	黃宗羲	. huodong	活動
. jianghua	講話	. jieji douzheng	階級鬥爭
. jieji zhanzheng	階級戰爭	. jieshi	解釋
. jingshen	精神	. jinhua	進化
. juewu	覺悟	. junzi	君子
. kang	抗	. Kang Youwei	康有為
. kutong	苦痛		
. li	禮	. Liang Qichao	梁啟超
. Liang Ji	梁濟	. liangzhi	良知
. lijiao	禮教		
. lougong zhuyi	勞工主義	. lun	論
. Mao Zedong	毛澤東	. minyi	民彝
. Minyi Daifanglu	明夷待訪錄		

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- pingtianxia 平天下
- Qing 清
- qu 除
- qujiubuxin 除舊佈新
- qun 群
- ren 仁
- renmin 人民
- sangang wuchang 三綱五常
- shouxin 獸性
- shuyuan 書院
- sumenglun 宿命論
- tianren heyi 天人合一
- tianren xiangying 天人相應
- tufa 突發
- xiaoren 小人
- xin 新
- xiushen 修身
- Wang Yangming 王陽明
- weiwude 唯物的
- wuxin liangmiande gaizao 物心兩面的改造
- yeshou zhuyi 野獸主義
- yiqiong erbai 一窮二白
- yu renleijingshen de yingxiang 與人類精神的影響
- Yuan Shikai 袁世凱
- Zhang Zhidong 張之洞
- zhengfu 征服
- zhidu 制度
- zhuanzhi 專制
- zi 自
- zijue 自覺
- zizhong 自重
- zizhu 自主
- zuopai wangxue 左派王學
- zuzhi gaizao 組織改造

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