The Historical Transcendentality of the Marx’s Thought of “Species Being” and Its Contemporary Value

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Abstract—Marx regarded the practice of human’s free and conscious activities as a "species characteristic", which departs human from other things, and put forward the view that man is a "species nature", which finds a unified basis for the multiple contradictions of human existence. By relief human from traditional philosophy’s shackles of “Abstract subject", The idea of "human being-like existence" based on practice restores the "subjectivity" to the real human being itself, and goes beyond the way that ancient philosophy regards man as an appendage of "sanctified subjects" and the Abstract interpretation of modern philosophy to regard man as an isolated " Monad individual". Marx’s thought of human “species being" realized the dialectical unity of human and nature, human and itself, and human and society, and raised the philosophical perspective of human’s existence to a new historical height, it also has a very important guiding significance and reference value for the development of contemporary Chinese society.

Keywords— species being; practice; human and nature; human and itself; human and society

I. INTRODUCTION

For the first time in the history of human thought, Marx promoted practice into the fundamental principle of philosophy. Starting from man's practical activities, Marx talked about a series of philosophical problems such as man’s "species being", "species nature", "species life" and "species awareness". "Men can be distinguished from animals by consciousness, by religion or anything else you like. They begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to produce their means of subsistence..." ¹ (Karl Marx, The German Ideology, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1968).

"In creating an objective world by his practical activity, in working-up inorganic nature, man proves himself a conscious species being, i.e., as a being that treats the species as its own essential being, or that treats itself as a species being." ² (“The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 and the Communist Manifesto” by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels Published 1988 by Prometheus Books).

II. THE HISTORICAL LOGIC EVOLUTION OF THE "SPECIES BEING" THOUGHT OF HUMAN

Marx once divided human society into "three forms" based on the generating of the nature of human social relations, he pointed out that "human dependence (originally entirely naturally built) is the initial form of society, in which human productive capacity is only developed within a narrow scope

and in isolated places. Human independence, based on material dependence, is the second largest form, in which a universal social material exchange, comprehensive relations, various needs and a comprehensive capacity system are formed. The third stage is the free personality based on the all-round development of individual and their common social productive capacity as their social wealth. The second stage creates conditions for the third stage. Correspondingly, the philosophical interpretation of "species being" in human history has gone through the logical evolution process from colony standard to individual-based, and then to freeman association, taking conscious species as subject and standard.

In the early stage of history, the social form Marx called "human dependence", the level of human productivity is extremely low, coupled with the constraints of natural conditions and oppression, to maintain and protect their own existence, and individual must rely on groups, clans, polis, religion and other forms of community. At this stage, human "species being" is mainly manifested in the individual's absolute obedience to the community and the creeping worship to the nature. This absolute dependence on the community of human makes the community gradually evolving into the image of "sanctified subject" with personalized characteristics, and makes a few people obtaining the right to be the representative of the community, while most people have no domination over their own existence. At this time, the individual appears very small and insignificant in front of the "sanctified" community and the "infinite power" of natural, and the "species being" is highlighted as the absolute dependence and obedience to the species.

From the development process of human history, the evolution logic of the "Sanctified subjects" can be seen clearly. In the period of ancient Greek city-state society, slaves did not gain social status and power as human beings, while the city-state community had supreme authority. And religion became the master of people's spiritual life in the middle ages. During this period, the individual's dependence on the "patriarchal clan community" reached its peak in both spiritual and social life. Similarly, in China's thousands of years of feudal autocratic society, the sanctification of "patriarchal clan community" had been enlarged infinitely and had become the absolute domination of people's real life and spiritual world. Thus it can be seen that in ancient times, under the social form nature of "human dependence", the individual did not really represent a real "subject of life", but abstractly divided all the personality into clan, city-state, religion, patriarchal community of all kinds.

Ancient philosophers always attributed the origin of the world to various abstract substances corresponding to the actual state of human existence, and tried to achieve the ultimate interpretation of the world by these substances. Early Greek philosophers regarded "water", "fire", "air" and "atom" as the origin of the world; with the development of theory, Socrates and Plato gradually abstracted the existence of human being into "rational soul" and took "mind" as the ontology and basis of the entire universe; Aristotle took "Primary Substance" as the object of philosophical study, the form of "no material" is regarded as the final basis and guarantee of all existence. In the Middle Ages, Augustine directly opposed the world of God and the real world of man, and attributed everything in the world to God. From the early plain Atomism to the theory of human nature, and then to the theory of God's ontology in the Middle Ages, ancient philosophers attempted to find an antithetical world outside the phenomenal world and opposites to it, consecrate the infinite world on the other side, and make it the support of the world on the this side. The real world of human meets the sacred other world in different ways, and the human "species being" highlights the absolute dependence and obedience of the "small-sized person" which lacks the subjectivity to the "sanctified subjects".

With the development of social productive forces, the existing form of human society has changed from "human dependence" to "human independence based on material dependence". At this stage, the social productive forces have been generally developed, the scope of people's social contacts has been expanding, and the dependence on things has replaced the original personal dependence under the market economy, thus freeing the individual from the community of "sanctified subjects", and giving full play to the individual's potential and becoming an independent individual. Human's "species being" based on the premise of "material dependence" makes the individual getting out of the fetter of "sanctified subject" and obtaining the independence of his own existence. If the social stage characterized by "human dependence" attributes the human's "species being" to the creeping worship of the other side of the world, then the society of "human independence based on material dependence" draws man's subjectivity back to the world and transforms the worship of "sacred subject" into concern on real individual. The concern of subjectivity. Since modern times, the common ideological core of many cultural trends can be attributed to the deep concern and call for human's "subjectivity".

The "subjectivity" of the individual was prominently emphasized. No matter though the return to the spirit of individual rationality in the Enlightenment, or the criticism of theocracy, and the promotion of human rights and the yearning for freedom in Renaissance, or the return to the secular life of people in the religious reform movement. Descartes, the father of modern philosophy, put forward the famous proposition of "I think, therefore I am", attributed people's understanding of the world to human rational thinking, thus the principle of "subjectivity" was truly established; Leibniz directly regarded people as separate "monad" and regard individual as self-sufficient and complete closed; Kant attributes sensation to external things, regards logic as thinking function, thinks that the content of thinking is acquired and the form of thinking is innate. He thought that the combination of the two makes it possible for the

"congenital comprehensive judgment" which forms the scientific knowledge, and emphasize "legislation for the natural world" and Fichte restored God to the absolute principle of self-consciousness, and put the "thing-in-itself" into self-creation activities and regards them as the products of self-creation of human beings; Schelling regards subject and object as absolute unity or objective reason, and the human subjectivity as objective reality of self-consciousness; Hegel regards the basis of world unity as both substance and absolute spirit with subjectivity. And realized the dialectic for the first time in the history of philosophy, Feuerbach regards "rational, love and will" as the species nature of human beings, interprets human beings' existence with "religion of love" and interprets God as the alienation of sensible man’s species nature, and the secret of theology is the humanism.7 The transformation of modern philosophy is precisely to uncover the mysterious veil of the "scarified subject" and restore the subjectivity to the real human itself.

Unlike the ancient society in which individual were subordinated to the absolute dominant position of the community, modern philosophy regarded individual as self-sufficient, isolated and closed " substances" or "monads" and understood human "species being" as abstract monads. However, while the modern philosophy transcends ancient philosophy and highlights the subjective status of real people, individual also be separated from the world in which they live, eventually leading to the serious separation of individual from " specie ", individual from nature, and individual from its own. Admittedly, the individual subject is undoubtedly the actual undertaker of human life, but the existence of human beings with the essential characteristics of " specie " can transcend the existence of things, not because of the separation of individual from the world, but because people can establish an unified relationship between individual and species, individual and nature, individual and its own through practice, the "free and conscious activities". Therefore, modern philosophy regards man as a "monad" isolated from the world, which essence is deviated from the whole life attribute of human being, and will inevitably lead to the final separation of human from "species". Modern philosophy has transcended the ancient philosophy and pushed forward the development of philosophy, but at the same time, an unavoidable problem has been left, that is, isolating the organic relationship between the individual and the world, resulting in the final separation of the individual and the "species".

According to Marx's philosophical viewpoint that social existence determines social consciousness, modern philosophy regards human as the subject of "monad" type, which is closely related to man's real existence state of "independence of man based on material dependence". In this period, human get rid of the absolute rule of the "scarified subject" and obtain certain independence, but at the same time this incomplete opposition will inevitably fall into the excessive worship of things. With the further development of social division of labor, commodity exchange and currency circulation, the social relationship between individual is gradually alienated as the social relationship between things. The general materialized logic of society is constantly intensifying the hostility relationship between people due to the survival competition and makes eventually individual "monad". As Marx expounded in the Paris Manuscript, "That which is for me through the medium of money-that for which I can pay (i.e., which money can buy)-that am I, the possessor of the money. The extent of the power of money is the extent of my power. Money's properties are my properties and essential powers-the properties and powers of its possessor."8 (Karl Marx & Frederick Engels, The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 and the Communist Manifesto, Prometheus Books, Amherst New York,1988) At this time, Although people no longer crawling worship to the sacred "The other side of paradise ", but have to fall under the authority of the "invisible hand" of capital. As well as the Monod type "subject" cannot be liberated from the magic of "fetishism" even if it is free from the absolute bondage of the sacred "Upper case subject", but. Under the rule of capital logic, the individual in the form of "monad" seems to have acquired a free and independent personality on the surface, but in fact, it has the same destiny as the human being in the lower case under the vision of ancient philosophy - to be absolutely ruled and enslaved by the "abstract subject", and the development of this abstract logic will inevitably lead to the antithesis between individual and species, the individual and the nature, the individual and its own. The birth of Marx philosophy has fundamentally solved the drawback left by traditional philosophy.

III. THE HISTORICAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE MARX'S IDEA OF "SPECIES BEING"

For the first time in the history of human thought, Marx upgraded practice to the fundamental principle of philosophy, thus providing a reasonable basis for the dialectical unity of the multidimensional contradictions between "sociality" and "individuality", materiality and spirituality, subjectivity and objectivity, naturalness and Transcendence of human beings, and breaking the one-sided exaggeration of human beings' multidimensional existence contradictions in traditional philosophy. The mode of interpretation has also realized a fundamental change in the mode of thinking of "substantial ontology" in the past philosophy. Marx thought: "It is just in the working-up of the objective world, therefore, that man first really proves himself to be a species being. This production is his active species life. Through and because of this production, nature appears as his work and his reality. The object of labor is, therefore, the objectification of man's species life: for he duplicates himself not only, as in consciousness, intellectually, but also actively, in reality, and therefore he contemplates himself in a world that he has created."9 (Karl Marx & Frederick Engels, The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 and the Communist Manifesto, Prometheus Books, Amherst New York,1988).

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7 Reference "The Comparative study of Marx and Feuerbach on philosophy -- thinking on economic and philosophical manuscripts in 1844", by He Jianjun journal of the party school of Fujian provincial committee of the communist party of China, 11 (2016), page 33.


Practice is the realistic foundation of human existence. Only starting from practice can we find a reasonable interpretation to the multi-dimensional existence of human beings and break the abstract way of understanding human beings in traditional philosophy. As Marx pointed out: "All mysteries which lead the theory to mysticism can find their rational solution in human practice and the comprehension of this practice." ("Theses On Feuerbach" by Karl Marx 1845 published by Lawrence and Wishart edition of The German Ideology in 1938)

The establishment of the practical viewpoint means the birth of a new philosophical interpretation on the way of human existence, which reflects the transcendental nature of human's "species nature" to species regularity, that is, human beings constantly negate its own and nature through practical activities, and affirm themselves and realize its "species nature". This viewpoint elevates the philosophical interpretation of human being's "species being" to a brand-new foundation and realizes the historical transcendence of the abstract thinking mode of traditional philosophy. The transformation of Marx's idea of "species being" of human being should include at least aspects as following:

Firstly, from the practical point of view, Marx constructed a bridge between human and the outside world, combining man's super egoism and super naturalness organically together, revealing the dialectical relationship between human and nature, which negates and unifies each other, thus transcending the absolute domination of nature over the human being in ancient philosophy, so as to surpass the view of opposition between man and nature in modern philosophy thereof, and realizing the dialectical unity of man and nature.

As Marx pointed out: "Freedom in this field can only consist in socialized man, the associated producers, rationally regulating their interchange with Nature, bringing it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by the blind forces of Nature; and achieving this with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most favorable to, and worthy of, their human nature". (Capital Volume III Written by Karl Marx, 1863-1883 edited by Friedrich Engels and completed by him within 11 years after Marx's death Publisher: International Publishers, NY, [n.d.] First Published: 1894) Taking practice as the essential characteristic of human "species being", Marx saw the realistic foundation of dialectical unity between human being and nature. On the one hand, human comes from nature, and must rely on nature to maintain his existence. Human own is also a part of nature. Although human being can transform and transcend nature, by using and transforming the power of nature to construct the human society, the objective law must always be followed. From this perspective, nature is always the basis of human existence; on the other hand, The human’s relationship with the nature. It is not only the passive dependence relationship, but also the active transformation of nature by the virtue of practical activities of human being itself, making it a "humanized nature, thing-for-us", so that the great potential of nature can be exploited, tapped and used by mankind. It is in the objective activities of the transformation of nature, the "species nature" of free and conscious activity of human being can be brought into full play, realizing and confirming truly itself to be a "species" of existence. "Human nature is essentially a kind of transcendence. Man should not only surpass nature, but also surpass itself". The self-transcendence of human being is the human's self-actualization. That is to say, living in the dual relation of affirming and negating to its own, man affirms itself in negating form its own while affirming himself from negating the nature. In this sense, the process of man's differentiation from nature and separation from other things is at the same time a process of deepening the integration and assimilation with the nature, and other things. It is the ultimate goal of human development to achieve a higher form of 'species unity' between human and nature at a deeper level. In this unified relationship, human development and natural development are unified in essence". 12 Understanding the relationship between man and nature from the viewpoint of "species", Marx went out of the thinking dilemma of the binary opposition between human and nature in traditional philosophy and founded the dialectical unity of human and nature.

Secondly, to explore the essence of human beings from its free and conscious activities of transforming the object world, that is, to understand human "species being" from the practical activities of real and flesh-and-blood human beings, is an interpretation of human beings from their own point of origin, which has transcended the traditional philosophical thinking mode of seeking the basis of human existence from the external abstraction, so as to realize the dialectical unity of human being and its own.

Regarding practice as human's "species nature" means that human life is a process of continuous transition and transcendence, that is, a process of emancipation towards a new ego, which is the fundamental characteristic of human's "nature instincts" different from the population attributes of animals. "The animal is immediately identical with its life-activity. It does not distinguish itself from it. It is its life-activity. Man makes his life-activity itself the object of his will and of his consciousness. He has conscious life-activity. It is not a determination with which he directly merges. Conscious life-activity directly distinguishes man from animal life-activity" (The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 and the Communist Manifesto” by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels Published 1988 by Prometheus Books). According to Marx, animals simply acquire the means of existence on the basis of their instincts, while human beings can consciously and purposefully transform the objective world into "thing-for-us" and "make the world develop in a direction consistent with the pursuit of human goals and ideals of values". In this way, the constraint of nature to ourselves can transcended, during which the ego before is denied, so

12 The "species-life" and "species-philosophy" of Human being -- the spirit of contemporary philosophy towards the future, by Gao Qinghai, Hu Haibo, He Lai, Changchun: Jilin People’s Publishing House, page 244.
that we can get a higher level of development and liberation. This constantly transcending "nature of the kind" reveals that man is neither a passive individual attached to the "sacred subject" in ancient philosophy, nor a "monad" of modern philosophy which is isolated from each other and lacks connection, but an initiative subject who can transform the real world through its practical activities in certain social relations. Practice is the foundation of the unity of man and the world. It organically unifies the multidimensional contradictions of man’s naturalness and transcendence, material and spiritual, causality and purpose, passivity and initiative altogether, thus freeing human being from the fetters of various abstract "subjects" and making man an active human being with flesh and blood. So as to achieve the ultimate unity of man and it’s own.

Third, Marx regards "free and conscious activities" as practice as the "Gattungswesen" of human beings, and believes that practice can always be carried out in certain social relations. Individuals can only realize the transformation of the objective world in the social community. And achieve self-worth, which connects the individual and the society closely, revealing the social nature of human beings, transcending the one-dimensional dependence of the "little-oriented person" on the "sacred subject" and modern philosophy in ancient philosophy and the "single-type" individual and overall disengagement of the society, realizing the dialectical unity of man and society.

According to Marx's point of view, practice is the "Gattungswesen" of human beings, and human practice must be completed with others. Therefore, the "Gattungswesen" of human beings also determines that human beings must be social. "Their needs are their nature, and the way they seek satisfaction, linking them (sexual relations, exchanges, division of labor), so they must have a relationship." In criticizing Feuerbach’s view of human nature as "an intrinsic, silent, universality that connects many individuals naturally", Marx pointed out: “The essence of man is not the abstraction inherent in a single person. In its reality, it is the sum of all social relations." This shows that human beings are social beings, and it is precisely the “free and conscious activities” of human beings that practice the connection of the individual and others, individuals and society. The grounds are connected together to form various social relationships, making the real essence of human being "the sum of all social relations." Marx pointed out: “Only when the real individual returns the abstract citizen to himself, and as an individual, in the middle of his own experience life, his own individual labor, and his own personal relationship, when he becomes a class existence, only when people realize When the ‘inherent power’ of itself is a social force, and this power is organized so that social forces are no longer separated from themselves in the form of political power, only at that time can human liberation be completed." After dialectical abandonment of the "sacred subject" of ancient philosophy and the "single subject" of modern philosophy, Marx realized a higher level of unity between the individual and the society. In the communist society, the unity of man and society is based on the unity of man and nature, man and self, and everyone will fully occupy the "class nature" of the people. Individuals are no longer appendages of the "sacred subject", nor are they “single individuals” separated from each other. Each person will personalize their own. The individual exists both as an independent person and as a member of the social whole. Here, "man is a special individual, and it is his particularity that makes him an individual, a reality, a single social being. Similarly, he is also the whole, the concept of the whole, the self-existence of the subject of society thought and perceived, as he exists in reality as both the intuitive and realistic enjoyment of social existence, and the existence of human life as a whole." At this time, as Marx described: "Man is a kind of being, not only because people practice the class - their own class and the class of other things as their own objects in practice and in theory; and because of “This is just another way of saying the same thing” — people treat themselves as existing, living classes, and treat them as universal and thus free beings."  

IV. CONTEMPORARY ENLIGHTENMENT OF MARX’S "CLASS EXISTENCE” THOUGHT

Marx's "class existence" thought has important guiding significance and reference value for the development of contemporary Chinese society. In the context of economic globalization, China's development is closely linked to the overall development of the world. As a developing country that has entered the industrialized era, China has spent nearly 40 years in the industrialization process of the West for nearly 300 years, which means that contemporary China will inevitably face many problems arisen from the industrialization process in the West for hundreds of years. With the rapid development of the economy and society, multiple contradictions and problems such as man and nature, people and society, and people and themselves are concentrated. In the face of this complicated situation, about how to deal with many contradictions and achieve full implementation in the new era, the overall layout of the five-in-one coordination of economic, political, cultural, social and ecological development and the promotion of all-round development of modernization have become major issues facing contemporary Chinese society. To solve these problems, we can neither stop the main subject consciousness advocated by the perspective of ancient philosophy, nor continue to follow the idea that modern philosophy insists on dividing people into isolated "single-individuals", but must be aware up to now, many problems in China and the whole

18 "Marx and Engels collection", vol. 1, Beijing: People’s Publishing House, 2009, p. 188.
world are incompletely related to the development of human nature, which leads to the close relationship between man and nature, man and society, and man and himself. The over-exploitation and plundering of natural resources is actually the result of the struggle and competition between people and the reality. It is a realistic manifestation of the social pattern of mutual opposition between people and even mutual hatred. Faced with this situation, we should raise people's awareness of "class existence" and raise people's individual-centered consciousness into a self-conscious class-based consciousness. In view of the multiple contradictions and social conflicts faced by contemporary Chinese society, Marx's "class existential" thought can at least provide us with the following revelations:

At the level of human-society, we must realize that people living in the world are neither appendages to the "sacred subject" without subjectivity and initiative, nor are they "single individual" isolated from the society. We must fully respect the subjectivity of human beings, and at the same time we must examine and treat people in the network of relationships as a whole, and transform human "dependence" and "independence" into multidimensional "class existence" attribute of organic integration realizes the dialectical unity between man and himself, man and society; in the relationship between man and nature, he must get rid of the abstract thinking mode of the binary opposition between man and nature. It is necessary to fully realize that human beings originate from nature and must rely on nature to exist. At the same time, human beings are not simply attached to nature. Men's "class characteristics" enable people to transform nature into "humanize nature and be my thing" making man and nature become the organic whole of dialectical unity. Therefore, in the process of transforming the natural world, we must focus on transforming the opposition between man and nature into a harmonious unity, and realize the harmonious coexistence; In dealing with the relationship between reality and ideals, we should transform the purely realistic interests and abstract value ideals into a life attitude that pursues the unity of real interests and value ideals, combines realistic goals with long-term goals. Abandon the development model of eagerness for quick success and draining the pond to get all the fish, instead emphasizing the realistic goals and long-term goals. Abandon the abstract value ideals, which lead to the close relationship between man and nature, which leads to the subjectivity of human beings in the development of contemporary Chinese society, the relationship between man and nature, man and himself, and man and society. Reasonable resolution of the problem provides more inspiration and reflection.

V. CONCLUSION

Marx attributed the free and conscious activity of human beings to practice as the "class essence" of human beings. He believed that the essential difference between human beings and animals lies in the active transformation of human beings in the objective world according to their own consciousness and purpose, and in the transformation of the object world. In the process of practice, people confirm themselves and realize themselves. The potential of human beings can be fully expressed, so that people can constantly transcend themselves in the process of transforming the natural world, and establish various social relationships, so that people become social beings, ultimately realize the dialectical unity between man and nature, man and himself, and man and society. Marx's "class existence" thought provides a reasonable basis for solving the mystery of human existence, and realizes individuality and sociality, materiality and spirituality, naturalness and transcendentality, subjectivity and objectivity. The dialectical unity of multiple contradictions such as subjectivity and objectivity, flesh and soul, thus transcending the ancient philosophy and modern philosophy to exaggerate one aspect of the multidimensional existence of human beings and form an abstract understanding of human beings. Marx's "class existence" thought not only restores "subjectivity" to the real person itself, but also connects people with nature and society organically, thus making people become independent and "class" consciousness. The unity of attributes makes people truly become "class-like objects" that distinguish them from one another, realizing a historical transcendence of traditional philosophy. Under the background of the new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics, in-depth study and excavation of Marx's "class existence" thought will inevitably lead to the subjectivity of human beings in the development of contemporary Chinese society, the relationship between man and nature, man and himself, and man and society. Reasonable resolution of the problem provides more inspiration and reflection.

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