

## Marx's Alienation Theory and Contemporary Value

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### Abstract

Since the reform and open policy for 30 years, China, on the one hand, greatly develops the productive forces, and enriched people's material life. On the other hand, society also appeared many alienation phenomenon. According to Marx's theory, the Communist society will eliminate private ownership, in which people are free and comprehensive development. It's the sublimation of alienation. But our country is still at the primary stage of socialism, so called the underdeveloped stage. This requires us to develop the capital greatly. And in the economic system, which the public ownership as the main body, a variety of ownership coexist, we can still find the private ownership economy and the division of labor. This determines the necessity of dissemination phenomenon exists in China. So we need to return to the classics, exploring the fundamental cause and find the right measure to solve the problem. Marx provides us with the weapons of theory in his *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*. Based on China's social reality, this paper starting from the analysis of Marx's theory of alienation, combing the dissimulation phenomenon in contemporary society, to study the value of the theory of alienation in today's society.

**Key words:** Marx; Alienation; Era value; Contemporary value; Alienation phenomenon

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### INTRODUCTION

Alienation is a significant concept in Marxist philosophy. It means the main body creates or splits up the opposite itself in the process of development, which gradually evolved into the external, alien force. About alienation, we can find more detailed and comprehensive discussion in Marx's *Economic Philosophy Manuscript in 1844*. Some people think that the book is the culmination of Marx, and some people think that the manuscript is not nature. I think they all have a point, but at the same time, they are one-sided. In my opinion, this manuscript reflects on the investigation of the real economy, contains the historical materialism, and also embodies the humanism color.

### 1. BACKGROUND OF ALIENATED LABOR

In the year of 1844, Marx achieved two transitions. The first is the transition from idealism to materialism. Another is the transition from revolution to democratic to communism. The *Economic Philosophy Manuscript in 1844* is an early product in economics research after he makes these changes. Before that, when Marx is young, he believe in Hegel's idealism, and then turns to criticize Hegel because he reverses the relationship of civil society and the state. This promotes Marx to write the *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*. Marx thinks that material force decided to state and civil society. So as to realize transformation from idealism to materialism. Thereafter, Marx expound the theory of human liberation. He thinks that human liberation is the abolition of private ownership and eliminates all the class.

This is the mission of the proletariat. And only combined with revolutionary philosophy theory, the proletariat can complete its historical mission. Let the private ownership turns into the public ownership, realize the free and all-round development of a person, a society that discards the alienation.

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## 2. THE STANDPOINT AND GUIDANCE OF ALIENATION THEORY

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Marx used his whole life sedulously committed to uncovering and criticize capitalist economic system. He believed that this is the last system of human history, and also believed that only the proletariat and philosophy are united can we eliminate private ownership and to set up a free association, finally realize the essence of man return. Because he always stands on the position of the masses of the proletariat, and only the proletariat which at the bottom of the society become the propertied class, make the majority of the proletariat become the ruling class, can we eliminate all class, achieve the equality of all people, thereby eliminating private ownership, eliminate exploitation and achieve the liberation of mankind and make the return of human natural.

The purpose of Marx is not limited to the liberation of the working class, but by recovery of all people's initiative which is all free and not alienation, Make people liberated, and to achieve a society where the purpose is not the product, the person is no longer "deformed" and become fully developed

Marx thinks the capitalist society is a transitional phase. From the original dependence of the feudal society people to people (Most characterized by clan consanguinity as link group work and life) to the independence of people based on the material dependence in the bourgeois society (The value of man is embodied by the possession of the object), ultimately achieve comprehensive free development and liberation of personality.

Capital, in Marxist theory, is the surplus value which can be added, and the capitalist is the personification of capital. Capitalist society, it's a money worship society. When Marx achieves the two transformations, he explained the origin of capital alienation and its solution in the way of critique of capitalist economic facts. Alienation theory is put forward to eliminate the phenomenon of alienation. Generally speaking, alienation is people's material production and spiritual production and its products, into the alien force, a kind of social phenomenon in turn ruled people. By its own development, however, contrary to its own and become the opposite of itself, and then rule itself. As Marx's theory of alienated labor is in the view of the phenomenon that people become a slave to money, a slave to machines in the capitalist society. He thinks that labor be originally free conscious activity to oppression, slavery. Marx with the belief that make the philosophy to be the theoretical weapons to transform

the world's, violent attack on the capitalist society, and put forward the theoretical weapon of the problem of the alienation labor, then elaborated the new world outlook which is about to be comprehensively founded. Aimed at the realization of communism, and through the subjection of alienation to realize the free and comprehensive development of people. The essence of socialism is to realize communism in China. Therefore, return to Marx's criticism of the modernity to see a problem with the source of the phenomena of alienation in modern society, will surely provide us with some enlightenment.

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## 3. THE THEORETICAL CONNOTATION OF ALIENATION THEORY

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### 3.1 The Alienation of Laborer With the Product of Their Labor

From the results of production, The alienation of laborer with the product of their labor is the alienation of material. In the Manuscript, Marx said that

The more wealth the worker produces, the more power and quantity of his products. The poorer he is. The more goods the worker creates, the more he becomes a cheap commodity. The world of value is proportional to the devaluation of the world.

This is the same as the Matthew effect of the Bible, which means the rich people becomes richer while the poor gets poorer. Marx then clarify that

This fact is nothing more than that: The object of labor production, which is the product of labor, as the existence of an alien, as does not depend on the power producers, with labor opposed. The product of Lab our is fixed in an object, materialized labor, this is the objectification of Lab us. The reality of labor is the objection of labor. In the national economics assumption condition, This reality of labor is the non reality of workers, the object of the object is the loss of object and being enslaved to object, Possession expressed of alienation and externalization.

That is to say, the labor products the workers create do not belong to themselves. Most of the products occupied by the capitalists, and form a vicious circle.

### 3.2 Labor Itself and the Alienation of Workers

Labor itself is labor behavior, the outside of labor behavior makes the phase separation between labor and workers. This article comes from the first reasoning. The labor product is the result of the labor, it is the result of the man's own power and the spirit of the outside, and the essence of the self certification. Since the result of the labor and workers turns alienation, so this process must be in the labor process. It is the alienation of self conscious labor behavior and human being. Labor is peculiar to human beings. The distinction between man and animal is that man is free and consciously engaged in labor. But now, Labor is an activity that people has to be engaged in the protection of life or other purposes. So we were gradually enslaved by labor, and the workers in the labor denied itself so as to avoid the labor. Marx says in his manuscripts:

Its alien character is clearly demonstrated by the fact that as soon as no physical or other compulsion exists, it is shunned like the plague. External labor, in which people make oneself externalization of labor, is a kind of sacrifice of self, self tortures labor. Finally, for workers, the external performance of labor is that this kind of labor is not his own, but others; labor is not his. He also does not belong to his own in the labor, but belong to others...His activities belong to others, this kind of activity is the loss of his own.

Marx here vividly expounds the workers gradually lose themselves in the process of externalization of labor and alienation. Become a screw in the factory under capitalist system. Lose their personality and their own value, become the smallest and f the weak victim. But this is contrary to the humanitarian thought in the Enlightenment era. It is a tumor in the development of western civilization to the bourgeois. The alienation of labor has become the means to maintain the physical existence.

### 3.3 The Laborer's Self-Alienation

The noble place of man lies in his thought, and his free conscious behavior. Marx's scientific knowledge about human own kind's essence was the hypothesis and foundation of his further revealing human social:

Animal production is one-sided, while human production is comprehensive, Animals are produced only by the direct physical need, while human is not even influenced by the physical need, and only without this need can human achieve real production; Animal products belong directly to its body, while the person is free to face their own products. Animals can build according to the criteria and needs of their own species, while man knows how to conduct his production according to the criteria of any species, how to apply them to his object. Man therefore builds all things on the principle of beauty.

A philosopher once said, human is so fragile, small, just like a straw in the universe, but how he became the master of the space of the earth? His consciousness and will. But now, external labor fettered people, make people to be the walking dead (no freedom, unconscious). Marx point out that "Both nature and the human categorical nature ability becomes the essence of the alien to people, and maintain his personal way of life." Marx pointed out that this kind of alienation is not one-sided here, but a full range of alienation. On the one hand, containing inorganic body, namely the alienation of nature; on the other hand, it is a person's own essential strength, from outside to inside of alienation."Here, we can find the buds of his later theory of "Among human nature, an essential one attribute of human is its social attribute."

### 3.4 The Alienation of People

This article is from the first three reasoning, especially the third. Marx says in his manuscripts:

In a word, the proposition of the alien of human categorical nature and human means that people alien with others, and everyone of them alien with the essence of human. Human alienation, generally speaking, the relationship between man and himself can be realized and expressed only through the relationship between people and others.

From this we can see, in the process of production, there's alienation of human with production and themselves. And in our lives, there are also alienation of Social members in the process of interaction with others. In the capitalist private ownership society, Due to the commodity fetishism and prevalence of money worship, the relationship between humans is undisguised transaction with money. There arise the capitalization of people and the personality of capital. The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honored and looked up to with reverent awe, leaving only, currency, interest relations. This leads to shallow and human diaphragm, and the distortion of the personality split, the relationship between people is interest relationship. In this historical background, this phenomenon is especially reflected in the confrontation between the working class and the bourgeoisie in the capitalist society.

## 4. THE ENTAILMENT OF ALIENATION ON PRESENT SOCIETY

### 4.1 Present Condition

China has experienced a 30-years long Reforming and Opening, and we have tuned poor white to a new era, we China becomes the world's second largest economy, with fast development and high GDP among countries. In China, we carry out an economic system as the public ownership being the main body with a variety of ownership coexist, which has already involved in capital logic in the wave of economic globalization. The existence of private ownership economy and natural division of labor, decided the objective existence of alienation phenomenon in today's China. What's more, the development of human history is also a development transitional phase. The existence of Alienation has its objective and necessity. China today is in the primary stage of socialism, which is an undeveloped transitional phase. If we see the capital society as the first phase, and the communist society as the third phase, the stage we are now in ,has the characteristic of the first phase, the modernity and alienation problem caused by modernity. The present stage is also with a meaning of the transitional stage. The imperfect of present stage requires it to develop continuously and create conditions needed for the realization of communist. This decides the current task of China is to develop the productive forces, surpassing capital logic with a great development of productive force, with which we can get a sublimation of alienation. So, development is before everything.

### 4.2 The Significance of Alienation Entailment

#### 4.2.1 The Entailment of Material Alienation

In capitalist society, the differentiation of alien force between labors and products, and work achievement occupied by others, on the other hand, our productive force has been improved largely and people's quality

of life improved, too. Capital absorbs everything, not only the nature but also men, it eventually caused alienation, which also enlarged people's income gap, regional difference is obvious.

Recent years, our country continuously adjusts the national policy, turned the policy which takes economic construction as the center to slow economic growth and pay more attention to quality. "we not only need to make big cakes, but also dividing the cake well", "let people share reform efforts", and so on, all take reasonable allocation of labor products as the point. For decades, our party always gives first priority to people's livelihood issues, and a series of reform policies have been taken out.

#### 4.2.2 The Entailment of Alienation in Work Process

In the process of bringing in and development of Capital, people become the slaves of machine in factories, ideals and reality are separated for most people, so they maintain their work for themselves or family needs, and cannot give full play to their ability, people are like mass-produced objects in mold, they have loosed their individuality, and become "boomerang child". However, in present society, a person's personality and need are varied, we advocate individuality and creative man, and we appreciate the economic system dominated by knowledge economy other than dominated by agriculture and industry. We should follow the principle of free and comprehensive development of individual quality, we also advocate people do what they can do and things can play as it is needed. We except to fuse the ideal and reality, realize individual's actual demand by our own work.

#### 4.2.3 The Entailment of Human Nature Alienation

In modern society, phenomenons, such as materialistic worship and money worship is very common. Some people acquire wealth by some other wrongful ways, or dream of something for nothing, most people mentally fall into faith crisis. Moreover, they are immoral even anemic. So that it will impair the social development and affect people's value orientation. Men's alienation in nature environment is performing like evolution of the natural environment and natural disasters, such as global warming melting glaciers, tsunami, earthquake and debris flow, which threatens people with living quality.

Our country proposed the construction of a harmonious society in present conditions. Harmony is not only the inner world between people and people, or people with themselves, but also a kind of concomitant and sustainable development between men, society and nature. Mentally, setting up positive values is very important. The general secretary stressed the importance of ideology at 819 speeches. In the relation of mankind and nature, it stressed that people should make rational use of natural resources, and develop new resources at the same time. We call for frugality and no waste.

#### 4.2.4 The Entailment of Alienation Between Humans

In modern society, the independence of humans depending on substance is performed like making money as a

mean and occupying substance as a goal, and it formed commodity fetishism and currency fetishism, what's more, identity, status of men becomes abstract symbols which is supported by property, this leads to people turn the nature relations in men to interest relationship when they are on the way of pursuing fame and fortune, in severe case, it manifest as the relationship between superior and subordinate in work, infiltrating into life, or everything is interest-oriented, leading to lose the original warmth and harmony. Interpersonal relationship is no longer based on equality but becomes money-oriented relation. Someone becomes others methods to realize their own purpose. Thus, it makes a large amount of bribe-takers and corrupt officials appear in society, resulting in the landslip of ethos, the lack of morality, trust between people and the widespread indifference in society. As a result, some phenomena turn up, such as people dare not to help the old's to cross the road, or passer-by's indifference when disasters happen right before their eyes.

Hereby, we call for the regression of humanity, the improvement of social security mechanism, and the reinforcement of the publicity and guidance function of newspaper. At the same time, we appeal that government pays more attention to the building of public infrastructure, and perfect the public assistance system. In recent years, government is rectifying the Party's style of work, and the cleaning of corruption is quite fruitful. Meanwhile, the media vigorously promotes the idea of delivering civilization and building up new spirit, and carries out a series of morality evaluation activities.

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## CONCLUSION

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The socialist construction road of our country is tortuous, but the future of socialist society is very bright. From Marx's *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, we can understand the universal inevitability of alienation phenomenon, and only through the development to overcome it. Now, we are still in the primary stage of socialism for a long time, which decided we should overcome the alienation when our society is constantly developing. Marxist theory as our guide, will give us hope in the boundless darkness.

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