

East-Asian Marxisms and Their Trajectories

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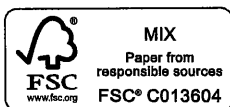
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Introduction

Marxism, space, time and East Asia

Viren Murthy and Joyce C.H. Liu

When we think of the theme “Marxism in East Asia,” we might conceive of the simple transfer of a theory from Europe to the non-West. East-Asian intellectuals from the early twentieth century read and disseminated Marx’s works through various translations. In the past couple of decades, a number of theorists have problematized the process of translation and underscored the slippage of meaning that occurs as texts are translated in new regions. One theorist stresses the material conditions of meaning transfer and contends that rather than being transferred, local translators find hypothetical equivalents, which would amount to a reinvention of meaning (see Liu, 1995). The emphasis on the politics of translation has made an important impact in the study of intellectual history and by extension, the problem of translation would appear to be an essential method to problematize the writing of production of Marxist ideas in East Asia.

The implication of such a deconstruction of meaning would imply the potential fracturing of Marxism, which as a signifier standing in for a body of thought would not be able to withstand the splintering of meaning as practices of translation took place. So we have an antinomy between, on the one hand, the idea of a simple transfer, without any explanation of how this is possible, and on the other, theories of how meaning is radically re-invented, such that the continuity is broken and the unity of a body of thought is placed under erasure. The above antinomy poses a question concerning how to be reflexive about discussing Marxism in East Asia and prompts us to ask how such a theme of inquiry becomes possible. The question of language mentioned above entails with it a larger question of how to understand the universal and the particular. Marxism, which is an ostensibly universal theory, is here being received in a particular region, namely East Asia. This volume is concerned with this problematic from various interdisciplinary perspectives and in the following pages we introduce ways to think about Marxism and East Asia by drawing on the work of the various authors.

This volume grew out of a conference, organized by Joyce C.H. Liu and Viren Murthy, held at the National Chiao Tung University in Taiwan that brought together two major Marxist theorists, Moishe Postone and Harry Harootunian, specifically to engage with the seminal debate between their different readings of Marx’s *Capital*, especially the problem of temporality, universality and particularity in Marxism. Postone, in his book *Time, Labor*

and Social Domination: A Reinterpretation of Marx's Critical Theory (1993), expounded a Hegelian reading of Marx, which contends that with the advent of global capitalism, there is one contradictory logic that envelopes the world and consequently one dominant temporality in the world. Against this Postonian challenge, numerous articles appeared, including Harootunian's recent book *Marx after Marx: History and Time in the Expansion of Capitalism* (2015). In this book, Harootunian rereads Marx, highlighting concepts of multiple temporality, unevenness and the formal subsumption of labor under capitalism. In the first section of this volume, we have included the conflicting standpoints of Postone and Harootunian, as well as those of two renowned East-Asian Marxist-inspired intellectuals, Wang Hui and Karatani Kojin, who we believe each speak in different ways to the above problematics of capitalism, universality, particularity and temporality. After engaging this major theoretical debate, we will discuss how the more empirical chapters, which attempt to bring Marxist theory and history together, articulate with the above opposition between different types of Marxism and present for us the diverse trajectories of the reception of Marxism in East Asia.

Perspectives of capital: universality, particularity and temporality

Moishe Postone's book *Time, Labor and Social Domination* was a major event in Marxist theory and presented to the Anglophone world a radically new Hegelian reading of Marx. The importance of this reading of Marx for Asian studies has only been uncovered in the past decade or so, initially by works in India and more recently by essays and dissertations on East Asia (Sartori, 2009; Werner, in this volume). In some ways, this reading of Marx goes directly against a dominant mode of doing Asian studies that stresses the particularity of various cultures, be they Chinese, Japanese or Korean. In the case of Chinese history, the particularist position underscores that there was something specific about Chinese culture that made it different from the Western world even during the modern period. Notice that this perspective, represented in Chinese intellectual history by people as diverse as Thomas Metzger (1986) and Chang Hao (1987), was itself a response to an earlier thesis by Joseph Levenson (2016 [1968]) which stressed the incorporation of modern China into a larger global problematic. The implication of Postone's thesis would be a return to Levenson, but with a Marxist twist.

Postone's Marxist twist is indeed complex, because he rethinks both Marxism and the global problematic. In particular, Postone contends that most Marxists have missed the real crux of Marxist thought because they operate with a transhistorical conception of labor. In other words, they have a vision of labor that was there from the beginning and gradually comes to its own through capitalism and is finally liberated in socialism. Against this, Postone argues that rather than criticizing capitalism from the standpoint of labor, Marx articulated a critique of labor in capitalism. Consequently, in Postone's view, labor is not a transhistorical category and, perhaps more importantly, abolishing capitalism implies not realizing

labor but abolishing it. There is an important political corollary to Postone's point. He claims that in general, workers' struggles in capitalist society are movements within capitalist society and do not point beyond.

At this point, some of the implications for East Asian studies are clear, especially given Mao's emphasis on labor; however, to grasp the full challenge of Postone's work, we need to delve further into the concept of totality that he develops through the work of Georg Lukács (1972). In short, Postone contends that what makes capitalism unique is the universal mediation by labor. In pre-capitalist societies, labor was governed by overt relations of domination, such as the relationship between lord and serf. But in capitalist society, the proletariat is not directly dominated by the capitalist; rather they enter into a relationship of equals. In capitalist society, we labor in order to buy commodities that contain the congealed labor time of other human beings. In this way, capitalism is a society in which both the commodity form and a particular form of labor are universalized and this universalization itself contains a more totalizing and yet more subtle form of domination.

Postone makes an original analogy between Hegel's Spirit and Marx's concept of capital. He contends that in capitalist society, capital operates similar to Hegel's notion of Spirit, which becomes a self-moving subject and includes not only economic relations, but cultural, political and intellectual aspects of life as well. In Postone's view, capital grounds the contradictions of the modern world, be they cultural, economic, intellectual or political. As capitalism becomes global, these contradictions also become global. Moreover, capital has an uncanny ability to incorporate all types of resistance. For example, following Postone's logic, one could say that throughout the twentieth century various attempts to affirm national particularity have ended up reproducing the universal and particular dimensions of capital, because the nation-state is itself an expression of the commodity form.

One might conclude that Postone has produced a Marxist night in which all cows are capitalist and consequently does not allow for difference. However, we must realize that his argument works at an extremely high level of abstraction and consequently allows for enormous variety. In short, all countries in the global capitalist world will not look the same. In fact, given that levels of productivity would be different in various parts of the world, there would be necessarily unevenness on Postone's view and the nature of this unevenness would change through time. For example, China and India's respective positions in relation to the uneven world of global capitalism are radically different at the turn of the twentieth century and at the turn of the twenty-first century. One could perhaps say that this is because the entire structure of global capitalism has changed, even while the basic dynamic propelling it has remained constant.

Although Postone's perspective focuses almost exclusively on capitalism and therefore does away with any simple modernization theory, the consequences of his theory of Third World Marxism are devastating. In particular, similar to more orthodox views of Marxism, Postone contends that socialism is only possible in a society or a world with massive increases in productivity and technology. In Postone's

view, socialism becomes possible when and where increasing mechanization has made proletarian labor obsolete with respect to the production of material wealth. The increase in mechanization allows for the possibility of abolishing proletarian labor and consequently of ending capitalism. Given that such mechanization did not take place in countries on the periphery of global capitalism, socialism was not possible there. Instead, what such countries needed to do was to find a means to create capitalism in those regions. Thus in Postone's view, despite all the ideology about constructing socialism, Mao's China actually successfully created capitalism—state-capitalism.

Harry Harootunian presents a different approach to global capitalism, which stems from some concerns with the above Hegelian Marxist line and also from an interest in the role of Asia and the Third World within such a paradigm. Harootunian affirms Postone's perspective with respect to the importance of global capitalism but contends that capitalism operates differently. He would claim that Postone's picture represents capital's own self-image of its penetration throughout the world, but the actual reality is different. Indeed, in Harootunian's view, capitalism presents this image of itself as all-pervasive in order to make resistance look impossible. However, he contends that although capitalism appears to have really subsumed all areas of the world and all things in it, in actuality such subsumption is never complete. Harootunian's work and his essay in this volume begins with an intuition that brings us back to a number of texts to which Marxists have recently turned their attention. In particular, he attempts to see whether there is room in Marxist theory to allow more room for possibilities of resistance from countries on the periphery of global capitalism, the former "Third World," or the global South. To use Dipesh Chakrabarty's words, Harootunian's question is: does Marxism imply relegating these countries to the "waiting room of history," where they must learn to become capitalist before they can create a vision of a socialist future (Chakrabarty, 2000)?

This question should of course recall to us the famous letter that Marx wrote to the Russian revolutionary, Vera Zasulich. Put simply, Zasulich asked whether given that Russia had not fully developed capitalism, whether following the theory outlined in Marx's *Capital*, Russian socialists would have to first promote capitalism before turning to struggle for socialism. So while Russians would not quite be in a waiting room, they would have to catch up before they could go beyond. Marx wrote many drafts of this letter and sent a brief response that did not really answer the question definitively. However, in one of the drafts, he affirmed that since Russia is in the global capitalist world-system, it would not have to merely follow the path of other capitalist countries. Rather, Russian socialists could draw on earlier communal forms of life, which persist despite the introduction of capitalist forms of production.

To address such issues, Harootunian innovatively invokes the terms *real* and *formal subsumption* in Marxist theory. Normally, Marxists associate formal subsumption with an initial stage of capitalist production, when capitalists make use of earlier forms of production in order to produce profit. In *Capital*, Marx sometimes connects this early form of capitalism to the production of absolute surplus value. In other words, at this point, capitalists do not increase surplus value by

mechanizing the process of production, but rather by lengthening the working day. However, with the real subsumption of labor under capital, capitalists can increase surplus value even after the working day is fixed at eight hours. They now increase surplus value by increasing the amount that one produces in one hour. This can be done by changing the structure of production, for example through cooperation, technological innovation and other means. The real subsumption of labor under capital could be used to explain the radical technological changes that have occurred throughout the last hundred years.

However, Harootunian here makes two points, one explicit and the other implicit. First, he contends that if the transition from formal to real subsumption is taken to be a general rule, the effect is similar to modernization theory. Areas where formal subsumption predominates are in a waiting room or need to catch up to those where real subsumption has been achieved. Against this narrative, Harootunian contends that the transition to real subsumption is never complete. Indeed, in his view, we should not think of formal and real subsumption as stages. Capital constantly reconstitutes something that it cannot completely absorb and this vague outside could be a point of potential resistance.

With this last formulation, we come to the second implicit point that Harootunian makes, namely that of expanding the scope of the terms real and formal subsumption. In Harootunian's view, we should not narrowly understand formal and real subsumption in terms of absolute and relative surplus value; rather, the terms encompass more than this. Harootunian uses these terms to refer to a much larger problem in Marxist theory, namely the role of vestiges or remnants in the Marxist theory. The idea that real subsumption is never complete implies for Harootunian that the remnant never goes away or that capitalism can never completely incorporate its outside. On this view, there will be large areas of the world where formal subsumption is predominant and where earlier forms of life and practice persist, despite being in a context of capitalist production. With the concept of formal subsumption, Harootunian grounds Dipesh Chakrabarty's category of History 2 in a theory of capitalism. Recall that for Chakrabarty, History 2 referred precisely to those forms of life that were antecedent to capital and that capital could not quite incorporate into its logic (Chakrabarty, 2000).

With such theoretical issues in sight, Harootunian returns to numerous Third World Marxists who all stressed this persistent unevenness and contended that unevenness could be mobilized positively. In some sense, he is saying that we should not throw Third World Marxism into the dustbin, just because the so-called Third World no longer exists. Rather, the world of unevenness that they described continues and can be described in huge areas in the world, in places such as China, India and Africa, where real subsumption is only one form among many modes of subsumption. In Harootunian's view, we still need to think about the political possibilities of such unevenness, and areas where people appear superfluous and are only formally subsumed under capitalism. From Harootunian's perspective, the inability of complete subsumption is not merely the result of the greater productivity of labor and is especially acute where capitalism entered through imperialism and could never absorb all the labor that existed there.

Although Wang Hui does not directly deal with Postone or Harootunian's respective works, his history of the Chinese present and his analysis of the "new poor" in China allows readers to reflect on their respective theories in relation to a Marxist attempt to make sense of contemporary China. As we recall, Postone's theory encourages us to think of East-Asian history within the context of a global capitalism within a single contradictory logic. Moreover, from his perspective, Mao's attempt to create socialism ended up creating state-capitalism, which dovetailed with the general tendency of the world in which Fordism was the dominant mode of production. Note that this also follows from Postone's claim that socialism could not emerge in a country that had yet to make great technological advances. Consequently, all such countries would have to engage in the state-led development of capital.

Harootunian's framework, on the other hand, and his theory of formal subsumption in particular, allow for different paths in Third World countries, where capital had not subsumed all of life and labor under its logic. In general, we could say that Wang Hui follows Harootunian in affirming the possibility of socialism in non-industrialized regions, but Wang's narrative affirms working-class struggles and at times comes close to affirming Postone's position, especially when it comes to the present. In particular, he repeatedly emphasizes that workers' struggles in contemporary China are struggles in capitalism rather than pointing beyond capitalism.

However, while Postone saw this as being the case even for worker struggles in the early twentieth century, on this point Wang radically disagrees. Indeed, the major point of his chapter rests on a contrast between the status of workers during the Maoist period and the present. He contends that old workers had successfully turned their struggle for economic interests into a political movement and eventually helped to create a workers' state. By making this comment, Wang has brought up the issue of the state, which has been a hurdle for Marxist theory. In Wang's view, we cannot conclude that because the world is capitalist, that every state within that world is capitalist. Rather one would need to examine the various mediations that make up each particular state. According to Wang, the Chinese state during the Mao period was not capitalist because, among other things, it had eliminated the market.

Here again the contrast with Postone is clear, since on his reading the market is merely one possible way of organizing capitalism. We cannot fully go into this issue here, but should highlight what is at stake here. In Wang's view, without the market, the nature of competition between various firms becomes extremely different because socially necessary labor time is politically mediated. Proponents of the state-capitalist thesis could of course point out that China was competing in the global arena and Mao famously said that he would surpass the United States. However, readers will have to judge whether Chinese competition in the global arena could be understood as the type of competition that occurs between two capitalist enterprises. Again here, the question of how one understands the state in relation to capital becomes crucial.

At this juncture, the Japanese Marxist Karatani Kojin's work is important because he is particularly concerned with the state's relation to capital (Karatani, 2003).

Although Karatani would agree with Postone about his judgment about Mao's China being a form of state-capitalism, Karatani insists on analytically separating the logic of the state from that of capital. Moreover, in his chapter in this volume, he asks how we can rethink world revolution for the present day. His thinking moves him from Marx to Hegel to Kant, who dreamed of an idea of perpetual peace. In Karatani's view, following Kant, such a world requires thinking globally and Karatani places his hopes on the potential in transnational organizations such as the United Nations.

Trajectories of Marxisms in Japan, China and Korea

The four chapters that open this volume set the theoretical stage for the rest of the chapters in this book, which are more specific to Japan, China and Korea. In the four opening chapters of the book, the issue of difference in a global capitalist world is key. Consequently, it is fitting to begin the more historical section of the book with an essay by Max Ward, who explicitly attempts to make sense of the problem of difference with respect to Japanese studies. Ward picks a topic especially germane to this volume, namely the study of Japanese Marxism. He shows how studies of Japanese Marxism and non-Western Marxism more generally have been stuck in an antinomy between stressing Asian particularity, thus making non-Western Marxism irrelevant or eliminating particularity, consequently negating the historical specificity of the non-West. To help us think our way out of this conundrum, Ward reads Dipesh Chakrabarty and Harry Harootunian's respective works and shows how a theory of capital that allows for difference could point a way out of the above impasse.

Elena Louise Lange's contribution continues the volume by turning to an important Japanese Marxist, Uno Kōzō. Uno was a Marxist in postwar Japan with a considerable amount of followers. Indeed, even today, we speak of an Uno-school of Marxism. A chapter on Uno fits perfectly into our volume for a number of reasons. In particular, he began a revisionist interpretation of Marx and emphasized circulation at least as much as production, which influenced a whole generation of Japanese intellectuals, including Karatani Kojin. Moreover, he provides an excellent case for the problematic that Ward poses in his essay, namely how to treat Japanese Marxists without provincializing them. Lange consequently provides a rigorous critique of Uno's interpretation of Marx's theory of value. In short, Lange contends that Uno fails to understand the importance of production and fetishism in Marx's labor theory of value. Lange also shows that although he has received less attention than Uno, the Japanese Marxist Kuruma Samezo debated Uno and anticipated many of the points that Lange makes in this essay.

Moreover, Lange shows that the debate between Uno and Kuruma, which she continues on the side of Kuruma, has extremely significant consequences for thinking of politics. To bring these political consequences out, Lange draws on Postone's idea of how the working class is constituted by capital and that we should be attuned to how capitalism itself produces the possibility of its negation.

Lange however adds that such a possibility can be seized only by bringing back working-class politics of a different type. On this point, she gestures again in the direction of Wang Hui, who laments the de-politicization of working-class movements in China.

Moving to China, Rebecca E. Karl's essay echoes some of Harootunian's concerns about global unevenness and shows the ways in which many of these ideas were anticipated by Chinese economist Wang Yanan, who wrote during both the prewar and postwar periods. Karl explains how Wang theorized the comprador in relation to the unevenness produced by global capitalism and the international system of nation-states. Karl's analysis also leads her to rethink the relationship between capital, unevenness and temporality. In particular, she affirms that when thinking of global capitalism, we should be alert not only to geographical unevenness, but also multiple temporalities, which pervade the everyday. Moreover, Karl explores how Wang analyzed the manner in which bureaucratic capitalism, far from being something culturally specific to China, had to be understood in relation to global unevenness.

Following Karl's essay, Jake Werner takes another perspective on China, this time drawing on Postone's Marxism in order to rethink early twentieth-century Chinese history. In particular, Werner attempts to read this period of history in relation to the global transformation from liberal to Fordist capitalism more globally. Such a project is essential to the Postonian standpoint, since if we can talk about one global dynamic of capitalism, we should be able to locate similar transformations in various parts of the world. Werner consequently argues that Shanghai is a microcosm of the global system. Werner follows Postone in contending that, according to Marx, the market is not an essential part of capitalism and that capitalism is based on a unique form of labor. He suggests that the Chinese Revolution of 1949 was not a break from capitalism, but rather meshed with the larger global shift from liberalism to Fordism.

Werner's chapter presents a world in which global capitalism structures all differences, so that they must be conceived as of secondary importance. Joyce C.H. Liu continues the volume by focusing on two famous, but as yet understudied, philosophical events in Mao's time, that is, "one divides into two" and "the struggle between Confucianism and Legalism." Through a reading of these two instances, along with other works by Mao and other Chinese Marxists, she enquires about the history of Chinese socialism in the twentieth century. In particular, she asks why the promises of the socialist revolution turned into their opposite; in her words, struggles against inequality were paradoxically reified into a socialist state bureaucratic system. Indeed, in making such a remark, she echoes Postone and Werner in claiming that what Mao created was not just a socialism, but a mixture of socialist practices following USSR's model with a form of state-capitalism. In the rest of her inquiry, she draws on a series of intellectuals, including those whom she terms as early socialists in pre-modern China, and pre- and post-1949 China, such as the Chinese Marxist economist Yang Xianzhen, the Marxist Confucian scholar Zhou Yutong, as well as

the Chinese-Uyghur Marxist historian Jian Bozan, to seek the possibilities of socialism in the non-institutionalized history of People's Republic of China.

With Seung-wook Baek's chapter, we move from Marxists in China and Japan to Marxist movements in Korea. Baek introduces us to Marxist politics in 1980s Korea and places this in the context of global neo-liberalism. He examines the politics of People's Democracy (PD), which emerged in the 1980s and experienced a number of setbacks throughout the next decades. Baek points out that the failures of PD should not be understood merely in the context of local Korean politics, but in relation to larger global crises, such as the financial crises of the 1990s. Using the term PD, he attempts to theorize a huge range of movements connected to Marxism and the struggles of labor to the larger category of democracy. Echoing Wang Hui, Baek attempts to search for the political in relation to movements related to workers.

Finally, Viren Murthy brings the volume to a close by taking a number of theories of Marxism into the context of intellectuals, not usually associated with Marxism, such as Takeuchi Yoshimi, Kuan-hsing Chen and Wang Hui. Murthy examines each of these intellectual's views about Asian identity and attempts to place them within a Marxist analysis of history, drawing on both Postone and Harootunian, while dealing explicitly with Wang Hui. Takeuchi wrote in early postwar Japan, while Chen and Wang write in contemporary Taiwan and mainland China respectively. Consequently, analyzing their works enables Murthy to examine how ideas of Asian identity are reconstituted across both time and space, during a period when unevenness is also globally reconstituted. While none of the above thinkers are Marxists in the traditional sense, each of them are interested in Marxist issues of social transformation. Takeuchi was writing in Japan during the period that Wang Hui in his contribution to this volume characterizes as the period of the workers' state in China, when workers were able to translate their movements into political results. Chen is very interested in Takeuchi's critique of modernization theory and his affirmation of Asian identity, but pushes Takeuchi into a space bereft of the Chinese Revolution. Murthy compares Chen's discussion of Takeuchi's legacy with Wang Hui's recent discussion of Asia and revolution. In this context, again the legacy of the Third World and the possibility of radical social transformation in places that have not been really subsumed by capital return.

The volume as a whole poses different perspectives on the problem of universality and particularity in global capitalism and the problem of real and formal subsumption. Where we position ourselves with respect to this debate will influence how we think of not only East-Asian Marxism, but more generally Marxisms outside of Europe. If Harootunian is correct and real subsumption in various senses of the word is never complete, then the questions of Third World Marxism are not passé. But how do we rethink this legacy in the present moment? Following Postone, we should conclude that today the nature of inequalities in the world has changed. As a result of technological changes, the problem of superfluous people, especially in the global South, has become increasingly severe. This surplus might become a political force in a future politics of unevenness. For this to happen,

we would need to return to Wang Hui's problematic of repoliticization within a deeper understanding of global capitalism. Following Karatani, we should affirm that such repoliticization would have to envision transforming capitalism through transnational institutional change. In their different ways, these various chapters attempt to deal with responses to problems generated by global capitalism. We hope that this volume will help the reader in thinking through these issues with us.

9 Paradoxical routes of the sinification of Marxism

Materialist dialectic and immanent critique

Joyce C.H. Liu

The question of the sinification of Marxism

The question behind this chapter is first why and how did “sinification of Marxism” (馬克思主義中國化) go wrong, and second, what does this failure indicate in a larger context? The sinification of Marxism in the very beginning, proposed by Mao Zedong 毛澤東 in 1938, was an attempt to decolonize and provincialize Marxism, to resist being dictated by abstract dogmatism (教條主義) and foreign stereotypes (洋八股) imported from the West, and to exercise the dialectic logic of Marxism based on the historical and material conditions in China. According to Mao, “sinification of Marxism” meant to practice Marxism in the concrete struggles within the concrete situations (具體環境的具體鬥爭). Furthermore, Mao insisted that Marxism should be applied through national forms (通過民族形式的馬克思主義) and with Chinese characteristics (中國的特色). He wanted to make Marxism fresh and lively (新鮮活潑), appealing to the taste of Chinese people (喜聞樂見) (Mao, 1971 [1938]: 241–263). In 1956, Mao again reminded the Chinese Communist Party members that theory and practice have to be unified, and Marxist truth has to be united with the concrete practice of Chinese revolution. Mao explained that, according to dialectic materialism, thought has to reflect objective reality and truth has to be verified through objective practice (Mao, 1999 [1956]: 86–99).

The route of the sinification of Marxism, however, paradoxically moved away from its original agenda and its realization ended up in the opposite direction. Though Mao considered revolution as a permanent materialist dialectic process, and the *sinification* of Marxism in China was a necessary method of praxis, the interplay between the objective reality and objective practice according to the local conditions, highly dialectic in its nature, ironically prefigured the path of the internal power struggles and highlighted the primacy of the demands of the time. The operations of discursive and semiotic syncretism effected in the spheres of signs and instituted in the material reality in such a dialectic way that it turned out to be the tool for internal colonization and the game of the alternating seizure of power.

I shall take the philosophical events in socialist China *yifenweier* (一分為二 one-divides-into-two) in 1963–1964, and *rufadouzheng* (儒法鬥爭 the struggle between Confucianism and Legalism) in 1973–1974, as two exemplary instances in history to illustrate the paradox of the sinification of Marxism. The reasons that I pick up these two philosophical incidents are because, first, these philosophical

debates had long-lasting and widespread influence on mass psychology in the PRC. Not only factory workers, but children in elementary schools, could recite and debate among one another the use of these philosophical phrases. Second, “one-divides-into-two” is a typical Marxist dialectic concept that had been translated and reinterpreted in the Chinese contexts, while “the struggle between Confucianism and Legalism,” on the other hand, illustrates the symbiotic tension of Chinese political philosophy of governmentality between Confucianism and Legalism, but was coated in this event as the dialectic struggle between idealism and materialism. Finally, the debate of “one-divides-into-two” is known as the precursor to the Cultural Revolution beginning in 1966, and the “the struggle between Confucianism and Legalism,” along with the campaign of “Criticize Lin & Criticize Confucius” [*pilin pikong* 批林批孔], is known as the last instance of the continuous revolution launched by Mao Zedong. The centralization of the bureaucratic state power is even more stabilized after this event.

Alain Badiou once pointed out that “one divides into two” is the core of dialectics, and the true division of Hegelian dialectics is the opposition of idealism and materialism, that is to say, the opposition of the effects of the system built upon idealist construction and materialism as the rational kernel (Badiou, 2011: 81, 96). What Badiou meant was that all dialectic movements were initiated on the basis of the materialist ground through ideas and thoughts. This concept of materialist dialectic is also the method of his study of the twentieth century, that is, through the study of how the thoughts of the twentieth century thought itself; through the bifurcations and ramifications of ideas and their institutionalizations, we can understand the “maximal interiority” and its “immanent prescription” (Badiou, 2007: 3–6).

I must say that I agree with Badiou concerning his comments on “one divides into two” and the question of the ramification of ideas and their institutionalizations. The sinification of Marxism, however, is a much more complex case. The philosophical event “one-divides-into-two” not only exemplified the dialectic movement of ideas and their institutionalization in itself, but also explained the morphology of “the struggle between Confucianism and Legalism.” Both events are symptomatic signatures of the reification of Marxist ideas in the particular historical conjunctures and are exemplary of the pathological route of the *sinification* of Marxism in socialist China. Marxist ideas such as materialist dialectics and class contradiction were objectified and transformed into hypostasized and institutionalized power struggles, abandoning the materialist dialectic practice to analyze class difference according to different forms of inequality in local conditions and historical contexts. These cases of power struggles, I shall also argue, were not merely determined locally, but were also triggered, implicated and displaced by global conditions, combining diverse systems of subsumptions and co-figured the path of historical development both locally and globally in the Cold War Era in East Asia in a mode of discursive and semiotic syncretism.

To point out the paradoxical and pathological route of the sinification of Marxism does not mean to indicate that there is a normal route or intact norm of the practice of Marxism in China that should be followed or restored. I do not think there is any *normal* route of the translation of Marxism into China. These paths of course were

diverse and even singular in many cases. The question for me therefore is not what the norm should be, but why and how there were proclaimed normative constructive and reconstructive paths, why and how these exercises were affected by the demands of the time, and why and how did they turned to its negative and pathological side and the excuse for legitimation to secure the power position and hence for internal colonization. Pathological route here means the path that is affected by the pathos and sentiments of the time and therefore is related to the affective regime that is operative both as an epistemic apparatus and a consensus of shared sensibility.

A project of decolonization or a paradoxical-pathological turn?

When Jürgen Habermas discussed the concept of social pathologies and internal colonization in *The Theory of Communicative Action*, he pointed out the overdeveloped societal rationalization and its bureaucratic administration that caused the reification of the life-world and the systemic imperatives that created critical disequilibria and called forth social pathologies and internal colonization. The implementation of institutional subsystems and bureaucratic controls augmented the internal expropriations and conflicts to the extent that some parts of the people in the same society were exploited, excluded and cannot enjoy equal opportunities to actualize their capacities. For Habermas, this paradox points to the question of capitalist modernity. Habermas suggested that the critical question should be to inquire why the rationalization of the life-world and its various subsystems developed “irresistible inner dynamics” that brought about both the “colonization of the life-world and its segmentation” (Habermas, 1987: 305, 327–331, 367, 385).

To me, the paradox of the societal rationalization exists not only in the societies of capitalist modernity but also in those of socialist modernity. It is crucial for us to note that the modernity of socialist states in the twentieth century such as China actually follows the same capitalist logic of accumulation, expansion and competition of capital, though in the form of state-centric totalized project (see the chapters by Postone and Werner in this volume). It is also crucial for us to note that the sinification of Marxism, though an attempt to decolonize and provincialize Marxism imported from the West, paradoxically aggravated the mechanism of the internal colonization based on the overdeveloped societal rationalization and its ideocratic and bureaucratic administration in the socialist state. The shared pathos of the time constituted the affective as well as epistemological imperatives. The pathological development through the process of the sinification of Marxism, as what we are about to discuss, was not caused by the deficient rationality, but by the overdeveloped socialist rationality of progress, military competition and formal equality in the context of global politico-economic conditions in the Cold War era. The practice of liquidating enemies during resurrections was retained in the People’s Republic of China (PRC) as continuous internal partitions, separating and cleansing the parts labeled as bad. The ideocratic and bureaucratic cadre system as well as local ideological subsystems, undergirded with the popular consensus shared by society, further automatically reproduced the mechanism of internal partitions and detected certain parts of the people as a potential threat to

the total system. The core of the paradox of the socialist-communist regime lies in the fact that, in pursuing and upholding equality for all people, the regime turns out to go against itself dialectically in a spiral route as an automatic monstrous engine that generates fundamental contradictions and inequality in society.

The concept of provincialization was proposed by Dipesh Chakrabarty in his project on the decolonization of knowledge. To Chakrabarty, to provincialize Europe was to reject the assumption that European ideas are universal and to find out how and in what sense European ideas were drawn from “very particular intellectual and historical traditions,” and to ask the question about “how thought was related to place.” Chakrabarty wrote, “can thought transcend places of their origin? Or do places leave their imprint on thought in such a way as to call into question the idea of purely abstract categories?” (Chakrabarty, 2007: xiii). The travel of European ideas and capitalist modernity, Chakrabarty insisted, was not merely a question of historical transition, but a question of translation, and the translation on the local and subaltern level is “more like barter than a process of generalized exchange,” and the local and subaltern practice of everyday life has the capacity to disrupt the totalizing project of universal history of capitalist modernity (*ibid.*: 16, 71).

Looking at the process of the sinification of Marxism in China, we shall see that thought is indeed inevitably deeply related to its place and that the translation of Marxism to China signifies a larger semiotic exchange. Mao’s effort in decolonizing and provincializing Marxism indeed brought the Marxist practice back to the geopolitical and historical conditions in which China was situated. But, we also observed the fact that the demands of the time were so powerful that the local and the subaltern history of everyday life does not necessarily have the capacity to disrupt the totalizing project of either capitalist modernity or socialist modernity. On the contrary, the local power structure and the subaltern consensus oftentimes carried out complicit collaborations with the concurrent political tendencies and profitable investment in whatever forms of capital. The project of critical analysis, for me, should start from within the local context of contradictions through historicizing the trajectories of crucial representative events so that we can carry out a form of immanent critique as an exercise of decoloniality. This chapter therefore attempts to re-read the representative historical discourses related to the sinification of Marxism and to examine how and why the discourse and the institutional practices of the sinification of Marxism moved toward the perverse turn. To assume a position of immanent critique is not to suggest a clear cut of the inside from the outside, but to recognize the fact that the colonizer–colonized dichotomy or the West–East distinction is false and superficial, and acknowledge the fact that the coloniality of the power structure is both implicated globally but is always rooted and instituted from within through a topological collaborative apparatus.

A quick look at the discursive trajectories of the sinification of Marxism itself in the history of the PRC is already informative in its pathological and spiral route. Mao’s “sinification of Marxism” was denounced by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union as “nationalist” (搞民族主義) and was not openly used in the official documents during the 1960s. After the age of the Cultural Revolution,

however, a second wave of “sinification” of “Marxist-Leninism” was proposed by Deng Xiaoping in 1980s, followed by Jiang Zeming and Hu Jintao, with the objective to “establish the socialism with Chinese characteristics” (中國特色社會主義). Jiang Zeming stated in 1997, “only Deng Xiaoping’s theory, and no other theory, that bridged Marxism with contemporary Chinese practice and the characteristics of the time, could solve the problem of the future and the fate of socialism. Deng Xiaoping Theory is Contemporary Chinese Marxism” (Jiang, 2007 [1997]: 1413). In 2008, Hu Jintao once again stressed the objective to “unite the basic principles of Marxism with the Sinification of Marxism,” and the guiding principle of “Reform and Opening-up” (改革開放) is “to emancipate thought, to be practical and realistic, to keep abreast with time, and to innovate theory on the bases of practice” (Hu, 2009 [2008]: 796). The practice of the “sinification of Marxism” now ironically turned out to be the rationalization and justification for the economic reform and the developmentalism that China has followed in the post-1989 and post-socialist stage.

It is clear to us in retrospect that the project of the sinification of Marxism confronted double stakes. On the one hand, it claimed to resist the domination of a universal and homogeneous historical process suggested by the Eurocentric view of Marxism and to situate the praxis of Marxism in the materialist conditions and the historical moments pertaining to the Chinese context, while this project was in fact subsumed under a larger historico-political context, particularly the domination of the Comintern with the dictate of Stalin. On the other hand, by refusing to take Marxism in its abstract form and insisting on applying Marxism in concrete struggles in the concrete environment in China through “national forms,” Mao nevertheless had subsumed the praxis under the domination of local power structures and the manipulation of nationalist sentiments.

For me, the central problem, in that we want to make a preliminary speculation before we move into detailed analysis, lies in the fact that Mao’s theory of the “sinification of Marxism” and constant revolution with the concept of “one divides into two,” though highly mobile and complex, nevertheless led to the hypostatization of Marx’s method of analytical dialectics by making the concept of the nation, the people and the proletariat into substantialized categories, based on Mao and his followers’ strategic targets of the time. The question presented itself most obviously when Mao insisted in his talk on the united front against the Japanese invasion that internationalism should be closely combined with national form. The concept of nation, state and people are conflated in the term *minzu* (民族 the nation) and *guojia* (國家 sovereign state). The idea of the “national form” (民族形式), Mao emphasized, linked the importance both of the local/vernacular culture and the survival of the nation-state with the tinge of nationalist sentiments. In the same talk in 1938 in which he discussed about the sinification of Marxism and the question of national form, he also stressed that it was the time that people should join and fight in order to show their patriotic passion (愛國) and to save the country (救國). Those people who were mobilized by Maoist ideas would be at the same time self-positing in a nationalist context as national subjects. The objectives for the internationalist movement to resist the concentration of power

and capital controlled by the state then lost its effect in the Chinese context. This form of total mobilization turned out to be the most successful mechanism whenever the danger of war and the threat from outside were discursively or rhetorically conjured. The Sino-Japan War in 1930s and 1940s, the Korean War and the Taiwan Strait Crises in 1950s, and the incident of Zehnbao Island 珍寶島 (Damansky Island) in late 1960s, all triggered strong passion from the people to serve and even sacrifice for the nation. Along with the various movements of mobilization, the internalized oppositions among the people were also repeatedly called forth in order to differentiate “the people” and “the enemy of the people,” such as the pro-West members, the pro-capitalist “rightists” or the Five Black Categories.

Just as Harry Harootunian had succinctly analyzed, provincializing Marx was to adhere to a “rigid conception of a Marxian historical trajectory,” a scenario derived from the Second and Third Internationals and subsequently reproduced in the imaginary of the nation-form, to uphold “a particular progressive narrative all societies must pass through, on the template of a geographically (and culturally) specific location exemplified by Britain as Marx ‘sketched’ its genesis of capitalism in volume one of *Capital*” (Harootunian, this volume). The sinification of Marxism, to put the practice of Marxism in the Chinese historical and contextual circumstances, ironically demonstrated for us a different form of provincializing Marxism and the paradox of the effort to decolonize Eurocentric Marxism, not only with the attempt to catch up with the pace of modernity heralded both by the West and by the Communist International led by the USSR, but also processes of the actualization of systemic reification of Marxian ideas dominated by local power structures and subaltern desires in China.

“Sinification of Marxism,” therefore, not only served as a strategy to alter the path of revolution according to the analysis of the changed situation, but in fact also functioned as a reflection of the trajectories in the course of history according to the changed local as well as global conditions. Looking into the complex historical and materialist conditions in which Mao and his followers made their strategic decisions and adaptations, we would soon find the act of “sinification” in fact connotes the ever-changing material and political conditions, and the routes and the effects of its bifurcations need to be examined.

In the following sections, I shall look into the two philosophical events: *yifenweier* (one divides into two) in 1963–1964 and *rufadouzheng* (the struggle between Confucianism and Legalism) in 1973–1974, and discuss how and why Marxist ideas of materialist dialectics and class contradictions were reified and transformed into institutionalized local power struggles that were over-determined by complex local and global conditions and co-figured the long arc of Cold War history.

One divides into two and Mao’s theory of contradiction

The phrase “one divides into two” (一分為二) was first brought up by Mao in a speech he delivered at the Moscow Meeting of Representatives of the Communist and Workers’ Parties on November 18, 1957. Mao stated that contradictions exist

everywhere in the world, and every object and person can be analyzed according to this principle of contradiction. “One divides into two” is both a general phenomenon and the “method of dialectic” to be used in the scientific analysis of all situation. One would fall into metaphysics if he refused to admit that everyone is analyzable according to this principle (Mao, 1999 [1957]: 332).

The talk on “one divides into two” in 1957 is emblematic in many ways. In this talk, Mao presented his analysis of the changing global situations in the mid-1950s and announced that it was the time for the East Wind to gain the upper hand over the West Wind (東風壓倒西風) (ibid.). This remark informed the turnover of the greater power in the Middle East after the Suez Crisis in 1956. The former colonial empires had encountered setbacks, and the socialist countries, including those in Asia, Africa and the Middle East, were on the rise through the alliance of the Third World countries since the Bandung Conference in 1955. This remark also indicated that China had successfully achieved its strategy to gain more support from the Arabic nations and had gained the recognition of seven countries, including Egypt, Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Morocco, Algeria and Sudan, and consequently alleviated from the international total isolation of PRC since its establishment in 1950 (Shichor, 1979: 89–96). Moreover, Mao announced in this talk that China was going to catch up with the UK in 15 years with its massive production of steel. The resolution to overtake the UK was again reconfirmed in the New Year’s talk in 1958 in which Mao proposed to move his “continuous revolution” to a new stage: a technological revolution.¹ This new revolution led to the Great Leap Forward (*dayuejin* 大躍進) launched in 1958, the main task of which was to be discussed in the extended meeting of CPC Political Bureau at Beidaihe starting from August 17, 1958.²

It was also in the same talk concerning “one divides into two” that Mao openly denounced people such as Trotsky, Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀, Zhang Guotao 張國燾, Gao Gang 高崗, and Chiang Kai-shek 蔣介石, as “incorrigible” and “absolutely exclusive to the socialist party.” In this sense, there is “only one aspect to their nature, not two.” The absolute antagonistic dichotomy therefore is set up by Mao through “one divides into two,” differentiating between the colonial and the colonized, the capitalist and the socialist, the right and the left and even within the Chinese Communist Party itself. This antagonistic denouncement explained the underlying logic of the national large-scale anti-right movement in 1957 against the Democratic League and the intellectuals, that would recur repeatedly through the purge of the “five black categories,” that is, landlords, rich farmers, anti-revolutionists, bad-elements, and right-wingers, especially during the Cultural Revolution.

Mao’s concept of dialectics was first developed in his essay “On the Question of Contradiction” (矛盾論) that he lectured in Yan’an in 1937, basing on his readings of Lenin’s comments on Marx’s *Capital* as well as Hegel’s dialectics in his *Philosophical Notebooks* written in 1915 and other Marx–Lenin textbooks available in the 1930s. In his theory of contradiction, Mao elaborated his view of the materialist dialectics of the infinite splitting of all matters, and constant movement of differentiation and integration, action and reaction, positive and negative electricity, combination and dissociation of atoms, and class struggle.³

Mao's theory of contradiction echoed Lenin's reading of Marx's *Capital* as well as Hegel's dialectics. In *Capital*, Marx took the commodity as the "cell" of the economic life, the "germs" of all the contradictions, and analyzed the scission within the object between the labor force and the value form (Marx, 1867: 6–7). The operative logic of the scission between the labor force and the value form needs to be analyzed in its historical and material conditions. Lenin pointed out in his *Philosophical Notebooks* that the Hegelian logic (dialectics) is essential in order to account for Marx's practice of dialectics in his writing of *Capital*. Lenin (1976: 357)⁴ stated straightforwardly in the beginning of his essay that "the splitting of a single whole and the cognition of its contradictory parts" was the "essence" of dialectics. If we look into Hegel's method of dialectic in his *Phenomenon of the Spirit*, we would also notice that, to him, the dialectic movement always involves the self-movement of all living matters in the process of "the bifurcation of the simple," the "doubling," "self-othering" and "becoming-other" through pure negativity. The living matters constitute the process of the doubling and self-othering movement of the ideas. For Hegel, the negative is the potential that refutes and transforms the temporary positing of the "one," and the constant splitting of the "one" would materialize into "another" while this "other" will constitute the formation of the self. The *actual* here then means the movement itself, and then is also the Subject and the Essence of the living being (Hegel, 1977 [1807]: 10–14).

This concept of "one constantly splitting into two" and the permanent movement of materialist dialectic were reverberated by Mao in his essay on contradiction in 1937 and elaborated by the Chinese Marxist philosopher Yang Xianzhen 楊獻珍 in 1963 through his reading of classical Chinese dialectic thought. But, the case of Yang Xianzhen in 1963–1964 in relation to the debate of "one-divides-into-two" demonstrated one of the crudest examples of irony in the hypostatization of the dialectic movement into fixated oppositional political persecution in the name of class struggle.

Yang Xianzhen had long criticized the dominant discourse of the Chinese Communist Party's practice of the USSR's model of "single economic basis" (*danyi jingji jichu* 單一經濟基礎) which was especially advocated by another Marxist philosopher, Ai Siqu 艾思奇. Following Stalin's policy, Ai Siqu's theoretical formulation of the "single economic basis" specified that the political regime belongs to the dictatorship of the working class, and the economic base for the state can only be the working class. It is also the guiding principle for the people's commune. Ai Siqu insisted that it is unacceptable to have both the working class and its opponents serve as the colligated economic bases. According to Ai and other CCP cadres, the PRC had come to the stage that there should not be the co-existence of different economic forms at the same time, and all the economic forms such as the capitalist, the individual farmers, land owners, and petit bourgeoisies should be obliterated. For Ai Siqu, it is a struggle between the rising socialist classes against the declining capitalist economic structure and this struggle is a matter of life and death (Ai, 1983 [1955]: 295–305).

Yang Xianzhen, however, objected to Ai's and party cadres' totalizing project. He proposed the theory of "colligated economic basis" (*zonghe jingji jichu*

綜合經濟基礎) in 1953–1955 and argued that there are necessarily diverse economic components in contemporary society with different economic forms co-existing in society that were developed through the gradual processes of history. He insisted that it is not right to eliminate or even to erase the other forms of production because the concrete conditions of contemporary society do not present themselves in this way (Xiao, 2006: 21–38).

Yang's criticism of the "Great Leap Forward" in 1958 also voiced his disagreement with the CCP's unconditional acceptance of the USSR economic policies of nationwide rapid communalization and the prioritization of heavy industry. Based on his investigation of contemporary social conditions of production systems, he questioned the party's ideational decision to switch from one economic stage to a different economic stage without concretely consulting local conditions. Yang visited several rural villages and observed the party cadre's ignorance of the practical reality that the damage the Great Leap Forward had brought to the farmland, and the false information about food production that were prevailing throughout the country. Yang also severely criticized the practice of formal equality, depriving private properties of all members and mistaking "equalization" (*pinjunzhuyi* 平均主義) as communism, as "idealist" (*weixinzhuyi* 唯心主義) and a "violent fantasy" as suggested by Engels.⁵ Though in the beginning Mao and many other party members shared Yang's views and agreed that the Great Leap Forward was too drastic and rash and had to be modified, after the dramatic event of the meeting at Lushan Conference (*Lushan huiyi* 廬山會議) in 1959, however, the situation turned to far-left politics and revisionist views were denounced (see Li, 1993).

Furthermore, around the same time in 1959, the frictions between China and the USSR started to increase. Nikita Khrushchev openly chastised CCP's People's Commune during his visit to Poznan in Poland in July 1958. In the meeting on October 2, 1959, severe disputes were aroused between CCP and USSR representatives on issues related to the military tension that PRC caused respectively with Taiwan and with India at the Sino-Indian border. In the following year, Khrushchev withdrew around 1,400 Soviet experts and technicians from China, and more than 200 scientific projects were forced to be cancelled. Adding up the USSR's siding with India and Tibetan rebels against China in the Sino-Indian War, and the USSR's signing the Limited Test Ban Treaty with Britain and the United States, the PRC and USSR officially broke relations, and Mao organized a series of nine letters of criticism, from September 1963 to July 1964, to criticize every aspect of Khrushchev's leadership (Pantsov and Levine, 2015 [2007]: 493–495, 500–513).

Yang Xianzhen's idea of "two fusing into one" (合二而一), a notion he appropriated from a traditional Chinese philosopher Fang Yizhi 方以智 (1611–1671), together with ideas by Lao Zi 老子, to elaborate Mao's dialectic theory of "one divides into two," was utilized in this particular historical moment as a tool for the open debates against Soviet revisionism.⁶ Yang's usage of Fang Yizhi's phrase was an attempt to sinicize the Marxist concept of materialist dialectics through traditional Chinese dialectic thought. He suggested that Fang's notion of "two fusing into one" and "one divides into two" indicate the constant movement of continual

change and can explain exactly what Mao meant as materialist dialectics. For Yang, this typically Chinese dialectic notion of revolution explains the moments of revolving and transformation of all living matters explicated by Mao. Yang believed that the synthesis of the opposites is necessarily a moment in the dialectic, a moment between movement and stillness, and the moment to begin again, just as what Lenin and Mao had said about dialectics (Xiao, 2006: 9).

Yang's resort to the classical Chinese dialectic notion turned out to be the object of plotted debates during 1964 and 1965, with Yang's discourse as a public bait that paved the way to the anti-revisionist political campaign and was identified as the precursor of the Cultural Revolution. Yang's article on the "colligated economic basis" was also brought up again as the proof of his revisionist position (see Wang, 1999: 43–68; Jin, 2009: 26–28; Xiao, 2006; Yang, 1981; Hu, 2009: 56–86). He was crudely criticized, deposed from his position as the principal in the Communist Party School of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, and more than 150 intellectuals was involved in the case. Two years later, during the Cultural Revolution, all those who had written to support the concept of "two fuse into one" were labeled as rightist and revisionists, with a bourgeois mentality attempting to reconcile class contradictions and were brutally persecuted. Many people who were persecuted in the event committed suicide at the beginning of Cultural Revolution. Others were put into jail or exiled to remote farms for labor reform for many years. Yang was kept in jail for eight years. At the closure of the Cultural Revolution, in 1976, he was again sent for labor reform in Shaanxi for three more years because of his former association with Liu Shaoqi 劉少奇 (see Sun, 1997; Zuo, 2005).

"One divides into two" was transformed discursively from "the bifurcation of the simple" and the constant process of "becoming-other" to the antagonism against the external and internal enemies, particularly as an act of open confrontation against the USSR, and coincidentally materialized as an act of local liquidation and power reinforcement. The contemporaneous external as well as internal political power relations co-figured the logic of separation and exclusion.

The education of the purgation theory of "one divides into two" was so successful and widespread that, even 10 years later, Li Changmao 李長茂, a factory worker in Tianjin, wrote an article in 1974, still vehemently professing to obey the instruction of "one divides into two" taught by Chairman Mao, urging people to use the weapon of "one divides into two" to fiercely attack "the reactionary discourse of 'two fusing into one.'" For him, and most his contemporaries who were taught in schools how to think according to this logic from their childhood, the notion of "one divides into two" indicates the action to dig out the bourgeois class "hidden within the proletariat class," and to continuously exclude "the handful of class enemies" (一小撮階級敵人) in order to make the proletarian class "clean" and "solidified" and to strengthen the proletarian dictatorship (Li, 1971 [1970]: 29–33).

The randomly chosen example of this Tianjing worker's article on "one divides into two" served as the index of the affective effectivity of the hypostatization of the dialectic movement of ideological revolution and the philosophical debates

consequently turned out to be class struggle on reified ideological grounds. The production of a new social body, or the national body, is enacted through cleansing and digging out one part from the whole, through naming the people and the enemy of the people within the people. Physical humiliations and assaults were carried out in the name of the people. The partition between the left and the right, however, is literally the projection of the Cold War divide, the greater forces of opposite camps that tended to control and to stabilize the global situation. The internalized border and the duplication of the hypostatized opposition, “one divides into two”, is practiced as the policy for the statist stabilization. The formulation of the “sinification of Marxism” fused nation-state-party into one concept and made it even more difficult to detect the unevenness of social relations in the statist order.

The struggle between Confucianism and Legalism and its return

The movement of *Examining Legalist Theories and Censuring Confucianism* (*pin-fapiru* 評法批儒) that mobilized sustained philosophical debates on the *Struggle between Confucianism and Legalism* (*rufadouzheng* 儒法鬥爭) in 1973–1974 was another exemplary incident of the pathological development of the sinification of Marxism. This philosophical debate was heralded by the movement of *Criticize Lin & Criticize Confucius* (*pilinpikeong* 批林批孔) in which Lin Biao 林彪 was the real object of the purgation. Lin Biao’s winning of support within the Chinese Communist Party and his control of military leadership, especially Lin’s aggressive military move during the Damansky Island Incident (Zhenbao Island) in March 1969, irritated Mao. Lin’s criticizing the Cultural Revolution in the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in 1970 further offended Mao. The failure of Project 571, an armed uprising devised by Lin’s son Lin Liguang 林立果, intending to assassinate Mao, forced Lin’s family to flee China for the Soviet Union. Lin and his family died when their plane crashed over Mongolia on September 13, 1971. In 1973, Jiang Qing 江青 and the Gang of Four initiated the movement of *Criticize Lin & Criticize Confucius*, using the proof of the Confucius’s texts found in Lin’s house to confirm the rumor of Lin’s secret association with the Kuomintang, intending to extend the accusation of all Confucian bureaucrats, especially targeting Zhou Enlai 周恩來 as a “modern Confucian prime minister.” At this point, the philosophical debates turned out to be a historiography of allusions used to hunt down internal enemies (MacFarquhar and Schoenhals, 2009: 314–341; Pantsov and Levine, 2015 [2007]: 576–583; Torrill, 2011: 473–497).

The above scenario shows only the symptom of this event on the surface. What is more significant here is the paradoxical and complex reversal of the sinification of Marxism that we have witnessed in this case. The critique of the tradition of Confucian ideology was the position Chinese Marxists had held since the beginning of the Republic of China in the twentieth century because the political rulers after the fall of the imperial regime all were inclined to employ the discourse of reviving Confucianism through *fugu* (復古 returning to the past), *zun Kong* (尊孔 worshipping Confucius) and *dujing* (讀經 reading classics) in order to justify their

legitimacy in their autocratic rules. Obvious examples include Yuan Shikai 袁世凱 who proclaimed himself the Emperor of the Chinese Empire of the Republic era and restored the monarchy in 1914; the warlords who occupied different provinces through military forces during the period of the Northern Government (Beiyang Government 北洋政府) from 1912 to 1928; Chiang Kai-shek of the Nanjing Government who launched total militarization through the New Life Movement in 1934, and again started the Chinese Cultural Renaissance in the 1960s in Taiwan during the martial law period. Even the Japanese colonial rulers in the Manchuria government and in Taiwan also practiced the policies of *fugu*, *zunkong* and *dujing*. All these strategies of governmentality attested to the political function Confucian ideology held for the centralization and militarization of the ruling government to rationalize its legitimacy and its concentration of power.⁷

The discourse of the revival of Confucianism was actually started in the late Qing period, especially by Kang Youwei 康有為, when China was moving on the path toward building a new nation-state. Kang Youwei's advocacy of making Confucianism the national religion for the new China, eradicating all local temples, and building Confucius temples in every province and city so that people could worship Confucius as the sage king, was based on what he had learned from Western politics, that religion is essential for the governance of the state. Kang took up the interpretation of Confucius by Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (179–104 BC), a Confucian scholar in the Han Dynasty, in his interpretations of the *Gongyang Commentary* of the *Spring and Autumn Annals* (春秋公羊傳), and stressed that the newly founded Republic should establish a well-ordered hierarchical regime, a strong and centralized political authority, and a benevolent ruler whose legitimacy is ordained by the Mandate of Heaven (*tianming* 天命). He also suggested that the Republic should follow the teachings in the *Spring and Autumn Annals* to reinforce the proper dutiful relations between the monarch and his subjects, to achieve reconciliation between past and present sources of political legitimacy (*tongsantong* 通三統) in order to enhance the unity of cosmological and political order (*dayitong* 大一統). He even suggested that the way to reform China also should be modeled after ancient kings (先王), and that the Republic should take *Spring and Autumn Annals* as sacred scriptures and as the basis for the national constitution.

Dong Zhongshu's theories based on the *Gongyang Commentary* of the *Spring and Autumn Annals* prospered only briefly in the Han Dynasty and then was revived in late Qing Dynasty. Dong integrated the mystic cosmology, that is, the correspondence between heaven and mankind (*tianrenganying* 天人感應), into a Confucian ethical framework and emphasized the political implication in *Spring and Autumn Annals* so as to lay down rules for deciding the legitimacy of a monarch as well as the hierarchical subordination of the political system. The concepts of filial piety and loyalty were particularly emphasized, and a general norm of submissiveness in terms of adequate social order was also established. Dong also implemented a complicated penal system, appropriating Confucius' classics, to the effect that so-called Confucianism was actually a mixture of the school of Legalism at its core, Confucianism as the appearance and Legalism as the practice (*waire-neifa* 外儒內法).

The amalgamation of the Legalist practice with the Confucian ethical discourse, together with the patriarchal clan system, the imperial examination and the tribute system with neighboring countries, turned out to be the stabilizing technique of governmentality for the autocratic concentration of power and the smooth turnover of the Chinese dynasties. Such autocratic concentration of power and rigid hierarchical control exercised by the governments in the Republic of China in the name of the revival of Confucianism was severely criticized by Marxist thinkers of the time. Two examples will suffice.

Zhou Yutong (周予同 1898–1981) (2010 [1929]: 413–421), an important scholar of classical Confucian texts who was familiar with the Marxist method of historical analysis, insisted on differentiating the historical Confucius from the false image of the ideological Confucianism, and criticized the practice of *fugu* and *dijing* in the 1910s and 1920s as “zombie rising” (*jiangshi de chusui* 殭屍的出祟). Zhou (2010 [1934]: 227) insisted that the real Confucius was dead, but the false Confucius would reappear in accordance with the historical changes of Chinese economic institutions, political conditions and intellectual vicissitudes. Zhou spent 50 years researching Chinese classics. His major contribution was to historicize various texts of Confucianism in different dynasties and to analyze the economic and political contexts in order to explain the modes of discourse and their political implications. He pointed out that the *Book of Filial Piety* (*xiaojing* 孝經) was not written by Confucius, but composed by the scholars in the Han Dynasty 漢朝 (206 BC–AD 220) in order to promote obedience and loyalty for the sake of the unified empire. The concept of filial piety was in fact a technique, Zhou suggested, together with the feudal system and the patriarchal clan system in China, to govern and stabilize society (Zhou, 2010 [1936]: 338–340, 342–343). Zhou also teased out the controversies over Confucian classics in different versions in the ancient school and the modern school, as well as the political contestations between the Confucianism of the Song school and of the Han school. He explained that Dong Zhongshu’s *Gongyang Commentary of the Spring and Autumn Annals* was in fact a text of mysticism in the service of the authoritarian regime in Chinese history (Zhou, 2010 [1933]: 216–226; 2010 [1937]: 351; 2010 [1936]: 338–340, 342–343; Zhu, 1996 [1994]: 335).

Zhou’s scholastic analysis of the political economics of various discursive modes in Chinese history was based on the influence of socialist thoughts, Tolstoy, anarcho-syndicalism and Marxist writings that he encountered in the 1920s and 1930s. He joined the movement of Work-Study Mutual Aidism (工讀互助會), and was acquainted with other Chinese communist thinkers such as Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀, Li Dazhao 李大釗, Lu Xun 魯迅 and Mao Zedong.

Jian Bozan 翦伯贊 (1898–1968), a renowned Marxist historian, whose ancestors were of the Uighur tribe, was another example. In an article that he wrote in 1936 on the development of the idea of *fa* (law 法) in the early Qin Dynasty (秦朝 221–206 BC), Jian contended that the political agenda of the scholars of the Legalist, such as Yang Zhu 楊朱, Shen Buhai 申不害, Shen Dao 慎到, Shang Yang 商鞅 and Han Fei 韓非, were to reject the rule of man and to promote the rule of law. The primacy of the concept of law is equality. Even the emperor himself should follow the law

too. Only law could emancipate the plebeians from the hierarchical system. Jian also acknowledged the fact that law should be revised along the change of time in order to fit contemporary social structure and material conditions. No ancient law could be applied to modern time without revision. The law of the early Qin Dynasty was to assure the concept of *gong* (公), the common, and to prevent any form of privatization, that is, *si* (私 privatization) (Jian, 2008 [1936]: 426–448).

Jian also published an article in 1959, a survey of the history of land reform in Chinese history, and explained that Qin Shi Huang's 秦始皇 policy of ceasing the succession of inherited aristocratic titles and salaries was to stop the centralization of land and property so that the plebeians could farm their own land. The Well-field system (*jintianzhi* 井田制) realized by Wang Mang 王莽 (45 BC–AD 23) is another case of land reform based on the method of equal distribution. Likewise, Xun Yue 荀悅 (AD 148–209) in the Dong Han Dynasty proposed the policy to farm and not to possess the land (Jian, 2008 [1948]: 25–28).

In a series of writings that he wrote during 1950–1951, Jian (2008 [1950], 2008 [1951]) explored the question of the countless farmer uprisings in Chinese history and analyzed the causes of these uprisings to be the continual processes of land appropriation and concentration to the extent that the poor had no place to live at all. Jian's historical studies demonstrated a Marxian method of historical and materialist analysis. Through his works, we could see how the thinkers and plebeians in Chinese history carried out different models of political reforms in order to resist the authoritarian appropriation and concentration of power and land.

Following the route of Zhou's and Jian's sinification of Marxist theories in their historical studies, we can also find numerous volumes of publications, textbooks and even cartoons published during the movement of *Examining the School of Law and Censoring Confucianism*, targeting the critique against Confucianism and advocating the tradition of the school of Legalism. From the long list of examples which were included as the school of Legalism in the articles published during this period, we can easily see that these thinkers are the early socialists who proposed socialist visions and equalitarian policies in different historical and social conditions. Shang Yang 商鞅 of the fourth century BC, for example, insisted on the rule by law and the equality of everyone under the law (一刑無等級). Wang Mang 王莽, another excellent example in the first century BC, banned the slavery system and instituted the system of ownership of farmland according to the field-well-system, that is, if a family had fewer than eight members but had one well or larger property, it was required to distribute the excess to fellow clan members, neighbors or other members of the same village (男不盈八, 田不得過一井). Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元 (773–819), a member of the Yongzhen reformist movement (永貞革新) in the ninth century that proposed to reduce heavy taxation and to stop privatization of military powers, criticized the discourse of the Heavenly Mandate (天說), and promoted the self-governance of local government (郡縣論). Wang Anshi 王安石 (1021–1086), a socio-economic reformer in the eleventh century, opposed the concentration of land and broke up private monopolies and introduced some forms of government regulation and social welfare.

This long list of socialist thinkers could serve as a critical counter-discourse against the authoritarian ideology of Confucianism, or the autocratic practice of governmentality through the fusion of overt Confucianism and covert Legalism, in Chinese history. This list also points to a history of political reforms (*bianfa* 變法, literally, changing the law) against the authoritarian concentration of power. Such immanent political critiques were activated based on the idea of equality against the domineering hierarchical ideology of the ruling regimes. The studies of the struggle between Confucianism and Legalism in the 1970s, therefore, served as an index and pointed to a significant genealogy of the intellectual politics fighting for equality against the authoritarian domination and centralized power in different dynasties of Chinese history. This counter-discourse could offer us a different perspective on Chinese intellectual history other than the hierarchical and centralizing autocracy practiced in the history of China.

It is ironic, however, to see that Chinese communist tradition that picked up the genealogy of the critique against the authoritarian and hierarchical regime in the name of Confucianism made its perverse turn in the Cultural Revolution not only through destroying all Confucius temples, classical texts and monuments, but also by assuming an autocratic control that penetrated all levels of Chinese society. The dichotomization between Confucianism and Legalism is in fact a disavowal of the co-existence of Confucianism and Legalism in the technique of governmentality throughout Chinese history while at the same time assuming the autocratic position legitimated by the Legalist theories. The movement of *pilinpi* in 1973–1974 itself was a reified power struggle and involved the purging of more than 1,000 high officials close to Lin Biao, and even more persecutions of the scholars who refused to criticize Confucius. Zhou Yutong who criticized the *fugu* and *zunkong* practices of the Japanese colonial government and the Chinese republican government in the early twentieth century was cruelly persecuted in the case of Wu Han 吳晗 when Zhou refused to join the critique against Wu and was forced to dig Confucius's grave with his bare hands in Shandong 山東 in 1966. Zhou was tortured to blindness and paralysis and laid in bed for 13 years till his death in 1981. The Marxist historian Jian Bozan, like Yang Xianzhen and Zhou Yutong, was also persecuted during the cultural revolution and committed suicide with his wife in 1968.

Contemporary revivals of Confucianism in the last two decades in China is of course a reaction against the campaign in the Cultural Revolution which destroyed the Confucian tradition. But, this recurring discourse of Confucianism in China, reverberating the rationale used in several restorations of conservative political power in the twentieth century and resonating with the discourse of politico-economic expansion in the twenty-first century, appears to be a more paradoxical turn regarding the Chinese Marxists' socialist ideas of equality. Gan Yang's 甘陽 book *Tong San Tong* (*Bridging Three Traditions* 通三統) is a typical case of the contemporary attempt of the sinification of Marxism. Gan advocates the political order of the Grand Unification (*dayitong* 大一統) and the reconciliation between the past and present by "bridging the three traditions" (通三統) that he learned from Dong Zhongshu's discussion of *Gongyang Zhuan*. To Gan, the unification of the traditions of Confucianism, Mao Zedong and Deng

Xiaoping is the perfect solution to achieve the Grand Unification (Gan, 2007: 1–3). Following the same logic of Confucian political order as elaborated by Jiang and Gan, Jiang Shigong 強世功 explains in his book *China Hong Kong* (《中國香港》) that Hong Kong naturally and necessarily should be a tributary of China, which means that the central government should take up the responsibility to take care of the security and stability of Hong Kong, and Hong Kong should follow the dictate of the central government and offer its tribute in the form of obedience. In this way, there is no chance for Hong Kong to establish autonomously its own legislative procedure for the governance of its own local affairs (Jiang, 2010: 228). In Gan's agenda, we see clearly that it is based on the Confucian rhetoric of the Mandate of Heaven and the operation of the Grand Unification in the Confucian political ethics that a new model of the Chinese empire and a new politico-economic tribute system is discursively formulated. The center–periphery economic attachment system in the regional entrepreneurial partnership speaks just the same logic as that of the pre-modern Chinese tributary system. The pathological and paradoxical route of the sinification of Marxism, in its attempt to reject the colonial domination from the West and to develop Marxism with Chinese characteristics, in the spirit of economic development, has reached its pinnacle point.

Conclusion: materialist dialectic as immanent critique

In *Grundrisse*, Marx differentiated objectified labor from living labor. Living labor exists in time, alive, present only as the *living subject*, in which it exists as capacity, as possibility and creates values, whereas *objectified labor* is present in space as past labor, first as use-values and then exchange values. *Objectified labor* would then be incorporated into capital, and exchanged, invested and purchased as commodities (Marx, 1973: 271–272, 304–305). Based on this distinction of labor, Chakrabarty proposed the concept of two temporal processes to modify Marx's analysis of the logic of capital: History 1 as the universal and necessary movement of capital, a past “posited by capital” that lends itself to the reproduction of capitalist relationships, and History 2 as the histories that belong to capital's “life process,” affective histories of cultural-dwelling of peripheral societies, a history that continually erupts within capitalist history and interrupts the totalizing project of History 1. Chakrabarty especially focused on the daily life histories of the workers in India as his version of History 2 and argued that this local history is heterogeneous and could resist the overarching movement of capital (Chakrabarty, 2007: 64–66; see Max Ward's chapter in this volume).

From the processes of the sinification of Marxism in socialist China, however, we've seen how Marxist ideas were not only popularized but also objectified and reified as “use-value” and “exchange value” to trade in power as capital in the communist cadre ideocratic and bureaucratic system. The question here then is not only the fact that socialist China followed the logic of state-centric capitalism after the founding of the state in 1949, but how Marxist ideas were transformed into marketable commodities in socialist China (see the chapters by Postone and Harootunian in this volume).

The process of realization and even institutionalization of the objectified and reified Marxist ideas is what I've discussed in this chapter. The sinification of Marxism was in the beginning an act of living labor by many Chinese intellectuals in accordance with contemporary circumstances in order to engage with the present of the historical moment. But these Marxist ideas soon turned into exchangeable and purchasable commodities, fetishized and sanctified, circulated in society as in the market. Not only all students and their parents knew it, but also the workers in the factories and the farmers in the fields, all sharing the same value framework and helping stabilize the totalizing project of the centralized and hierarchical state. Textbooks for all levels of schools, popularized versions in the fashion of serial educational cartoons, pictorial illustrations for the editorial forum in the centralized newspapers, and projects of publications all demonstrated the successful realization of the total mobilization of the people through these "philosophical" ideas.

In our discussions of the two philosophical events of the sinification of Marxism in socialist China during the Cold War era, "one-divides-into-two" in 1963–1964 and "the struggle between Confucianism and Legalism" in 1973–1974, we see how Marxist "ideas" were invested and materialized through institutional subsystems and mechanisms of partitions, that is, disseminations among the people as well as the practice of liquidation of the enemies of the people. Mao's conceptualization of contradiction in 1937 presented dialectic subtleties, including the concept of the infinite splitting of all matters and constant movement of differentiation and integration, but his comment on "one divides into two" in 1957 was clearly fixated in the Cold War situation, finding clear antagonistic targets, displaceable according to different situations. The examples discussed in this chapter, such as Yang Xianzhen, Zhou Yutong and Jian Bozan, were Marxist scholars in Chinese history of the twentieth century, and could be viewed as real practices, with living labors, of the sinification of Marxism in local contexts. The fact that they were all persecuted to death before or during the Cultural Revolution, over-determined by and co-figured the path of historical development both locally and globally in the Cold War era, served as a witness of the pathological and paradoxical route of the sinification of Marxism that turned out to be the technique of border politics and internal suppression and exclusion.

Through looking into these two philosophical events as the anchorage points or markers of the time, we could see more clearly how these events converged complex political and discursive forces, both locally and globally, and moved on its dialectic and spiral turn. These local and subaltern histories in our studies, following the original efforts to decolonize and to provincialize Marxism, paradoxically served as a testimony for the dialectic and perverted route of internal colonization. The logic of "one divides into two" was extended to the effect that the symbiotic co-existence of Confucianism and Legalism in the technique of governmentality in Chinese history was dichotomized as two warring camps, utilizing the Legalist ideas in attacking the Confucian ideas, and erasing the real social traditions in pre-modern China. This dialectic turn from "one divides into two" to the "struggle between Confucianism and Legalism" informed us of the

real tricky contradictions of the sinification of Marxist ideas in the context of socialist China.

Notes

- 1 Mao explained that the Chinese socialist revolution had gone through different stages from anti-feudal land reform, the agricultural co-operation and socialist reconstruction of private industries, commerce and handicrafts, and the revolution on the ideological and political front in 1957: “The twenty-first article” of his “Sixty Points On Working Methods—A Draft Resolution from the Office of the Centre of the CPC” (Mao, 1999 [1958]: 349–351).
- 2 In May 1958, at the Second Session of the Eighth National Congress, the CPC initiated the “Great Leap Forward” movement. High targets were set for agricultural production. In August 1958, the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee convened an enlarged meeting at Beidaihe and decided that in 1958 the output of steel should reach 10.7 million tons, double the output in 1957. Also, a movement to mobilize the people’s commune spread throughout the entire country in the same year.
- 3 Mao’s essay (1966 [1937]: 274–312) “On the Question of Contradiction” was originally delivered as lectures at the Anti-Japanese Military and Political College in Yan’an in 1937. In recent years, long debates among Chinese scholarship have been devoted to the question whether Mao’s essay “On Contradiction” was actually a plagiarism of Ai Siqu or other Chinese Marxist intellectuals. Concerning this controversy, Nick Knight (2002: 419–445) accurately points out that whether the source of the idea is from Ai Siqu or Mao Zedong, they were all inspired by the translations of Marx and Lenin and the Marxist-Leninist textbooks that were abundant at that time. See also Pantsov and Levine (2015 [2007]).
- 4 *From Marx to Mao* (2008). Online at: www.marx2mao.com/ (accessed April 22, 2016).
- 5 Yang (1986 [1958]: 126–152, 1986 [1959a]: 184–195, 1986 [1959b]: 196–209, 1986 [1959c]: 210–214, 1986 [1959d]: 215–230, 1986 [1959e]: 231–253, 1986 [1961a]: 254–258, 1986 [1961b]: 259–327) criticized the drawbacks of the Great Leap Forward in 1958, including the general tendency of coxcombrity (*fukua* 浮誇), blind leadership (*xiazhihui* 瞎指揮) and idealist subjective dynamism (*huguan nengdong* 主觀能動). His article was the first one to criticize the Great Leap Forward.
- 6 Fang wrote in 1652 in his book *Dongxi Jun* (東西均) that “two moving into one and one moving into two. Separating and rejoining. Joining and departing. It is the moment of encounter and revolution at the same time.” For Fang, “Two fusing into one” is the same dialectic movement of “one divides into two,” intersected at the moment of “encounter” (交) and “revolution” (輪), the transitory moment between movement and stillness, tension and relaxation, masculinity and femininity (Fang, 2001 [1652]: 40, 57, 198).
- 7 The publication of *xiaojing*, *The Book of Filial Piety* (孝經), together with the propaganda of the Kominka Movement as *Huangmin fengong jing fu xiaojing* 皇民奉公經 附孝經 by the Japanese colonial government in Taiwan, encouraging the *subject of the emperor* to serve in the battlefield as fulfilling his duty of filial piety to the state, further exemplified how the concept of loyalty and filial piety could be merged in the disciplinary governance of the subjects of the modern state.