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# Contemporary Chinese Thought and the Question of Modernity

## The End of History?

Wang Hui

Translated by  
Rebecca E. Karl

The year 1989 was a historical watershed; nearly a century of socialist experimentation came to an end. Two worlds became one: a global-capitalist world. Although China's socialism did not collapse as did the Soviet Union's or Eastern Europe's, this was hardly a barrier to China's quickly joining the globalizing process in the arenas of the economy, production, and trade. Indeed, the Chinese government's continued support for socialism does not pose an obstacle to the following conclusion: In all of its behaviors, including economic, political, and cultural—even in government behavior—China has completely conformed to the dictates of capital and the activities of the market. If we aspire to understand Chinese intellectual and cultural life in the last decade of the twentieth century, we must understand the above transformations and their corresponding social manifestations.

Before moving into an analysis of contemporary Chinese thought, we must first explore several premises that bear an intimate relationship to the reflections of intellectual circles in the 1990s: First, the 1989 Tiananmen incident did not change the fundamental reform path China has followed since the end of the 1970s; to the contrary, under state direction, the pace of the reforms has been faster than even the highest tide of reformism in the 1980s (by reforms, I refer primarily to the adaptation to marketization and to the process of economic and judicial structural reforms). Commercialization and its attendant consumption have thoroughly penetrated every aspect of social life. In this context, not only have the social role and the profession of intellectuals profoundly changed but so have the social and economic roles of the government at every level—by daily becoming more intimately related to capital.

Second, in the 1990s, Chinese intellectual voices do not all emanate from China; rather, they also come from abroad. The 1989 Tiananmen incident precipitated a large westward outflow of establishment intellectuals; in addition, many scholars and others left for different reasons and then either stayed abroad or chose to live in exile. At the same time, a number of those who studied in Europe, the United States, and Japan under the late-1970s state policies on study abroad have now received their degrees. Of those, there are some who are employed abroad and

some who have returned to China. From the perspective of intellectual subjectivity, these two generations of Chinese intellectuals have undergone different experiences, but both have had the opportunity to fundamentally understand Western society and intellectual trends. They have brought their observations on Western society to bear on their analyses of Chinese questions, thus opening up a different perspective on China from that of those who stayed at home. From the perspective of learning systems, contemporary education and research in China have gradually become structurally transnational, that is, the production of knowledge and research activities have been incorporated into the globalizing process.

Third, after 1989, intellectuals in China could not help but rethink their historical experiences. Under pressure from the harsh environment and through their own choices, a large majority of intellectuals engaged in the humanities and social sciences gave up their 1980s New Enlightenment style, and after discussing the problem of intellectual work and taking up increasingly specialized research, they clearly turned to a more professional style. Initially, they used Weberian theories of research professionalization to justify this turn; this can be understood as a method of self-adjustment under the harsh conditions after 1989. Almost simultaneously, and especially after 1992, the process of marketization accelerated the tendency toward social stratification. This tendency seemingly was in accord with the internal professionalization of research; the progress of professionalization and institutionalization of intellectual life gradually effected a fundamental change in the role of the intellectual. Basically, 1980s intellectuals were gradually transformed into experts, scholars, and professionals.

Of course, there are many other circumstances that could be listed here; however, in general, it is possible to say that the above three conditions produced a vastly different situation from the cultural space inhabited by 1980s intellectuals. Not only has this profoundly altered the relationship of intellectuals to the state but the homogeneity of intellectuals as a group no longer exists. Chinese intellectuals have responded to these transformations in various ways: Some have turned to traditional values; some, to the promotion of humanism; some, to self-conscious professionalism; and some have appealed to a sense of the intellectuals' mission. On the one hand, these different and contradictory efforts have allowed Chinese intellectuals to maintain their critical and moral condemnation of contemporary society; on the other hand, these very attitudes have become the basis for their own reorientation. Nineteen-eighties intellectuals saw themselves as cultural heroes and trendsetters; 1990s intellectuals are urgently seeking new ways of adapting. Facing a pervasive business culture, they have had to become painfully conscious of the fact that they no longer are contemporary cultural heroes or arbiters of value.

Contemporary Chinese society has entered a complex era, and the views of intellectuals as a group have become ambiguous. In modern history, the reflections of China's intellectuals have centered on how China can modernize and the reasons for its failure to modernize. In the 1980s, intellectual critiques focused on a reevaluation of Chinese socialism, which was denounced as antimodern in its very methods. In reality, though, the clarity of this thinking came from the clarification of social questions. For intellectuals, modernization was on the one hand a search for wealth and power along the path to the establishment of a modern nation-state; on the other hand, it was the process of reevaluating their society and tradition against the yardstick of Western society and its cultures and values. Therefore, the most accepted paradigms of contemporary Chinese discourse are located within the "China/West" and "tradition/modernity" binaries.

Yet, as China's modernization increasingly converges with global capitalism, the problems become much more complex. First, the cultural and ethical crises of contemporary society can no longer be attributed to manifestations of outmoded Chinese tradition (even as there are those who maintain that these crises are the result of the decline of Chinese tradition); many of the problems are produced by the process of modernization itself. Second, China's problems cannot be blamed on China's socialism, since economic reforms have already led to the formation of a domestic capitalist market and the private sector is already responsible for over half of the country's gross national product. Third, since the disintegration of the Soviet and Eastern European socialist systems, global capitalism has become the most significant development of the contemporary world; China's socialist reforms have already led to the complete incorporation of the country's economic and cultural processes into this global market. In this context, China's sociocultural problems—including the very behavior of the government—can no longer be analyzed from the position of a unitary China. In other words, in rethinking Chinese society, the usual targets of criticism can no longer explain contemporary difficulties. In the rhetoric of the historic rise of "Asian capitalism," tradition cannot be used as a self-evidently derogatory term; with the internationalization of production and trade in capitalism—the discourse of historic globalization—"nation" also is no longer a self-evident unit of analysis. (This does not imply that the contemporary world has succeeded in establishing a supranational political system. On the contrary, the internationalization of production and trade has been guaranteed by the old nation form. The problem is that the nation form is less and less able to adapt itself to the process of globalized production and culture. It is in this sense that the nation system and the ability of nations to control sociopolitics are facing profound transformation.) With the complete interpenetration of the activities of capital and social life, state behavior, state

power, and all state institutions have also been tightly linked to capital; thus, it is insufficient to use a simple state perspective on the problem. (This does not imply that state analyses are not significant or valuable.)<sup>1</sup>

So what are China's problems? What methods and language should be used to analyze them? The various theoretical stances of pluralism, relativism, and nihilism have eliminated the possibility of the resurrection of unitary parameters of value. Thus, the proponents of various alternative theories, the major characteristic of which is a critical edge, have begun to recognize in the course of their heated debates that the very idea of "critique" is gradually losing its vitality. It is thus necessary to first identify the premise of critique.

Contemporary Chinese intellectuals have abandoned their analysis of capital (including the complex relationship between political, economic, and cultural capital); they also have abandoned research into the interpenetration and mutually conflictual relations between the market, society, and the state. Instead, they have confined their gaze to the level of morality or to the ideological frameworks of modernization. This is an especially important development. Capital is penetrating to every corner of social and political life, and the processes of modernization are plunging all of us into multiple social crises such as the population explosion, environmental degradation, imbalances in the social-distribution system, corruption, and the associated political conditions that are inseparable from these issues. Yet the incredible fact is that the Chinese intellectual world avoids discussion of any of them.

Contemporary Chinese social and cultural problems are linked to the problem of Chinese modernity in a number of complex ways. Thus, my question is: If China's historical socialist experiment is the major characteristic of Chinese modernity, why have the New Enlightenment intellectuals who have borrowed Weber and other theorists to critique socialism not been logically led to a critical reflection on the question of modernity itself?

In the context of contemporary global change, Chinese reforms have on the one hand profoundly reorganized the basic structures of Chinese society. (The urgency with which intellectuals have proceeded to affirm themselves is itself a demonstration that they have moved from being central subjects of society and culture to being marginal. This alteration in the fixed positions of social classes is undoubtedly evidence that the social structure is being reorganized.) On the other hand, the Chinese reforms have also contributed in unknowable and unspecifiable ways to the developmental direction of global capitalism itself. (Debates on the uniqueness of the Chinese road have in the end only managed to address the question of whether or not there is a modern society in China that has become so by deviating from the historical model of capitalism. They have not

addressed the question of whether or not China's modernization process has significance for the very concept of modernization.) I think that the above are all profound questions and that they are now concealed by the obsession of contemporary intellectuals with morality. The questions themselves reveal the ambiguous historical reasons for the current state of contemporary thought.

### **Three Versions of Marxism as an Ideology of Modernization**

Prior to any discussion of the decline of critical discourse in contemporary Chinese thought, it is necessary first to understand the historical relationship between Chinese Marxism and modernization. Those Western scholars who rely on modernization theory to analyze Chinese history reduce the problem of Chinese modernization to a problem of scientific and technological development, that is, to the transformation of an agrarian economy into an urban industrial one.<sup>2</sup> Because modernization theory derives from the history of European capitalism and development, modernization has therefore often been understood as the process of becoming capitalist. Marxism, too, sees modernization as a mode of capitalist production. However, China's situation is different not only because China's modernization agenda was set by Marxists but because Marxism itself is an ideology of modernization; not only was the goal of the Chinese socialist movement modernization but the movement itself constitutes the main characteristic of Chinese modernity. Although the popular understanding of modernization in China focuses primarily on the process of transforming the state, the economy, the military, and science from a condition of backwardness to an advanced condition, this concept does not merely set technological goals, and it does not point only to the formation of the nation-state and a modern bureaucracy. Rather, it also includes a teleological historical perspective and worldview. It is a type of thinking through which China's social praxis is understood as a path to an ontological historical goal, which in turn fosters an attitude that links existential meaning to the historical period in which one finds oneself. As a result, socialist modernization is a concept that not only points to the difference between the socialist and capitalist systems but also implies a whole set of its own values.

Thus, the modernization in Chinese discourse and the modernization in modernization theory are different. This is because inherent within the Chinese concept of modernization are tendencies toward socialist ideological content and values. Mao Zedong believed in irreversible historical progress and used revolution and the methods of the Great Leap Forward to push Chinese society along the modernization path. He used the social-

ist system of public ownership to establish a prosperous and powerful modern nation-state while at the same time striving to eliminate the “three differences”—between workers and peasants, between town and country, and between mental and manual labor. Through the movement to nationalize the economy and particularly through the establishment of People’s Communes, Mao Zedong realized his goal of transforming peasant agriculture into the primary agent of national mobilization; he thus successfully subsumed society under state goals. Internally, this resolved the tax-collection problems that were a legacy of the late-Qing and Republican periods; resources for urban industrialization were now to be secured by exploiting the countryside, which was organized according to socialist principles. In this sense, public ownership in the countryside was premised on the inequality between the urban and the rural sectors.<sup>3</sup> The subsumption of society under the state enabled China’s backward society to coalesce into a united force to finish the unfinished task of nationalism. Mao Zedong often said that his socialist revolutionary project was the heir to and the development of Sun Zhongshan’s (Sun Yat-sen’s) national revolution; in reality, he saw his revolution as the final resolution to the whole first half century of China’s modernization and as its inevitable culmination.<sup>4</sup>

Mao’s socialism is both an ideology of modernization and a critique of Euro-American capitalist modernization. But this critique is not a critique of modernization itself. Quite the contrary—it is a standpoint based on a revolutionary ideology and nationalism that produced a critique of the capitalist form or stage of modernization. For this reason, on the level of values and history, Mao Zedong’s socialism is a type of modern anti-capitalist modernization theory. From the perspective of its impact on the state, Mao’s elimination of the “three differences” in actual social praxis eliminated the possibility of the existence of the autonomous categories of the individual and the state, from which arose an unprecedentedly hegemonic bureaucratic state.

This “antimodern theory of modernization” is a characteristic not just of Mao Zedong thought, however; it is one of the major characteristics of Chinese thought from the late Qing onward. The discourse on China’s search for modernity was shaped in the historical context of imperialist expansion and a crisis in capitalism. Thus, those intellectuals and state officials who promoted modernization in China could not help but consider how China’s modernization could avoid the multiple problems of Western capitalist modernity. Kang Youwei’s one-world utopia (*datong*), Zhang Taiyan’s egalitarianism, Sun Zhongshan’s principle of the people’s livelihood (*minsheng zhuyi*), and the various socialist critiques of capitalism all went hand in hand with programs and plans for the construction of a modern state, economy, military, and culture. It is even possible to say

that the basic characteristic of Chinese thought on modernity is doubt. As a result, at the heart of the search for Chinese modernity in Chinese thinking and in some of China's most important intellectuals stands a huge paradox.

Modern Chinese thought embodies a critique and a reconceptualization of modernity. Yet in the search for modernization, within this particular discourse there have arisen both profound ideas and antimodern social praxes and utopianisms: fear of a bureaucratic state, contempt for the formalization of legal structures, an emphasis on absolute egalitarianism, and so forth. Indeed, in China's historical context, modernization and the rejection of rationalization have proceeded together, and this has produced profound historical contradictions. For example, on the one hand, Mao Zedong centralized power to establish a modern state system; on the other hand, he launched the Cultural Revolution to destroy that system. On the one hand, he used People's Communes and collectives to promote China's economic development; on the other hand, he designed the social distribution system to avoid the severe social inequalities of capitalist modernization. On the one hand, he used the nationalization of the economy to subsume society under the state goal of modernization, in the process stripping individuals of all political autonomy; on the other hand, he was horrified and pained at the use of state mechanisms to suppress the autonomy of "the masses." In sum, inherent in China's socialist modernization experience is a historical antimodernity. This paradox has cultural roots, yet it is infinitely more important to search for an explanation in the dual-sided historical discourse from which Chinese modernization emerged (namely, the search for modernization and reflections on the devastating consequences of Western modernization).

The end of the Cultural Revolution marked the end of a Maoist socialism characterized by perpetual revolution and the critique of capitalism. In 1978, the socialist reform movement that has lasted to this day began. On the level of ideology, the criticism of Mao focused first on Mao's idealistic system of public ownership and his egalitarianism, both of which led to a decrease in efficiency, and second on Mao's dictatorial methods, which led to a political breakdown in the whole country. At the same time as the evaluation and the historical summing-up were proceeding, the Chinese socialist reforms, with improved efficiency as their central focus, were launched. They began with the disbanding of the agricultural communes and their replacement by the responsibility system in the countryside. Gradually, the responsibility and shareholding systems were extended into the urban industrial sectors. In addition, in the course of opening up, China's privatization process was gradually absorbed into the global capitalist market.<sup>5</sup> The contemporary reforms have abandoned Mao's idealistic modernization methods while continuing with the mod-



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that through  
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project of the  
modern period.

ernization goals; the socialist ideology of the contemporary reforms is a type of modernizationist, as well as a functionalist, Marxism. Different from Mao's modernization, the most important characteristics of the socialist reforms that China is now implementing are marketization in the economic arena and the convergence of the Chinese economy, society, and culture with the contemporary capitalist system. In contrast to Mao's socialism, contemporary socialism is a type of Marxism as an ideology of modernization, although it has already basically been stripped of the anti-modern character of Mao's socialism. The reformers are convinced that through economic development, China's socialist reforms have moved the country one more step toward completing the unfinished nationalist project of the modern period; at the same time, along with the development of science and technology, the transition to a capitalist commodity economy represents great historical progress. China's socialist reformers clearly consider that the policy to "allow some people to get rich first" is a contingent measure that bears neither on fundamental changes in the relations of production nor on the equal distribution of social resources. Yet in fact, in urban areas, the process of market reform and privatization that has redistributed social wealth (particularly state-owned assets) has not been carried out on the principle of a level playing field, where ownership is assigned to the original owner, but rather on a de facto basis that grants it to the last owner.<sup>6</sup> What is often neglected is that the pragmatism that focuses solely on efficiency has created the conditions for social inequality, and it also poses obstacles to political democratization. Had the redistribution of social wealth been implemented openly or with some degree of popular supervision, the extreme partitioning of national assets that is its characteristic could not have proceeded so unequally. Since 1978, there have been many debates about reform. The heart of these debates has not been the question of whether or not to modernize; rather, it has been the question of modernization methods. It is a struggle between Marxism as an antimodern ideology of modernization and Marxism as an ideology of modernization.

A third kind of Marxist modernization ideology is that of utopian socialism. By this, I mean what has been called "authentic socialism" by some Marxist intellectuals in the CCP. Its major characteristic is the use of humanism to reform Marxism. Such a "humanistic Marxism" was mobilized as a critique of Mao's antimodern ideology of modernization and could have become the theoretical foundation for the contemporary socialist reform movement. This trend was part of the "thought liberation movement" in China at the time. On the one hand, humanistic Marxism criticized Mao's disregard for the Marxian ideals of individual freedom and liberation, which was responsible for the cruelties of social dictatorship that arose under the aegis of "the democratic dictatorship of the peo-

ple.” On the other hand, it was in direct contradiction to socialist reform thinking. This contradiction can be said to be a conflict between utopian socialism and the pragmatism of mainstream socialist reformism. The core of China’s humanistic Marxism is Marx’s theory of alienation, as outlined in his *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*. The early Marx took this concept of alienation from Feuerbach and other Western humanist philosophers and used it to analyze the problem of labor in capitalist production. He pointed very specifically to the problem of the alienation of laborers in capitalist relations of production. Chinese humanist Marxists wrested this concept from the historical context in which Marx used it to critique capitalism and turned it into a tool for the critique of Mao’s socialism. This trend of thought specifically critiqued Mao’s theories of dictatorship as the historical legacies of tradition and feudalism; it also engaged the problem of alienation in socialism. However, Chinese humanist Marxists offered no critical reflection on the question of modernity itself.

Just as with the Western humanist attack on religion after the Enlightenment, China’s humanistic Marxist critique of Mao’s socialism has accelerated the “secularization” of society—the development of capitalist commodification. In certain contexts, Marx’s critique of Western capitalist modernization has been transformed into a type of Marxist ideology of modernization. Moreover, it has become an important part of contemporary Chinese New Enlightenment thinking. Thus, the major task of China’s humanistic Marxism has been to analyze and critique the historical experience of Mao’s antimodern modernization. Yet in the context of the capitalist opening in China’s socialist reforms, abstract theories of human freedom and individual liberation in the end have become the very definition of the values of modernity. In other words, humanistic Marxism itself has become a Marxist ideology of modernization. For this reason, it cannot possibly launch either an appropriate analysis or a critique of the multiple social crises that have resulted from modernization and the capitalist market. In a context in which the economic formation is increasingly dominating society, the type of socialism that primarily targets the socialist historical experience in its critique is already obsolete.<sup>7</sup>

### **Enlightenment As an Ideology of Modernization and Its Contemporary Formation**

The most dynamic intellectual current of the entire 1980s decade was the New Enlightenment Movement. Initially, it proceeded under the banner of humanistic Marxism, but after the Spiritual Pollution Campaign of the early 1980s that was aimed at humanistic Marxism, the New Enlighten-

ment Movement gradually was transformed into an intellectual movement with radical demands for social reform that increasingly took on an oppositional, antiorthodox, and antiestablishment pro-Western tendency. The New Enlightenment Movement is by no means unitary; its literary, philosophical, and political aspects have no direct relationship to one another. However, I wish to particularly point out that to regard China's New Enlightenment thought as simply an oppositional intellectual trend and China's New Enlightenment intellectuals as simply political dissidents, makes it impossible to explain the basic sequence and logic of Chinese thought in the new era. Despite the fact that the history of the New Enlightenment Movement is confusing and complex and that serious divisions had emerged by the end of the decade, nevertheless, in historical perspective, it is clear that China's New Enlightenment thought has served as the foundational ideology of the reforms. Indeed, the split between the New Enlightenment intellectuals and the state establishment emerged gradually from their intimate relationship to one another.

The intellectual fountainhead of New Enlightenment thought derives from Western (especially Western liberal) economics, political science, and legal theory. This was all posed in opposition to orthodox Marxist ideology and is directly attributable to the fact that the Chinese reforms articulated the process of commodification to global capitalism. In this respect, it is impossible to explain the split between New Enlightenment intellectuals and the state establishment simply as an opposition of civil society and the state. Quite the contrary, from an overall perspective, the efforts of the intellectuals and the state goals were completely compatible with one another. The active intellectuals in both the intellectual and cultural spheres in China in the 1980s (some of whom went into exile after 1989) occupied leading positions in state institutions, including universities. In the 1990s, some of them have become leading officials in the state's legislative bodies.<sup>8</sup> A more complicated aspect of the problem is that the process of reform has transformed not only society, it has transformed the state. It has created cracks in the internal structure of the state and deepened factionalism among the ruling elites. The apparent opposition of some intellectuals to the state in essence reflects these internal structural divisions. This complexity was concealed by the post-1989 political situation and the transformed position of exiled intellectuals. Actually, it is precisely this conscious or subconscious concealment of the internal divisions within the state and their complex relationship to the activities of New Enlightenment intellectuals that has already become a huge obstacle to the analysis of the 1980s Chinese intellectual situation overall.

The theoretical fountainhead of the Chinese New Enlightenment Movement was not socialism but early French Enlightenment thinking

and Anglo-American liberalism. Its critical stance toward Chinese socialism was subsumed under a critique of tradition and feudalism. Consciously or unconsciously, New Enlightenment thinking pursued Western capitalist modernity. In other words, the New Enlightenment critique of politics (and of the state) was couched in an allegorical critique of Chinese socialism as feudal tradition; it thus avoided discussing the modern content of this historical experience. The result of this allegorical strategy is that reflections on China's modernity (whose major characteristic is socialism) are subsumed under the tradition/modernity dichotomy, where modernity is completely reaffirmed. In the Thought Liberalization Movement of the 1980s, intellectual reflections on socialism were undertaken under the slogan of antifeudalism, thereby avoiding any discussion of how the difficulties of socialism were part of a "crisis of modernity."

In many respects, particularly in its desire to incorporate China into the global capitalist economic system, China's New Enlightenment has many points in common with the socialist reforms. Painting Mao's socialism as a relic of feudal tradition was not merely a tactic on the part of the New Enlightenment intellectuals, it was also a means of self-identification. It allowed them to identify themselves with the antichurch and antiaristocratic European bourgeois social movement. However, such a self-understanding obscures the fact that both the New Enlightenment Movement and Marxism, as ideologies of modernization, have many common values and common modes of historical understanding: belief in progress, belief in the promise of modernization, belief in nationalism as a historical teleology, and particularly, belief in the ideals of freedom, equality, and universal harmony. These latter ideals are linked to individual struggle and the existential significance of the individual—both hallmarks of the modern attitude that understands the present moment as the temporal transition to a better future.

China's New Enlightenment Movement, unlike Marxism, is by no means a coherent or unitary intellectual system. In reality, it is a far-flung and jumbled social trend that is constituted by various and sometimes incompatible elements. These elements were initially united by their shared critique of orthodox socialism, a unity forged in the process of their common support for the goals of "reform." Nevertheless, we can risk some generalizations about the basic features of this social trend because the mutually exclusive yet mutually linked trends of thought that constitute it take as their basic task the advocacy and establishment of a Chinese modernity. The core of their modernization project lies in their support for the establishment of autonomy and freedom in the economic, political, legal, and cultural spheres. In the economic sphere, through its condemnation of Mao's socialist planned economy, the New Enlightenment Movement reaffirmed the rightful position of the market economy and its

associated law of value in commodity exchange; it upheld the market (understood as the free market) and private ownership of property as elements in a universal modern economic mode; and it sought thereby to integrate the Chinese economy with the world capitalist market.<sup>9</sup> In the political sphere, it demanded the reestablishment of formal legal frameworks and a modern civilian bureaucracy; it also demanded the gradual establishment of human rights and a parliamentary system to limit the power of the rulers through the expansion of freedom of press and speech (this was understood as political freedom).<sup>10</sup> In the cultural sphere, some scholars have used the scientific spirit or scientism to adopt Western modernization as the yardstick for the reconstruction of world and Chinese history, thereby linking their critique of Mao's socialism to a total critique of Chinese feudal history and the social structure.<sup>11</sup> Other scholars, by contrast, have used philosophy and literary criticism to raise the question of subjectivity to call for personal freedom and liberation while trying to establish social norms and values based upon such freedoms (this was understood as individual freedom). In this context, subjectivity means both individual subjectivity and the subjectivity of the human species, where the former is counterposed to the dictatorial state and its ideology and the latter is counterposed to the natural world. Such a theory is suffused with the optimism of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European Enlightenment and is couched in the binary framework of subjectivity/objectivity.<sup>12</sup> It is worth noting that in the quest for individual autonomy and subjectivity, New Enlightenment thinkers have derived inspiration not only from Western Reformation thinking and classical philosophers (particularly Kant) but also from Nietzsche and Sartre. Yet in the Chinese appropriation of Nietzsche and Sartre, the latter's critique of modernity has been conspicuously ignored, and they are seen simply as representatives of individual autonomy opposed to a powerful state.<sup>13</sup> The internal conflict in Chinese New Enlightenment thinking is thus often reflected in a split between classical liberalism and radical individualism.

Regardless of how large the internal conflicts and contradictions within the New Enlightenment Movement are, and regardless of what degree of consciousness the proponents of the New Enlightenment Movement have about its social effects, Chinese New Enlightenment thinking is without a doubt the most influential of all ideologies of modernization, and it is the pioneering voice for contemporary Chinese capitalism. In the latter half of the 1980s, because of the real decrease in social controls, divisions with the New Enlightenment Movement gradually came to the surface. After the worldwide changes of 1989, the essential unity of China's New Enlightenment Movement could not be restored. Because the Chinese New Enlightenment Movement and the socialist reforms had many points in common, the conservative wing of the movement was

absorbed by the reform faction of the state to serve as technocrats or theorists of neoconservatism, the official ideology of modernization. The radical wing gradually re-formed into a political opposition, focusing on promoting the liberal idea of human rights and pushing for political reform in the direction of Western democracy. Culturally, the radical faction of the New Enlightenment Movement (here, “radical” indicates a cultural attitude toward tradition) began to become conscious of the possibility that the social goal of modernization could become (or could already be) a crisis in values, yet their apprehension of the crisis in modernity went beyond the antitraditionalism of the May Fourth Movement. They used Christian ethics to highlight crises in morality and belief in modern Chinese society.<sup>14</sup> With efficiency as the catchword, China’s modernization movement had indeed begun to face the twin issues of value and faith. The derivation of this question clearly came from the transmission into Chinese intellectual circles of Max Weber’s *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. The book’s most important message (for Chinese intellectuals) was: If the spirit of capitalism arises from the Protestant ethic, then the process of modernization in China must undertake some fundamental cultural transformations. In general, while the 1980s New Enlightenment intellectuals wholeheartedly believed in a Western-style path to modernization, their hopes were built upon an idealistic individualism or subjectivity and based on universalism. Yet the impulse to raise these questions from the perspective of Christianity indicated that China’s intellectuals were still enmeshed in a Eurocentric universalism, particularly in regard to the concept of abstract and universal man. The major thrust of New Enlightenment thought was thus established on the basis of this type of abstraction and universalism.

It was only in the course of the split in the movement that doubts about universalism cropped up. Its first manifestation was in the emergence of relativism. By this, I mean that some of the early New Enlightenment scholars resorted to traditional values, particularly to Confucianism, to question whether the Western model of development had any particular applicability to Chinese society and culture. This trend of thought had been strongly encouraged and inspired by the experiences of Japan and the so-called Four Small Asian Dragons—Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, and Hong Kong—whose successful modernization had been called a victory for “Confucian capitalism.” This concept of Confucian capitalism conceals the cultural and historical differences among the societies encompassed by it; for example, if Japan, Korea, Vietnam, and China all belong to the “Confucian cultural sphere,” why have their historical paths diverged so widely? In the articulation of Confucianism to capitalism, Confucianism is no longer regarded as an obstacle to modernization but rather as a key motivating factor for its realization. In other words, this

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realization.

nostalgia for Confucianism has nothing to do with traditionalism, nor is it a barrier to the cultural force of capitalism. Indeed, in the eyes of these scholars, Confucianism plays the same role as that assigned by Weber to Protestantism in the development of Western capitalist modernity. Clearly, Confucian capitalism is an ideology of modernization. In its rejection of Western values, Confucian capitalism enables exponents to embrace the capitalist mode of production and the global capitalist system—phenomena born of Western historical specificity—while adding a layer of cultural nationalism on top. In this context, Confucian capitalism and the contemporary Chinese socialist reforms are simply two sides of the same coin.

A derivative of Confucian capitalism is the theory put forth by some scholars that emphasizes the role played by lineage organizations and localism in Chinese economic life. These theorists argue that rural enterprises based on various types of social collectives are leading China along a unique path of modernization that is neither capitalist nor socialist.<sup>15</sup> To be sure, this theory of rural-enterprise-led modernization has an important empirical base, and these types of local and particularistic collective formations have indeed wrought economic miracles in many places. Yet revisionist Chinese New Enlightenment thinkers want to render rural industry as a unique model of modernization to avoid a theoretical discussion of the confrontation between capitalism and socialism and to find within the discourse of global capitalism a non-Western path to modernization. From 1993 to 1995, some Chinese social scientists undertook full-scale research programs and came up with surprising results. The basic questions these scholars asked were: After the dismantling of the People's Communes, did the peasants become autonomous and unorganized social actors? Is relying on the collective to reach prosperity the same as recollectivization? Is the private entrepreneurial economy tantamount to the beginning of privatization? In the wake of the development of a market economy, do there still exist organizational forms akin to the People's Communes' "three-in-one" structure? What changes have there been in these? Is there essential order or disorder in the articulation of various rural social organizations? What is the general characteristic of village social organization?

The researchers analyzed and described in detail the changing relations between the collective and the individual after the dismantling of the People's Communes, the relationship between individual peasant activities and socialized rural production, and the transformation of rural organizations and rural organizational networks. They mapped out the trends in rural social organization and localization, from which they derived the concept of "new collectivism." In their view, the organizational methods of new collectivism reflect the principles of competition in the modern mar-

ket economy and are entirely compatible with the current social system and its efforts toward shared prosperity. Moreover, as a continuation of the quintessence of traditional lineage culture, they reflect the essence of China's "collective society" and the unique characteristics of China's current path of social development.<sup>16</sup>

According to the theory of new collectivism, the modernization of China's rural areas (or at least, in some regions) is not proceeding toward privatization or a system of private property; rather, it is incorporating a completely new social consciousness that relates models to their organizational constitution, with "public ownership" and the goal of shared prosperity as the basis. This in fact rejects the absolute validity of American and European modernization models. The theories of social thought and historical experience that have been severely attacked and criticized in contemporary Chinese thought are vitiated and receive a different explanation in the theory of new collectivism. "New collectivism is a type of social consciousness; as such, it manifests itself in a cooperative spirit, a type of unity, a consciousness of social guarantees, and a type of perspective that sees the possibility of social ownership as dependent upon the larger 'family.'"<sup>17</sup> Theoretically, this type of expression is exceedingly simple. But the researchers hasten to use concrete examples and research to provide evidence for their theoretical conclusions; their goal is to reject the view that individualism is the sole cultural foundation of modernization and to mount a critique of the ideology of New Enlightenment thinking. According to its proponents, "The core concept of new collectivism is cooperation, and the cultural foundation of cooperative thinking derives from the extension of the lineage concept's 'pan-familialism.'"<sup>18</sup> The social organizations built on the cultural foundations of this type of "large-family" consciousness bear the traces of lineage culture. At the same time, however, even though China's village-level socialist experiments were widely condemned as "failures," contemporary rural organizations cannot help but bear the traces of this historical experience too. For this reason,

looking at it from the perspective of the actually existing conditions of rural society, the concept of new collectivism is related to decades of forced ideological education; it is also related therefore to several decades of the reliance of the individual on the administrative functions of the collective forged in the system of the People's Communes. Leaving aside the collective (nonlineage) functions peripheral to administration and looking at the relationship between individuals and the land as reflected in the collectives . . . there is little difference to speak of between the old collective concept and the new collectivism."<sup>19</sup>

Neither the theory of rural-enterprise-led modernization nor the concept of new collectivism has neglected the historical lessons of the era of



People's Communes, and their delineation of "collective" is rigorously differentiated from the collectivism of China's socialist period. The most important difference is in the emphasis given to "individual interests"; indeed, the "new collectives" are founded on the premise that they are the product of a voluntary cooperation among individuals based upon their individual interests. The collective and the individual are linked by shared interests and local-village conditions; the goal of cooperation is to adapt to the conditions of the market economy, and the new collectives are capable of attaining good economic results.

The emergence of the theory of rural-enterprise-led modernization and the theory of new collectivism has implications for theoretical and systemic innovations amid the historical conditions of global capitalism. The revived use of such concepts as "collective," "cooperation," "localism," "village conditions," and so forth, clearly emphasizes the problems of "equality" and "egalitarianism" in social production and distribution. Under new collectivism, Chinese peasants, seemingly through the revival of traditional forms, are for the first time moving out of their centuries-old isolation and rapidly developing rural industries. They have developed markets and promoted urbanization (not goaded by the state but created by the locality) and have become in the process an important motivator of and stable basis for the expansion of China's economic reforms to the urban industrial sector. This is the first time that the Chinese countryside has led in economic reform and has been the primary motive force for the nation's modernization.<sup>20</sup> Yet new collectivism and the theory of rural-enterprise-led modernization both have clear tendencies to generalize and create idealized conditions out of particular situations. Because these theories urgently wanted to promote "non-Western paths of modernization," they both suffer from the same problem as modernization theory itself, that is, they treat modernization as a neutral indicator of technology. They thereby evade a central problem, namely, the relationship between rural enterprises and the international and domestic capitalist market, as well as their relationship to the state goal of marketization. From the perspective of technology, both theories want to see in village enterprises a unique modernity in their mode of production and social organization, and they ignore the different modes of development such enterprises have taken in different regions of China and seriously overlook the environmental degradation and the neglect of labor protection that have come in the wake of their pursuit of efficiency first.<sup>21</sup>

Through its idealized description of and disregard for the serious internal contradictions in the production relations of rural industries, the theory of rural-enterprise-led modernization has selectively provided support for New Enlightenment thinking's critique of traditional social relations as well as for the idea that capitalist privatization is not necessarily

the only alternative to socialist public ownership. It has seemingly opened the possibility for a third road to modernization. Yet because this theory does not take into account the fact that China's economy is already a very active part of the global capitalist market and because it takes modernity as a neutral indicator of technology, it has been unable to make appropriate diagnoses about either modernity or modernization. We cannot help but ask, Have rural industries, for all their uniqueness as a social model, behaved in unique ways after joining the marketplace? The internal uniqueness of rural industries does have the understandable intellectual attraction of rejecting global capitalism's predictions; this can then be mobilized along with culture and other aspects to explain China's unique path to modernization. But the inventors of this theory have forgotten that the very uniqueness of this path (I am not denying the existence of uniqueness, just as I would never deny that China, Japan, the United States, and England are all unique in their own ways) is today made possible only because of its relation to global capitalism. There can be a "theory of modernization with Chinese characteristics" only where the notion of modernization is teleologically assumed. In the past several years of social development, the rural industries in many regions, including Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Guangdong, are going through profound transformations; one of these is their transformation into joint ventures. A new economic system is being forged in collaboration with multinationals. It remains to be seen whether rural industries are a transitional avenue to modernization or whether they constitute a new model of modernization. Moreover, I think that the rural industries that have led Chinese modernization have trodden a path that is quite different from the industrialization paths of Western and other countries. To use this, as does the theory of rural-industry-led modernization, as the basis for a critique of the Eurocentrist notion that there is only one model of modernization has great theoretical value and significance. But this theory still uses efficiency as its only yardstick; it is silent on the questions of whether the system of production and distribution in the rural enterprises promotes the expansion of economic democracy, whether their culture is conducive to political democratization, whether their mode of production can protect the environment, whether their organizational methods are conducive to political participation, and whether, in the context of global capitalism, they are capable of setting the systemic and ethical foundations of economic equality. In short, this theory has failed to identify targets of criticism in the economic and political processes of modern society.

New Enlightenment thinking has dominated and still dominates intellectual discourse in China. But in the rapidly changing historical context, what used to be China's most vigorous intellectual discourse has increasingly descended into equivocation; it has gradually lost not only its ability

to critique but also its ability to diagnose problems in contemporary Chinese society. It nevertheless has great historical significance because one of its critical targets—political dictatorship—still exists and because its initial intellectual vigor had huge liberating force. But China's New Enlightenment Movement now faces a fully capitalized society: The market economy is increasingly the dominant economic formation, and China's socialist economic reforms have already brought China completely into the global capitalist mode and relations of production. This process has created its own spokespeople. New Enlightenment intellectuals, as the definers of values, face a profound challenge. More important, New Enlightenment intellectuals, while deploring commodification, moral bankruptcy, and social disorder, cannot help admitting that they are in the middle of the very process of modernization that they have longed for.

As a cultural ideology and harbinger of China's modernization, New Enlightenment thinking can only be ineffectual now. The abstract concept of human subjectivity and the concept of man's freedom and liberation, which were useful in the critique of Mao's socialist experiment, lack vigor in the face of the social crises encountered in the process of capitalist marketization and modernization. Some have attributed the crisis to a "decline of the spirit of humanism."<sup>22</sup> They have gone back to Western and Chinese classical philosophy to seek moral norms and final answers; in the end, they reduce the problem to one of the moral foundation of selfhood. At this historical juncture, New Enlightenment thought has seemingly become an empty moral gesture (whereas formerly it so vehemently condemned moralism). It is unable to critically examine ubiquitous capitalist activities and actual economic relations; it also has lost its ability to diagnose and criticize the problems of a Chinese modernity that is already part and parcel of a global capitalist system. But what is this spirit of humanism, and how has it been lost, if it has? In the West, according to Habermas, the spiritual influence of the classics first disintegrated in French Enlightenment idealism. One major characteristic of modernity, by the same token, is the division of religious and metaphysical authority into three arenas: science, morality, and art. In other words, the collapse of the religious and metaphysical worldview was intimately linked with modern thought, particularly Enlightenment thought. Since that time, problems that were the legacy of the old worldview were reordered in a new structure of validities. These new validities can be seen as the problem of knowledge, the problem of truth, the problem of morals, and the problem of aesthetics. The wild hopes that Chinese New Enlightenment intellectuals harbored about this process of "reason"—that it would lead to the control of nature, to the formation and freedom of human subjectivity, to the progress of morality and justice, and to the happiness of human beings—are now being dashed by large doubts. I do

not think that China's problems are the same as the problems of the West, even though globalization is now impossible to avoid. The reason I write here of Western modernity is the following: If we wish to explore the loss of the humanistic spirit, we must first understand the historical relationship between this loss and the efforts of the New Enlightenment intellectuals during the modernization movement.

The recent discussions on the humanistic spirit began in 1994 and lasted for more than a year. There were many participants, but they did not even touch on the problem of explaining the collapse of the category "intellectual." If this so-called humanistic spirit is directly linked to the intellectual activity of the 1980s, how have the dramatic social changes since 1989 undermined this category? Changes in the social position of the intellectual in China include a higher degree of division of labor and a concomitant professionalism, increased stratification within corporations and enterprises, the technocratization of the state machinery, and changes in many of society's value perceptions. Intellectuals are not a homogeneous group; they are divided into experts, scholars, managers, and technocrats and are subjected to the same relentless process of stratification as everyone else in Chinese society.<sup>23</sup> The ascribing of the changes among intellectuals to a loss of spirit and their silence on the social conditions that lead to stratification can be attributed to the fact that New Enlightenment intellectuals have an extremely contradictory and equivocal attitude toward these social processes. China's "postmodernists" have exploited this ambiguity in their deployment of Western postmodernism as a tool for the critique of New Enlightenment thinking, even though China's postmodernism is more ambiguous than the latter.

Postmodernism in China has emerged under the influence of Western, and particularly U.S., postmodernism, but Chinese postmodernism's theoretical intentions and historical contents are very different from the West's. I consider Chinese postmodernism to be a supplement to the ideology of modernization, despite its theoretical ambiguity. The major sources for Chinese postmodernism are deconstruction, postcolonialism, and third-world theory. Yet Chinese postmodernism has never carried out a full-fledged historical analysis of Chinese modernity, nor have I ever seen one Chinese postmodernist's belief in the relationship between Chinese modernization and Western modernization undergo serious historical analysis. In the field of literature, the historical target of postmodern deconstruction and that of the New Enlightenment thinkers is the same, that is, China's modern revolution and its historical roots. But postmodernists sneer at the New Enlightenment concept of subjectivity without taking into account the historical context of this concept's emergence. They say that the New Enlightenment attitude is outmoded in a postmodern society dominated by the mass media and consumerism. In this

regard, postcolonialism can be seen as the cultural self-criticism of the West (particularly in the United States), a critique launched by peripheral cultures against the Eurocentricism of white people. It reveals the extent to which colonialism is implicated in culture and thought, and it also indicates the confused process through which colonized peoples used Western theories to resist their colonizers. In Chinese postmodernism, postcolonial theory is often synonymous with a discourse on nationalism, which reinforces the China/West paradigm. For example, there has not been a single Chinese postcolonial critique of Han centrism from the standpoint of peripheral culture. What is particularly amusing is that Chinese postmodernists turn the postmodernist critique of Eurocentricism on its head to argue for Chineseness and to search for the prospects for China repositioning itself at the center of the world. In this typical metanarrative of modernism (even though it proceeds under the banner of postmodernism), the vision of Chineseness says nothing about the relationship between this centrally located China and its own traditional culture, nor does it say anything about its relationship to modern Western history. Indeed, not surprisingly, the Chinese postmodernists' vision replicates that of the traditionalists.<sup>24</sup>

One of the most salient features of Chinese postmodernism is that in its treatment of popular culture, it misrepresents the production and reproduction of desire as peoples' "needs," and it interprets the marketized social mode as a neutral and ideology-free "new mode" (*xin zhuang-tai*).<sup>25</sup> In this type of analysis, there is neither differentiation between levels and aspects of popular culture, nor any attempt to undertake a hermeneutic and critical appraisal of the ideology of consumerism and commercialism. Rather, postmodernism appears as the champion of the people and popular culture and as the defender of their neutral desires and their "unmediated state." It is used to attack other intellectuals and as a legitimation of market ideology and consumerism. At the same time as it deconstructs all values, postmodernism jeers at the serious sociopolitical critical intent of the New Enlightenment intellectuals while ignoring the formative role of capitalist activity in modern life and neglecting consideration of the relationship between this capitalist activity and China's socialist reforms. In constantly pitting popular culture against official culture, the postmodernists fail to see that the complex relationship the two have developed through the mediation of capital is one of the main features of contemporary Chinese society and culture. Actually, the hopes of the postmodernists ride on commercialism: "'Marketization' means the weakening of anxieties over 'Othering' and the possibility for the confirmation of the self through national culture. . . . The result of marketization is the inevitable transcendence of the imbalance produced by the old metanarrative and the possibility that the shocks produced by these imbal-

ances and by cultural decline can be realigned. . . . It also offers the possibility of new choices, a new path towards self-confirmation through nationality and self-discovery.”<sup>26</sup> In the post-1989 Chinese context, the rise of consumerist culture is no longer merely an economic event, it is also a political event because the penetration of such culture into people’s daily lives is carrying out the task of the reproduction of hegemonic ideology. In this process, it is the interaction between popular and official culture that is the main feature of contemporary Chinese ideological hegemony, and what is being excluded and ridiculed is the critical ideology of elites. The academicism of some intellectual critiques conceals their cultural strategy of embracing popular culture (as the defender of neutral desire and the commercialization of culture) to effect a conquest of the cultural center stage. This is none other than the socialist market with Chinese characteristics. Some postmodernist critics have effectively participated in the establishment on the Chinese mainland of a unique market ideology.

In contemporary China, the responses to the above problems in intellectual circles is quite without vigor. Some Western-trained mainland Chinese scholars in conjunction with their mainland collaborators have been exploring new theoretical approaches to these problems. These young scholars have not necessarily found their own theoretical categories, and their understanding of modern Chinese conditions leaves something to be desired. Nevertheless, I think that their consciousness of these problems has poignant relevance and their mode of thinking has transcended to some extent the West/China binary that remains the focal point of New Enlightenment thought. Intimately linked to the end of the Cold War, their point of departure is that old concepts and categories born of the Cold War era are no longer sufficient to accommodate the realities of post-Cold War China or the world. A new world situation demands new theories. A number of them want to apply insights gained from “neoevolutionism,” analytical Marxism, and critical legal studies to China’s situation by building on the foundation of new systems and structures within China that then nourish their theoretical innovations.

So-called neoevolutionism seeks to transcend the traditional dichotomy of capitalism/socialism to introduce theories that can explain the institutional innovations, such as the rural enterprises, in the legacy of the socialist economic system. Analytical Marxism, a theory promoted by U.S. scholars such as John Roemer and Adam Przeworski, has been imported to China with the goal of rigorously explicating Marxist positions on the possibilities for the realization of the all-round liberation of human beings and the development of human society in current world conditions. Its core theory is that the historical emphasis of socialist ideals has promoted the expansion of mass economic democracy in opposition

The emergence  
of neo-Marxism  
in China is part  
of a trend toward  
the revival of  
Marxism in  
economics,  
sociology, and  
legal studies in  
U.S. universities.

to economic benefit for the few and as a way to prevent the monopolization of social resources by a political elite. Clearly, this theory stems from opposition to the large-scale privatization of state property that has already been completed in Russia and is well under way in China. Analytical Marxists believe that political democracy is necessary so that the few can be prevented from becoming the exclusive beneficiaries of privatization; if “capitalist democracy” is a compromise between capitalism and democracy, then socialism is synonymous with political and economic democracy. As for critical legal studies, its major theoretical contribution lies in its discovery that the basis of Western civil law since the end of the eighteenth century—that is, the concept of absolute property rights, or the exclusive right of disposal by the “final owner” of a property—has collapsed. In the Chinese context, the significance of this theory is once again connected to the expansion of economic democracy and restraint of the privatization movement. It seeks to transcend the private/public ownership dichotomy and to focus on “the separation and reconstitution of the cluster of powers over property” to expand economic democracy and to give priority to the right to life and freedom over the right to property in the constitution. In sum, Chinese scholars subscribing to neoevolutionism, analytical Marxism, and critical legal studies strive to transcend the either/or binary theoretical model and to highlight the interdependence of economic and political democracy as the guiding principle for institutional innovation.<sup>27</sup>

Whether one uses concepts from socialism or from capitalism is not important. The current situation in China does not easily lend itself to either. The main questions are whether the social problems China now faces will be confronted and whether careful analysis can be made of the concrete situation. The emergence of neo-Marxism in China is part of a trend toward the revival of Marxism in economics, sociology, and legal studies in U.S. universities. This can be seen as an example of “traveling theory” in the new conditions of globalization. However, a shortcoming of Chinese neo-Marxism, apart from its simplistic borrowing of Western theory not grounded in empirical study of Chinese history and contemporary reality, is its exclusive focus on the economy with little reference to culture.<sup>28</sup> If one can say that Chinese neo-Marxism has already brought the problem of economic democracy to attention, it has still not begun a discussion of the problem of cultural democracy. In the present market conditions, however, the possession of cultural capital is an important part of social activity. Control of cultural capital and of the media determines the general orientation of culture and mainstream ideology. For example, the most important arm of the media today is television; in addition to state control of the media, the production of TV series is becoming marketized. In the space between popular culture and state-controlled

programming, might we be able to offer as an internal systemic possibility the democratization of culture? Many Chinese intellectuals optimistically, but quite naively, assume that marketization will naturally lead to the resolution of the problem of social democracy in China. Today, when the interpenetration of popular culture and the media is already quite extensive and especially when cultural production is already completely linked to international and domestic capital, to abandon an analysis of cultural production and cultural capital is to completely miss the opportunity to understand the complexity of contemporary Chinese society and culture. Neo-Marxism focuses almost exclusively on economic democracy and rarely if ever touches on the problem of cultural democracy; this is to some extent a reflection of the lingering influence of China's goal-oriented modernization theory. In the present context, the complex interpenetration of the state machinery and the capitalist market means on the one hand that the state is completely involved in cultural production and on the other hand that cultural production is part of the activity of both capital and the market. Clearly, in the present circumstances, cultural production is part of social reproduction. Therefore, cultural studies must transcend the Marxist base/superstructure dichotomy to treat culture as an organic part of social production and consumption. In other words, for Chinese scholars, cultural criticism must be thoroughly integrated with political and economic analysis, and this integration must be sought in methodological practices. In this respect, there are few scholars who have developed systemic theories to deal with the problem, for this type of theory requires large amounts of empirical information and historical research, both of which are still lacking.

In the Chinese social context, discussions of economic democracy inevitably must involve discussions of the system of social distribution and production; as such, they cannot but include discussions of political democracy as well. Discussions of economic and cultural democracy can provide the substance for discussions of political democracy. Since 1989, there has been a clear decline in discourse on political democracy. This is not only because it remains a taboo topic, but also because in the post-Cold War context, political democracy is both the goal of social praxis and the topic of cultural reflection. The interpretation of political democracy is determined very much by culture; it also is influenced by the intimate relationship between politics and economics in the international sphere. Chinese capitalism (or should we call it socialism?) is unique; there is no way to separate the problems of political, economic, and cultural democracy. Indeed, in the 1990s, the question of democracy has new social content.

The debates on Chinese democracy have concentrated on how to guarantee individual autonomy and individual political participation. Chi-



nese intellectuals have approached the problem from two angles. The first uses economic liberalism. Privatization, the development of rural enterprises, and the presence of multinational corporations have made the Chinese economy unprecedentedly complex. Yet many scholars still believe that as a “natural process,” market activity alone is sufficient to lead to the emergence of democracy. They argue that because “the logic of the market is a free exchange of individual rights” and “the state represents the coercive implementation of public rights,” and because “the former is premised on the assertion and protection of individual freedom and rights, while the latter is founded on the result of public choice,” the development of the market itself constitutes a guarantee of individual freedom and rights.<sup>29</sup> In this discourse of economic liberalism, individual rights are guaranteed by the logic of the market, and even though the market and the state have a complicated relationship, the market nevertheless puts certain restrictions on the excessive expansion of state power. The state not only is seen as completely exterior to the market but is the direct antithesis of the individual.

The second angle proceeds along the lines of the discourses on civil society and the public sphere. More and more people have recognized that the market is not exterior to the state and that between the market and the state is “society.” As a middle force, society can maintain the balance of power between state and market. Under the influence of Habermas, many people have turned their attention to civil society and the public sphere. They believe that a Western-style civil society is emerging in China, or at least they call for its emergence as a defender of the civil rights and freedoms of the individual against the excessive interference of the state. But market reforms in China were initiated by a strong state from the very beginning; it is doubtful that a state-sponsored civil society could provide an effective counterbalance to the state in this state/civil society dichotomy.<sup>30</sup> For example, members of the political elite or their families directly participate in economic activity and have become agents for large corporations and industries. Can we call them representatives of civil society? In China, political and economic elites have been completely conflated, and they participate in international economic activity. The worst scandals in the economic sphere exposed thus far have all involved top-level bureaucrats and their dependents.

Other scholars have turned their attention to the sphere of cultural production. Several “civilian” or “independent” journals emerged after 1989. The first was *Xueren* [The scholar], followed by *Zhongguo shehui kexue jikan* [Chinese social science quarterly], *Yuandao* [Inquiry into the way], and *Gonggong luncong* [Public forum].<sup>31</sup> A number of semi-official publications such as *Zhanlue yu guanli* [Strategy and management] and *Dongfang* [The orient] also appeared.<sup>32</sup> In addition, state-owned China

Central Television (CCTV) began broadcasting the program *Dongfang shikong* [Oriental time and space], which was made by freelance producers. All this has changed the cultural scene considerably. But there are two things to be noted about these “unofficial” publications: First, they are published by state-owned publishing houses (in the absence of non-state publishing houses), and second, their legal status is quite ambiguous, since they have no proper ISBN identification. Significantly, they are usually more cautious about printing critical material than official publications because of their greater vulnerability and lack of systemic protection. Thus, the public sphere in China is not a mediating space between state and society; rather, it is the result of the penetration of society into a certain space in the state. *Dushu* [Reading] is a case in point. Generally seen as the standard-bearer of free thinking, this journal is by no means an unofficial publication; it is published by a state publishing house and administered by the Bureau of Journalism and Publications. It therefore has no real power to resist state intervention. *Dongfang shikong* is another case in point. To be sure, because of the participation of freelance producers, it is quite different from the monotonous and superficial state news programs in its use of imagery, language, presentation style, and content. Nevertheless, it is under strict state control and must fulfill the task of creating and promoting the state ideology.

After 1989, many scholars from the United States, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China have imported Habermas’s concept of civil society into China. In the West, civil society and the public sphere may indeed be intimately linked and may indeed function as the critical supervisor of the state, but in mainland China, the public sphere emerged before a mature civil society, and it exists very much within the state apparatus. Its existence in this position is facilitated on the one hand by the financial assistance offered by international and domestic financial aid and on the other hand by the needs of the state and the internal splits within the ruling elite. The position of the media in the social structure forcefully points to the vast differences between China’s public sphere and the public sphere in Europe, of which Habermas speaks. It is important to do more research into the complex relations between society and the state; it is also important to recognize that, within this complexity, neither the market nor society is a “natural” deterrent to state power. This highlights the fact that economic and cultural democracy are inseparable from political democracy; it also demonstrates that the hope that the market will somehow automatically lead to equity, justice, and democracy—whether internationally or domestically—is just another kind of utopianism.<sup>33</sup>

The decline of the New Enlightenment Movement marks the end of the most recent phase of Chinese thought. Yet, we can also say that this decline has come about because of the arrival of the modernization that

the New Enlightenment Movement pushed for. Its decline is its triumph. These two mutually conflicting yet mutually supportive aspects have produced a rationalization and a legitimization of China's modernization and have illuminated the path for a Chinese society facing global capitalist marketization reforms. In this era of multinational capitalism, the New Enlightenment Movement was able only to produce a critique internal to the nation-state and particular to state behavior. It was unable to turn its critique of state dictatorship toward a critique and an analysis of the changing relationship between state and society and the conditions of changing state behavior in a market economy. It also was unable to come to an understanding of the fact that China's problems are already deeply embroiled in world capitalism and that any diagnosis of those problems will have to come to terms with the steadily increasing problems produced by the globalization of capitalism. Finally, it was unable to recognize the futility of using the West as a yardstick in the critique of China.

The discourse of the Chinese New Enlightenment Movement is built upon the basic goal of the modernization of the nation-state, whose origins are in Europe and have by now become the global prescription of the capitalist process. New Enlightenment thinking has been unable to transcend these goals to formulate a critique of the problem of China's modernity in the era of global capitalism. In the wake of the decline of New Enlightenment thinking, what we see are its remnants; upon these ruins sits the capitalist market that crosses all national boundaries. Even the very dictatorial state behavior that was the primary target of New Enlightenment thinking has been constrained by this huge market. Thus, at the close of this century, there are those who have already announced an end to history.

### **Facing the Twenty-First Century: Critical Thoughts on the Era of Global Capitalism**

The two most important events of the end of the twentieth century are the collapse of Eastern European socialism and the reorientation of China toward capitalism through its "socialist reforms." They bring to a close the Cold War conflict between two opposing ideologies. Standing at this crossroads of history, there have been all sorts of prophecies about the twenty-first century: It will be the era of a new industrial revolution; it will be the century in which population and living-standard problems will be resolved; it will be the era of cultural and religious renaissance; it will be the Pacific era. Samuel P. Huntington of Harvard University in his 1993 essay "The Clash of Civilizations?" said that the major arena of conflict between peoples in the contemporary world is no longer ideology or economics, but rather civilization. In world affairs, the nation-state is still the

major actor, but the major conflict in global politics will occur between peoples and states from different civilizations. Conflict between civilizations will thus dominate world politics.<sup>34</sup>

I do not intend to discuss these predictions here (others have already touched on questions such as whether, in the context of world politics, it is possible for states to put cultural and civilizational values above economic and political interests). I simply want to raise a question. In the post-Cold War era, China and other (former) socialist countries have become an important, or even the most dynamic, component of the world capitalist market. Indeed, East Asia could be turning its accustomed peripheral position in the former world capitalist system into the economic center of the new world capitalist order. Under such circumstances, what are we to make of the internal contradictions of the capitalist mode of production in the twenty-first century? For example, in the course of marketization in China, what will the relationship be between state, private, and foreign capital? What will the relationship be between new classes and social groups? What of the relationship between peasants and urban populations? Between the developed coastal regions and the backward hinterland? All of these relationships must be placed within the context of capitalist relations of production and particularly in the context of their relationship to the market. The fundamental question is, How will changes in these relations impinge on Chinese society and the world capitalist market? In the era of multinational capitalism, do these “internal relations” matter any more? I am reminded here of the warning of that giant of liberal theory, Max Weber, who said that the rationality of modern capitalism would inevitably lead to a system in which some people rule over others; in this context, nothing, he said, would be able to root out faith in and hope for socialism. Is there still any relevance to these words, now that the global socialist movement seems to have ended in failure?

The problem is even more complex than that. As both a method and an embodiment of China’s modernization, Chinese socialism has led to an even harsher form of state domination over society and people than has ever existed under capitalism. Weber’s and Marx’s critiques of modernity were based on their observations and understandings of capitalism. Today, we must link our critique of the history of Chinese socialism to a critique of modernity and to the fact that the problem of modernity was first raised as a problem of European capitalism. The modern socialist movement was brought about by an analysis of the internal contradictions of capitalism and by the aspiration to overcome these contradictions, but the practice of socialism not only failed to complete the task of this aspiration, but it ended by being absorbed into global capitalism. At the same time, the self-criticism of capitalism derived from socialism opportunities for reform, to the point where today, it is impossible to carry out a critique of socialism or capitalism on the basis of the autonomous unit of the nation-state. In

this regard, because we are still at the stage where modernization is the historical goal, a rethinking of Chinese socialism, in both its past experience and as a current and future prediction, is imperative. Traditional socialism is not able to resolve the internal crisis of modernity, and both Marxism and New Enlightenment thinking, as ideologies of modernization, are devoid of force and unable to formulate appropriate approaches to contemporary world developments. It is here that the imperative to rethink the China question is located.

Chinese intellectuals are now engaged in discussions of the question of globalization. Most of them, however, understand globalization within the context of the Confucian ideal of universal harmony. In my opinion, this type of universalism is nothing more than another version of the century-long modernist dream of “meeting the world” (really, “meeting the West”). Some scholars regard globalization as a new world order, forgetting that this order has been long in the making; as a process set in motion by the rise of capitalism, it has already passed through several stages. Prior to the Industrial Revolution and the rise of commercialism (1500–1800), commercial capital occupied the Atlantic, turning parts of it into European peripheries (e.g., the Americas); during its classical period (1800–1945), Asia (excluding Japan), Africa, and Latin America came to occupy the periphery of Western capitalism and were integrated into the global division of labor through agriculture and mining industries. It was during this period that an industrial sector began to develop within each bourgeois nation-state and that national liberation movements simultaneously arose in the peripheral countries. The dominant ideology of these movements was their single-minded pursuit of modernization and the establishment of a wealthy and strong nation-state; they took “catching up” as synonymous with progress and equated industrialization with liberation. From the end of the Second World War until today, the peripheral states have undertaken industrialization under globally disadvantageous and unequal conditions. China, along with many other Asian, African, and Latin American countries, did indeed achieve political independence, yet in the process of the globalization of capitalism, the self-sufficiency of national industries collapsed. These countries all found themselves being reorganized into a unified world system of production and trade.<sup>35</sup>

Globalization cannot resolve the multiple social problems we now face. From the perspective of the development of the modern world, the globalization of production and trade has not produced new political and social institutions capable of transcending the new organizational forms of state and society within nation-states, nor has it been able to address the political and economic problems of the peripheral regions of Asia and Latin America. It has been even less able to bridge the so-called north-

south gap. It is also clear that globalization has weakened the nation-state, but it has not changed nation-states' political, economic, and military domination over their own societies. As for China, the interpenetration of and mutual conflict between international and state control of capital that has resulted from China's increasingly deep involvement in globalized production and trade has led to increased complexity in the domestic economy and to inevitable systemic corruption. (It should be recalled that in China, as in other third-world countries, those who control domestic capital are in fact the same as those who control political power.) This corruption has seeped into the political, economic, and moral spheres, giving rise to serious social inequities at every level. Even from the standpoint of pure efficiency, if institutional innovations are not able to stop the disintegration of society, such systemic corruption will constitute a major obstacle to economic development and will encourage a destructive consumerism that will rapidly drain national and social resources.

The upshot is: The teleology of modernization that has dominated Chinese thinking for the past century must now be challenged. We must reconsider our old familiar patterns of thought. Even though there is no one theory that can explain the complex and often mutually contradictory problems that we now face, it nevertheless behooves Chinese intellectuals to break their dependence on time-honored binary paradigms, such as China/West and tradition/modernity, and to reconsider China's search for modernity and its historical conditions by placing these questions in the context of globalization. This is an urgent theoretical problem. Socialist historical practice is part of the past; the future designs of global capitalism, by the same token, do not promise to overcome the crisis of modernity that Weber wrote about. The modern era, as a historical phase, continues. This provides the impetus for the continued existence and development of critical thought; it may prove for Chinese intellectuals to be a historic opportunity for theoretical and institutional innovation.

## Notes

The translator consulted a translation by Sylvia Chan of a shorter version of this essay.

1. For example, in the Sino-American debates and negotiations over human rights, it is important to analyze whether these are in the end to be understood as economic or political rights.

2. For example, see Gilbert Rozman, ed., *The Modernization of China* (in Chinese) (Nanjing: Jiangsu Renmin Chubanshe, 1988).

3. The problem of the urban-rural relationship and its position in China's modernization process through the 1950s is also related to the decision by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to abandon New Democracy and move

directly into socialism. On this question, see Jin Guantao and Liu Qingfeng, *Kaifangzhong de bianqian: Zailun Zhongguo shehui chaowending jiegou* [Changes in the course of opening: A further discussion of the superstable structure of Chinese society] (Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 1993), 411–60.

4. See Mao Zedong, “The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party,” in *Mao Zedong’s Selected Works* (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 1996), 610–50.

5. The significance of the post-1979 rural reforms must be understood in the historical context of the 1950s, when it seemed that the collective model seemingly could avoid the motivational problems of capitalism at the same time as it transformed a small peasant economy into a modern one. Yet, with no encouragement for mechanization, once collectivization reached a certain point, it led to a decrease in efficiency. (See Lin Yifu, *Zhidu, jishu yu Zhongguo nongye fazhan* [Systems and technology in China’s rural development] [Shanghai: Sanlian Shudian, 1992], 16–43.) More important still, according to Gao Shouxian,

[this situation] obstructed the expansion of employment opportunities outside the agricultural sector. Although the government made industrialization a primary goal, in the villages, they strenuously limited the opportunities for employment outside agriculture. Because the government . . . exerted unprecedented control over the countryside, these restrictions were particularly effective. In contrast to what had gone on previously, during collectivization the degree of individual freedom of choice not only did not increase, it contracted severely. This radically restricted the development of the rural economy.

In Gao’s opinion, the post-1979 rural reforms “offered a relatively free ‘structure of opportunity’ and gave local collectivities and individual peasants both autonomy and the freedom to experiment. In this way, they could more flexibly search for and find different paths to economic development and other employment opportunities” (Gao Shouxian, “Zhidu chuangxian yu Ming Qing yilai de nongcun jingji fazhan” [Institutional innovation and rural development since the Ming and Qing dynasties], *Dushu*, no. 194 [May 1995]: 123–29).

Philip Huang points out that the changes since the reforms are “not, as many people think, a dramatic breakthrough produced by free marketization and the high degree of rural family stimulation; rather they are the product of the diversification of the rural economy and of the redirection of excess rural labor power to nonagricultural employment.” He adds that

in China’s reforms of the 1980s, the most significant and enduring change in the rural sector is that in the wake of the rural economy’s diversification there is a growing overdensity of activity; it is not, as is popularly believed, the marketization of rural production. . . . After the introduction in the 1980s of the rural family responsibility system, agricultural production has stopped increasing; a very tiny number of peasants have become wealthy by following either the “static electricity” model or the mechanically predicted model of bureaucratic rhetoric. On average, the 1980s marketization of the rural sector is not performing any better in the production of commodities than it did in the six hundred years between 1350 and 1950, or even than it did in the thirty years of collectivization.

Huang continues: “For example, the problem of Sanjiaozhou Village on the Yangzi River has never been and is not now either the marketization or the collectivization of rural production; it is not socialism or capitalism; it is rather over-density and the necessity to continue developing” (Philip Huang, *The Peasant Family and Rural Development in the Yangzi Delta* [in Chinese] [Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1992]; 16–17).

6. See Su Wen, “Shanzhongshui fuying you lu: Qian Su Dong guojia zhuanqu guocheng zaipinglun” [There must be a way in this complicated landscape: A further discussion of perestroika in the former Soviet Union and the East], *Dongfang*, no. 1 (January 1996): 37–41.

7. Although the debates on Marxist humanism were not started by Zhou Yang, the report he gave at the conference in commemoration of the centennial of Marx’s death attracted a lot of criticism. The revised and edited version of his report was published in the 16 March 1983 *People’s Daily*, but the original text, distributed to the conference delegates, was confiscated. The report’s original title was “An Exploration of Several Theoretical Problems in Marxism.” The most trenchant criticism came from then party theorist Hu Qiaomu, who, in a speech to the Central Party School, took Zhou Yang’s and others’ perspectives on Marxism to task without naming them. His speech was first published in the Central Party School’s *Theory Monthly*, and it was followed by a pamphlet published under the title *On Humanism and Alienation* (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 1984). Actually, this issue had already attracted the attention of several theorists in 1978, and the People’s Publishing House had already put out an anthology in 1981 titled *Ren shi Makesizhuyi de chufadian: Renxing, rendaozhuyi wenti lunji* [Man is the starting point of Marxism: A collection of articles on human nature and humanism], which included essays by Wang Ruoshui, Li Pengcheng, and Gao Ertai, among others. It is worth noting that in those discussions, man and human nature were the bases of the debates on humanism.

*Deism* and *bestialism* (*shoudao zhuyi*) are the two terms most often used as opposites of *humanism*. The former indicates the tyranny of religion, and in Chinese discourse it is a metaphor for the Cultural Revolution’s “contemporary superstition”; the latter indicates feudal dictatorship or fascism, and in Chinese discourse it is a metaphor for the “complete dictatorship” of the Cultural Revolution. Perhaps because of the influence of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, Chinese Marxist humanism considers the rethinking of man to be the primary problem of Marxism; it points out that Stalin’s *Dialectical Materialism and Historical Materialism* paid insufficient attention to this problem. In addition, Chinese Marxist humanists point out that Lenin was not familiar with Marx’s *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* (which was published only in 1932). Wang Ruoshui’s essay “Man Is the Starting Point of Marxism” mentions that Mao in 1964 supported the concept of alienation and thought that it had made a comeback. This all makes clear that China’s Marxist humanism was launched as a critique of China’s socialist historical experience, on the one hand, using an allegorical strategy to subsume China’s socialism under feudalism and, on the other hand, deploying the concepts of humanism and alienation in popularized forms. Both these aspects conceal an affirmation of the values of modernity and particularly of the values of the New Enlightenment Movement. In this explanatory model, socialism was never an anticapitalist modernization formation; on the contrary, the socialist historical experience was a complete affirmation of the values of European modernity.



8. The history of the formation of the 1980s New Enlightenment Movement is exceedingly complex. One can probably point to a 1979 conference on theory, attended mostly by CCP theorists, as an origin. Previously, Nanjing University professor Hu Fuming had circulated a draft of the article “Practice Is the Sole Criterion of Truth,” which was revised by Sun Changjiang, Wang Qianghua, and Ma Peiwen and published in the 11 May 1978 *Guangming Daily*. This article provided the theoretical justification for the Thought Liberalization Movement. The revision and publication of the article were both supported by the then leaders of state. (For an account, see Hu Fuming, “Zhenli biao zhun dataolun de xuqu: Tan shijian biao zhun yiwen de xiezuo, zenggai he fabiao guocheng” [Prelude to the large debates on the criterion of truth: A discussion of writing, revising, and publication of the practice criterion essay], *Kaifang shidai* [Guangzhou], nos. 1–2 [1996]: 1–25.) From the memoirs of Li Chunguang and other protagonists in the event, it is clear that the Thought Liberalization Movement was closely tied to top-level leaders, even though a certain number of the protagonists have for various reasons gone abroad since 1989 or have become recluses. Others, however, have become top-level officials themselves (e.g., Wang Qishan, who is the vice director of the Chinese People’s Bank and the director of the China Development Bank). Even the Zouxiang Weilai (Toward the Future) Group is representative of this: Although a good number of them have gone abroad since 1989, there are still some in China who are in important posts. Beijing University professor Li Yining, who, in the 1980s, was for a time quite infamous for introducing Western economic thought into the classroom, is now a vice director in the legal department of the Chinese People’s Consultative Congress. In contrast to that group, there are also the literary and social-scientist groups, such as the early 1980s *Jintian* [Today] faction and the mid-1980s *Culture: China and the World* editorial board. These groups were basically apolitical. It is worth noting that even though *Jintian*’s representative voice, Bei Dao, was implicated in the then political Misty Poetry Movement, he is a strong supporter of literary autonomy. The *Culture: China and the World* group also did not get directly involved in political questions. Both groups’ relatively apolitical stances of course had political consequences, yet they also helped forge social spaces for autonomous intellectual activity and values.

9. Initial discussions of the law of value and of a commodity economy were conducted within the framework of a Marxist political economy. The most influential contributions were those of Sun Yefang. But recent scholarship has revealed that Gu Zhun first raised the issue and discussed it with Sun. These discussions of the law of value are representative of the major developments in Chinese thought in the 1980s. It was these rethinkings of basic categories of Marxism that served as the theoretical foundation for the implementation of the market reforms.

10. The calls for legal reform were connected to the reevaluations of the Cultural Revolution and were initially undertaken under the aegis of the popular post-Cultural Revolution proposition that “everyone is equal before the law,” put forward by the former chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress, Peng Zhen. But the theoretical foundations for these ideas derived from older and younger scholars.

11. Jin Guantao and Liu Qingfeng, *Xingsheng yu weiji* [Booms and crises] (Changsha: Hunan People’s Publishers, 1984) was the first book to argue that the structure of China’s feudal society was “superstable” in comparison to the dynamic structure of modern Western civilization. Underlying this thesis is the

question of why China did not succeed in achieving Western-style modernization. This thesis continues to inform their most recent book, *Kaifangzhong de bianqian* [Change in the course of opening up] (Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 1993).

12. The problem of subjectivity was first put forward by Li Zehou in his work on Kantian philosophy; he later published several essays on the question. See Li Zehou, *Pipan zhexue de pipan* [A critique of critical philosophy], rev. ed. (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 1984). This theory was made known to a wider audience through its enormous influence on Liu Zaifu. In “Lun wenxue de jutixing” [On subjectivity in literature] and other essays, Liu turned a metaphysical problem into the banner for a literary and thought movement. See Liu Zaifu, “Lun wenxue de jutixing,” parts 1 and 2, *Wenxue pinglun*, no. 6 (1985): 11–26; no. 1 (1986): 3–15.

13. Contemporary Chinese intellectuals’ understanding of Nietzsche is not nearly so profound as that of the early-twentieth-century Lu Xun. While today’s intellectuals take both Nietzsche and Sartre as representatives of individual autonomy, Lu Xun as early as 1907 noted the antimodern strain in Nietzsche and other thinkers of his time.

14. Liu Xiaofeng, *Chengjiu yu xiaoyao* [Salvation and leisure] (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Chubanshe, 1988) was the first book to raise this issue, around which there was much subsequent debate in the intellectual world. Liu himself has gradually moved from the study of German philosophy to the study of Christianity.

15. Gan Yang, “Xiangtu Zhongguo chongjian yu Zhongguo wenhua qian-jing” [The reconstruction of rural China and the prospects for Chinese culture], *Ershiyi shiji*, April 1993, 4, 7. For a critical view of Gan Yang, see Qin Hui, “Litu bu lixiang: Zhongguo xiandaihua de dute moshi?” [Leaving the land without leaving the village: Is this a unique Chinese model of modernization?], *Dongfang*, no. 1 (1994): 6–10. On rural industries, see Yang Mu, “Zhongguo xiangzhen qiji de qishi: Sanshige xiangzhen qiye diaocha de zonghe fenxi” [The miracle of China’s rural industries: A general analysis of investigations into thirty rural industries]; Wang Hansheng, “Gaige yilai zhongguo nongcun de gongyehua yu nongcun jingying goucheng de bianhua” [Transformations enabled by rural industrialization and village elites since the reforms in China]; and Sun Binglin, “Xiangzhen shetuan yu zhongguo jicheng shehui” [Village-level collectives and Chinese grassroots society], *Zhongguo shehui kexue jikan*, no. 9 (fall 1996): 5–17, 18–24, 25–36.

16. See Wang Ying, *Xin jitizhuyi: Xiangcun shehui de zaizhuzhi* [New collectivism: The reorganization of rural society] (Beijing: Jingji Guanli Chubanshe, 1996); and Wang Ying, She Xiaoye, and Sun Binglin, *Shehui zhongjiancheng: Gaige yu Zhongguo de shetuan zuzhi* [The middle stratas of society: Reform and China’s social organization] (Beijing: Zhongguo Fazhan Chubanshe, 1993). These books analyze Chinese society in detail after the reforms, particularly with reference to rural organization and industrialization. They are both extremely valuable for the study of contemporary Chinese development.

17. Wang, *Xin jitizhuyi*, 197.

18. *Ibid.*

19. Wang, *Xin jitizhuyi*, 198.

20. *Ibid.*, 204.

21. In Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Guangdong, and other regions, village enterprises have developed extremely successfully; however, according to research done by

Huang Ping and others under the aegis of the Institute of Sociology of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the formations and conditions of these enterprises have been undergoing great transformations since 1992. One particularly telling change is that many rural industries, including many successful ones, are beginning to link up with foreign investors and are being transformed into jointly owned industries. In 1990, I lived in the Shangluo District of the Shaanxi Province for the better part of a year; the rural industries in that region were very different from the ones just described. Because of limitations in culture, technology, and transportation, the industries in that region were not so successful. More important, those regions where rural industries are the most successful have not put in place any measures for the protection of the environment. The result has been severe environmental degradation. In 1992, I had the opportunity to go on a research trip to Daqiu Zhuang, Hebei Province, where rural industries and collectivized development are nationally famous. But obscured by the productivity and the prosperous lifestyle were serious instances of environmental pollution, the degradation of the environment around production sites, and serious illegalities. This all makes clear that concrete analysis needs to be done regarding rural industries. On changes in contemporary Chinese villages, see Guo Yuhua, Shi Ran, Wang Ying, and Huang Ping "Xiangtu Zhongguo de dangdai tujing" [Views on the contemporary Chinese countryside], *Dushu*, no. 10 (October 1996): 48–70.

22. Discussions on "the spirit of humanism" began in the magazine *Dushu* (Beijing) and later spread to many other journals. For the first mention of the subject, see Zhang Rulun, Wang Xiaoming, Zhu Xueqin, and Chen Sihe, "Renwen jingshen xunsilu zhiyi" [Looking for the spirit of humanism, part 1], *Dushu*, no. 3 (March 1994): 3–13. Later, *Dushu* (nos. 4–7 [1994]) published a series of responses sent by young scholars in Shanghai.

23. Li Tuo is now researching this problem of stratification. I am indebted to him for my understanding of this issue.

24. See Zhang Fa, Zhang Guwu, Wang Yiquan, "Cong 'xiandaixing' dao 'Zhonghua'xing" [From "modernism" to "Chineseness"], *Wenyi zhengming*, no. 2 (1994): 10–20.

25. The new mode is seen by some contemporary literary critics as a major feature of contemporary Chinese literature. It indicates an ideology-free, "pristine" condition.

26. Zhang, Zhang, and Wang, "Cong 'xiandaixing' dao 'Zhonghua'xing," 15.

27. See Cui Zhiyuan, "Zhidu chuangxin yu dierci sixiang jiefang" [Institutional innovation and the second liberation of thought], *Ershiyi shiji*, no. 8 (August 1994): 5–16. For a critical view, see Ji Weidong, "Dierci sixiang jiefang haishi wutuobang?" [A second liberation of thought or utopia?], *Ershiyi shiji*, no. 10 (October 1994): 4–10.

28. Cui Zhiyuan's treatment of contemporary China has precipitated a debate. For example, the major theoretical target of Su, "Shanzhongshui" (see note 6 above,) is Cui Zhiyuan's perspective on China's privatization process. This is because Cui's analysis is based on a comparison of the Chinese reforms with those of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Apparently, these debates about the Chinese reform path are premised not only on the Chinese reforms but also on the reforms in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. In the foreseeable future, the success or failure of the Soviet and Eastern European reforms will undoubtedly continue to influence Chinese discussions about reform.

29. Cf. Zhang Shuguang, "Geren quanli he guojia quanli" [Individual rights and state power], *Gonggong luncong*, no. 1 (1995).

30. Philip Huang, in his discussion of the mobilization of civil society/public sphere discourse among American China scholars, has pointed out that "in using the twin concepts of 'the bourgeois public sphere' and 'civil society' in China, often there is an opposition set up between the state and society. . . . I believe that this state/society dichotomy has been abstracted from modern Western history, and is not necessarily applicable to China" (Philip C. C. Huang, "Public Sphere/Civil Society in China? The Third Realm between State and Society," *Modern China* 2 [April 1993]: 216–40). Although Huang's discussion is specifically aimed at China's situation at an earlier juncture, I believe that it is also appropriate for a discussion of contemporary China.

31. *Xueren* is edited by Chen Pingyuan, Wang Shouchang, and Wang Hui. It is funded by the Japan International Academic Friendship Foundation and published by Jiangsu Wenyi Chubanshe. *Zhongguo shehui kexue jikan* is edited by Deng Zhenlai and registered in Hong Kong. *Yuandao* is edited by Chen Ming and was initially funded by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Press. When the latter organization encountered financial difficulty, the journal was picked up by Tuanjie Chubanshe. *Gonggong luncong* is edited by Liu Junning, Wang Yan, and He Weifang. It receives financial assistance from the Ford Foundation and is published by Sanlian Shudian.

32. *Zhanlue yu guanli* is edited by Qin Chaoying, with Yang Ping and Li Shulei as managing editors. It is run by the official Chinese Association for the Study of Strategy and Management. *Dongfang* is edited by Zhong Peizhang, with Zhu Zhengling as vice editor. It is run by the Chinese Association for the Study of Oriental Culture.

33. Under the influence of Eastern European and Euro-American scholars, Chinese scholars began discussing civil society in 1990. Invoking the society/state dichotomy, Western scholars have ascribed the rise of Poland's Solidarity Movement to the collapse of central state power in Eastern Europe as a consequence of the maturation of civil society. Scholars of modern Chinese history in the United States have been deeply influenced by Habermas's *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* and have used the concept of the public sphere to reexamine modern Chinese historical change, thereby producing a large number of valuable studies. However, in their discussions of civil society in contemporary China, there clearly persist idealistic dreams about the natural connection between marketization and democratization. While China's market reforms have clearly produced new social stratifications, it is unclear whether these new social stratifications can provide the motivating force for political democratization. I have already mentioned that in the course of the Chinese reforms, there has been a conflation of political and economic elites. Together with the intimate relationship between political corruption and marketization, this demonstrates that neither marketization nor new social strata can possibly guarantee the emergence of political democracy. More important, under the present conditions in China, it is impossible to separate the problem of democracy from the economy, and it is particularly inseparable from the question of social distribution. With respect to the discussions on civil society, the belief of many Chinese intellectuals that "opening" in and of itself will result in China drawing closer to the West, thereby resolving the problem of democracy, is false. The problem is that one of the biggest motive forces for political corruption in China today is linked to the integration of Chinese economic activity with international capital. This demon-

strates that the simplistic idea that opening will lead to democracy has no basis in reality. I bring this up not to reject a discussion of civil society and even less to suggest that China should move back into isolation; my intention is merely to point out that we must develop more complex paradigms for the study of contemporary Chinese social questions.

See Deng Zhenglai and Jin Yuejin, "Jiankou Zhongguo de shimin shehui" [Constructing Chinese civil society], *Zhongguo shehui kexue jikan*, no. 1 (1992): 58–68; Xia Weizhong, "Shimin shehui: Zhongguo jinqi nanyuan de meng" [Civil society: A dream not to be realized in the near future], *ibid.*, no. 5 (1995): 176–82; Arif Dirlik, "Xiandai Zhongguo de shimin shehui yu gonggong Rongjian" [Civil society and public sphere in modern China], *ibid.*, no. 4 (1994): 10–22; Xiao Gongqin, "Shimin shehui yu Zhongguo xiandaihua de sanzong zhang'ai" [Civil society and three barriers to China's modernization], *ibid.*, 183–88; Zhu Ying, "Guanyu Zhongguo shimin shehui de jidian shangque jijian" [Several contentious points concerning civil society in China], *ibid.*, no. 7 (1996): 108–14; Shi Zuehua, "Xiandaihua yu Zhongguo shemin shehui" [Modernization and Chinese civil society], *ibid.*, 115–20; and Lu Pinyue, "Zhongguo lishi jin Cheng yu shimin shehui zhi jian'gou" [China's historical process and the construction of civil society], *ibid.*, no. 8 (1996): 175–78.

34. Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* (1993): 1–20.

35. On the problem of globalization, see Wang Hui, "Zhixu haishi shixu?—A Ming yu ta dui quanqiuhua de kanfa" [Order or disorder?—Samir Amin and his view on globalization], *Dushu*, no. 7 (July 1985): 106–12.