The Radical Impulse Of The "Fatherless Sons" In Post-Mao China

Wang Yan

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THE RADICAL IMPULSE OF THE "FATHERLESS SONS"
IN POST-MAO CHINA

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THE RADICAL IMPULSE OF THE
"FATHERLESS SONS" IN POST-MAO
CHINA

A Psychoanalytical Study on the Intellectual Radicalism of China

BY

Wang Yan

A Thesis
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Abstract

Through a psychoanalysis of the trajectory of the ideological transformation from orthodox Marxism, Soviet communism model, and the latest New Left or New Right schools, this thesis reveals how the Chinese intellectual and political elite have responded to the historical changes and reacted to Chinese modernity.

In particular, this thesis demonstrates the ambivalent attitude of Chinese intellectuals toward the Westernization of the new enlightenment movement in the 1980s. The market economy had developed so fast in the 1990s that Chinese intelligentsia were brought into intellectual crisis and ideological polemics in the face of capitalist productions and globalization. Chinese intellectuals made their desperate effort to maintain the ideological coherence and intellectual totality; but they were doomed to be marginalized by the consumer culture and the fragmentary ideologies of the 1990s ultimately transformed Chinese intellectual elite into academic professionals.
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PREFACE

In the summer of 2000, when the author began taking courses in the Asian Studies program at Seton Hall University, he showed great interest in the intellectual history of China.

During the summer break of 2001 and the winter break of 2002, the author visited China and interviewed many scholars of Peking University with extensive discussions on modern and contemporary intellectual history of China. In particular, the intellectual movements and cultural polemics in China during the 1980s and 1990s extremely attracted the interest of the author, who, up to the final stage of his master's degree, adopted the social psychoanalytical theory into his research on the cultural radicalism of contemporary China.

The author wishes to thank Dr. Edwin P. Leung for his consistent support and genuine passion toward this study. As mentor of the author, Dr. Leung's professional knowledge and insight were of significant help to this research.

Sincere thanks is also extended to Dr. Shigeru Osuka, Dr. Deborah Brown and Dr. M.D. Jenny. Without their instructions and contributions, this study would not have been possible.
Chapter One: Introduction

During the late 1990s, a very interesting cultural phenomenon appeared in Chinese academia: the rise of the New Left, the New Right and postmodernism. Together with the rapid growth of a consumer-oriented economy and the relentless process of globalization, the official communist ideology was fading from people's minds and the capitalistic logic was penetrating into the Chinese society. At this very moment, Chinese intellectuals became interested once again in Marxism as what they had same eighty years ago in the May Fourth Movement. The New Left reflects a complete reversal from the objectives the Chinese intellectuals (the so-called new enlightenment intellectuals or xin chi meng zhu yi zhe) upheld in the 1980s. Only a few years after the Chinese government's crackdown on the liberal enlightenment protest launched by college students and liberal intellectuals, it seems that the Chinese intelligentsia changed their pursuits in the transformed social context of China and the world. Are they expressing their remorse toward the liberal enlightenment protests of the 1980s, or gesturing their obedience to the authority? It does not look so in either way. The Chinese government does not like the play "Che Guevara," produced by the New Left artists. It is about a story of the radical Cuban communist revolutionary, a play advocating revolution against capitalism. Furthermore, the communist government banned the magazine Zhong Liu (Mainstream) of the Old Left, a core governmental magazine of communist ideological propaganda during the Mao's Era. How should this intellectual diversion in China be interpreted? What are the driving forces repeatedly positioning the Chinese intellectuals in the
crossroad during the more than eighty years of modern Chinese history—they either choose to convert to communism at certain historical moment, or they reversed to negate communism at the other moment? An analysis of the trajectory of the Chinese communism, from its beginning in the early 1920s to its decline during the 1990s, provides an informative perspective on this question.

Since the iconoclastic culture movement—the New Culture Movement was launched by Chinese intellectuals in 1915, the entire Chinese history of thousands of years was identified to “feudalism,” backward, ignorant, inertial, brutal and superstitious, or in other words, the source of all evils. Chinese intellectuals insisted on breaking free from the tradition and constructing a new world. The patriarchal idols of Confucius and the benevolent rulers were knocked down; and the radical intellectuals embraced the modern values and way of life of the West. The Chinese communist movement was the collective devouring of the father—Chinese tradition—by the generation of the sons. With banner of high modern, the Chinese communists were confidently convinced that recurrence of the killing of the father and repression—the vicious dynastic cycle—would be ended for good. But the patriarchal despotic tradition was not brought to an end after the victory of Chinese communist revolution. The confrontational relation between the father and the sons returned, and the repression and castration resumed. It was during the 1990s when the tension between the father and the sons was diverted by the rapid growth of a consumer-oriented economy and the relentless process of globalization. The power-relations during the 1990s of China became diverse and complicated along with the process of capitalist production. The popular mass culture and consumerism blurred the frontline of the conflicts between the father and sons, and ideologies were also dissolved
by them. The destructive impulse of the sons was diverged and multi-dimensionalized toward both the past and future, the proletariats and capitalists, national sovereign and international capitals in face of the new order of the globalized and capitalized society of China.

In this thesis, three ideological and cultural phenomena are analyzed with the purpose of inventorying the cultural dimension of the project of Chinese modernity during the twentieth century: 1) Chinese communism as an iconoclastic ideology against Chinese tradition, 2) the new enlightenment movement as a romantic aspiration of Chinese intellectuals for Westernizing China; and 3) the rise of the New Left, New Right and postmodernism as a intellectual response toward the globalization and consumerism.
Chapter Two: The Era of the New Father

A historical perspective: The May Fourth and After

Throughout the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, China’s increasing contact with the West resulted in continuous intellectual changes and social transformations. Modernization of China became a major concern of the Chinese throughout the entire process of their construction of a modern nation state. The awareness of the Chinese people of the disparity between China and the West, and their effort to establish equality with the West are central to understanding the history of China’s modernization.

The Chinese intellectuals’ ambivalent attitude toward the Westernization of China is also important in further analysis of the intellectual movements of modern China. Specifically, how did the Chinese intellectuals redefine their Chinese identity within the Western-oriented intellectual framework? Some Chinese intellectuals saw in “communism the great equalizer between China and the West,” and some believed that the law of instrumental reason in market democracy would salvage China from its declining.

The influx of various Western ideas evoked the famous New Culture Movement between 1914 and 1920. This cultural movement, initiated by Chinese intelligentsia, is commonly called the Enlightenment movement. Similar to the European Enlightenment, Chinese intellectuals led an iconoclastic attack against all Chinese traditions, especially Confucian orthodoxy. Different scholars were influenced by different Western schools of
thought even though many such schools were contradictory to each other. Nevertheless, scholars stood in tight solidarity during the early stage of the movement because they found common ground in their iconoclastic attitudes toward China's past. The Western-oriented intellectuals identified traditional patriarchal despotism with "all-evil feudalism." They were determined to subvert "feudalism" through a revolution against traditional culture and ideas. The first obstacle they found in their way to a modern society was Confucian familial tradition. The vernacular revolution as a part of the New Culture Movement was directed at diminishing the status of the Confucian family, which was regarded as the backbone of Chinese society, as well as the use of classic language. Not long afterwards, however, the reform-minded intellectuals realized that it was difficult to find the sound basis in Chinese society for the ideas and philosophies of modernity, which had evolved through thousands of years of philosophical tradition. The enlightenment intellectuals also were confronted with political problems, such as warlordism and colonialism. With only a superficial knowledge of the complex and comprehensive Western theories of social science, Chinese intellectuals could not find effective theoretical means to cope with their frustrations with Chinese reality. More importantly, the intellectuals of the May Fourth era realized the insoluble incompatibility between the Western "universal" values and the Chinese "particular" situation. It was much harder but probably more productive to find a new alternative, which was beyond the project of modernity in the West on the one hand and applicable to the Chinese soil on the other.

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During this period, some superficial Marxist ideas were adopted by a number of radical intellectuals. They saw communism an alternative path for China to becoming a strong and modern state. Furthermore, Marxism was regarded by the Chinese as a new or a different social and political theory of modernity in the world, which was worth being explored in China in its pursuit of overtaking the developed countries of the West.

However, the revolutionaries found certain practical theories of violent revolution in Marxist pamphlets, especially in Lenin's works, which could be successfully adapted to Chinese conditions. Lenin's theory about Western imperialism provided Chinese intellectuals with a critical weapon against Western domination. Mao Zedong, the leader of communist China after 1949, recalled that he had showed his interest in "New Learning"—the Western learning in his youth but the Western imperialist aggressions woken up his and his fellowmen's illusional dream.² He annoyingly asked:

Curiously enough, why does teacher (the Western countries) always trespass his student (China)? The Chinese have learned a lot from the West but that knowledge has never worked through in China. Chinese's aspiration (for modernization) has never realized. The nation-wide republican revolution ultimately failed even though (the republicans) endeavored (with the ideals learned from the West).³

The success of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia gave some radical intellectuals optimism that "inferior" China could equal the "superior" West. Mao made up his mind to trail behind the Russians:

The Chinese found out Marxism by the way of the Russians' introduction.... The thunder of guns of the October Revolution sent the Marxism-Leninism to us.... Our conclusion is to trail behind the Russians.⁴

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³ Ibid., 1470.
⁴ Ibid., 1471.
Chinese intellectuals were concerned not only with the military presence of the Western imperialism but also with international economic infiltration into the domestic industry. Cao Yu, the left-wing novelist, published his famous novella “Spring Silkworm” (*chun can*) in 1932. It told a story about how Chinese silk men were brought into bankruptcy by the presence of foreign textile in their local market. The novella implied that the Chinese liberal intellectuals were, as a matter of fact, in complicity with the Western imperialism even though they advocated modernizing China in order to exclude the foreign encroachments. Mao Zedong was also aware of the penetration of international capital into China. In his essay “An analysis of the social classes of China” (*zhong guo she hui ge jie ji de fen xi*) published in 1925, Mao observed that the Chinese national capitalists were ambivalent toward the communist revolution. They supported the revolution because they were impinged by foreign capitals. Nevertheless, the national capitalists were afraid of revolution as the proletariats might appropriate their property. Mao quoted the opinion of Dai Jitao, a nationalist of his time in the same essay: “raise your left hand to strike the Western imperialism and your right hand to strike the Communism.” Mao Zedong demonstrated his distrust of bourgeois left. Actually, here we find that the radical intellectuals were acutely conscious of the double castrations by both traditional patriarchal father and Western imperialism. They rebelled against two sides. The Bolshevik Revolution broke out at the very moment and inspired the radical intellectuals with the cravings for violent revolution.

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6 Lowe, A.
The newborn Soviet Union helped to institutionalize communist ideas. The Marx's theories of political economy and his optimistic promise of Commonalty provided the Chinese communists with the legitimacy in their revolution. The nationalistic sentiment of the general public of China against the Western imperialism became the basic elements in mobilizing the masses into the revolution. The Marxist theories of modernity gradually gave way to the revolutionary practice.

Mao Zedong, one of the radical intellectuals, attributed the failure of the New Culture Movement to "lack of practice." "Mao always emphasized revolutionary practice and the support of practice-oriented knowledge." 

Marx's revolutionary ideal and Russian Bolshevik experience inspired Mao's enthusiasm for organizing peasant-based revolutions, even though he read very little about Marxist theories or Lenin's works. His revolutionary practices were basically "in conformity with the official Cominten-CCP line" during the late 1920s. After the consolidation of his control within the party by 1935, Mao came to explore the possible equivalence between China and the West in his theories of revolutionary practice: 

The attitudes of the various classes in China toward the national revolution are almost identical with the attitudes of the various classes in Western capitalist countries toward the socialist revolution...."

The modernistic ideology offered itself as a richly moral and symbolic heritage to the ideologically impoverished cyclical revolt of China. The republican revolution of 1911 and the communist revolution of the 1920s upheld the banner of modernization and the

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7 Ibid., 108.
8 Ibid., 107.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid., 109.
11 Ibid.
salvage of China from its backward feudalism. But behind the fascinating modern banner, 
the revolutions were very much driven by the rebellious impulse of thousands years—the 
destructive impulses or Thanatos in Freudian terminology—that is, a rebellious 
inclination against patriarchal despotism. The Qing Emperor, the father of the patriarchal 
despotism, was overthrown by the Republican Revolution of 1911 and the generation of 
sons fought for the power of the “killed father.” The sons were determined to terminate 
the dynastic cycle—to stop the collective killing and devouring of the father as well as 
father’s castrations of the sons. The project of modernity of the West, liberal democracy, 
and market economy became the new ideology of the sons. Even though the modern 
ideology was alien to the Chinese indigenous values, the intellectuals of the May Fourth 
era strove to implant it into Chinese soil and to incorporate it into the social contract 
among the brother clan of the sons, who were the usurpers of father’s authority over 
pleasure and reality. In face of the strife-torn age of warlordism, the intellectuals of the 
May Fourth era were divided. The liberal intellectuals such as Hu Shi sought for 
reconciliation with Chinese tradition and indigenous values in his advocacy of empirical 
approaches to Chinese problem during the polemic about “ism” and “problem” in Peking 
University. Instead of the metaphysical approaches to Chinese modernization in a 
confidence of universal values, Hu Shi became vaguely conscious of the possibly 
different alternatives of Chinese modernity with his emphasis on the continuation of 
Chinese past. However, the radical intellectuals remorselessly proposed to have a rupture 
from Chinese tradition—a collective devouring of the father—and replace the old 
tradition with a new and modern order. Lu Xun accused the Chinese history of four-
thousand-years of being a history of “devouring men” in his famous article The Diary of
a Madman (*kuangren riji*, May, 1918), and cried for “rescuing children.” It was a cry from the son of fearing castration and also a promotion of a revolt against the father. Li Dazhao and Mao Zedong were among the rebellious sons. At the same time, there were a few conservative intellectuals such as Liang Qichao and Liang Shumin who developed the sense of guilt about the betrayal of the father and sought for restoring the patriarchal despotism.

**Mao’s Era: The Generation of Sons**

Under the common banner of communism, the Soviet Union in 1935 assisted the CCP to seize a foothold in Yanan, in the northern part of China. Marxism and communism during the early stage of the Chinese communist movement served as a propagandist instrument to integrate and consolidate the rebellious powers against the warlord authorities and Western imperialism.

Only during the period in Yanan did Mao become interested in Marxist theory, but particularly the practice-oriented part that was relevant to his revolutionary operations and current politics.\(^\text{12}\) His important theoretical articles, including “On Practice”(*shi jian lun*), “On Contradiction”(*mao dun lun*), and “On New Democracy”(*lu xinminzhu zhuyi*) were released during this period and they formed the bedrock for the official ideology of the communist regime after 1949.

During the revolutionary period, Marxism and Marxist theories serve Mao and his party more as military tactics than as the ultimate objective for which they fought. When Mao wrote to Lin Biao during the Long March, he misused, from his little knowledge of Marxist theories, the binary oppositional concept of “subject” and “object” to refer to the
CCP against GMD despotism. What drove Mao and other communist revolutionaries to become involved in the communist revolution during the Chinese civil war was quite much the same the traditional Chinese impulse of rebellion against patriarchal despots evident in thousands of years of dynastic history. Mao showed his great interests in the theme of rebellion in his nationwide cultural and political campaign called the “Criticism of ‘Shui Hu’” (The Outlaws of Marge), a movement to reinterpret the political implications of the classical novel about rebellion of outlaws against the Song Dynasty. Mao was fascinated by the story of rebellion but was disappointed by the sad ending of the novel because the rebellious heroes, even after having won victory after victory, surrendered in the end to the sovereign of the Song Dynasty. Thus, Mao’s theory of revolution embraces remorseless rebellions until ultimate victory is won.

The Communist Party succeeded in the power struggle against its national antagonist, the GMD. It monopolized the entire power-structure of the nation and incorporated communist ideology into the state apparatus following the model of the Soviet Union. Mao’s intellectual orientation was optimism after the communists seized control of power. He insisted that the victory of 1949 was a confirmation of his linkage of Marxist theory to Chinese practice. But when one turns to the revolutionary history of the Chinese Communist Party led by Mao, one sees a series of wrangles between the CCP and the Soviet Union throughout the revolutionary period between 1927 and 1949. The reason for the disputes is that the CCP intended to unbridle itself from communist doctrines. The CCP reduced Marxist and Leninist theories to sheer terminology employed in its propaganda and effort to mobilize the masses. In Mao’s writings during the Yanan

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12 Ibid., 114.
13 Ibid.
period, he simply embellished his practical theory of Chinese revolution with Marxist and Leninist terminology. Marxist theory during this period actually served the function of identifying the CCP with the international communist movement. In other words, by means of its identification with Marxism, the CCP achieved legitimacy in its alliance with the Soviet Union. The antagonistic alliance between the GMD and the West was simply based on common interest resulting from the historical consequence of the entwining interactions between warlordism and colonialism during the darkest decades of the early twentieth century. But the elements in the alliance in the communist camp polished up their common pursuit of the Communist Commonality even though their alliance was much less ideological than they asserted. In fact, what bound them up together was their common interest in deploying their power according to the political geography of the world. The victory of the CCP was owed to the experience gaining in military and political operations during the strife-torn war years of China, and to the party's choice of a partnership with the Soviet Union. Mao claimed in his important article "On the Dictatorship of People's Democracy (lun renmin minzhu zhuanzheng):"

The unilateral relation with the Soviet Union, it is true. It was the forty-year-historical experience of Sun Yatson and the twenty-eight-revolutionary experience of the Chinese Communist Party that had taught us to follow the one-sided foreign policy toward the Soviet in order to achieve and consolidate our revolutionary victory. With the historical experience of the forty years and the twenty-eight years, the Chinese understood either to side with the Western imperialism or with the socialist camp without the third alternative or the midway. We go up against the reactionary KMT [GMD] who sides with the Western imperialism and against those who dream about the third alternative.\(^15\)

After winning control of political power, the CCP turned its attention to gaining equality with the West, which the Chinese had persistently wanted since the mid-

\(^{14}\) Ibid., 118.
nineteenth century. Economic, technological, and military modernization rose to the top of the agenda. Mao Zedong, in his article “The Question of Agricultural Cooperation” (guan yu nong ye he zuo hua wen ti), observed: “the economic conditions of our country being what they are, technical reform will take longer than social reform.” The reason for this, he attributed to China’s poor conditions, noting: “apart from other characteristics, China’s six hundred million people are, first of all, poor, and secondly, ‘blank.’” Mao was acutely aware that China could not develop quickly under the poor economic and technological conditions of the early 1950s. But with a mindset of optimistic utopian ambition, and in the manner of Marxist dialectics, he commented further about the “blankness” of China’s poor condition in the same essay entitled “Introducing a Co-operative” (jie shao he zuo hua yun dong) published in June 1958:

That may seem like a bad thing, but it is really a good thing. Poor people want change, want to do things, want revolution. A clean sheet or paper has no blotches and so the newest and most beautiful words can be written on it, the newest and most beautiful picture can be painted on it.

Instead of being patient with progressive development of economics and sophisticated technology, Mao sought an abrupt transition of China from its poor and weak condition to a prosperous and strong country with a recognized status in the world. His solution was to mobilize the poor and blank people under the leadership of the party in order to accelerate socialist construction of China. Mao believe that accelerated economic growth would be stimulated by the non-economic sector, and, therefore,

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16 Lowe, 137.
17 Ibid., 138.
18 Ibid.
approached the socialist construction of China in a manner of a voluntarist. He strengthened the communist state apparatus and official ideology as an alternative to accelerating the modern construction of China.

Mao had a sadistic impulse toward modernization. He did not tolerate any capitalist modes of production or anyone with bourgeois ideas, even though Marx admitted that capitalist production is efficient in accumulation of social resources. However, Mao, even though was obsessed with aspiration for China’s modernization, would not explore any application of capitalism. Similar to other Chinese intellectuals, Mao had an ambivalent attitude toward modernization, an attitude or desire analogous to Freudians’ Eros, marked by both love and sadism. But Mao was consciously aware that the capitalistic market could produce the material affluence on the one hand and the alienation of humanity on the other. He had the confidence in both human creativity by strong will of Chinese people and the command economy dictated by social elite in the pursuit of modernization of China.

In theory, Mao revised his concept of non-antagonistic socialist contradiction and made it antagonistic, which enabled him to justify his manipulation of power and the terror imposed on the masses in the process of mobilization. The contradiction between the productive forces and the relation of production became the principal problem above all other theoretical issues. The ensuing revolutions and the political liquidations were inspired on to resolve this contradiction. During Mao’s rule after 1949, Marxist-Leninist theories indeed were utilized by the communist ideological state apparatus to mobilize

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19 Ibid., 137.
20 Ibid.
the masses and reconstruct the social structures. In the end, theories were actually regarded by Mao as an effective means to overcome the material inadequacies of China.

In the mid-1950s, Mao partially rejected the Soviet model of administration that was incorporated into the Chinese government\(^{21}\) for the sake of involving more participation of the masses into social reconstruction and the restraint of corruption in the bureaucracy. But the outcome countered Mao’s will. Throughout the 1960s and the 1970s, communist ideology prevailed over the social life of the Chinese. Communist ideology became instrumental in disciplining and subjugating people. Relations between the center of power and society at-large became tense and soon turned to confrontation. The patriarchal despotic structure of power resumed in the 1970s. In the restoration and glorification of authority, Mao transsubstantiated and was deified. The deification of the son (Mao) beside the father (emperor) resulted in restoration and strengthening of the father-rule. The repression and castration returned; at the same time, the son, Mao Zedong, became a severe father. It seemed that the recurrence of suffering and repression was perpetuated in China. Thereafter, Mao’s death in 1976 was followed by a new recurrence of revolt by the fatherless sons. The culture and literature of the 1980s in China mirrored the collective unconscious of fatherless sons—the destructive impulse toward the immediate past—the communist or socialist legacy. The new generation of the Chinese leadership, who were survived from Mao’s political purges—the castration by the father—launched an iconoclastic attack on the idol of Mao and the Cultural Revolution. At the same time, they explored a new path, a dramatically different alternative from Mao’s, to the modernization of China, a dream of generations of the Chinese since the early nineteenth century. The leadership after Mao applied instrumental
reason to Chinese economy—market economy—in opposition of Mao’s moral-oriented economy. The new generation of bother-clan once again sought for a social contract among in order to avoid the vicious cycle—the legal and political reform. They found that they had detoured a large circle and came back again to road that the early New Culture Movement had advocated—Westernization and market democracy. In addition, in their emulation of the New Culture Movement, the fatherless sons of the 1980s signified the immediate past—the communist regime—a feudalistic dictatorship. They regretfully insisted that the history had mocked at the Chinese and China would have been a very strong nation only if China had continued the project of the New Culture Movement. But the new wave of the Westernization of China during the 1990s did not stop the recurrence of the sons’ uprising and the father’s castration. The new enlightenment movement of the 1980s turned a new page in Chinese modern history.

Chapter Three: The New Enlightenment and the Era of the Fatherless sons

Ideological Revolt: Anti-Maoism

As early as in September of 1975 when Mao Zedong was still alive and in power, Deng Xiaoping, the later paramount leader of China in the post-Mao era, expressed his discontent with the Maoist doctrinism in the ideological propaganda and political practice of China. In a national conference on agricultural industry, he pointed out that the thought of Mao Zedong should be comprehended as a complete system in its totality, which not only had emphasized on class struggle but also on modernization of China. He implied the possible reinterpretation of Maoist doctrines and the potential pragmatic politics in future China.

Mao expelled Deng Xiaoping from Politburo after the mass unrest of the April Fifth Movement and accused Deng of being the "black-hand" behind the manipulation of the rebellious protest. It was not until long after Mao’s death in 1976 that Hua Guofeng, the legitimate successor of Mao, arrested Mao’s widow and reappointed Deng Xiaoping to the high positions of Chinese leadership. Deng, immediately after returning back to

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power, raised the issues of reinterpretation of Maoism and Marxism-Leninism, and that of modernization of China.

Hua Guofeng explored a political midline between Maoism and the pragmatism of the “Old Revolutionaries” led by Deng. He endeavored to continue the dogmatic Maoism—the so-called “Two Everys” (liangge fanshi), i.e. every decision made by Mao Zedong shall be defended without compromising, and every Mao’s instruction shall be followed faithfully\(^2\) on the one hand, and promoted the modernization project on the other. The continuation of Maoism would secure Hua’s power as the chosen successor of Mao, and the modernization would have the nation saved from bankruptcy. However, Deng and his “Old Comrades” were seeking for a rupture from Maoism and the Cultural Revolution. They lodged a vehement attack on Hua’s “Two Everys” and called on a thorough reassessment of the consequences of the Cultural Revolution and the April Fifth Movement.

Theoretically, Deng and his comrades tried to dissolve the rigidly doctrinal Maoism by launching an ideological movement of “the Empirical Knowledge (or Practice) Is the Sole Criterion for Truth” (shi jian shi jian yan zheng li de wei yi biao zhuo) in 1977. Only a year after the death of Mao had the reassessment of the history of communist China after 1949, especially the history of the Cultural Revolution and the April Fifth Movement, become a burning problem at the top of the state agenda. Moreover, there was a gigantic momentum in the general public of China to repudiate their immediate past—the Mao era—and usher in a new epoch. But Hua, the new leader appointed by Mao, showed his filial obedience to Mao’s will and devotedly defended Mao’s heritage—Mao Zedong’s Thought. The consecration of Maoist orthodoxy overwhelmed the
potential subversion of Mao’s legacy—the collective rebellion of the sons. Deng
Xiaoping and his comrades encountered the strong resistance from the Maoists when they
tried to rehabilitate the former officials purged by Mao during the Cultural Revolution. In
1977, finding out a theoretical breakthrough in the empirical approaches to Maoist
document, Deng advocated that it was not through the doctrinal notions but through
practices (experiments) that one laid bare the truth and revealed the nature of the world.
He insisted that Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong’s Thought should be put to the test
of the social practices (the empirical knowledge), and only obtained their validity after
the experiments; that Mao Zedong constantly revised his ideas and abandoned his
improper concepts in response to changing historical context and his social practice; and
that the unity of theory and practice was always the fundamental principle of Marxism. 25
It was the first time in the post-Mao era that the Maoist orthodoxy was allowed to put to
the test of practice and to be questioned. The Thirteenth Conference of the Third Central
Committee of the Chinese Communist Party of 1978 institutionalized the empirical
notions of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong’s Thought in the party constitution and
the routines of Chinese government. This theoretical breakthrough made possible for
Deng’s reassessment of the Cultural Revolution and the April Fifth Movement, and
became afterward the bedrock of the pervasive ideology of pragmatism in the Deng era.
Similarly to Mao in the 1920s and 30s, Deng emphasized more on practices than
theoretical doctrines in the late 1970s and successfully relegated the Marxist and Maoist
theories to the strategic maneuver of power. Deng emulated Mao’s strategy of dissolving
theories by the flexible practices and pragmatic policies. The institutionalized ideology of

23 Ibid., note 18, 420.
24 Zhang Shujun, Da zhuanzhe (the Great Shift) (Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 1998), 125.
Marxism since the 1950s was once again softened and dispersed in the 1980s of China. Mao’s exertion of three decades since 1949 in incorporating and consolidating Marxism into the Chinese society became futile in the same pattern of what the Soviet did in the 1920s and 30s. Deng then had the free hand to accomplish his own plan in running the state.

Politically, Deng advocated a shift of focal point of the central government to economic construction instead of political movements during the Cultural Revolution. He believed that the prime mistake that the Chinese Communist Party had ever committed was not to have dedicated itself to this important shift during the three decades in the past.26 He made it clear that the project of modernization of China should be topmost in the state affairs above all other issues. He declared the April Fifth Movement a “revolutionary action” and rehabilitated the protesters and many “old revolutionaries” who had been purged out by Mao during the Cultural Revolution.27 On December 2, 1978, Deng Xiaoping made his important political declaration: 1) to liberalize people’s minds; 2) democracy and the rule of law; 3) to look forward on the basis of looking backward—to look into the future and be tolerant to the past; 4) to discard the bureaucratism; 5) to allow a certain amount of people to be richer than others; etc.28 His declaration was echoed enthusiastically by the general public of China. Deng ushered a new epoch of China by breaking free from the ideological shackle of the Mao’s era. He introduced an era of pragmatism and emphasized on economic efficacy in pursuit of modernization of China.

25 Ibid., 133.
26 Ibid., 172.
27 Ibid., 217.
28 Ibid., 301.
Economic reforms of the Deng Era

After 1978, the leaders of China opened the country to the world. Egalitarianism was officially repudiated as "leftist error." The collectivized economy was privatized under government's auspices, and a series of social and economic transformations took place within a decade, which was made possible by:

The recognition of the assumed "imperative" of hierarchical decision making and economic inequality, the subordination of all social (and certainly all socialist) considerations to rapid economic development by whatever means promise the greatest efficiency, the discovery of "the magic of the market," the supposed abandonment of "ideological thinking" in favor of "pragmatism," and a new Chinese receptivity to Western capitalistic culture and commodities. 29 China accomplished a great success in the agricultural reforms after 1978. The communes founded during the Mao's time and the command planning farming were called off during the reform. The farmers became the autonomous leaseholders of farmland and became much more motivated and productive than during the time of Mao's planning farming. The lives of farming population all over China were improved dramatically after the first five-year plan of agricultural reform. The new leadership became affirmative and confident about the reform project for modernization. They hastily introduced the reform plan to urban industry immediately after the success of agricultural reform. The radical but uncertain reform plan in urban industries was challenged by a potential inflationary market and high unemployment. The cities were becoming very unstable and potentially subversive to the new leadership of reformists. But at this very moment, some radical reformative economists recommended a policy of inflationism to the Chinese government, which consequently worsened the uncertainty of urban lives of China. The involvement of the large numbers of civilian protesters in the

Tiananmen Incident of 1989 was believed by some historians to be directly triggered off by the policy of inflationism.

The new enlightenment movement

1. Scientism of the early 1980s

During the early 1980s, as the byproduct of Deng’s campaign of “the Empirical Knowledge (or Practice) Is the Sole Criterion for Truth,” there appeared a prevalent scientism in the academic world of China. As a matter of fact, the scientism of China during the early 1980s was a continuation of the endeavor of the new leaders in the post-Mao era to desecrate Marxism and Maoism with the intention of breaking free from the doctrinal constraint by Marxist and Maoist orthodoxy in the course of their explorative enterprise to the modernization. The Chinese scholars and scientists believed that Marxist theory, as a materialistic philosophy, should constantly be revised in response to the latest development of science and technology.\(^{30}\) The empiricist mind-set as an iconoclastic attitude to the communist convention became a dominant ideology in the early 1980s of China. Moreover, the reformative ideologists’ over-emphasis on the productive force, as a new revisionism to Marxism, also reinforced the scientism that saw the advancement of technology and productive force as the fundamental and ultimate value of human history. When China opened its door to the outside world at the beginning of the 1980s, the Chinese experienced at once a striking shock by the Western modernization and wealthy life of the developed countries. China lagged far behind and, once again, the Chinese

\(^{30}\) Chen Lai, *ershi shiji wenhua yundong zhong de jijin zhuyi* (the Radicalism in the Cultural Movement of the Twentieth Century), *zhishi jenzi de lichang* (the Stands of the Intellectuals) (Changchun: Shidai wenyi chubanshe, 2000), 302.
came up with the same burning anxiety of the May Fourth Movement: could China survive in this world? As a result, “He Shang” (the decline of Yellow River), a very popular and influential T.V program of the late 1980s issued an appalling and desperate warning to its fellow citizens: China would be expelled from the Global Village sooner or later if China did not catch up the steps of the world. It became a widespread opinion in the early 1980s that China could catch up with the world only through the upgrade of technology and the development of economy. But the frustration of the urban industrial reform shook the confidence of the Chinese intellectuals. At the outset, they went back to Marxist theories for the solution, and soon afterward, they claimed that it was the relations of production contradicted (or obstructed) the productive forces. At this moment, the frustrated intellectuals attributed all troubles to the political system and the rule of the communist regime. It seems that history always repeats itself—the Chinese intellectuals of the mid-1980s identified the Maoist communism to the all-evils and tyrannical feudalism, the same analogy made by their older generation more than sixty years ago in the New Culture Movement. They related the communist legacy since 1949 to an “old” and “backward” past. The new generation of fatherless sons waved farewell to their immediate past and embrace the “new” civilization, again, across-the-board westernization. They turned to the Western culture and humanism so as to nurture their oedipal complex—the sadistic rebellion against the Maoist tradition. A cultural fervor of sadistic impulse dominated the ideological arena of China at the mid-1980s.

2. The Cultural Fervor of the 1980s
Yu Ying-shi, a professor at Princeton University, observed in one of his lectures to Hong Kong University that, after a voyage around the cycle of radicalism for seventy years since the New Culture Movement in the 1920s, the Chinese intellectual history came back to its departing point—embracing the Westernization and upholding the democracy, liberty, human rights and individualism as the highest values as what the May Fourth Intellectuals did in the 1920s. Furthermore, he brought up his insight that it was understandable that the across-the-board Westernization and the repudiation of the cultural tradition of China had become the cultural motif today because that tradition had formed the framework of Chinese cultural psyche or the mental-set, which had produced the present reality of China and contributed to maintaining the status quo, and some even insisted that Marxism had been Confucianized in China, as Yu pointed out, all evils and backwardness were attributed to the origin of Confucianism, and moreover, traced back to the origin of Yellow River Civilization of China. It was no wonder why He Shang (the decline of Yellow River), the popular T.V program, fervently asserted that China could only be redeemed by the blue oceanic civilization through discarding the Yellow River Civilization.

In January of 1985, there was a series of lectures being sponsored by the Chinese Cultural Academy (Zhongguo wenhua shuyuan), in which international scholars introduced a new discipline—comparative culture—to Chinese intellectuals, and soon afterward, comparative culture became a widespread intellectual interest around the

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31 Yu Yingshi, Zhongguo jindai sixiangshi shang de jijin yu baoshou (the Radicalism and Conservatism in the Intellectual History of Modern China), 19.
32 Ibid., 19-20.
33 Ibid., 20.
country. In 1986, the publisher of “Culture: China and World” promoted its ambitious project: it would translate and publish all important Western modern theories and works of humanity to Chinese readers in a progressive manner. Within two or three years, the Cultural Fervor took off with the landmark of the influx of all kinds of Western ideas, theories, philosophies and life-styles into China.

The word “culture” was very much over-laden during then with its meaningful reference to everything about human being, human history and society; and it became a ubiquitous specter haunting over China at the mid-1980s. The critical Chinese intellectuals, of the New Culture Movement of the 1910s and the Cultural Fervor in the 1980s alike, had a strong sense of duty in the reconstruction of nation-state, at the same time, they had strong wills to involve into politics, balance the ruler’s power and check the state-affairs. It was probably the part of Confucian legacy from which the Chinese intellectuals inherited in regard of their positions and roles among their countrymen. Confucius advocated that literature was in service of the political objectives of the state.

The Confucian motto “poetry expresses one’s (political) objective (or ambition)” has been so influential to the generations of Chinese intelligentsia for thousands of years. The intellectuals of the post-Mao era were more concerned with the common goal of the nation than academic research. The concept of “culture” during the 1980s connoted more political contents than it should have meant. The Chinese leadership was aware of the

34 Chen Lai, 303.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.
potential challenge from the critical intellectuals. Deng Xiaoping made one of his most
important declarations—Anti-Capitalistic Liberalization—in May 1985:

A current of thought appeared in China after the crackdown of the Gang of Four, which
is called the Capitalistic Liberalization. It worships "democracy" and "liberty" of the
Western capitalist countries, and denounced socialism. It cannot be tolerated. China
will only accomplish modernization, not the liberalization. China will never go after the
Western capitalism.... What they [the intellectuals] did is, as a matter of fact, a
duplication of the Cultural Revolution; the free speech, free promotions, posters and
illegal publication are, as a matter of fact, turmoil.... 39

Chinese leadership identified the liberal intellectuals to the residuals of the Cultural
Revolution, and at the same time, the liberal intellectuals pointed the finger at the
communist government and claimed that the vicious communism culminated at the
Cultural Revolution. Both sides repudiated their immediate past—the Cultural Revolution
and the Mao era—and denounced it the feudal, chaotic and backward regime. But the two
sides introduced two different visions of future for their new world: a nationalistic
capitalism espoused by the communist government under a pragmatic ideology, and,
from the other side, a free-market capitalism with the metaphysical Western ideology of
democracy, individualism, and rule of law. The post-Mao leadership of China and the
intellectuals divided during the mid-1980s. The cultural liberalization promoted by the
intellectuals was accused as "ideological contamination (jing shen wu ran)" during the
early 1980s. Some liberal intellectuals were requested to surrender their declaration of
remorse to the general public. Xu Jingya, one of the liberal poets, submitted his
confession:

39 Deng Xiaoping, 123–4.
Under the devastating influence of the flooding current of capitalistic and liberalistic thought, I mistakenly deviated from the right track in my theoretical exploration of literary criticism and made grave mistakes or had missteps in many important matters.40

The liberal intellectuals were disciplined and felt castrated by the father. “It was an attempt of the contemporary novelists to reconstruct their independent intellectual standing with their promoting the critical functions of literature and art against Chinese society,” Meng Fanhua, a liberal intellectual, observed: “and it was also a desperate endeavor to rebuild an ideology of Chinese intelligentsia, which was destined to be an unsuccessful breakout of the siege.”41 They were so frustrated with the repression of the power and were becoming defiant against the new leadership of China. The generation of sons in the 1980s was developing a destructive impulse toward the father and resolved to take hold of their own destiny from the control of father.

The new enlightenment movement

Dai Jinhua, a scholar of cultural studies at Beijing University, observed that the Cultural Revolution, as one of the darkest acts in the dynastic cyclical drama of Chinese history, set off with a spectacular collective devouring of father and ended up with the unanimous affirmation of an extralegal patriarch despotism.42 Ironically, she added, the Cultural Revolution, being generally regarded as an epitome of the “castration of sons” in China, was actually started out with a “carnival of sons (the Red Guards);” it was a destructive vandalism that was in fact launched under the banner of “absolute devotion to

40 Meng Fanhua, Zhuo jia jiantaoshu (the Statement of Remorse by the Novelists), Jiushiniandai wencuen (the Documents of the 1990s) (Beijing: Zhongguo shenhui kexue chubanshe, 2001), 92.
41 Ibid.
42 Dai Jinhua, Wu zhong fengjing (the View Through Fog) (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2000), 25.
Chairman Mao," it was a collective devouring of the authority and seniority—the killing of the embodied father that had been instigated and exonerated by an extralegal father, Chairman Mao, who was always high above the society. But as a surprise ending of the historical drama, Mao, the extralegal father, put the sons in exile in the "Movement of the Intellectual Youth Going Up to Mountains and Down to Countryside," and the sons' adulthood was infinitely postponed, as Dai pointed out in her book.

The main body of the participants in the new enlightenment movement came from those exiled sons but not from the genuine or essential members of the "Red Guards," as Dai Jinhua revealed, they came from the marginal members of the "Red Guards," who were mostly sons of the purged communists in the Cultural Revolution, and whose fathers were the victims of vandalism, and who were themselves humiliated and excluded by the Revolution. The fatherless sons of the new enlightenment movement attempted to unveil the hidden mechanism of the tragic cycle of father/son in Chinese history, and sought to tear down the mechanism and put an end to the cycle. They made experimental movies to trace back cultural prototype and historical tradition imbedded in the collective unconscious of the Chinese to the unbroken tie of endless, tranquil and constant "Yellow Earth Civilization," as Dai observed, and they were acutely aware that the tradition was never in favor of them as those who tried to enlighten or patronize the old civilization.

In her review of the movie "Hai Zi Wang" (the Master of the Kids) released in 1987 by Chen Kaige, Dai Jinhua pointed out the embarrassing situation in which the fatherless sons (the Fifth Generation of Chinese Movie Directors in her book "Wu Zhong Feng

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43 Ibid.
44 Ibid., 27,
Jing") was trapped—they were not able to touch a chord of Chinese history and tradition at all, even less, the historical narrative about father. The movie tells a story about elementary school teacher of a remote mountain village who made his best to educate the illiterate country kids. The movie starts with the teacher’s holding a primitive oil-lamp and instructing his pupils to copy down the textbook, a symbolic vision of the attempt of "Intellectual Youth" to enlighten or civilize the backward tradition of the Yellow Earth. When he worked so hard in teaching the son of a dumb peasant in the hope of breaking free from the linguistic confinement on the speechless family, the teacher found the peasant’s son was only able to copy down the dictionary and not able to write any words on his own, and only to become an inertial copier or a constituent part of the cyclical discourse of Chinese history. Even though the teacher (being a symbol of the generation of sons in the 1980s) made his desperate breakaway from the symbolic order of historical cycle, His effort was proven a futile one and he left the village for good without any possible success in changing his social status as being the generation of sons. The movie is ended with a long shot of spectacular smoke and fire on a mountain, a metaphorical scene of the son’s impulse of destruction. Dai reveals that it was the new enlightenment movement and the May Fourth Movement alike that pursued the contradictory objectives: on the one hand, they both upheld searching root—promoting the national culture, tradition and Chinese psyche; one the other hand, the enlightenment and criticism—negating the past and tradition. The generation of sons in the modern

46 Ibid.
47 Ibid., 41.
48 Ibid., 42.
49 Ibid., 43.
50 Ibid.
51 Ibid., 45.
history of China was trapped into this vicious circle: they sometimes gave destructive strikes on the circle—cultural vandalism or social unrest, and sometimes they rebuilt the circle—promoting national learning (guo xue) and traditional culture. Different from those of the May Fourth, the sons of the new enlightenment movement became conscious of this everlasting paradox. They determinedly sought for the way out to escape the trap, and the across-the-board Westernization again became an available alternative.

The liberal intellectuals, the sons of the new enlightenment movement, inherited the voluntarist legacy of the New Culture Movement and the communist revolution, a legacy that could be traced back to Kang Youwei, the utopian thinker of Commonality in the nineteenth century of China. They advocated a radical political reform—to amend the constitution of the nation in order to achieve the separation of power of government, direct elections in executives and legislature, and the rule of law; and a radical legal reform—to create the new civil, criminal, and administrative statutes and restructure the juridical system entirely. The liberal intellectuals upheld a thoroughgoing free market economic system, a new social and interpersonal relationship in the logic of instrumental reason. At the same time, they fervently held the Western humanistic values in the highest regard and reproached Chinese cultural tradition for being inhumane, unforgiving, and pedestrian. They sought to incorporate Western humanism into Chinese culture and forced out the Confucian and Marxist humanism from the Chinese psyche.

There were a series of protests and street demonstrations by the university students throughout the 1980s, the leadership of China kept responding to the appeals from the intellectuals. Deng publicized his opinions about the political reform in September 1986 during the meeting with his Japanese guests:
The subject of political reform is under our discussion for the time being. It is a very difficult issue that concerns significantly a lot of people in many aspects. Various interests of people are also involved in this reform. We expect a tough resistance and have to handle the reform scrupulously. ... We are going to start out with one or two particular things and not to have a thoroughgoing reform at a stroke, which will bring the country in chaos. 52

One the one hand, Deng and his comrades put the political reform at the top of agenda and believed that economic reform could not progress smoothly without undertaking the political reforms. On the other hand, Deng emphasized on the insistence of his Four Cardinal Principles, which called for Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought, the socialist path and the leadership of the Communist Party, and the proletarian dictatorship to prevail. 53 Deng made it clear to the liberal intellectuals that he would like to undertake the political reform, but not to adopt the Western political system and obliterate the leadership of the Party. 54

The revisionist communist ideology of the Deng era served as a symbol of the continuation and coherence of the communist regime. The continuation of communist ideology was essential in maintaining the legitimacy of communist authority as a revolutionary power and to placating the lower class that was uneasy in the face of radical social transformation. Moreover, the ideology also functioned to ensure the continuation of the communists’ authoritarian rule. Deng emphasized on the historical continuation of the ideological legacy of Chinese communism in relation to the political stability when he discussed how to evaluate Mao:

The mistakes made by Mao Zedong in his old age should not be overstated (in our evaluation). Because, [our] repudiation of the great historical figure means to repudiate an

52 Deng Xiaoping, Vol.3, 176-177.
53 Brugger, 4.
54 Deng Xiaoping, Vol.3, 63.
important part of our history that only brings about the ideological chaos and political instability.\textsuperscript{55} The legitimation of the position as a new father for the leadership of the post-Mao era lied in the heritage of the old father. But the sons with the destructive impulse would not seek for the middle ground in collaboration with the father. The increasing protests and demonstrations of the university students were going on more confrontational against the government during the mid-1980s. Chinese government gave serious warnings to the liberal intellectuals that they must have stopped instigating the students. At the same time, the leaders of the Party seemed oscillating in the future direction of China when they were urged by the increasing appeals and protests of the intellectuals and students. It was obvious that China was speeding up its pace toward capitalism by more radical reforms in banking, finance, state-enterprises during 1986 and 1989 under the auspices of Chinese government. Deng encouraged Chinese state banks to borrow money from abroad to finance the reform and hire foreign banking experts as their councils.\textsuperscript{56} In February 1989, when meeting with the president of Uganda, Deng told the visitor: “I fully agree that you did not set up the socialist system [in your country] immediately after the victory of [your] revolution, and I told many African friends not to haste with undertaking socialism.”\textsuperscript{57} It is self-explaining that the Chinese leaders were not as certain as they repeatedly stated about the insistence of socialism as the future direction of China.

The radical free market and inflationary policy of 1988 brought out subversive elements and the potential instability of Chinese society. The volcanic society was

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 284.  
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 193.  
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 290.
triggered by the students' and intellectuals' protest in the new enlightenment movement, and the situations in the cities of China became explosive and uncontrollable in the spring of 1989.

"The Uncle's Tale"—a Story about Castration

After the Tiananmen Incident of 1989, there was long silence of Chinese intellectuals under the repression by the father. The orthodox Maoist propaganda dominated the cultural stage of China very briefly during 1990 and 1991. But, at this moment, a novella "Shushu de gushi" (the Uncle's Tale) written by Wang Anyi, an important female novelist, was released and caused moderate attentions of the general public. It was an allegorical condemnation of the repression in Tiananmen, an obscured dispute over the castration of 1989 with father.

"Shu Shu De Gu Shi (the Uncle's tale) is a fictional biography of the narrator's uncle, who was a talented writer but was purged and ousted from the city to countryside during the Cultural Revolution—an implication that the son was castrated by the father—the Great Leader Mao. His talent of writing was completely repressed, and he lived a very boring life and married a countrywoman whom he did not love. The countrywoman gave birth to a son but the uncle never had any passion for their son. The uncle probably thought he should not have offspring in his exile. The death of Mao—the end of the Cultural Revolution—liberated the uncle who became famous again in the cities of China. He abandoned the family and enjoyed his new good life with many young girls around. When the countrywoman sent his son back to him, he found himself unbearable
with his own son. Finally, the father and son had a violent fight and the son almost stabbed his father with a knife. The father beat his own son up and felt remorseful to what he did in the past.

The story about the uncle is as a matter of fact an allegory about the historical vicissitude between father and son from the Cultural Revolution to the new enlightenment movement. It was a cry of sons of the new enlightenment movement after the castration. It was also a complaint that the father had not shared his wealth and affluence with his sons. Later on, the liberal intellectuals made their last attempt to bring back the new enlightenment movement during 1994 and 1996. However, they found themselves in a very different social and cultural milieu at the early 1990s from that of the 1980s. The pop culture and consumerism permeated every corner of the society and intellectuals were forced away from their prestigious position as social elite. Under this circumstance, a polemic about “humanistic morale (renwen jingshen de taolun)” came into sight during the early 1990s with the obscured intention of liberal intellectuals to call back the specter of the new enlightenment movement. They moaned that the humanistic morale of the Chinese was lost because of the consumerism and money worship. This polemic was directed at the populism instead of authoritarianism. The pop culture and pulp fictions fell under its assaults. Wang Shuo, a popular novelist, and his pulp fictions were considered to represent the lost generation of China and plebeian literature. The intellectuals of the polemic criticized: “The [psychological] wandering off [in Wang Shuo’ s novels] was the result of no demands for making choice [in the life of the lost generation], thus, no needs for any humanistic affinities... they can only obtain
masturbation-like pleasure through the humiliating and mocking play of words." The liberal or elitist intellectuals were also concerned that there had been a general retreat of intellectual morale and a disappearance of the conviction of humanism as the universal value, or "an infidelity of the consecration of literature."

Unfortunately, the polemic did not elicit an enthusiastic response from the general public; moreover, it became a controversial polemic in academic arena. Voluntarism seemed to be losing the footing in the post-Deng era and morale of the new enlightenment movement was becoming diverse and evaporative. As Dai Jinhua observed, in her review of the movie "Red Sorghum" by Zhang Yimou, that the rebellious son [the narrator’s grandfather in the movie] vowed his compliance to the order of father-rule after the killing of father, which was testified by his song "Dionysus" as a pledge and a treaty. He redeemed his adulthood and the succession to the position of father by sacrificing or returning the "father’s woman" (the narrator’s grandmother in the movie, who was killed at the end), and the sons, as collaborators, finally succeeded in becoming the dominion of the society—an allegory of ideological transformation of China.

The liberal intellectuals, like the rebellious son in Zhang Yimou’s movie, gave up their romantic ideals and confrontational protests during the 1990s, and waited compliantly for the succession to the leadership of China. However, the repression of the power was never the same in the new decade of the 1990s as how it had acted upon the

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58 Meng Fanhua, 30.
59 Ibid., 35.
60 Dai Jinhua, 60.
61 Ibid.
intellectuals since the May Fourth and after. It is exactly as what Herbert Marcuse described about the repression of industrial society:

The repressiveness of the whole lies to a high degree in its efficacy: it enhances the scope of material culture, facilitates the procurement of the necessities of life, makes comfort and luxury cheaper, draws ever-larger areas into the orbit of industry… 62

Chapter Four: The Death of Father and the Emergence of a New Ideology

The Political and Ideological Transformation of the Post Deng Era

At the beginning of the 1990s, the Chinese government strengthened communist ideology, placing special emphasis on Deng’s Four Cardinal Principles. It suppressed new enlightenment ideas and began rigid control of the social, economic, the mass media and every sphere of the society. Consequently, Chinese economy slowed down and social creativity was stifled. The Chinese government soon adjusted its policy because the political elites realized that the CCP no longer could maintain an ideology-oriented economic system.

In 1993, the Chinese government amended the clause “planned economy on the basis of socialist public ownership” in the 1982 Constitution in favor of “socialist market economy.” This amendment removed ideological control from the economic domain of China. Communist ideology was the state official ideology but a market economy was the state economic base. In a sense of Marxism, ideology as the superstructure of a state is dependent on or decided by economic base and they interact with each other. From a Marxist point of view, a few years after the 1989 incident, China had become a
schizophrenic polity characterized by a tension between desires for humanity on the one hand and for modernity on the other. This change fundamentally restructured the liberal intellectual community as a source of political dissent in the past. Chinese society, in general, also became much more complex and diverse.

In July 2000, Jiang Zemin, the new leader of the C.C.P, announced a new amendment of the party constitution, which was entitled the “Three Representatives.” The “Three Representatives” stands for a new description of the Chinese Communist Party’s political objectives in its service of the country: the C.C.P. serves as the representative of the “advanced productive force;” or to lead the nation on behalf of the necessity of the progress of advanced productive force; the representative of the advanced culture, or to lead the nation in accordance with the prospect of advanced culture; and the representative of the fundamental interest of the majority. 63

The first representative was a reinterpretation of Chinese communism in response to the changed economic conditions of China in the 1990s. It emphasizes, “It is still a very long way for China to realize the Communist Society” 64—a theoretical society described by Marx—and China is presently in a rudimental stage of socialism. Thus, the Party has gradually realized that the fundamental objective of socialist China is to make a great progress in productive force 65 and modernize China by all means. In order to achieve such an objective, the Party should be able to break free the theoretical constraint of Marxist orthodoxy, which was formulated by the Marxists under their historical contexts

63 Jiaoyu shu ili ke su yan jiu yi sixiang zeng zhi gong zuo si, ed. Xin shi dai de li lung gan gling (the New theoretical Principle of the New Era) (Beijing: Zhong guo Ren min xue jiao chu ban she, 2001) 60-78.
64 Ibid., 21.
65 Ibid., 102.
of their times,\textsuperscript{66} and must go along the line of the progress in productive force and Chinese social reforms.\textsuperscript{67} The second representative of advanced culture is basically to preserve the characteristic tradition and culture of China in recognition of national identity. The third representative of the majority emphasizes that the C.C.P does not only represent the interest of the working-class but also the majority of people from various classes, because the interest of the working-class is in conformity with the needs of the majority of people and the progress of the society.\textsuperscript{68}

The "Three Representatives" is a milestone in the transformation of Chinese political ideology in the post-Deng era. It claims the ultimate objective of the Chinese Communist Party is the material modernization of China instead of the proletarian dictatorship or egalitarian commonalty based on the communist orthodoxy. The Party is no longer the exclusive vanguard of the proletariat but a party of most Chinese. And its political ideology has changed to be nationalism-oriented instead of being cosmopolitan in accordance with the communist ideals. The transformation of official ideology brought about profound influences in the culture, social values and the politico-economy of China. The communist hardliners grumbled out their dissent about the revision of the communist doctrines. The liberal intellectuals lost their target in their attacks on communist legacy. But the political and bureaucratic system of China had not been changed too much. The political orientation of the Chinese government and political culture had become very evasive and ambiguous, but more pragmatic in response to China's changing conditions.

\textsuperscript{66} Ibid., 20.
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., 100.
\textsuperscript{68} Ibid., 133.
In the face of the authority’s political flexibility, the alliance of Chinese intellectuals, which was based on common opposition to dogmatic communist ideology, could not survive. The solidarity of intellectual alliance disintegrated; scholars drifted into various schools and quarreled among themselves about how to interpret the ambiguous official ideology and understand Chinese society. Simultaneously, consumerism permeated the society and pushed the intellectuals out of their dominant position into peripheral positions in an anti-cultural, anti-intellectual business cultural wave.

Modernist ideological China, which had endured since the New Culture Movement, gave way to a commercial, globalized and diverse business culture. But the impulse of intellectuals to restore their elitist position drove some of them to develop new joint-efforts with various powers in order to achieve domination in the social reconstruction underway. Other intellectuals gave up their elitist attitude, regarding it as an outdated Confucian tradition of thousands of years. They withdrew from playing their customary role in shaping China’s morals and, instead, made a “professionalist turn to the normality and standardization of academic production and promotion.”

From the early 1990s, there appeared various schools of thought in response to the changing social conditions: Nationalism, Conservatism, Neo-Confucianism, New Right, and New Left, etc. These ideas significantly altered the spectacle of the Chinese culture and social relations of the post-Deng era.
The Rise of Nationalism in the Early 1990s

In the early 1990s, the Soviet Union and its satellites collapsed, and Cold War era ended. The new political geography of the world became much less ideologically oriented but was reoriented to the diverse national interests of individual nation-state. Regional conflicts and economic competitions replaced the ideological war between communism and capitalism of the two super-powers. There was a rise of the nationalistic consciousness all over the world. Under such circumstance, Samuel Huntington, a professor at Harvard University, published his very influential book *The Clash of the Civilizations*, which proposed a new perspective to the world and the future with his emphasis on the clashes of different cultures and traditions instead of the political or social ideologies among the nations. Huntington’s new perspective was a result of the frustration of American foreign policy in the post Cold War era and his exploration in a new way of looking into the world. This book aroused an unexpected turbulence in Chinese academia and media, since, at this very moment, the nationalistic consciousness of the Chinese was taking off the ground.

By the early 1990s, China’s relation with world had brought about a deep-seated change even though many Chinese did not become clearly conscious of that change during that time. The Western countries had always been the “Wonderland” for the Chinese, the model societies to emulate, and the “beyond world” to dream about since the open-door policy in China that began in 1978. At the same time, the Western countries took China as a strategic partner in curbing the Soviet Union and a communist country

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that was very hopeful to be transformed peacefully. But when it came to the 1990s under
the new circumstance of the world, China was becoming a potential competitor in the
world market after its rapid and successful economic development since 1978. There
were more and more conflicts of interests in the international trade between China and
the West. The large international corporations sought for access to Chinese domestic
market and they experienced resistance from the Chinese authority and Chinese domestic
corporations. The Chinese became acutely aware of the pressure and exploitations of the
West, and conversely, the West realized the challenge and threat from China.

The accumulation of resources and the more affluent life made the Chinese more
confident about their own. And the national pride gradually ascended in the
consciousness of the Chinese. The recollection about the humiliation of foreign
aggression during the eighteenth and nineteenth century of China, which was amplified
by the governmental propaganda after the Tiananmen Incident, enormously inflated
Chinese nationalism. The report on ethnical disunion and economic depression in Russia
by the mass media in the early 1990s convinced the Chinese more about the importance
of their national identity.

Furthermore, the international economic sanctions imposed on China after the
Tiananmen Incident and the hyperbole about the Chinese threat by Western media, as a
gap-filling to the Cold War ideology, also strengthened the nationalistic sentiments of the
Chinese. There then emerged a certain radical nationalistic sentiment in China
highlighted by a popular Chinese book Zhongguoren ke yi shuo bu (the Chinese are in the
position to say no), a book boasting a ballooned national pride and an isolationism, which
advocates closing up China to the West and forming a military alliance with the
developing countries to check the Western aggressions.

Academically, Chinese nationalism was closely examined and analyzed by Chinese
scholars. Wang Hui, a famous scholar, examined Chinese nationalism by looking into the
Chinese intellectuals’ reception of the American theory of Post-Colonialism during the
early 1990s. Post-Colonialism was a radical theory of cultural criticism against the
American mainstream culture inside the United States, according to Wang, but it became
a conservative theory inside China as a reinforcement to Chinese nationalism, an official
ideology promoted by the government, after Post-Colonialism was introduced into China
during the early 1990s.\(^70\) This demonstrated, Wang added, that the radicalism,
conservatism or any other cultural and political orientations in the intellectual movements
since the May Fourth Movement of the 1910s always had a common goal in their
pursuits: to modernize China as a sovereign nation-state.\(^71\) Different schools of various
political and cultural ideals had never been contentious on this ultimate objective of the
whole nation in the intellectual history of modern China, even though there were fervent
promotions of westernization in the New Culture Movement and the new enlightenment
movement, he explained, in fact, Chinese intellectuals took the American ideology and
values as the criterion by which they lodged wars against Chinese political system and
cultural traditions.\(^72\) Chinese intellectuals sometimes idealized their critical criterion so
as to accommodate a more destructive war.

\(^{70}\) Wang Hui, \textit{Wenhua pipan litun yu dangdai zhongguo minzuzhuyi wenti} (Cultural Criticism and
Contemporary Nationalism of China), \textit{Zhishi renzi lichang} (Our Stands as Intellectuals) (Changchun: Shidai
\(^{71}\) Ibid., 397.
\(^{72}\) Ibid.
Wang Hui redefined Chinese nationalism into two categories: political nationalism and cultural nationalism. He identified those who had promoted the across-the-board westernization, the Western values and criticizing their own cultural values to the political nationalists. The Chinese political nationalism is a conviction that China is only able to secure its national sovereignty by emulating the Western political system and following after the way of Western modernization. Those who tend to identify their national identity to Chinese cultural tradition are regarded by Wang as the cultural nationalists. Therefore, one may draw a conclusion based on Wang's definition that Chinese nationalism experienced a transformation from political to cultural nationalism after the declining of the new cultural movement. The cultural nationalism brought about a concern to many that China would probably close up itself again and Wang Hui proposed that Chinese intellectuals should seek for a new objective for future China, an objective beyond “modernization,” or above the interest of a nation, which probably avoid the vicious cycle of political and cultural nationalism.

The Contestation between the Conservatives and Radicals

Chinese nationalism of the 1990s had another dimension—conservatism in Chinese academia, which was probably a counter-current against the radical cultural inclination of the new cultural movement of the 1980s. Yu Yingshi, a professor at Princeton University, initiated the cultural polemic about radicalism and conservatism in Hong Kong University in 1988. He criticized the radicalism in the May Fourth Movement, the Cultural Revolution and the new enlightenment movement and attributed the cultural

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73 Ibid., 398.
74 Ibid.
vandalism and social devastation to the intellectual radicalism during these movements. Yu advocated some conservative ideas prevailing in the West and the humanism in Chinese cultural tradition. His promotion of cultural conservatism elicited enthusiastic responses from the Chinese academia.

Basically, the scholars with conservative orientations traced the genesis of Chinese radicalism back to the late nineteenth century in Kang Youwei’s utopian ideals, and sequentially the Republican Revolution in 1911, the New Culture Movement of the 1910s, the communist revolution and the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s. They examined the rise of the radical ideas in the modern history of China and the devastating consequences of those ideas and the relevant revolutions to the modernization of China. They insisted that radicalism deprived the progressive social reforms of the persistence, continuation, and stable social environment, which was critical to the enduring modernization of a nation. For instance, the conservatives maintained that the “hopeful” constitutional reform of late Qing Dynasty was disrupted by the Republican Revolution in 1911, and as a consequence, the modernization project was postponed for many decades because of the continual social turmoil and wars followed after each revolution. They upheld a kind of authoritarian politics and elitist culture. The conservative criticism also vaguely pointed its finger to the communism and the revolutionary legacy of the past. But those who defended the revolutionary tradition contended that the radical revolutions since 1911 were unavoidable choices made by the social and intellectual elite in face of the despairing historical context in which the monarchy or regimes were too reactionary to tolerate any possible social progress. They argued that authoritarianism could only bring about despotism and stagnancy of social progress. Furthermore, they

75 Ibid., 401.
associated the revolutionary transformation of society with popular democracy, and accused the conservatives of complicity with the current authority of China. But both sides had the unconscious impulse of sadism against father of the present or the past; simultaneously, they both had the same craving for material modernization in future China. The concerns of humanism and other aspects of human well-being seemed to be ignored in their arguments. The conservatism and radicalism of the early 1990s, together with the cultural nationalism, soon evolved into more complicated schools of thought: Neo-Confucianism, the New Right and New Left.

**Emergence of the intellectual Neo-Confucianism**

The cultural nationalism was highlighted by Neo-Confucianism in the post-Deng era. Neo-Confucianism developed along different lines based on different theories all conceived on answering questions about China’s position in the world and equality with the West. Some radical scholars with the intellectual Neo-Confucian ideas (or rather old China-centric ideas) believed that Chinese ethics and classical philosophies were universal and that Western culture and civilization was particularistic. They claimed Western civilization dominated only temporarily and that the twenty-first century would be the century of China. They rigorously denounced those who advocated Westernization as slaves to the West. Neo-Confucianism was a radical reaction to the new enlightenment movement of the 1980s and a sentimental outlet for the heightening nationalism of the early 1990s. However, it was a very short-lived cultural movement.
By Contrast, the long enduring conservative Neo-Confucians, or ultra-conservatives,\(^{77}\) fervently criticized all radical revolutions between 1919 and 1949, (including the Chinese communist revolution) and even the Republican Revolution of 1911,\(^{78}\) which few had ever questioned. They upheld a progressive social evolution and gradual market-economic reform as well as a continuation of Confucian ethics based on the models of Taiwan and Singapore. They insisted that the Chinese cultural tradition was the most effective instrument for the achievement of lasting development of all Asian countries and communities. The intellectual effort in seeking for the momentum for today’s modernization inside Chinese classics and traditions characterized the Neo-Confucian fervor, which remarkably emphasized on incommensurability between the different civilizations. The Neo-Confucian scholars accentuated the particular origin of Chinese civilization, the special religious tradition and humiliating history of modern China, which fundamentally shaped a different future of China from all other civilizations of the World. This ultra-conservatism was a moderate reaction to the radicalism of the new enlightenment movement of the 1980s and it contributed to the conservative nature of the New Right, which rose in Chinese academia in the mid-1990s as a continuum of the new enlightenment movement of the 1980s.

**Modernization and the Rise of the New Left and the New Right**


\(^{77}\) Arif Dirlik, and Zhang Xudong, 405.

\(^{78}\) Ibid.
In the mid-1990s, China’s market economy quickly expanded and a consumer culture spread throughout much of Chinese society. China became a nation that lost its traditional epical narrative about its historical sagas and the common objective of its people. The intellectuals endeavored to step out of the gloominess of the fiasco of the new enlightenment movement of the 1980s and sought for psychological recovery or a healing to the trauma in their memory. The de-politicized, de-ideologicalized and de-historicized cultural replication was becoming the available alternative to bridge the mind-set of the new enlightenment intellectuals to the consumerist culture in the 1990s. The liberal intellectuals assumed a critical attitude in their literature and attacked symbolic power of the past, which had been dissolved or enfeebled by the consumerist culture, in order to have a kind of narcissistic pleasure. They played with words or coined new language to create malicious irony of the symbolic legacy (the ideological discourses of Mao’s time) of the “Red Classics (hongse jingdian)” or revolutionary ideologies. They acted as brave combatants or saviors in their social critical shows but never touched upon the real power-abuse of the dominions of Chinese society in the 1990s. They achieved satisfactions through their shower-abuse on the empty signifier of “repression by the tyrannical power” during the Cultural Revolution in the horrified memory and, at the same time, embraced a kind of bourgeois warmness of humanism and eternal love to soothe their psychological trauma of 1989.

If it was believed that Chinese culture of the 1990s was still under the trampling and repression of the center of power, the power center was then multiplied and diversified. The party-state as the center of totalitarian power was encroached upon by economic populism, which manifest itself as the commodity fetishistic and anti-elitist (or anti-
ideological) attitudes held by the masses. The party-state’s legitimacy as the sovereign power was also diverted and dissolved into the consumer nationalism, which, rather than the traditionally collective recognition of the territorial imagination supported by state sovereignty, became a cultural product to be consumed by the general public and to be manufactured by mass media. Reduced ideological control by the government made possible for liberal intellectuals to continue their abortive new enlightenment project of the 1980s. The “New Right,” the label given to the liberal intellectuals of the 1990s, introduced western conservatism that supplanted the radical elements of the new enlightenment movement of the 1980s.

The New Right had basic assumptions about China of the 1990s. They believed that the present stage of Chinese history was similar to that of England during its rudimentary industrialization. The corruption of government and China’s economic and political injustices were actually a repeat of the history of seventeenth and eighteenth centuries England. British aristocracy, they observed, conspired with bureaucracies in the process of their accumulation of wealth during the darkest period of early British capitalistic development. The Chinese market economy needed a long and progressive development, despite the evil part of this process, until China achieved the rule of law and democracy that could be attained only after such a gradual and suffering process. A market economy was seen as the only effective means to eradicate communist autocracy. The primary mission of Chinese intellectuals was to advocate individualism and free competition, which were under the constant threats of the aggressive government. Furthermore,

79 Dai Jinhua, 381.
Chinese intellectuals were to fight against various radical ideas that were subversive and destructive to the existing establishment.  

The liberal intellectuals, such as Xu Youyu and Liu Jiangde, in their reflections about the new enlightenment movement of the 1980s, suggested that the protesters should have adopted the ideas of the English classical conservatives such as those of Edmund Burke in his "Reflections on the Revolution in France." The New Rightists believed that it was the limited knowledge of the intellectuals of the 1980s, who were inspired by the classical enlightenment ideas of Rousseau, Locke, and the intellectuals of the May Fourth tradition, that led them into radical, utopian protest. Xu and Liu proposed that the liberal intellectuals of the 1990s, an age of market economy, should have introduced the Neo-Conservatism of Europe, as espoused by such as Tredrick Von Hayek who upheld the free market and individual liberty. The New Rightists expressed their deep concern that the democracy for the masses might encroach on individual liberty. Their elitist attitude was reflected in their distrust of the masses. Xiao Bin, in his article "The Transformation of Contemporary Chinese Liberalism," showed his concern that the popular mass democracy might turn into totalitarian democracy like what happened in the French Revolution. This concern of the New Rightists can be seen a reaction to the resistance of the lower class to the ongoing market expanding among the Chinese urban population. The New Rightists, driven by the sentiments of anti-communism and anti-radicalism, feared that subversive social resistance might result in a new revolution. They believed

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80 Xu Youyu, *Liberalism and Contemporary China* (Ziyuzhuyi yu dangdai zhongguo), *Our Stand as Intellectuals* (Zhishifenzhi de lichang) (Changchun, P. R. China: Dangdai yishu chubanshe, 2000), 419.
81 Xiao Bin, *The transformation of the Contemporary Chinese liberalism* (Dangdai zhongguo zhiyouzhuyi de zhuangxing), 513
that any revolutions would probably result in a return to social chaos, as occurred during the Cultural Revolution, and a new dictator (such as Mao) gaining control of power.

Wang Dingding, the liberal economist, says in his article "The Choice of the Society: Market Economy and Liberty," that the disparity in human competence results in disparity in the distribution of social resources even if people begin from the same point with equal opportunities. Expressing the views of a utilitarian Benthamist, he implies that social efficiency can be maximized only at the cost of certain people's interests, which are subject to the free market competition.

From the mid-1990s, increasing numbers of workers were laid off in the urban areas of China. Privatization gradually caused the social security system of the past to collapse. Retired people and laid-off workers fell more and more into despair about their present conditions and future prospects. Increasing crime and moral decadence had deepened the instability of Chinese urban society. The protests of laid-off workers for their basic means of living mushroomed in all cities of China. Retired people participated in a new religion, Falun Gong, which in some way filled the religious vacuum in China. It was their hope that, through the practice of Falun Gong's stylistic exercise, they would have access to an alternative source of health-care benefits. The Chinese government suppressed all potential subversive elements against its power or those it deemed detrimental to the environment of economic growth. But in reality, the Chinese economy grew rapidly and steadily, probably at the expense of the living standards of the lower class. Indeed China is becoming one of the strongest and most prosperous nations in Asia.

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The Chinese political elite and the New Rightists hoped to solve China’s social problems by fast economic growth. They maintained that the suffering of the lower class and the moral decadence of society were an unavoidable part of China’s long road to industrialization and modernization. There was a long way to go before China reached the authentic modernity. The New Rightists believed that China could overcome its difficulties and shorten the period of hardship only by entering the world economic system and by unifying all elements of society.

Facing the same social realities, some had very a different attitude and understanding about the modern civilization. As Dai Jinhua observed, in her review of the movie “Er Muo” by Zhou Xiaowen, that it was not possible for people like Zhou to have high expectation about the “modernization process” and shared the sense of responsibility about modernizing future of China that invested the complete decade of the 1980s. In fact, Zhou was expressing his deep concern about prospective modernist civilization in China through his allegorical movie: the Chinese was living less in the confinement of the “iron house (a metaphor first used by Lu Xun, a famous Chinese writer of the New Culture Movement, to refer to the prison-like confinement)” than in a pace permeated with evils set free by Pandora’s Box imported from the West. The movie told a story about a young countrywoman, Er Muo, the wife of a former party-secretary of a remote Chinese village during the Mao’s era. The social reform and modernization after Mao deprived the husband of the power and honor as the head of village. An accident made him impotent in both sex and manual labor. The wife, Er Muo, played the role of husband in the unfortunate family and made up her mind to bring the past dignity and honor back

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83 Dai Jinhua, 369.
84 Ibid., 369-70.
to the family. The political power as a Party member was gone for good and only wealth
could bestow power on the villagers today. She worked very hard but a woman’s hard
working could not make enough fortune to bring back the previous dignity. When a
chitchat among women mentioned that there was only one 29 inches color T.V. in all
over county and even the county mayor could not afford such a T.V., Er Muo was
inspired and determined to buy such a large T.V. to make her family be envied by the
whole county. She did everything she could to make money; including selling blood for a
couple of times, and even had herself killed. Finally her dream came true and the large
T.V. earned her respects from the villagers as her family surpassed the richest family in
the village by bringing forth a spectacular event to the villagers (she set the T.V. outside
for all to view). But her resistance to the alteration of traditional order of the village
imposed by the modernization process, as Dai pointed out, drew her into that alteration
and made her participate in moving forward the process; her exhausting effort for the
T.V. exorcized all her established value about life even though she used to believe that
she was fulfilling herself through the struggle.\footnote{Ibid., 370.}

Zhou’s concern about modernization was shared by other intellectuals whose
priority was morals and those influenced by postmodernist and postcolonial theories of
the West, who expressed different perspectives and understandings of China. The New
Leftists voiced sharp criticism of capitalistic logic and China’s popular culture that was
greatly influenced by the process of globalization.

As early as 1985, Frederic Jameson, the famous Neo-Marxist professor of Duke
University, visited Peking University and delivered lectures over four months on the
theories of postmodernist culture. He was the first one to expose Chinese scholars to
American postmodernism, postcolonialism, and feminism. But only during the late 1990s did the Chinese intellectuals, in alliance with the Chinese-American scholars, raise the banner of the New Left in the major universities of China. Only during the late 1990s, when the Chinese market economy has successfully developed, did the New Leftist scholars realize that the world that Jameson had described in 1985 was approaching to their own homes.

Using contemporary critical theories of the Cultural Left of the West, the Chinese New Leftists launched criticisms against Chinese pop-culture and declared their rupture from consumerism. Equipped with theories of post-colonialism, they also attacked Eurocentric discourse and Western cultural hegemony. Those who adopted Western postmodernist theories were teasingly called “postologists”\(^\text{66}\) by the Old Left and the New Right. In the implication of the neologism, postologists are those who only play discursive games in their literature and criticism. The “postologists” did show their preference for discursive criticism and their dissolving the power discourses; instead of pointing their attacks directly at social and political institutions as traditional Chinese intellectual had done in the past, they undertook their criticism of narrative of history and genesis of knowledge.

Of course, the newly emerged New Left also had concerns about matters of social structure. Some of the New Leftists, through their reinterpretations of Marxism within the theoretical framework of the Frankfurter School and American Neo-Marxism, criticized the unequal redistribution of social resources and the severe corruption of the government. They showed their sympathy toward the lower class and called for an elevation of morals.

\(^{66}\) Dirlik and Zhang, *Postmodernism and China*, 402.
The Old Left did not like them since the Old Left would rather have tolerated China's liberal conservatism than the Neo-Marxism of the West.  

Today, the New Leftists concerns more with what they perceive to be the Western countries' exploitation of China by the means of the global economic system, and the widening gap between the rich and the poor inside China in the context of the free market economy. Their missions then are to challenge the cultural hegemony of the West and to lay bare the inadequacies of capitalistic logic.

The New Left distinguishes itself from the Old Left and the New Right by its distinctive theoretical assumptions about present China. Wang Hui set the tone for the New Left in his famous article “The Contemporary Chinese Thoughts and Modernity,” which is regarded as a manifesto of the New Left. However, Wang refuses to be labeled as a New Leftist. Despite the fact that China did not collapse like the Soviet Union and its satellite countries after 1989, Wang maintained in his article that China had not changed its course toward becoming a capitalist society. He asserted that the “socialist economic reform” had led China into the global capitalistic relations of production. Furthermore, he pointed to a significant change in the function of the state apparatus along the process of China's capitalization. The capitalistic relations of production, he said, were producing their own representatives in the power system of Chinese politics. The Tiananmen Incident of 1989 somewhat radicalized the economic reform of China rather than slowing down the reform under auspices of the government during the late 1970s. The new

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87 In a five-month seminar on the classical Marxism held in Peking University in 1999, the orthodox Marxist scholars claimed that the Neo-Marxism in the West was more subversive to the classical Marxism than the liberal conservative ideas.
88 Wang Hui, The Contemporary Chinese Thoughts and Modernity (Dangdai zhongguo sixiang yu xianadaixing), Our Stand as Intellectuals (Zhishi fenzi de lichang) (Changchun: Dangdaiyishuchuban she, 2000), 83.
enlightenment intellectuals of the 1980s laid the groundwork for the new official ideology—modernist ideology—of China in the process of its moving toward the global market and world capitalist system. Commercialism and consumer culture, the byproducts of capitalist production, had penetrated the entire society. The quotidian life and behavior pattern of the Chinese were more or less regulated by the rule of the market instead of the tradition-oriented guideline in the past. Chinese intellectuals were realizing gradually that they no longer were cultural heroes or the creator of social values in China. Professionalism had appropriated the Chinese intellectuals’ elite position and was driving them back to academia.

Wang Hui addressed the problems that Chinese intellectuals tended to criticize Chinese society and history according to Western norms, a legacy of the New Culture Movement. He called for Chinese intellectuals to subvert the traditional theoretical bases of social totality and ideological dichotomy when they analyzed present-day China in the new environment of diverse culture, relativist ideas and nihilistic pathos. The traditional conceptions of terminological binary opposition such as reformists vs. conservatives, the West vs. the East, capitalism vs. socialism, and the market economy vs. the planning economy, should have been reassessed. One could no longer attribute all social problems to the “socialist system” of China after China had experienced the dramatic change in social and economic structures during the past twenty years, Wang maintained, since the state-owned enterprises had only contributed 30% in the proportion to China’s GNP, the social structure of China no longer was socialist as what it had asserted to the general public. The confrontational relationship between the state and Chinese society at large before 1989 had eased off in the context of globalization because both sides finally
achieved a certain agreement on the market ideology and the nation-state was serving the new function of protector of national capitalism. The political elites participated in international business activities that lead to their blending into society and narrowing the gap between the political leaders and the general public. As a result, there were not so many ideological conflicts between the political elite and social intellectuals as what had happened in the past. In his article, Wang Hui opposed the Marxist conception of “economic base” and “superstructure” in dichotomy and more emphasized on the cultural production and ideological construction in mass media and education instead of on the economic issues that more concerned the followers of classical Marxism. Wang insisted that cultural and ideological production in China was not only controlled by the state apparatus but also by the capitals and the market. In his “manifesto,” Wang called upon Chinese intellectuals to give up the utopian idea of cosmopolitanism that was rooted in Confucianism. In the face of globalization, he argued that Chinese intellectuals should not stop enhancing critical weapons and courageously challenge the cultural hegemony of global capitalism.

The New Left encountered poignant criticism from the New Right. Consequently, the two factions started their endless war of words. The New Rightists insisted that the New Leftists maintained a wrong assumption about, and an inaccurate understanding of, the present reality of China. Only with such wrong assumption, the New Rightists charged, had the New Leftists been able to apply the fashionable theories of the Western postmodernist and Neo-Marxism to their illusionary understanding of China.\textsuperscript{89} Chinese society was not a capitalist system in essence,\textsuperscript{90} and the project of modernity of China

\textsuperscript{89} Xu Youyu, 427.
\textsuperscript{90} Ibid., 428.
had not yet been finished. The New Rightists believed that the New Leftists’ social
criticism was completely unhistorical or anachronistic. Wang’s advocacy of the utopian
and revolutionary “innovation” was a new version of Cultural Revolution theory.91 More
importantly, the New Rightists insisted that the New Leftists overlooked the prominent
problems that China was facing in the process of achieving the rule of law and the
modern democracy under the communist party-state.92 “Flying above the rough ground”93
(a metaphor in implication to the unrealistic theories of the New Left), the New Rightists
pointed out that, under the label of cultural studies, the New Leftists were not concerned
with people’s basic needs for living subsistence, and that they had criticized a developing
country based on the norms of developed capitalist countries.94 The New Leftists
launched their counterattack by accusing the New Rightists of the watchdogs of an
authoritarian dictatorship95 and by denouncing that the New Rightist scholars were
indifferent to the poor and in affinity with the rich.

The polemic between the New Left and the New Right did not only demonstrate a
simple one-dimensional conflict of their political and ideological inclinations in the
service of the common objective of the nation—modernization, but Chinese intellectuals
of the late 1990s had also very diverse concerns and variant aspirations for their own.
Some of the New Leftists, or the so-called “postologists,” shifted their intellectual
interests from conventional social service (zai dao) to academic achievement through
professional research. They distinguished themselves from traditional intellectuals by not

91 Ren Jiatao, The Interpretation of “the New Left,” “(Jiedu xinzhupai) Our stand as Intellectuals(Zhishi fenzi de lichang) (Changchun, P. R. China: Dangdai yishu chubanshe, 2000), 203.
92 Ibid.
93 Ibid., 206.
94 Ibid., 204-5.
95 Ibid., 192.
making a full commitment to the project of China’s modernization, and also from the apolitical intellectuals of the last generation such as Hu Shi, who inaugurated “the New Literary Movement” of the May Fourth Movement. Because Hu’s literary renovation still had aspired to accomplishing the common objective of the modernization of China through elevating Chinese morale by aestheticism. The project of modernity, which became deeply ingrained into the collective unconscious of the Chinese as early as the nineteenth century, now was under questioning for the first time.

Modernity, a notion originated from the Christian Salvation of Western civilization, was examined and reevaluated by Chinese scholars during the late 1990s. With the new knowledge of postmodernism and contemporary theories of the West, Chinese intellectuals began exploring new alternative for the future of China. They first questioned the “one” and monolithic modernity and insisted on the plural “modernities.” Then they pointed out that the myth about progressive and rational human history, a grand narrative constructed during the European Enlightenment, was probably not universal to all human well-being but a sheer teleological ideology. The development of technology and science was at the cost of natural environment and resources on which human lived. Modernization might not be the only choice for all peoples of the world in conceiving their futures. China had its different tradition and historical legacy from those of the West and probably brought about distinct modernity and different prospects. The modernist ideology in China was experiencing a fatal challenge after more than a hundred years of consecration.
Chapter Five: Conclusion

The dynastic cycle repeated itself throughout China’s thousands of years of history. Patriarchal despotism was recurrently challenged by rebellions or was overthrown again and again by the new successors. The deadly confrontational relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed had long been a prominent problem that Chinese political elite and intellectuals persistently sought for a solution. Both the republican revolutionaries and the communists emphatically claimed that their rebellions were different from the traditional rebellions of the past and declared that their social projects were based on modernist theories imported from the West. The Tiananmen protesters in 1989 also made similar claims in the same pattern of their revolutionary forerunners. All those who claimed to establish a new social norm involved themselves in a revolt against the old authority or “father,” and afterward resulted in suppressing their people or “new sons.” But none of them broke through the cycle between subjugation and uprising that had haunted so many generations of Chinese. Herbert Marcuse, in his discussion of repressive civilization in his famous book of philosophical psychoanalysis titled Eros and Civilization, said:

But the effectiveness of the superimposed organization of the horde must have been very precarious, and consequently the hatred against patriarchal suppression very strong.\(^{97}\)

\[^{96}\text{Tian Qingshen, trans., Litterature et Modernite (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2001), 34.}\]
\[^{97}\text{Herbert Marcuse, Eros and Civilization (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1955). 63.}\]
After the republican revolution of 1911, Chinese political elites all set about their revolutions or rebellions on the basis of certain modern political or philosophical ideals from the West. Subsequently, they tried to impose their new ideologies after their control of power, but the patriarchal despotic model remained. The very important difference between the Western and Chinese despotism is that, the former functions through institutionalized powers such as monarchy or church, and the later through micro-power inside families and ethics. Europe in the Middle Ages was ruled by churches and kings and the despotic system would collapse if the power of kings and churches was overthrown. But the Chinese despotism was more embedded in the collective unconscious of the people, in the familial relations and social ethics than in the imperial power of dynasties. As early as in the Han Dynasty, the Chinese rulers commenced systematically incorporating the doctrinized Confucianism into social ethics of the Chinese. The doctrinized Confucianism epitomizes the entire empire into a single family with the emperors of the "universe" (Middle Kingdom) behaving as father and his subjects as sons. The emperors shall be benevolent to their sons and the sons shall have filial piety toward their father. The empires could achieve its prosperity and harmony only through maintaining every family prosperous and harmonious within the boundary of its sovereignty. Therefore, an empire is an enlarged family and the relation between rulers and their subjects becomes a benevolent and familial relation that is governed by Confucian ethics. Consequently, the social relations among people in traditional China were very much moral-oriented and family-patterned. The interpersonal relation centered on interests was quite despised and all commercial activities were regarded as very low deeds in the social life. In contrast, the government officials and aristocrats had extremely
high prestige and overwhelming privilege over the masses. Moreover, the civil service examination, which was conceived on the basis of the Confucian ethics concerning the relation between the ruler and the ruled, opened the door to the general public for entering the ruling court and becoming new aristocracy.

There was never a definite line of demarcation between the ruler and the ruled by inheritance. That line was always so precarious and fluid that the Chinese had never believed inherent legitimacy of rule and continued their attempts to usurp ruling powers. Then again, the Chinese also demonstrated enormous reverence toward rulers and pined for a benevolent ruler to lead them for good. This confusing attitude toward rulers can be well described by the oedipal complex of psychoanalysis in application to the unconscious of social collectives. So therefore, Chinese dynastic cycles were driven by the so-called oedipal complex to overthrow the patriarchal ruler. In Marcuse’s terms, this impulse is that of the “sons” which is explained by his social psychoanalysis: 98

In Freud’s construction, this hatred culminates in the rebellion of the exiled sons, the collective killing and devouring of the father, and the establishment of the brother clan, which in turn deifies the assassinated father and introduces those taboos and restraints which, according to Freud, generate social morality. 99

The overthrows of the old patriarchal emperors and the succession of a new emperor did not break the dynastic cycle because the new son-emperor always “deified” and reserved the previous system and morality. The despotic culture remained imbedded in Chinese tradition and collective unconscious.

After the late nineteenth century, China was further exposed to the West, and Western colonialism in China was intensified. The Chinese were so shocked by the

98 Ibid.
99 Ibid.
destructive power of the Western weapons and so surprised at advancement of Western technology and economy. They became very concerned about the national survival of China in the face of dramatically changed world. The first thing that the Chinese bureaucrats set about in their effort to chase after the West was the Self-Strengthening Movement in the 1860s when China began constructing railroads and arsenals during the movement. But the effort in promoting Chinese industry was finally frustrated by the difficulties from broader social reorganization and the measures taken tended to be piecemeal, halting, and ineffective.

The failure of the technological reform made the Chinese turn their eyes to institutional and political reforms. The One Hundred Days of Reform in the spring of 1898 initiated by Kang Youwei, one of the few Chinese intellectuals who came to grips with the problem of total modernization, promulgated a multitude of measures relating to constitutional monarchy, education, literacy and industrialization etc. The reform program was soon squelched abruptly by the extralegal ruler with the support of hardliners.

But the suppression by the conservative ruler, or the cruel father of family, actually provoked the Chinese with stronger aspiration for total modernization and equality with the West. The aspiration for total modernization, carried by the new generation of sons, not only included technological and institutional modernization but also cultural and social westernization. The new rebels, or the revolutionaries in modern terminology, of Republican Revolution in 1911 would not be satisfied with usurping the throne of the patriarchal ruler. Instead, they also wanted to change the social system and the ethics of society. The republican revolutionaries forcibly cut off all Manchurian “pigtails,” a
symbolic action to cut off the continuation of Chinese tradition (also Manchu's rule) and obliterate the familial society characterized by the power cycle of father and son, with their intention of establishing a modern republic with democratic politics. When the modern political system based on republicanism was established, the Chinese found that the patriarchal despotic tradition continued inside political culture. There were repeated attempts of warlords to usurp the power of state during Republican Period with their intention of restoring the imperial system.

In the face of devastating warlord wars and the increasing encroachments by the Western powers, Chinese intellectuals endeavored to seek for measures of national survival by creating a new culture and morals for Chinese society. They launched the New Culture Movement in 1915 that was conceived to westernize Chinese culture and catch up with the Western countries. The two impulses of obliterating patriarchal culture and gaining equality with the West were deeply embedded into the collective unconscious of Chinese intellectuals. These two impulses shaped the precariousness and turbulence of modern Chinese history.

The Chinese intellectuals believed that patriarchal despotism would not disappear if only the despotic system and patriarchal rulers were overthrown, because despotism was deeply incorporated into traditional family and ethics. They resolved to liberate individuals from family and introduce an individualistic ethic to the Chinese. They advocated “awakening of self” with more romanticizing the emotion of self than understanding the notions about individualism. The leading enlightenment intellectuals such as Lu Xun failed to discern the tension between individual desire and the common objective of the collective liberal intellectuals. They upheld individualism as a critical
weapon against patriarchal family and a “capitalize man” as an iconoclastic idol against Confucian ethics. These enlightenment intellectuals mixed up with the ideas of Rousseau, Nietzsche, Marx and Dewey and their notions about individualism always became the basis for a rational and collective objective in pursuit of transforming China into a civilized and progressive nation in equality with the West. The “individualistic man” for the enlightenment intellectuals of the New Culture Movement was only a notional or ethical image in contrast to the traditional man of servility. But this notional image had no any economic and social grounding that was usually brought about by the “relations of capitalistic production” in Marxist terminology. Unfortunately the capitalistic production in the early twentieth century of China was very primitive. This groundless individualism in the New Culture Movement naturally turned out to be a disparaging attitude toward the Confucian tradition and an embracing gesture toward modernization on the basis of progressive reason of the enlightenment intellectuals or reality principle in Freudian terminology. The nationalistic passion of Self-Strengthening was the ultimate objective of the movement. The internal contradictory orientations in the individualism of the New Culture Movement brought about a schizophrenic attempt of cultural renovation and enlightening. Lu Xun expressed his anxiety about this schizophrenic “self” through the protagonist of his novella Madman’ s Diary, who kept a diary about what he had felt, seen and encountered during his schizophrenia. The poor schizophrenic felt being watched and being conspired for his death by everybody around him. He did not try to make his way of escape but endeavored to enlighten those people and correct his sinful self. It is a vivid representation of the inner world of Lu Xun and his contemporaneous enlightenment intellectuals who resolved to change the national temperament (guo min
xing) on the one hand and stood up to gaining an equal footing with the West on the other. In the same novella, Lu Xun also implied that the enlightenment intellectuals were also the component of the patriarchal despotism by associating his protagonist to those who “devoured man.” He became aware that the intellectuals who advocated negating Chinese despotic tradition were at the same time driven by the traditional patriarchal impulse.

In order to satisfy or to repress the sadistic impulses toward father in pursuit of breaking the dynastic cycle, the Chinese political elites and scholars realized the necessity of reaching a sort of social contract in the common interest of preserving China as a whole. In chorus, the intellectuals of the New Culture Movement tired to impose a new ideology of modernity on Chinese society, namely “democracy and science,” which sought to subvert the Confucian family and to construct a modern nation-state in order to divert personal aspiration inside family to a larger-scale impersonal grouping and to the resistance to Western imperialism. In *Ero and Civilization*, Marcuse induced similar conclusion over social oedipal impulse:

The superego is loosened from its origin, and the traumatic experience of the father is superseded by more exogenous images. As the family becomes less decisive in directing the adjustment of the individual to society, the father-son conflict no longer remains the model-conflict.  

As the matter of fact, the enlightenment intellectuals’ advocacy for democracy and representative government was also an effort to shift the devotion of individuals from their families to the collective interests of the state. The common course of the Chinese became to build a strong modern state and equate itself with the West.

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100 Ibid., 63-64.
101 Ibid., 95.
Being frustrated by their futile enterprise, the intellectuals of the May Fourth Movement chose to revolt against the patriarchal powers as all other rebellious Chinese did in the past. Such revolutionary sentiment characterizes the "common attitude" of modern Chinese intellectuals at every historical stage, which reflects a primordial oedipal complex embedded in their collective unconscious.

After the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, the Versailles Conference in 1919 and the division of the political ideals among the enlightenment intellectuals in 1920s, the rootless enlightenment movement of China could no longer sustain. In the face of the intensified infringement upon China by the Western powers, the enlightenment intellectuals turned to seek for critical theories to the Western capitalistic system. Marxism and Leninism became the available negating theories and thoughts against capitalistic logic. Theoretically, the enlightenment ideas tend to approach to human society through an individual man with emphasis on the liberty of individual and humanity. While Marxism sees society through the perspective of man's economic status and classifies people in classes, the working class as whole is an antagonistic power against bourgeois class. The enlightenment intellectuals in the 1920s remorsefully condemned their earlier faith in individualism as a bourgeois illusion. As a result, they released their impulse of collective revolt against their father. They repudiated their earlier attempt of transforming the traditional culture of China and promoted political struggle between classes. The communist revolutionaries encouraged the peasants and workers to unite in order to form a working class as the leading body in the Chinese
communist revolution. The class struggle brought back the pattern of rebellion and usurpation of power, and the Chinese communist revolution resulted in a peasant leader in the rule of entire China during the 1940s.

Similar to the republican revolution of 1911, the victory of the communist revolution of 1949 raised the immediate question of establishing a new social system and introducing a new different ethics to the society from that of previous regimes. When Marxism-Leninism became the official ideology, the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party set about incorporating the abstract notions of Socialism into its administrative practice of ruling China. The CCP classified people into different classes: poor peasant, rich peasant, landlord, worker and capitalist etc. Even though the classes in the Marxist theory are abstract description of people’s economic status, the CCP institutionalized the notional description into a permanent essence of man. The Chinese were labeled by classes even if their economic conditions might have changed. The class-oriented social identity made possible the hierarchical system of Chinese society ruled by a dictator. Once a man was labeled by a social identity, he had to be subject to that identity and possessed a certain social resources accordingly. He could only promote his social status through sanitizing his socially contaminated thought and elevating his ethics to proletarian moral value. Most intellectuals were categorized as petit-bourgeois class in the lowest level of Chinese society. This traditional hierarchical politics and society were not able to sustain in the face of dramatically changed modern world of the late 1970s. Communism as an ambitious project of incorporating the brand new politics, economics and morals into Chinese society had ever lighted a hope upon the Chinese to embrace a new world. But last of all, communist ideology did not alter China’s father-son model of
despotism. Mao made him the father of China in the same way that Sun Yat-sen (who was officially titled the father of nation) and Jiang Jie-shi had done. Marcuse observes,

In every revolution, there seems to have been a historical moment when the struggle against domination might have been victorious—but the moment passed. An element of self-defeat seems to be involved in this dynamic. In this sense, every revolution has also been a betrayed revolution.\textsuperscript{102}

After Mao, Deng Xiaoping, the successor of Mao and the last father of the nation, in the face of the “destructive impulse of sons,” did not seek a new ideology (probably because nothing new was available then) to displace Mao’s. He chose to rationalize economic reforms instead, and tried to maintain his patriarchal monopoly of power. The dramatic restructure of economic system and very fast growth of social wealth during China’s economic reform in the 1980s brought about a complete new social structure. Many people’s economic and social status had remarkably deviated from their previous social categories of labeling. Some were even upside down. Moreover there emerged some groups of people who could not be named by the available categories of Mao’s era. The transformed social strata based on the reformed economic structure, which was carried out and pressed forward by the Chinese government for more than ten years, needed to be renamed. There were increasing demands from the newly rising powers for political recognition, and intensified anxiety of intellectuals about prospective democracy of China. The Tiananmen Incident of 1989, which was the last rebellion of the sons, led to the revival of the attempt to incorporate capitalist democracy into China’s ideology, an attempt which had ever been made eighty years ago.

After the 1980s, the social relations and power structures of China were on its way to a profound transformation. The new rising class of Chinese entrepreneurs actively
participated into national politics and the mass media was becoming a strong balancing
dpower to the political monopoly of the CCP. Together with the death of the last father of
the nation, the father-son model of the rule was gone for good during the post-Deng era.
There would be no more tangible fathers to assume Deng’s paramount position thereafter.

... these personal father-images have gradually disappeared behind the
institutions. With the rationalization of productive apparatus, with the multiplication of
functions, all domination assumes the form of administration.\textsuperscript{103}

Deng’s rationalization of the economy was a preliminary stage for such transformation,
which would put an end to the recurrent cycle of domination-rebellion-domination and
produce a new power mechanism.

The development of a hierarchical system of social labor not only rationalizes
domination but also “contains” the rebellion against domination.... From the slave
revolts in the ancient world to the socialist revolution, the struggle of the oppressed has
ended in establishing a new, “better” system of domination; progress has taken place
through an improving chain of control.\textsuperscript{104}

During the post-Deng era, after the disappearance of the last father of society, there
was a shift from the CCP’s monopoly of political power to its concentration on
economic power. The dominion over Chinese society became anonymous. Social
control turned to be administered by offices in which the controlled was the employers
and employed. Pop-culture and commodity fetishism became the ruling ideology. “The
ideology of today lies in that production and consumption reproduce and justify
domination.”\textsuperscript{105} Revolt against the primal father had become impossible “when the

\textsuperscript{102} Ibid., 91.
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., 98.
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., 90.
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., 100.
dominion of the father has expanded into the dominion of society.” The agent of repressive organization today is the mass media and China’s educational system. Marcuse observes,

The experts of the mass media transmit the required values; they offer the perfect training in efficiency, toughness, personality, dream, and romance. With this education, the family can no longer compete. In the struggle between the generations, sides seem to be shifted: the son knows better; he represents the mature reality principle against its obsolescent paternal forms.... The progressive father is a most unsuitable enemy and a most unsuitable “ideal”- but so is any father who no long shapes the child’s economic, emotional, and intellectual future.  

Furthermore, globalization brought about multidimensional changes in social relations in China. Cultural and social productions inside China had become a part of the global productive system. The power of international capitals became entwined with the web of local powers and complex social relations. This made the power structure of China far more multi-dimensional than the traditional father-son confrontation in a flat surface.

Chinese nationalism was believed a strategic reaction of some intellectuals to the impending globalization, who deliberately positioned the authority of China—the power center as a patriarchal image—to the repressed and marginal place equal to theirs and redirected the national oedipal complex against the overwhelming power of the West.

The rise of the New Right and the New Left during the post-Deng era was less a result of Chinese intellectuals’ reaction to the changed social reality of China than it was the product of social production out of the changed relation of production and power discourse. The New Rightists’ conservative tendency toward market economy clearly demonstrated that the oedipal impulse had lost its effects on the capitalist mechanisms. The autonomous individualism became possible because the capitalist production had

106 Ibid., 91.
also produced public space for every social member. Individualistic value and self-
independence finally grounded onto Chinese soil. The notion of individualism imported
from the West was no longer abstract theory but realistic pattern of the Chinese behavior.
Many liberalistic intellectuals had become more and more satisfied with the status quo
and began enjoying their positions in the society. They believed China had finally merged
into the global village and was on its way to gaining an equal footing in the world with
the West. Their anxiety of national survival in the past decades was relieved and,
therefore, they optimistically announced the end of history, or perhaps the end of
Oedipus. The “universalistic” value—capitalism, as they happily saw it, was finally
incorporated into this old oriental country even if “it came a bit late.” Most of the New
Leftists, especially the “postologists,” hesitated to question the authority’s
rationalizations of present Chinese society. As Gilles Deleuze described in his Anti-
Oedipus: “Capitalism has learned this, and has ceased doubting itself, while even
socialists have abandoned belief in the possibility of capitalism’s natural death by
attrition.”\(^{106}\) The New Left criticized the consumer culture for being generated by the
capitalist production. But in fact, they had significant anxiety about their peripheral
position and the “triumph of anti-intellectual ideologies.”\(^{109}\) The New Leftists would not
try to seek a new social project or propose an ideological totality as a future alternative
for China. They “no longer believe in a primordial totality that once existed, or in a final
totality that awaits us[them] at some future date.”\(^{110}\) They wrestled with cultural

\(^{107}\) Ibid., 97.
\(^{108}\) Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, Anti-Oedipus (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983).
\(^{109}\) Marcuse, 94.
\(^{110}\) Deleuze, 43.
fragments produced by the industrial society and were busy with constructing the multiply totalities in peripheries.

China’s ideological schizophrenia is the product of capitalist production, according to Deleuze’s theory. The criticism of Chinese consumerist culture made by the New Left also was the result of the cultural production of global capitalism. Wang Hui’s genealogical study on Chinese epistemological history was a milestone in the inevitable process of the increasing professionalism in Chinese academia. The Chinese intellectuals moved away from their traditional roles as China’s political elites in the process of social transformation and revolution. They returned to campuses and became institutionalized academic workers, who were subject to the division of labor. The rise of the New Left and New Right in the mid-1990s marks the waning of patriarchal despotism and the waxing of capitalism in China. The ideology of capitalism and free market has dominated Chinese society today and the entrepreneurial morale has replaced the traditional ethics of filial piety and political compliance. At the same time, the cultural critics to the modernist ideology from Chinese academia promise that the postmodernist culture is coming into sight on the horizon of China.
Bibliography


Glossary

CCP (中国共产党): Chinese Communist Party.

KMT (国民党): Kuomintang, the Chinese Nationalist Party.

Postology (后学): a coinage by the Chinese academia, denotes those who like to use the terminology and methodology of contemporary literary or philosophical theories of the West in their writings.

Elite: all those who have made themselves stand out from the majority of society in terms of one or more these variables: power, prestige, authority, influence and wealth.

New Left (新左派): a very loose concept referring to those who have a Neo-Marxism or the Western cultural leftist perspective on the problems of China.

New Right (新右派): a loose concept referring those who hold the Western liberal and liberal conservative ideals.

Old Left (老左派): refer to those who hold the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary ideals. Patriarchal Despotism: A traditional despotic society with a male ruler monopolizing total political power.

Guomin xing (国民性): A negative phrase in Chinese linguistic refers to the defective national temperament in contrast to the Western civilization, which was coined in the New Culture Movement of the 1910s.

The new enlightenment movement (新启蒙运动): refers to the cultural enlightenment movement in the 1980s of China.
One Hundred Days of Reform (百日維新): A movement under the auspices of Guangxu (光緒) emperor in the spring of 1898, Kang Youwei drafted numerous edicts that promulgated a multitude of measures relating to constitutional monarchy, education and industrialization.

Self-Strengthening Movement (自強運動): Some Chinese such as Zuo Zongtang and Zhang Zhidong (張之洞) in the post-Tongzhi (同治) period continued to opt for modernization.

Cao Yu: 曹禺

Chen Kaige 陈凯歌

Chun can 春蚕

Dai Jinhua: 戴锦华

Dai Jitao 戴季陶

Deng Xiaoping 邓小平

Er Mo 二嫫

Falungong 法轮功

guoxue 国学

haizhiwang 孩子王

heshang 河殇

Hu Shi 胡适

Hu Yaoban 胡耀邦

Hua Guofeng 华国锋

Jiang Jieshi 蒋介石
Jiang Zemin 江泽民

Kang Youwei 康有为

kuangren riji 狂人日记

Li Dazhao 李大钊

liangge fanshi 两个凡是

Liang Qichao 梁启超

Lin Biao 林彪

Liu Jiangde 刘建德

lun xinminzhu zhuyi 论新民主主义

Lu Xun 鲁迅

maodun lun 矛盾论

Mao Zedong 毛泽东

Meng Fanhua 孟繁华

renwen jingshen de taolun 人文精神的讨论

shijian shi jianyan zhengli de weiyi biaozhuen 实践是检验真理的唯一标准

shiyijie shanzhong quanhui 十一届三中全会

shushu de gushi 叔叔的故事

Shui Hu 水浒
The Three Representatives (Representations) 三个代表

Wang Anyi 王安忆

Wang Dingding 汪丁丁

Wang Hui 汪晖

Wang Shuo 王朔

wuzhong fengjing 雾中风景

Xiao Bin 萧彬

Xu Jinya 徐静亚

Yanan 延安

Yu Youyu 于友渔

zhai dao 载道

zhongguoren keyi shoubu 中国人可以说不

zhongguo shehui jieji de fenxi 中国社会阶级的分析

zhongguo wenhua shuyuan 中国文化书院

zhongliu 中流

Zhou xiaowen 周小文