

Marx's Sublation of Feuerbach's Humanism

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Abstract

Marx's humanistic thought was developed on the basis of critically inheriting Feuerbach's humanistic thought. The two thoughts are closely related in terms of human nature, human alienation, and human existence. Compared with the predecessors, Feuerbach's humanistic ideas have made extremely high achievements in the natural field, but they inevitably have many limitations in the social and historical fields. Marx began by believing in Feuerbach's thoughts and later turned to criticize him. In this process, he developed and perfected his own theory, and realized the sublation of Feuerbach's humanistic thoughts.

Keywords

Marx, Feuerbach, humanism.

1. Introduction

Marx's thoughts were never produced abruptly, but on the basis of fully absorbing the thoughts of many predecessors, combined with their own in-depth thinking, continuous improvement and progress. Among the many scholars who had a profound influence on Marx, Feuerbach cannot be underestimated. Because the two people's humanistic thoughts are very much related, some scholars believe that Marx inherited Feuerbach's ideological core, but only made amendments and supplements on this basis. While others think there are not many traces of Feuerbach's thought in the system constructed by Marx, because Marx's later mature philosophy is far from Feuerbach. In fact, these two views are extreme. We should treat the relationship between Marx and Feuerbach's humanistic thoughts objectively and dialectically.

2. Overview of Feuerbach's Humanism

2.1. Human Nature

Feuerbach's thoughts on the nature of human beings are inseparable from his criticism of Hegel's "absolute spirit". Hegel "thrown away" God and filled this vacant position with "absolute spirit", thinking that "absolute spirit" exists independently of man. It is not only the essence of man, but also the essence of everything. At first, Feuerbach inherited Hegel's thought, but as his materialistic thought gradually formed, he turned to criticize idealism.

Feuerbach believes that "man comes from nature"[1], human and nature share the same root and cannot be separated. In his view, the two major categories of philosophy (thinking and existence) need to have a subject to unify. This subject is a realistic person as a perceptual existence, and nature is the basis of its existence. In this system, Feuerbach's "realistic person" is different from our contemporary meaning. He believes that this term emphasizes the perceptual existence of human beings. The world is the perceptual world that people perceive by using their senses. Man can only be a "natural man" in a natural state. For the nature of such a person, Feuerbach's generalization is abstract. He abstracted the "kind existence" from the universal commonness of people, and regarded this kind of "kind existence" as the "kind

essence" of adults. The "kind essence" here does not reflect how to construct the complex social relations of people. It also ignores the most important people's practical activities and is completely out of touch with them. In this description, people are reduced to being indifferent and isolated without any sociality.

2.2. Human Alienation

Feuerbach not only stayed at the level of criticism of idealism, but also analyzed the essence of traditional religious theology, shining with the glory of humanism.

As Feuerbach's critical tool in criticizing religious theology, alienation theory is an indispensable paving stone for Feuerbach's humanistic thought. In his view, religion is an allusion to the real world in which people live in ignorance and chaos. When people encounter a dilemma that they are unable to deal with and cannot find an effective way to deal with it, they will fantasize about having external, supernatural energy to help them escape. When the gap between this ability and fantasy is getting bigger and bigger, religion The embryonic form is becoming increasingly obvious. Therefore, God is essentially the result of man's constant energy and constant creation; its will is essentially the human will. This shows that the essence of religion is the alienation of human nature, and the so-called God is nothing but a spiritual entity created by the alienation of human subjective consciousness. The traditional religious theology completely reversed this process and put God above man. As an extremely powerful being, he dominates, controls, and even enslaves man in turn.

2.3. Human Existence

The "perceptual world" in which Feuerbach believes the "real man" is located is where the essence of man should exist. In his view, people are not abstract and conceptual people thought by previous thinkers, but concrete and sensible. Because the senses are the first thing that people trust, and they are the bridge connecting people's thinking and existence, so all people's thinking is based on the perceptual cognition of the senses, and from this, a grasp of the individual to the general is generated. Therefore, man is a realistic, living existence, and a perceptual existence that transcends biological significance. Of course, people are also rational, but whether it is about rational thinking or a deeper search for truth, they are all built on the cornerstone of "man is a perceptual existence".

With such a premise, Feuerbach further clarified the philosophy of human ontology: matter first, spirit second. If people want to obtain truth, they need to combine sensibility and reason, existence and thinking, and matter and spirit. It is not difficult to find that the thoughts under this system have initially shown the outline of Marxist philosophy that we are familiar with. However, Feuerbach was constrained by the perceptual world and could only see some superficial and shallow connections, and lacked understanding of human existence from the perspective of human social attributes. This was also a dimension that Marx wanted to criticize later.

3. Marx's Sublation of Feuerbach's Humanism

3.1. Human Nature

The concept of "quasi essence" was picked by Marx from Feuerbach. He basically supported Feuerbach's idea of equating the essence of religion with the essence of human beings, but Marx did not stop there. It is the path of materialistic humanism that has continued on.

On the one hand, Marx pays more attention to the study of reality than Feuerbach, and constructs his own ideological system from some realistic problems and dimensions. As mentioned above, the "real people" pointed to by Feuerbach is quite different from our contemporary semantics. In fact, it emphasizes more on abstract people living in nature, free

from the process of historical development. Through research, Marx found that this concept is divorced from the real world in which people live, and only regards people as natural products. It does not apply to people with complex and diverse social relationships in reality, and does not reflect human social attributes. In other words, Feuerbach's view does not work in the field of social history. Marx believes that real people are people in practice. Only in practice can the subjectivity of people be highlighted. People have established various relationships in practical communication. Therefore, the essence of people should be "the sum of all social relations"[2]. On the other hand, on the view of "class", Marx gave a more comprehensive conclusion. Feuerbach believes that the essence of human being "is contained in the group and in the unity of people", but "this unity is only based on the reality of the difference between self and you"[3]. In Marx's view, the "kind" emphasized by Feuerbach is more of a kind of community, "an inherent, silent universality that naturally connects many individuals"[4]. This kind of "universality" only clarifies a kind of "perceptual spirit", a kind of abstract spirit, using it to summarize the essence of man has slipped into the category of idealism invisibly. On this basis, Marx agreed with the concept of "kind" and regarded people as a kind of existence, but introduced the concept of freedom, thinking that the essential characteristic of kind should be free and conscious activities. The difference between humans and animals is embodied in the essence of the species, because humans have subjective initiative and can freely control themselves. Humans not only carry out the same instinctive life activities as other animals, but can also creatively produce and live with others; they not only have natural attributes, but also have essential social attributes. Therefore, Marx's class essence considers people as the subject of thinking at the basic level, which is different from other objects as beings, and emphasizes the interaction between people at a deeper level.

3.2. Human Alienation

3.2.1. The Inheritance of The Theory of Religious Alienation

Marx inherited Feuerbach's critical attitude towards religion, exposed its essence, and clarified the origin of alienation. On this point, the two views are highly consistent. Marx believes that religion is made by man, who created a religious world separated from the real world in man's own fantasy. In this illusory world, one can feel the happiness that cannot be obtained in the real world because of difficulties or sufferings. Therefore, in this process, man actually realizes liberation by separating his own essential power and assigning it to the "god" in the illusory world. In other words, the essence of religious theology is the alienation of man. From this perspective, Marx spoke highly of Feuerbach's manifestation of the relationship between religious theology and alienation, but also pointed out the imperfections of this thought, and further expressed the view that religion should be exposed and eliminated in order to solve practical problems.

3.2.2. The Elucidation of The Theory of "Labor Alienation"

The reason why Marx is more advanced than Feuerbach is that his analysis of alienation goes far beyond the religious level. He pays attention to extending the thought of religious alienation to the level of the capitalist society in which he is located. It carefully considers the facts of capitalist production relations and all aspects of capitalist society. Marx found that "the more commodities a worker creates, he becomes a cheap commodity, and the increase in the world of things is proportional to the devaluation of the world of people"[5]. Under the conditions of capitalist production relations, workers did not reap more and more wealth with the continuous expansion of the scale of production and the continuous increase of their own labor. On the contrary, the gap with the capitalists became larger and larger. poverty. Workers' labor (and products) are no longer under their own control, but turned upside down into something that oppresses and enslaves them, and becomes the opposite of them, a kind of alien. This is the so-called "labor alienation". Marx believes that the most urgent task after exposing the essence

of religion is to change the oppression of religion on real people in practice, reduce the negative influence of religion on people, and overthrow capitalism that makes people alienate.

3.3. Human Existence

Firstly, Marx completed the transformation of perspective from metaphysics to dialectics. As mentioned above, Feuerbach believes that people are people in the "perceptual world" and are perceptual entities. People's perception comes from their own contact with the natural world, limiting the nature of man to nature. Marx believed that such a view did not break out of the circle of metaphysics, and still regarded people as abstract existences, only seeing isolated individuals. He believes that people are not only perceptual entities, but can also use these perceptual activities (labor) to create everything around people (including the country and society) and continue to move forward in the interaction between people. This embodies the connected and specific historical dialectics.

Secondly, Marx realized the sublation of Feuerbach's thought in the view of human practice. Feuerbach's definition of human practice is relatively simple. It only regards human's perceptual activities as practical activities (such as eating and breathing activities that can be visually inspected by the senses), instead of treating people as subjects, but To understand from the dimension of the object, there is no social attribute. Marx criticized this view. He believes that practice is not just a simple perceptual activity, but a creative and active activity carried out by the person as the subject, which must be carried out in a certain real social relationship. Practice is the only criterion for testing truth, and it is also the method and means for people to understand and transform the world.

Finally, compared with Feuerbach, Marx has a clear transcendence in the path towards humanism. Feuerbach believes that "love makes man a god, and makes god a man". He proposed the establishment of a "religion of love", through an extremely idealized "love" between people, to replace the love of God in traditional religious theology, in order to achieve the purpose of returning to the essence of man. Obviously, this kind of thinking is a somewhat utopian, imaginary and abstract fantasy. Marx believes that since the capitalist system is the actual source of human alienation, it should be eliminated fundamentally, and human liberation should be achieved through communism, and the development of freedom should be achieved. Only in this way can we truly accomplish the goal of eliminating human alienation.

4. Conclusion

In short, Marx's humanistic thought, as a component of the broad territory of Marxist philosophy, is not only obtained by pieced together and received the thoughts of predecessors, but formed by using his unique thinking. He rejected the outdated and outdated views, critically inherited the more reasonable theories, and combined his own research on political economy. It is an immortal classic in Marx's system, and it also has an irreplaceable influence on future generations.

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