

Derrida's Interpretation and Inheritance of Marx

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Abstract: As one of the influential ideas in the postmodernist trend, deconstructionism ushered in a golden age of criticism in the 1980s and established the starting point of postmodernist thought. As a representative figure of deconstructionism, Derrida's deconstruction of Marx serves not only to defend Marx and Marxism against various criticisms but also to deconstruct Marxism, expressing his deconstructionist view of Marxism and demonstrating the unique charm of deconstructive thought.

Keywords: Marxism; Derrida; Deconstruction; Condemnation; Political responsibility

After the Collapse of the Soviet Union and Drastic Changes in East Europe, socialist countries embarked on a path of reform, and Karl Marx was subjected to unprecedented criticism and even condemnation worldwide. However, the renowned French philosopher Jacques Derrida firmly believed that Marxism, as a specter, would not vanish, and that Marx's influence on the course of world history could never be dissolved.

Derrida argued that in the era of globalization, Marx holds an indispensable realistic meaning. Post-modernity cannot forget nor be devoid of Marx. Derrida's rigorous exploration of the essence of Marx's spirit served as a strong and powerful defense, safeguarding the historical position of Marx and Marxism in the Western world.

1. Derrida's Interpretation of Marx

In Derrida's work *Specters of Marx*, which deconstructs Marx and Marxism, he specifically describes the relationship between the problems of existence and the radical spirit of criticism that originates from the philosophies of Marx and Hegel. Derrida holds that Marx, as a former young Hegelian, inherited Hegel's dialectical thinking, but at the same time, was inevitably affected by Hegel's idealistic way of thinking. He believes that Marx's observation in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* that the old specters will once again become the foundation of social ethics, and that the separation of law and legitimacy, justice and ethical life will open up the possibility of political life, supports this viewpoint and judgment. Derrida also points out that in *Capital*, Marx offers a social theory of a commodity economy derived from production rather than a narrative about overthrowing all the necessary conditions of the old world. Marx's attempt to sever the ideology of the Hegelian spirit from the movement of "real individuals and the material conditions of their lives" itself creates a disruptive effect of the economy on politics. In Marx's dialectics, the dynamics of the oppressed are thought to be internalized in the antagonistic organization of private property relations, and rooted in the development of productive forces.

Derrida holds that Hegel's concept of alienation is the cornerstone of Marx's revolutionary spirit, but this cornerstone is logically imperfect. For Marx, the others that appear in the historical process of capitalism, i.e., those engaged in production, are progressively alienated as the productive forces develop. The history of racism, patriarchy and cultural imperialism is thus always reflected in the dialectic of class struggle. Marx's revolutionary spirit originates from the dialectical relationship between the composition of revolutionary subjects and the structural contradictions of capitalism. Marx supports the proletariat and even represents its interests, because he believes that at least the heterogeneous element of the proletariat possesses an experience of being exploited that he receives and with which he shares. If we allow the development of the system which completely changes commodification, then the pains generated under the conditions of production development will become the responsibility that orthodox Marxism should not shirk in theoretical and political terms. This marks the emergence of Marxism, which is the birth of a new ethical and political responsibility, rather than exclusively the proletarian revolution alone. Therefore, alienated thought cannot entirely replace critical spirit.

Derrida claims to be a true Marxist, and how to inherit Marx's legacy is an important issue that he repeatedly argues. What exactly is the spiritual legacy left by Marx? Marxism, as a serious ethical reproach, begins its spiritual essence from criticizing its own ontology and metaphysical assumptions, laying a solid foundation for Marxist politics. Derrida believes that this spirit signifies a new ethical political responsibility and he attempts to elucidate the relationship between the ethical demands of others and the transformation of the economic, social, and political conditions necessary to fulfill this responsibility, in order to construct an international new order that is distinct from capitalism.

2. Derrida's inheritance of Marx

The defense of the essence of Marx's spirit by deconstructionism has long been criticized in the West. Traditional Marxists, such as Callinicos and Perry Anderson, argue that Derrida's interpretation of Marxism is a complicity between metaphysics and the ideology and technological system of capitalism, which is far from orthodox Marxism. From the perspective of deconstructionism, Derrida's path of inheriting and developing Marxism could be a difficult one, but it is a completely new dimension of postmodern Marxism.

The spiritual core of Marxism is the narrative principle that Derrida has insisted and implemented. Traditional Marxists argue that the work of modern society consists in articulating the possibilities of revolution caused by changes in production. The possibilities always unevenly appear in different cultures, technological developments, and structures of economic and political cooperation. Derrida is not convinced by the approach of traditional Marxists, and argues that the historical materialist still evaluates itself on the basis of the relation of political struggles to the universal desires of what Marx called the "proletariat." A major discussion in deconstructionist studies of Marx's ontology is that how Marxism gives rise to political action. Derrida analyzes the changes in the mode of production in capitalist societies, describing the ethical responsibilities that modern societies should follow, and constructing new concrete forms of class solidarity. Deconstructionism is not, as traditional Marxists claim, cahoots with liberal capitalism, and much less a theory of messianic conformity waiting to be rescued from the evils of the world. Derrida makes it clear that metaphysical resources not well address ethical, just and political questions about technology and the capitalism. Modern society must not regard capitalism as a set of fixed conditional combination of the social economy, nor as a teleology that ultimately transcends the human desires it denies. Derrida has always insisted that the responsibilities that "come to us" are prior to the particular forms of law and contract that embody them, and which are constantly changing forms in the movement of capitalism and technology. The social material basis of deconstructionism is different from Marx's attempts to exorcize ghosts. Deconstructionism emerges from the globalization of the market and has an insight into the ghostly power of techno-capitalism. Standing on the side of ethical responsibility, Derrida rescues Marxism from the decisive factor of materialism, opposes the spectral game of revolutionary cohesion, and finally completely divorces from the dialectic between subject and object, economic base and superstructure, that determines the historicity of the mode of production. The ethical requirement of Marxism constructed by Derrida is a hospitable rule. He does not completely abandon Marx's critique and rejection of capital, but rather finds another way to seek a more realistic ethical responsibility than the dialectic of class struggle.

The new international order constructed by Derrida is different from Marx's communist society in that he does not support class struggle and his discourse of class unity is an innovative development of class struggle thought. Derrida argues that ideology can aggregate differences, allowing those who accept poverty and powerlessness to form international workers' organizations in the face of cultural, religious, racial, and gender differences. The core issue of Derrida's theory of cosmopolitan ethical responsibility and the new international order for others is hospitality, the possibility of realizing justice in the differential structure of hospitality, and the class struggle discourse is then transformed into a political-ethical responsibility in the future democratic concept. Derrida's law of hospitality is not an abandonment of current political realities or a reduction the doctrine of class politics to a neo-Kantism of internationalism. Derrida demands for fidelity to the question of class in which he attempts to maintain absolute hospitality in relation to the cultures, races, and religions by which economic forces are divided, an idea that is not a demand for material necessity, but rather gathers heterogeneous dissenting actions into fragile alliances, alliances that are a duty to the other over and above every covenant of fraternity.

Derrida's interpretation of Marx's class struggle tends to be a "democracy of the future," embodied in the transformative power of the other. Derrida's understanding of class is different from Marx's in that he sees the transformative power comes from those who come from outside the Western cultural, economic, and legal horizons. And they always propose formal structures that are in dispute with the world and are also summoned to every level of life, culture, and existence by the virtual expansion of capital. These people will create a new order, an international order that is completely different from the old world, and a revolutionary order that is different

from Marx's blueprint for communism.

3. Conclusion

Derrida's argument about the diversity of Marxist praxis affirms the potential that countries, groups, or individuals can combine Marxism with their own autonomous practices. This suggests that Marxism does not necessarily have to follow the Soviet model, and the diversity of praxis encourages socialist countries to explore and seek new developments in their own practices. Derrida's deconstruction provides new perspectives for interpreting Marx's texts, new ideas for demonstrating the diversity of Marxist praxis, and new arguments for countering Western discourse hegemony. It contributes to understanding Marx through texts, interpreting Marxism through practice, and exposing Western discourse domination.

However, Derrida's deconstruction of Marx also has undeniable theoretical limitations. While Derrida's deconstructionism claims to be anti-ontological and anti-transcendental, it paradoxically turns towards ontology and transcendentalism in the process of deconstruction, deviating from the path of Marxism. Marxism deconstructed by Derrida has become a mere shell of critical spirit, tinged with messianic color and veering towards a utopian-style new international, perpetually deferring communism on its way.

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