



Marx's Critique and Transcendence of Classical German Anthropology: A social reading of the developmental turn of the "real individual"

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ABSTRACT

Marx's critique and transcendence of classical German anthropology mainly focuses on reinterpreting the concept of the "real individual". The study points out that the discussion of "human being" in classical German philosophy is too abstract, ignoring the concrete social and historical background. Marx proposed that the nature of human being should be understood in the context of social and historical conditions, emphasizing the social and historical nature of human beings, especially in the capitalist society, where the alienation of labor is regarded as the key issue. His theory not only realized a revolutionary transformation in the way of thinking, but also subverted the philosophical outlook and themes, shifting the philosophical focus from abstract theory to the study of the real world. Particular attention was paid to the survival, development and emancipation of the proletariat and human beings. The far-reaching influence of Marxist philosophy is not only reflected in its ability to explain the world, but also in its function of changing the world, establishing its status as the "philosophy of changing the world". This analysis has profound significance for understanding Marx's anthropological theory and its importance for contemporary society and philosophical research. Marx's anthropological theory breaks through the traditional philosophical understanding of the nature of man in a single dimension and introduces the dimension of social relations and productive activities. He argued that the social nature of human beings is realized not only through labor, but also embodied through interpersonal relations and social interactions. This view provides a new perspective for understanding the position and role of human beings in complex social structures, and is an important inspiration for the study of modern social sciences, especially social philosophy. Overall, Marx's theory of anthropology, by critically transcending classical German anthropology, provides us with a brand new theoretical framework and profound insights for understanding the social and historical nature of human beings as well as their role in modern society.

Keywords: anthropological theory; classical German anthropology; Marx; sociality; "real individuals"; "abstract persons"

I. INTRODUCTION

From ancient Greek philosophy to modern times, the question of the nature of man has been at the center of philosophical inquiry. The forms in which this question has been presented in various historical periods have revealed the spiritual and social background of the corresponding times. Marx's anthropological theory, especially his conception of the "real individual", not only transcended classical German philosophy, but also triggered a profound ontological change in the history of philosophy (Kondrashov, 2021). Marx drew on many ideas based on his study of classical German philosophy. Kant's view of reason, Hegel's concepts of absolute spirit and self-consciousness, and Feuerbach's theory of sensibility-objectivity all had a profound influence on Marx. However, Marx did not simply follow these ideas, but critically inherited and developed them. He emphasized that human beings are not abstract, isolated individuals, but "real individuals" in specific social and historical conditions (Kong, 2021). This view highlights the social and historical nature of human beings and the key role of practical activities in shaping the nature of human beings. In this day and age, Marx's theory of human nature is of great relevance in addressing and solving the challenges facing humanity (Sun, 2022). Although scientific and technological progress and the industrial revolution have improved the living conditions of human beings, they have also caused human beings to face problems such as materialization, environment, and population, which highlight the urgency of a deeper understanding of the nature of human beings. Marx's

anthropological theory provides us with a unique perspective, emphasizing the dynamism and creativity of human beings as the subjects of social history, while revealing the risks of alienation and lack of self-realization that may arise in the process of modernization. Therefore, an in-depth study of Marx's theory of the nature of man, especially his conception of the "real individual", is of great theoretical and practical value in guiding us to solve the problems of modern society and promote the free and comprehensive development of mankind. By reviewing and deeply exploring Marx's anthropological theory, we can better understand the status and role of human beings in modern society, and how to maintain and develop their essential characteristics in the process of meeting challenges. Marx's anthropological theory both transcends past philosophical traditions and provides profound insights and guidance for contemporary society.

2. THE THEORETICAL DILEMMA OF CLASSICAL GERMAN ANTHROPOLOGY: "THE ABSTRACT MAN"

The birth of classical German philosophy marked the entry of the capitalist mode of production into a mature stage. During this period, human beings made remarkable progress in their ability to change nature, and the relationship between human beings and nature was transformed, with the subject position of human beings being more prominent. In this context, the theoretical focus of German classical philosophy turned to the exploration of subjectivity, emphasizing the active relationship between subject and object to interpret things and their interconnections (Karneev , 2022). Based on the theories of Kant, Fichte and Schelling, German classical philosophy inherited and developed the achievements of modern philosophy. After further expansion by Hegel, the philosophy of the subject reached a stage of high development in this field. Feuerbach criticized the philosophy of this period from a materialist standpoint, aiming to reconstruct the status of the human subject (Nguyễn , 2022). However, despite Feuerbach's enlightening critique, humanistic theories in classical German philosophy were still unable to escape from their metaphysical foundations, presenting a concept of the "abstract human being".

The "Copernican revolution" led by Kant created a new way of thinking in the field of philosophy, in which he tried to solve the problem of the opposition between the subject and the object by introducing the concept of innate synthesis of judgment (Katrechko, 2022). Kant emphasized the importance of the subject in the process of knowing by focusing his moral philosophy on the free will of the subject after the categories and limits of knowing had been determined. He put forward the concept of "man legislates for nature", which emphasizes the importance of the subject's free will, and the goal is to achieve the transition from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom, i.e., to emancipate man from the bondage of external forces and achieve true freedom (Rivera de Rosales, 2021). Kant believed that human cognitive activity begins with sensibility, transitions through knowing, and ultimately rises to reason. Reason is a uniquely human power and mode of creation that is used not only to know the world but also to guide practical behavior. In reconciling empiricism and solipsism, Kant argued that understanding the nature of reason leads to complete knowledge without the need for dividing camps. Through this "Copernican revolution," Kant established the principle of subjectivity, i.e., "man legislates for nature," and constructed a rational connection between subject and object. However, Kant's theory also reveals its limitations, i.e., his understanding of subjectivity is still confined to a limited perspective, leading to the conclusion of the subject-object split - that reason is unable to reach the Self, and thus is unable to realize true freedom.

Inheriting Kant's philosophy, Fichte sought to resolve the subject-object problem and the conundrum between phenomena and the object-self left by Kant. He adopted an extreme subjectivist position, asserting the subjective self as the creator of the world, creating both the self and the not-self. In Fichte's philosophical system, the concepts of the self and the not-self are central, and he seeks to incorporate the object-self and the phenomenon into the self-setting, which he argues gives legitimacy and meaning to the world's existence (Marey , 2021). Fichte highly valued Kant's concept of practical reason and deepened its development. He argued that the categorical imperative set out in Kant's practical reason is not truly absolute and needs further proof. Therefore, Fichte attempted to provide Kant's moral theory with more substantive content and tried to bridge the rift between practical and theoretical rationality. The approach he takes is to construct a complete system of absolute idealism based on the system of the self setting up the non-self. Fichte's basic conclusions are as follows: both practical and theoretical philosophy are based on the original action of the self; the setting up between the self and the not-self and its contradictory movement drives the practical subject; and practical philosophy is somehow prioritized over theoretical philosophy. His ethical reflections, especially his understanding of the social nature of human beings, developed from his inheritance from Kant.

Hegel, as the pinnacle of classical German philosophy, developed the system of metaphysics to its extreme. In his philosophical system, the concepts of entity and subject are unified, and a bridge is constructed between subject and object through dialectical movement, and this process is seen as a way to realize wholeness. Hegel deeply comprehended the nature of consciousness and its historical movement, considering the historical movement of consciousness as both the generation of consciousness and the generation of objects, demonstrating the unity of logic and history. In Hegel's anthropological theory, he regarded man first as an object being, a view that had a profound influence on the subsequent Feuerbach and Marx (Dolgitskii , 2021). According to Hegel, man is not only a sensuous being, but is equated with self-consciousness (Abbott , 2021). In his idealistic philosophical system, man is not the subject of historical movement, but a bearer of objective spirit. He regarded nature, human society, and thinking as the products of absolute spiritual movement, and consequently, man as the product of absolute spirit. Therefore, the history of man is in essence a process of self-realization of consciousness. In Hegel's perspective, nature and society are regarded as the externalization of the absolute spirit, and the reason why human beings can transcend animals lies in the fact that human beings are spiritual entities with self-consciousness, capable of escaping from the bondage of the material world and realizing the freedom of independent self-determination. Man can recognize the universality of things, transcend nature, and move from necessity to freedom. Hegel once said, "'The essence of what makes a man a man' is 'spirit', and the 'sole purpose' of 'spirit' is 'spirit'. end' is 'freedom'." (Hegel, 1965) Thus, in Hegel's view, the whole history of the world is nothing but the process of realizing the consciousness of "freedom", i.e. self-consciousness.

Feuerbach played a pivotal role in the evolution of classical German philosophy, especially in the development of materialism and the principle of subjectivity. His conception of anthropology is not only the cornerstone of the formation of Marx's anthropological theory, but also a key link in the exploration of Marxist anthropological theory. Feuerbach's initial intention was to free himself from the metaphysical shackles of classical German philosophy and to rebel against the denial of the Absolute Spirit to human beings with the criticism of religion as the cornerstone, and he sought to restore the concept of true human nature (KINAĞ, 2022). This attempt was initially recognized by Marx, who particularly approved of the part of his religious criticism. However, Marx also pointed out that Feuerbach's anthroposophy was still essentially metaphysical and failed to really break through metaphysics to realize an in-depth critique. Feuerbach regarded human beings as sensible natural beings, and conscious class beings. He emphasized that compared with animals, human perception is infinite and universal, and that rationality is embedded in sensibility. According to Feuerbach, animals can only take the individual as an object, while human beings can take the class as an object, which is the essential difference between human beings and animals. Feuerbach further elaborates, "The isolated, individual human being, whether as a moral or a thinking entity, does not possess the essence of man. The essence of man exists only in the group, in the unity of man and man." (Feuerbach, 1984) This shows that Feuerbach not only criticizes and abandons the study of isolated, single human beings, but also explores the essence of human nature in the interrelationships between human beings. However, Feuerbach's critique of religion did not completely overturn the cornerstone of metaphysics. His understanding of human beings failed to fully transcend classical German philosophy, and although he emphasized the concepts of the natural, class, and love essences of human beings, these ideas remained at the abstract level. As a result, Feuerbach's philosophy is seen as a sort of embodiment of metaphysics, which is one of the motivating factors for the grounding and turn Marx relies on in his philosophical critique.

The theory of anthropology in classical German philosophy reveals the remarkable dilemma of the nature of metaphysics. In the philosophical systems of Kant, Fichte, and Hegel, the metaphysical structure and the authoritative position of subjectivity and self-consciousness were consolidated. Despite the important achievements of these philosophers in exploring the nature and status of human beings, their ideas were still constrained by metaphysical concepts. Feuerbach attempted to solve this dilemma by creating a materialist anthropology, but his attempts still failed to completely escape from metaphysical categories. He used the abstractions of "class" and "love" to describe human beings, and his theory remained at the conceptual and metaphysical level. In classical German philosophy, human beings were regarded as conceptual entities in the supersensible world, and this supersensible understanding set limits to the development of anthropological theory. It is in this context that Marx's philosophy was born, seeking to overcome this dilemma. Marx's philosophy not only theoretically criticized the previous metaphysics, but also attempted to fundamentally reshape the concept of the human being.

3. THEORETICAL CONNOTATION OF MARX'S IDEA OF THE NATURE OF MAN: "THE REAL INDIVIDUAL"

In the perspective of classical German philosophy, human beings were regarded as part of the supersensible world, and the limitations of this way of perception could only be overcome by a complete rejection of metaphysics. Against this background, Marx's philosophical thought emerged, which not only criticized traditional metaphysics at the theoretical level, but also fundamentally reshaped the conception of the human being. By placing human beings in social-historical practice and emphasizing their material existence and social relations, Marx introduced anthropological theory from the abstract level of metaphysics to concrete social-historical practice, opening up a new field for social science and philosophy.

In his historical materialism, Marx radically reshaped the understanding of man. He emphasized that in order to understand the nature of man, it is necessary to start from the actual man, living in concrete historical conditions, rather than from the man in an abstract, isolated state. For Marx, human beings are formed and developed in practical activities of material production that are deeply embedded in the course of social history. People's needs and social relations constitute their way of being, and these are concrete facts that can be observed through experience. According to Marx, the essence of human beings is embodied in the real-life processes of production and reproduction, which contrasts with the traditional philosophical approach to understanding human beings in terms of abstraction or sensuous intuition. Marx pointed out that the essence of man evolves in the mode of material production and social relations, implying that man's essence is not a static entity but a dynamic process that changes with historical conditions and social structure (Thi-Pham & Bui-Xuan, 2021). Man's mode of existence and essence are expressed through his sensual activities in production and reproduction activities that not only satisfy material needs, but also serve as a way for man to realize his creativity. Marx also emphasized that the existence of the division of labor, while promoting the development of productive forces, also limits the free development of the individual, as it fixes him within a particular sphere of activity, thus leading to alienation. Individuals' lifestyles and social status are limited by class structure, and true individual freedom and full development can only be achieved under conditions that eliminate private ownership and alienated labor. Marx's view emphasizes that human activity is not only for the satisfaction of basic material needs, but also as a means of expressing and realizing human nature. By transforming the natural and social environment, man continuously realizes and manifests his essence. In this process, human sociality, creativity and free will become central components of their essence. This way of understanding breaks through the traditional philosophical understanding of human essence as fixed and abstract, and closely links human essence to its socio-historical conditions.

In his theoretical system of historical materialism, Marx deeply analyzed the nature of man and his evolution in capitalist society. According to him, human beings do not exist in isolation, but are generated in social and historical activities, especially in the practice of material production. Human development implies the process of getting rid of alienation, which plays a key role in the course of human history. Marx pointed out that alienated labor in capitalist society reveals that the real nature of man is subject to a specific system of social relations. Alienated labor is not only a manifestation of contradictions and conflicts within

the system of social relations, but also reflects the limitations of man in such social relations. This alienation is mainly reflected at two levels: first, in the process of commodity exchange, the social relations that are supposed to embody the labor exchange relations between producers are alienated into a special force that transcends the individual; and second, in the labor process, the relations of gratuitous appropriation of surplus labor between the owners of the means of production and the producers, and between the capitalists and the workers, reveal the domination of labor by capital. Marx emphasized that in capitalist society, the real nature of man can be embodied only in one-sided social relations. In alienated labor, the real individual is unable to realize free and conscious labor; individual freedom cannot be realized in such social relations, and labor is reduced to a mere means of earning a living. Social relations are constructed on the basis of inequality and unfreedom, and are unable to reveal the true nature of man. According to Marx, the alienated relationship in capitalist society is a temporary phenomenon of history, not a natural historical relationship, nor a social relationship common to all stages of history, but a stage in the process of human development. In the relation of capital to wage labor, the extreme form of alienation of labor activity to its conditions and to its products is a necessary transition point. This form of relationship heralds the dissolution of the prerequisites of production and creates the material conditions for the realization of the full development of the free human personality.

Marx's in-depth analysis of capitalist society reveals the contradictions and limitations of this social system. He clearly pointed out that although the commodity economic activities of capitalist society transformed individual labor into social labor and constructed a wide range of social ties across territories, bloodlines and nationalities, this did not lead to the full expansion of the free identity of the individual. On the contrary, it constitutes an obstacle to human development in a novel form and triggers the alienation of social relations. The historical contribution of capitalist society has been the creation of unprecedented productivity and a global network of social relations. However, this improvement in material living conditions has not led to the realization of the comprehensive development of the individual, but rather to the alienation of human life activities. In the capitalist system, the working class and even the capitalist are subject to the relations of capital. The mechanization of mass production has reduced the intensity of human labor, but has led to problems such as hunger and overwork, and the emergence of new technologies has been accompanied by the aggravation of moral and social problems. Marx emphasized that the progress and discovery of capitalist society, on the contrary, gave life to material forces, while human life activities were reduced to the subordination of things. In his view, capitalist social relations are a unique and historical social relation, a transitional stage of historical development. In this stage, despite the rapid development of productive forces, science and technology, capitalism is not the only or ultimate form of wealth production. Eventually, as the capitalist economy develops, this social relation will touch its own historical boundaries and be replaced by a new one. Communist society presupposes the elimination of the alienating social relations that are antagonistic in capitalist society and the liberation of the material conditions that are otherwise conditioned by capitalist social relations, so that they become the actual conditions for the full development of the free identity of the human being. This analysis of Marx provides us with a profound understanding of the development of capitalist society and a vision of the feasibility of a freer and more just communist society.

In the communist society envisioned by Marx, the nature of the relationship between labor and society undergoes a fundamental change. In this form of society, labor in the sphere of material production ceases to be a manifestation of alienation and is transformed into a free and conscious act that becomes an integral part of the essential needs and creative activities of human beings. The purpose of labor is no longer merely survival or capital accumulation, but is embodied as a means of unfolding human creativity and realizing one's potential. In a communist society, the individual becomes a direct member of society, with mastery over nature, society, and his or her own destiny. Within this social structure, human nature is freed from the constraints of one-sided or alienated social relations. On the contrary, it presents a comprehensive social relationship that contains unlimited possibilities for development. The word "comprehensive" here implies a future-oriented, infinite potential for development, and highlights the existence of the human being as a being of infinite possibilities. In this social relationship, each individual can fully unleash his or her potential diversity and creativity. In restrictive social relations, on the other hand, human potential and free individuality often cannot be fully realized. According to Marx, the realization of such comprehensive social relations needs to be achieved through man's own practical activities. Practice is not only man's way of being, but also the key to realizing his inner potential and creativity. In a communist society, social relations are fully open to all, and it is in the process of practice that the individual realizes his or her creativity and free personality.

Marx's insight into the nature of mankind profoundly reveals the intricate relationship between man and nature and man and society. He believed that in his interaction with nature, man not only constructs the relationship between man and nature, but also forms specific social relationships in his dealings with other people, thus acquiring social attributes. The establishment and development of these relationships all stem from the practical activities of production, because the primary prerequisite of man is survival, and in order to survive, man must participate in the transformation of nature. In this process, material relations between human beings - i.e., relations of production - naturally arise and further evolve into complex social relations. Marx emphasized that human nature is not an abstract attribute inherent in individuals, but "the sum of all social relations" (Marx & Engels, 1995). This means that real human beings are not only creatures engaged in perceptual and object-oriented productive and practical activities, but also social beings. Individuals cannot exist and develop without the context of social existence; independent individuals do not exist. In Marx's perspective, human activity and the realization of freedom are closely linked to society. Whether in content or form, human activities have social attributes. This viewpoint breaks through the traditional boundaries of individual-centrism and naturalism, places human beings in a broader social and historical context, and emphasizes the influence of social structures and modes of production on the individual.

4. MARX'S CRITIQUE OF CLASSICAL GERMAN ANTHROPOLOGY: FROM THE ABSTRACT MAN TO THE "REAL INDIVIDUAL"

In exploring the theory of the nature of man, Marx realized a profound transformation of traditional German anthropology. He rejected the abstract and generalized view of the human being in the old philosophy and turned his attention to the "real individual". Based on the new materialism, Marx emphasized the social and historical nature of human beings, and believed that the essence of human beings is formed and developed under social and historical conditions. Marx pointed out that human beings are not abstract entities existing in isolation, but are social beings living in concrete socio-historical conditions and interacting with nature and society through productive and practical activities. Marx's theory of the nature of man, in the whole process of its development, presents a comprehensive understanding of the nature of man, which is based on a scientific philosophical theoretical foundation. Starting from this theoretical foundation, this chapter will explore how Marx's theory of the nature of the human being revolutionized classical German anthropology and further explored how the "real individual" transcends the concept of the "abstract human being".

Prior to Kant, philosophers had mostly explored the human capacity to know from an empirical or a theoretical perspective, yet Kant believed that these views failed to address the fundamental question of how human capacity to know is possible. As a result, he pioneered a priori philosophy, which asserts the existence of an a priori knowledge prior to empirical knowledge. This theoretical turn was essentially an important shift in philosophy from the object to the subject. By emphasizing human agency and pointing out the limitations of the old way of thinking, Kant opened up a new path for the study of human concerns in classical German philosophy. However, Kant's a priori rational way of thinking did not realize the fundamental transcendence of the essence of philosophy, and the practice he proposed was mainly limited to the narrow understanding of moral practice. In the history of Western philosophy, the revolution of thinking triggered by Kant was not accomplished by himself, but was realized by the practical way of thinking established by Marx. Marx introduced the category of practice into philosophy and made it the basis of all philosophical theories. He highlighted the importance of practice by emphasizing in his Syllabus that "philosophers only explain the world in different ways, and the problem is to change it" (Marx & Engels, 2009). This way of thinking enables philosophy to realize the unity of the functions of explaining the world and changing the world. Marx's practical way of thinking is different from both Kant's a priori rational thinking and Feuerbach's perceptual practical thinking. On the basis of inheriting the philosophical thought of his predecessors, he created a practical way of thinking with his own characteristics. In Marx's view, practice mainly refers to the material production activities engaged in by people in real life. This understanding of practice captures the essence of practice and transcends the one-sided understanding of practice by previous philosophers. Examining the relationship between man and nature, man and society, and man and man through the base of practice, Marx pointed out that productive labor is the key to man's emancipation from the animal kingdom and the primary prerequisite for the existence of human history. His understanding of practical activities reached a new height of human nature. In terms of the overall development of Marx's philosophical thought, the establishment of the practical way of thinking marks a new journey in his philosophical revolution and provides a key perspective for the correct understanding of Marx's philosophical system.

The construction of Marx's theory of human nature was undoubtedly a far-reaching and revolutionary transformation of classical German philosophy. This transformation lies not only in a major breakthrough in the field of philosophy, but also in a fundamental reshaping of worldview. In the course of philosophical development, from Kant to Marx, and from classical German philosophy to Marxist philosophy, the theory of human nature has undergone a major transformation from idealism to materialism and then to historical materialism. Kant pioneered the idealism of classical German philosophy, placing human reason in a supreme position and emphasizing that "reason legislates for nature". Fichte, Schelling and Hegel further developed this idea, and Hegel in particular pushed idealistic thinking to the extreme. Hegel emphasized the subjective character of man and explored the influence of labor on human nature, although his conception of labor was more spiritual. Feuerbach's turn had a huge impact on Marx, who criticized religious idealist thought and restored the authority of materialism. "Feuerbach was the only one who took a serious, critical approach to the Hegelian dialectic; only he made a real discovery in this field and, in short, truly overcame the old philosophy." (Marx, 2018) Feuerbach started from a materialist perspective, and although he still remained in the understanding of abstract man, his ideas provided the prerequisites and conditions for the creation of Marx's historical materialism. On the basis of criticizing the idealism of Kant and Hegel and the old materialism of Feuerbach, Marx proposed to study the nature of human beings from the perspective of the "real individual". Marx emphasized that man is a being in the process of social history, thus bringing the study of human nature to science. His historical materialism broke through previous philosophers' one-sided and abstract understanding of human beings and realized a comprehensive and scientific understanding of human beings, thus completing a revolutionary change in classical German anthropology. This theoretical transformation of Marx not only changed the understanding of the nature of human beings, but also provided a completely new theoretical basis for the subsequent social sciences.

Marx's theory of the nature of man has indeed triggered a profound revolutionary change in the history of philosophy. This change involves not only a shift in the way of thinking, but also a reversal of philosophical views and philosophical themes. Based on the practical way of thinking and the worldview of historical materialism, Marx shifted the core task of philosophy from inquiring into the origin of the world to the study of the real world, paying particular attention to the problems of the survival, development and liberation of the proletariat and the whole of mankind. In classical German philosophy, philosophers were committed to applying their theories to the interpretation of the world, a philosophy that focused primarily on exploring the nature and origin of the world. Marx, however, asserted that what was crucial was not simply to interpret the world, but to change it. He went on to shift the focus of philosophy from interpreting the world to changing it, highlighting the value of practice and going beyond the scope of classical German philosophy in both theory and practical activity. On the one hand, Marx emphasized practical activity as the cornerstone of man's way of being and ontology of existence, and believed that the real world is constructed by practical activity. On the other hand, he reveals the reverse constraints of the real world on real human beings and their practical activities, arguing that the root cause of the alienated state of human beings in capitalist society lies in the real world. Therefore, in the Outline, he emphasizes that the task of the philosopher is not only to explain the world, but more importantly, to change it. The duty of Marxist philosophy is not only limited to theory, but also involves real life and practical

activities, and is committed to criticizing the irrationality of the real society, searching for realistic paths to realize philosophical goals, and laying the theoretical foundation for the free and comprehensive development of human beings. Therefore, Marxist philosophy has both the ability to explain the world and the function to change the world, which are intrinsically unified. It is for this reason that Marxist philosophy has been called "the philosophy that changes the world".

In summary, in analyzing Marx's theory of the nature of man, we find that he achieved a profound philosophical reform of classical German anthropology. Although much of the historical academic discussion has focused on Marx's critique of classical German philosophy, he actually inherited certain important elements of it. Marx's revolution was not just a critique, but a critical inheritance upon which he advanced his philosophical thinking. By changing his way of thinking and his worldview, Marx ultimately transformed the subject matter of philosophy. Instead of focusing solely on abstract theoretical explanations of the world, he shifted to the study of concrete individuals in the real world, especially in terms of their survival, development and emancipation. This shift marked Marx's transcendence of classical German philosophy at the theoretical level and provided a scientific basis for understanding concrete individuals in reality.

5. MARX'S TRANSCENDENCE OF CLASSICAL GERMAN ANTHROPOLOGY: THE ULTIMATE POINT OF THE "REAL INDIVIDUAL"

The essence of Marx's theory on the nature of human beings lies in the view of human beings as solid individuals in the course of history, thus transcending the traditional abstract conception of human beings. This theory not only overturns the basic premise of classical German anthropology, but also theoretically realizes a deeper understanding of human beings. Grounded in real life, Marx's perspective emphasizes that the nature of human beings, as individuals in the course of history, cannot be summarized by abstract concepts alone. This perspective provides a new dimension for understanding the multidimensionality and historicity of human beings and highlights the innovative spirit and far-reaching impact of Marx's theory.

Marx's distinction between the "real individual" and the "abstract human being" provides important insights into the nature of the human being. Human nature can be divided into two levels: general nature and specific nature. General essence reflects the commonality of human beings, i.e., the most basic and abstract attributes that human beings possess as beings distinguished from animals and other natural objects. In the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, Marx emphasized this commonality by defining human nature as "free and conscious activity." However, the concrete essence is concerned with individual differences, emphasizing that human beings, as real individuals, are not only different from animals, but also differ from one another (Kong, 2021; Henry, 2021; Sushentsova & Chaplygina, 2022). This idea is reflected in Marx's *German Ideology* that the nature of man in its reality is expressed as the sum of all social relations, highlighting the important role of social relations in shaping the specific nature of man. Thus, in exploring the nature of man, it is important to focus on the common features of humanity as a whole, as well as to consider the individual manifestations of the personality of the individual in particular social relations. This Marxian distinction contributes to a deeper understanding of the complexity of human beings as social beings, emphasizing that human beings are both part of natural existence and at the same time a product of society and history. By making this distinction between the nature of human beings, Marx's theory goes beyond simple abstract definitions and further explores the concrete practice of human activity and social relations. There are significant differences between classical German anthropology and Marx in exploring the nature of human beings, especially in their understanding of the general nature of human beings. Classical German anthropology tended to examine the nature of man from an abstract philosophical perspective, emphasizing human commonalities but neglecting the interaction between man and the external world (Gerardi & Ph. 2021). This approach leads to a one-sided understanding of human beings and fails to fully reveal the complexity and multidimensionality of human existence. In contrast, Marx's view focuses more on practice and real-world activities. He believed that the nature of man is not only intrinsic, but also influenced by the external world and environment. In Marx's view, the interaction between man and his environment is mutual, and man is constantly molding himself while changing his environment. This view not only considers the general nature of man, but also delves into the specific relationships between man and man and man and his environment (Kondrashov, 2021; Foster & Golemis, 2021). Thus, in contrast to the general view of essence in classical German anthropology, Marx's view is more comprehensive and scientific, revealing that human essence is both an intrinsic property and a product of social and historical conditions. This understanding contributes to a deeper realization of the dynamic and multidimensional nature of the human being as a social and historical being.

Marx's discussion of the nature of mankind has, to a certain extent, surpassed the views of classical German anthropology, thanks to his consistent adherence to the scientific methodology of dialectical materialism. In the process of discussing the nature of human beings, Marx put forward the division between "ideal nature" and "real nature" and analyzed the connection between the two in depth. He believed that the "ideal essence" is the highest state of mankind's pursuit of free and comprehensive development, and belongs to the category of "contingency", which represents the overall goal of mankind's development, and is the direction of mankind's continuous advancement. Comparatively speaking, "reality essence" refers to the concrete state of existence of human beings in the real world, which is the manifestation of human beings in the existing social relations and production relations, and belongs to the category of "actuality". In the real world, human nature is subject to the constraints of social relations, and therefore often fails to fully embody its ideal nature. Marx especially emphasized that the free and conscious activities of human beings, especially labor, are an important part of their essence (Jal, 2021; Hernandez, 2022; Eytan, 2021). However, in capitalist societies, labor is often alienated, resulting in the separation of the worker from the fruits of his or her labor, which reflects the "inhuman" nature of the human being. Thus, in a capitalist society, labor is not the full expression of human nature, but becomes merely a means of survival. Marx further elaborated the dialectical and unifying relationship between ideal and real essences. He argued that although human essence is affected by social relations, human practical activities are the basis of social relations. Therefore, the realization of the ideal nature of man requires a transcendence based on the nature of

reality. According to Marx, this transcendence can only be realized in a communist society, when labor will no longer be alienating but will become a conscious human activity and the free and comprehensive development of human beings can be realized. Marx's theory not only emphasizes that human nature is a dynamic and historical concept, but also reveals how human nature is constrained and changed under different social systems. His theory aims to reveal the limitations of capitalist society and to envision a communist society that can fully realize the ideal human nature.

This new understanding of Marx subverted the view of German classical anthropology that man is a *fait accompli* existence and revealed that the nature of man is a dynamic generative process. Marx's theoretical system was formed on the basis of an in-depth critique of classical German anthropology. The practical way of thinking is its core concept, which guides the realization of man's class essence, real essence and natural essence, and also promotes the dynamic process of social and personal development. In Marx's view, human nature is not an inherent and abstract attribute, but an attribute that is continuously generated and perfected in practice. The idea that human nature is "the sum of all social relations" emphasizes the social and historical nature of human beings (Lv, 2021). Marx's understanding of human nature has far-reaching significance at the theoretical and moral levels, as he asserts that human beings are not passively adapting to nature, but are actively creating their own material living environments, a view that highlights human subjectivity and agency, and also reflects human instincts to pursue freedom and ideals. Further, Marx emphasized the importance of practice as the basic way for man to know the world and transform it. Through practice, man not only understands the world, but also creates it according to his needs and ideals. This practical way of thinking requires human beings to constantly transcend themselves and realize self-creation and self-improvement in practical activities (Grechko & Evdokimova, 2021). Marx asserted that the essence of man is not defined by his attributes, but rather his essence determines his attributes. Human beings are both sensual and dynamic beings, and their reality, naturalness, and sociality reflect practical nature. Marx believed that human beings do not merely adapt to or accept the established natural and social environments for their way of being and development, but change and create these environments through practical activities. This view places man in the position of a subject who actively changes the world and emphasizes his subjective initiative and creativity. In practice, the human being constantly interacts with the external world, through which his or her essence is realized and self-created at a higher level. This understanding rejects the view of the human being as a passive, established being and emphasizes that the human being, as an active, creative being, lives and develops as a process of constant change and progress.

In Marx's conception, man's self-denial and growth is seen as a continuous process of seeking and creating new possibilities. In this process, man is not only the bearer and creator of multiple possibilities, but also continuously explores and unfolds these possibilities through practical activities. Marx asserted that human nature is not static or constant, but a dynamic generative process, a view that challenges the traditional static perception of human nature and emphasizes the human being as a being who actively creates and changes the state of being (Chatterjee, 2021; Emel'yanov, 2021). In this process, the human being not only adapts to the environment, but actively changes the environment and the self. This process of self-denial and transcendence is not a mere negative negation, but a positive action in pursuit of higher levels of self-realization and development. Human development does not follow a fixed pattern or standard, but is an open and diverse process. Only a society that upholds the essence of human beings can be best adapted to human survival and development, and its social relations are manifested in the form of comprehensiveness or negativity. Consistent with the logic of development, the self-negation of social development implies a variety of possibilities in the process of self-negation of social relations. Any established social relations constrain social development, and any solidified social structure is a constraint on human freedom. Only critical or self-denying social relations can open up unlimited possibilities for human social relations and shape society into the most suitable place for human survival. In this context, how to realize the possibility of social development, through the historical development of society and Marx's critique of capitalist social relations of production as a starting point, reveals the theoretical connotation of the Marxist concept of dialectical development of society, and clarifies the history, reality and future direction of social development.

Marx's exploration of social development was not only to criticize the capitalist social relations of production, but also to highlight the nature of human beings and the realization of their life in a truly free society. According to Marx, the communist society is a society oriented towards freedom and equality for all human beings and is the highest form of human social development (Musto, 2021). Regarding the form of society after the communist society, it is necessary to emphasize that "after the communist society remains the communist society (Breslauer, 2021)." This is because the communist society realizes the social self-negation, which can present the society of man himself and offers many possibilities for the realization of the essence of man's free individuality. In a communist society, there are no procedural relations between people fulfilled by rights, obligations or duties, but rather equal and direct relations of interaction, where each person lives freely as an independent individual. On this basis, the self-negation of social development is reflected in the ability of people to change and transcend their existing occupations in social life, individuals will not be confined to a specific field, people will no longer look at social activities through the lens of specialization, occupations will not become the standard of social power and measurement of other people's activities, and the occupational life will be integrated into the life of all societies (Liu & Yan, 2022). In other words, living in a society of self-denial, individuals can freely switch occupations according to their interests, preferences, or potentials, and this switching process is the development of human self-denial, which is built on the basis of social self-denial. Social development provides a rich material basis for human development, i.e., the transfer cost provided by society in the process of career change. Only when the transfer cost is close to zero, people can truly express their feelings and psychology in the process of realizing their own essence of multiple possibilities. When there are phenomena in society that are contrary to human development, these problems will naturally dissolve along with the development of society. This is because society is constantly improving itself in the process of self-denial and maximizing its conformity to the society that is best suited for human survival. In this sense, the full development of social relations provides many possibilities for people's lives; social self-denial is the prerequisite for individual self-denial; individual self-denial is the true manifestation of social self-denial; and human beings realize their essence in a self-denying society.

6. CONCLUSION

The article delves into Marx's critique and transcendence of classical German anthropology, focusing in particular on a reinterpretation of the "real individual" in terms of sociality. The study highlights Marx's view of human nature as a socio-historical product, especially the analysis of the alienation of labor in the context of capitalism. This theory not only revolutionized the way of thinking, but also made a major reversal in philosophical outlook and themes, shifting the philosophical focus from abstract theory to the study of the real world. In particular, the focus on the survival, development and emancipation of the proletariat and human beings shows the far-reaching influence of Marxist philosophy. The article also points out that although Marx's anthropological theory is of great significance in explaining the state of man in capitalist societies, further theoretical development may be needed in the modern context of globalization and technological progress. In addition, the article points out the limitations of the research, particularly the challenges that may exist in applying Marx's theories to modern socio-economic conditions. Future research should further explore the adaptation and relevance of Marx's theories in the contemporary context of globalization, especially in light of technological change and rapid changes in social structure. In summary, this study not only deepens the understanding of Marx's anthropological theory, but also emphasizes its continued importance in contemporary social and philosophical studies. Despite its limitations, Marx's theory provides a powerful theoretical tool and perspective for analyzing and solving modern social problems.

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