

Communism as Movement and Ideal: The Vision of Communism in The German Ideology

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Abstract

This article tries to clarify the vision of communism in *The German Ideology*. Commentary on this matter has made communism split into halves, communism as movement and communism as ideal, from Marx's writing of 1844, the year he came up with his vision of communism. Undoubtedly, the existence and collapse of Soviet Union and the East European communism helped or accelerated this misunderstanding that the voluntary disbanding of the so-called communist state was the practical defeat of Marx and Engels's theory of communism. Therefore, some supporters of communism, who attempt to weaken communism as ideal and strengthen communism as movement, seize on Marx's words that "we call communism the actual movement" and insist that communism of Marx and Engels is nothing more than a movement, because it is forever in a process of changing and becoming, namely, communism is a movement of revolutionising the existing world. While my aim is to propose a different approach to this matter and the main research object of this article would be a defence for a full vision of communism, communism as unity of movement and ideal, which should be two related aspects of one thing itself and should not be separable from one another in *The German Ideology*. In a specific way, the relationship between these two aspects can be read as means-purpose relation. Besides, this defence should take Marx and Engels's intellectual relationship into consideration and *The German Ideology* cannot be taken as an agreement of these two thinkers. However, this is not to say that the vision of communism remains unchangeable in this work, rather it is always in the tension of self-negation. Because of the revolutionary strategy which firstly appears in Marx's early writing, communism as movement in *The German Ideology*, such as class struggle, abolition of private property, overturning the illusory state and so on, gradually gains its importance. But this change or transformation will not be the focus of this article, and I just want to note that communism as unity of movement and ideal is an original thinking of these two thinkers concerning communism whose ideal aspect failed to catch up with the other aspect of movement in *The German Ideology*. The establishment of the notion of "criticizing and changing the present state of things" under the basic principle of communism as movement sets down a fundamental intellectual precondition for communism as ideal which goes without any feature of utopia, and it is from the valuable goal set up by communism as ideal that communist theory provides a prospective to judge the progress of human beings.

Keywords: Communism; movement; ideal; *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*; *The German Ideology*.

1. Introduction

The statements of communism in *The German Ideology* have been extensively quoted and discussed. Commentary on the vision of communism can be divided into three categories. In the first and second categories communism is subjected to a straightforward reading but often regarded as two sharply contrasting evaluations: communism as ideal and communism as movement. In the third category communism, is more comprehensive or we can say it is a compromised category for that it takes all the possibilities of communism into consideration, and then communism has become a mixture with movement, a foreseeable stage of society and a desirable goal or ideal. As is clarified by Ollman, who not only clarifies the two stages of communist future (the dictatorship of the proletariat and the full communism) with six striking characteristics, such as the high degree of cooperation and mutual concern, the human mastery control over nature and all the forces, and so forth, but also regards it as a movement as the other theorists do. (Ollman, 1977)

First, there are commentators, though in various degrees, who assume that communism is nothing more than a utopian society or just an idea that needs to be reconstructed. Some of them seize on these arguments as proof that Marx and Engels believe the evolution of human society is not unlimited, rather it has an ultimate goal of social development, that is communism, or even one of them claims "communism has become the banner of utopia" (Xie, 2007). In this group I place Tao Xie who was once the vice-chancellor of Renmin University of China, those writers who assume that communism is a religious utopia and those writers, who are sympathetic to communism as ideal, but contrary to utopian ideas. They seize on Alain Badiou's words that "from Plato onwards, communism is the only political idea worthy of a philosopher" (Douzinas & Zizek, 2010) and believe that the idea of communism has the potential to revitalize theoretical thinking and reverse the de-politicizing tendency of late capitalism. In a word, they insist that communism is the idea of radical philosophy and politics.

In this sense, I place Alain Badiou and Alessandro Russo in this group.

Second, there are writers who are sharply critical of communism as ideal. As is said by Laclau and Mouffe, “we are now situated in a post-Marxist terrain. It is no longer possible to maintain the subjectivity and classes elaborated by Marxism, nor, of course, the conception of communism as a transparent society from which antagonisms have disappeared.” (Laclau & Mouffe, 2014) Especially after the failure of socialist movement, those writers recognize the ideal communist society as utopia which can be regarded as an imagining alternative of society conceived by excessive optimistic Marx. In the meantime, they try to emphasize communism as a movement which means communism is not an ideal stage of society which should be built in the era of post-capitalism, rather it is a movement that is forever in the process of destruction and becoming. In this group, I place Junfeng Ma, a professor of Renmin University of China and Bruno Bosteels, James Lawler, Daniel Bensaïd and so on.

Last, there are commentators whose view is more comprehensive, or we could say it is a compromised view with all the possibilities included. Some of them, try to settle down the conflict between these previous views, and they don't think communism is merely concerned about movement or ideal of the future society, rather they try to explain it as a mixture of revolutionary movement, a foreseeable stage of society and the desirable ideal that we should strive for. I will place Bertell Ollman, Qiaomu Hu (one of the outstanding Marxist theorists in China and he was once the main secretary of Mao), and the majority of Chinese scholars in this group.

Splitting communism as movement and communism as ideal or just simply putting them together make no sense of interpreting the vision of communism in Marx and Engels's theory. On the one hand, supporters of communism as movement and communism as ideal, both of them claim that they can find adequate textual proofs from Marx and Engels's works. However, as I would state in the first part, both of them seize on one or some of Marx or Engels's claims about communism, pretending that they have understood the whole prospect of communism in *The German Ideology*. Although the last category is more comprehensive than the above two categories, it is not without problem. Firstly, this category, in order to reconcile the conflict between communism as movement and communism as utopia, tries to make it a mixture of these two kinds and communism as a foreseeable future. However, movement, stages of society and goal or ideal cannot be interpreted as a whole, for they are not in the same logical category. When it comes to movement and ideal, as I suggest, despite the difference between the two, they in the end designate a dual character of communism which is both an ideal and a movement, therefore, it is not as if one process of movement and one is setting up an ideal. However, communism as a stage of society involves nothing of this kind, for instance, Marx claims in the *Critique of Gotha Programme* that the communist future can be divided into halves, a first stage generally referred to as the “dictatorship of the proletariat”, and a second stage usually called the full communism. This is a diachronic category of social development, but movement and ideal don't belong to this category. Or, in the first stage of communism, dictatorship of the proletariat, for example, movement and ideal of communism can still exist at this stage or the next stage of communism. That's why I won't agree with those commenters who place communism as a stage of society in the category of movement and ideal. Secondly, the third category involves nothing about the intellectual difference between these two thinkers and the changes of their view about communism.

These underlying predicaments caused by modern political practice and academic discussion require deep reflection and interpretation of Marx and Engels's vision of communism. The vision of communism conceived by Marx in (at least) *The German Ideology* is a unity of movement and ideal which includes not only the actual movement that abolishes the present state of things, but also the ideal society that indicates a good life. The relationship between communism as movement and communism as ideal in *The German Ideology* can be described as follow: the establishment of “criticizing and changing the present state of things” under the basic principle of communism as movement sets down a fundamental intellectual precondition for communism as ideal without any feature of utopia; on the other hand, with the valuable goal of communism as ideal, the positive function of communism serves as a prospective from which the progress of human beings may be gauged.

My argument is twofold. First, I contend that, in *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels had a firm aspiration, to write communism as unity of movement and ideal, and that they hung this aspiration on a framework of purpose-means, that is, communism as movement is a means carrying out for the sole purpose of achieving communism as ideal. Second, I argue that, however, this unity has seen a great transformation in and after *The German ideology*, because Marx and Engels developed the revolutionary strategy that they talked more about communism as movement and less about communism as ideal.

2. Communism as movement and ideal in *The German ideology*

Communism is said to be the culmination of man's prehistory and the beginning of truly human history. And *The German ideology* is said to be one of the main sources of communist theory of Marx and Engels. In this section, I consider Marx and Engels's famous remarks about communism in this work respectively, and argue that communism as the unity of ideal and movement is their original attempt to construct communist theory in

The German ideology.

Before we go any further, an important question comes from the intellectual relationship between Marx and Engels which should be the precondition or research method of this article. As we all know, Marx worked in a close partnership with Engels, but it doesn't mean that their thinking would be totally the same or their views could be interchanged. As Terrell Carver points out: "the two should be treated as two separate individuals and intellects, rather than presumed always to be in agreement, or dividing tasks, or writing complementary discussion, such that one speaks for the other, and quotations can be deployed interchangeably" (Carver 2017), the point of understanding their intellectual relationship is to get rid of the presumption that they work together, so that they would definitely agree with each other from their first meeting to the end of their lives.

In *The German ideology*, we read Marx's most famous definition of communism as movement in the "Feuerbach Chapter" that:

- A. "Communism is not for us a state of affairs, which is to be established, an ideal, according to which reality have to set aright. We call communism the actual movement which transforms the current state of affairs. The conditions of this movement result from the situations now exist." (Carver & Blank 2014, pp.92-93)

This passage is often quoted by those who insist communism is movement rather than an ideal or a kind of good life. According to those writers who are sympathetic to communism as movement, communism as movement is the unique concern of Marx and Engels. Because there is no foreseeable society for communists to achieve through the movement of communism, and what's more important is that communism as a movement is forever in the process of destroying, changing and becoming. As Bruno Bosteels points out, communism today is said to be "an actuality and not just a spectre; a real or actual movement and not just a ghostly spirit from the dead past". (Bosteels 2010, p.225.)

It is important to note that this passage has close relationship with that of *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, in other words, it belongs to Marx's unchangeable conception of communism as movement from his writing of 1844. In a key section of the "Private Property and Communism" of 1844 manuscripts, Marx points out that:

- B. "Communism as the positive transcendence of private property as human self-estrangement." (Marx & Engels 1975, p.296.)

Also,

- C. "Socialism is man's positive self-consciousness, [. . .], no longer mediated through the abolition of private property, through communism. Communism is the position as the negation of the negation, and is hence the actual phase necessary for the next stage of historical development in the process of human emancipation and rehabilitation. Communism is the necessary form and the dynamic principle of the immediate future, but communism as such is not the goal of human development, the form of human society." (Marx & Engels, 1975, p.296.)

In this regard, according to 1844 Marx, communism as the positive transcendence of the private property which is the mediation of achieving the purpose of socialism, seems to be consistent with the notion of Marx's communism as movement in *The German ideology*. It demonstrates that, on the one hand, the secret of private property covered up by the political economy can only be revealed and solved by the communism as movement of positive transcendence of private property, on the other hand, it leaves the suggestion that this movement, which we already know is aiming to achieve the future good life of all human beings, will constitute in actual fact a very rough and protracted process.

Regarding communism as movement in *The German ideology*, Engels also makes his remarks:

- D. "[. . .] in reality & for the practical materialists, i.e. the communists, it is a matter of revolutionising the existing world, of getting to grips with things to hand & changing them." (Carver & Blank, pp.44-45)
- E. "Communism distinguishes itself from all previous movements in that it overturns the basis of all previous production relations & relations of exchange, & for the first time self-consciously considers all naturally arising preconditions up to now as human creations, stripes away their naturalness & subjects them to the power of untied individuals." (Carver & Blank 2014, pp.320-321)

In this sense, no one can deny the fact that communism as movement indeed exists in Marx and Engels's mind. That is to say, Marx and Engels do recognise communism as a kind of movement in *The German Ideology*, a comprehensive social movement, which is aiming to revolutionise the whole existing world, rather than single political revolution.

At first glance, the discussion above suggests a rather superficial approach to the meaning of communism, or, perhaps, a reduction of communism to communism as movement. Yet, on closer consideration, much can be learned by putting communism as ideal to this discussion and asking how the relationship between these two aspects forms in the context. As Daniel Brudney points out in his book *Marx's Attempt to Leave Philosophy* that "*The German Ideology* is in many ways continuous with the work of 1844." (Brudney 1998) In fact, if we go any further, one of the important continuations occurred in *The German Ideology* is the ideal of good life, namely

communism as ideal.

It is worth noting that between Marx and Engels's communism and the Utopia, there seems to be barely any shared commonplaces. As we know, Marx and Engels would not recognize themselves as the designer or the founder of future society, and they have no attempt to fulfil their wish of rebuilding a new society by describing details of the future society as what Thomas More's Utopia had done. In terms of the future post-capitalist society, in the key section of *The German Ideology*, Engels points out the key features of communist society as following:

- F. "Whereas in communist society, where each man does not have an exclusive area of activity, but can rather develop himself in any branch he likes, society regulates the general production & thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, in the morning to hunt, in the afternoon to fish, in the evening to herd livestock and to criticise after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, herdsman or critic." (Carver & Blank 2014, pp.90-91)

Engels's "hunt in the morning" passage which attributes communism as ideal to abolition of division of labour or exclusive sphere of activities, has provoked a huge amount of comment and criticism that can be understood as follows: Marx and Engels's general claim is that in communist society, all production will be concentrated in the hands of a vast association of the whole nations and all the capitalist achievements are to be preserved under communism, this is to say, in the way that taking over and adding those productive achievements of capitalism to a higher stage of communism. So, there must be a high technological achievement in communist society. Yet in this passage, these examples of individual activities in communist society are all typical activities of pre-industrial societies, making communism looks like a kind of traditional community which escapes from the mechanic industry. Even worse, the Japanese scholar Mochizuki Seiji points out that this kind of small world within which everyone can do one thing today and another tomorrow, actually, far more falls behind with the so-called "folk communism". Thus, it leaves the problematic that did the two authors intend to take this passage seriously? Or can we take it seriously?

Terrell Carver has made one important contribution to this question, who has questioned the reliability of this crucial passage and claims that it seems out of line with the rest of his work. In agreement with the Japanese scholar Wataru Hiromatsu, Carver's book *The Postmodern Marx and Marx and Engels's "German Ideology" Manuscripts: Presentation and Analysis of the "Feuerbach Chapter"* shows that this passage was mostly written by Engels's hand, except for a few insertions of Marx that were added to Engels's first draft, specifically, 'or critical critic', 'and to criticise after dinner', 'or critic' (Carver & Blank 2014, pp.88-91). Carver argues that Marx's insertions were written "humorously in order to send it up, and thus to reject it as a serious draft" (Carver 1999, p.106.). For Engels's depiction of the communist society was an unconscious parody of utopian Fourier to whom Marx had made critical assessment. Consequently, Carver argues, "the famous passage on the communist society from *The German Ideology* cannot now be read as one continuous train of thought agreed jointly between two authors" (Carver 1999, p.106.), and it has "no straightforward meaning now as a description of communist society in its technological aspect" (Carver 1999, p.107.). However, many other scholars, offered a different reading of this passage. I take James Furner's recent research as an example. Contrary to Carver's view, James Furner rejects Carver's claim that the story of this "hunt in the morning passage" reveals it to be nothing more than a humorous aside and it cannot be treated as a joint or agreed working of these two thinkers. With its seriousness and the consistency between these two intellects, he concludes that "there is no option for those who wish to understand Marx's vision of communism than to rake the sketch in *The German Ideology* seriously" (Furner 2011, p.210.).

Obviously, Carver's claim seems to undermine the reliability of this passage as a theoretical source of the communist society, on the contrary, James Furner's claim seems to defend, reconstruct and develop the society it outlines on the grounds of seriousness and consistency. Plausible as it may sound, however, James Furner's interpretation, as a representative of those who insist this passage is a joint work or an agreement of Marx with Engels (or maybe insist the presumption that these two thinkers would agree with each other on every single issue coming into question), is not without its problems, and two points in particular undermine his or their argument. I would argue that, on the one hand, this "hunt in the morning passage" should be treated as a main source of "communism as ideal" that is aiming to abolish the division of labour or any occupational confinement, thus it conveys the ideal that there would be no occupational identities remained in communist society. On the other hand, I agree with Carver that these occupational activities like hunter, fisherman are all pre-industrial occupations or activities of traditional community, thus this passage cannot be read as serious description of communism in its technological aspect and this passage cannot be read as an agreement of Marx with Engels, because of Marx's critical attitude or ironic criticism towards those traditional occupations like hunter and fisherman in his works.

The first problem concerns James Furner's view about Carver's textual presentation of the first chapter of *The German Ideology*. He insists that, on the one hand, Carver's appeal to philological research conducted by Wataru Hiromatsu in 1970s is problematic, because Carver fails to notice that Marx inserted more into this

passage than he presumes. “The most recent German-language critical apparatus indicates that ‘to hunt’ and ‘fish’ are also in Marx’s hand” (Furner 2011, p.191.). Actually, this problem has been replied by Carver who explains that these two insertions “to hunt” and “to fish” actually penned by Engels, “in pursuit of a smooth text ‘of the last hand’ the editors (Apparat (p. 225) volume of *Jahrbuch* 2003) are attributing the third of the text-layers [*Schichten*] intellectually to Marx as ‘last hand’, including text in Engels’ handwriting (i.e. ‘to hunt’ and ‘to fish’), whereas the editors of *Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe*, Series I, Vol. I/5 (1932), as well as Hiromatsu (1974) — in marking specific words as the product of one hand rather than the other—attribute only the insertions to Marx that I have (also confirmed by personal inspection of the manuscript page).” (Carver & Blank 2014, p.704.) The other problem concerns James Furner’s view about Marx’s real attitude towards activities like hunter and fisherman. In my view, Marx’s view about fishing, hunting and the like is always critical and ironic, at least his complaint is that they are too primitive. Like the critical assessment Marx had made to Fourier, we can find another proof about that Marx was critical of Adam Smith and Ricardo for making arguments about individual and society in terms of primitive hunter and fisher. For example, in the *Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy*, when Marx contrasts his “real presuppositions” which appears in *The German Ideology* with hunter and fisherman which he says are the starting points of Smith and Ricardo, we read

“Individuals producing in society---hence the starting point is naturally the socially determined production [carried on] by individuals. The individual---and individuated---hunter and fisher, with which [Adam] Smith and Ricardo begin, belongs to the unimaginative conceits of eighteenth-century stories *à la Robinson Crusoe*, which in no way express, as cultural historians imagine, a simple reaction against over-refinement and a regression to a misconstrued natural life.” (Carver 1975, pp.47-48.)

Obviously, Marx draws a line with hunter and fisher which he says are all typical primitive activities. Thus, it presents James Furner with a problem, for it is not clear that how could he deal with this inconsistency between Marx’s critical assessment towards Adam Smith, David Ricardo and his “sympathetic” supplement to Engels. As for James Furner’s argument about Marx’s positive assessment of Fourier’s vision of fishing and hunting is not so much convincing, because in the *The Holy Family, or a Critique of Critical Criticism*, we read: “Compared to his (Bruno Bauer’s) discovery that the rights of man are not ‘inborn’ — a discovery which has been made innumerable times in England during the last 40—odd years — Fourier’s assertion that the right to fish, to hunt, etc., are inborn rights of men is one of genius” (Marx & Engels 1988, p.88.). Marx’s attitude towards Fourier is nothing positive but ironic critique of both Bruno Bauer and Fourier.

Having assessed the inconsistency between Engels and Marx’s view about this passage, it is time to deal with the full content of Engels’s description of communism as ideal in *The German Ideology*, because Engels’s formulation of communism as ideal never stops at this passage. According to Engels, communism as ideal should take the world-historical vision into consideration, including not only abolition of division of labour, but also the fully development of productive force, universal competition and worldwide market etc. More specifically, the importance of communism as ideal is best appreciated as the derivative of their critique towards capitalist society. Or we can say that communism as ideal is a to-be-built society that is aiming to overcome all the defects of capitalist society. In communist society, there will be no division of labour and private property which would be replaced by the individual ownership. With the abolition of division of labour, the changing of personal powers into alienated material ones can thus be transformed. The separation between mental and material labour, production and consumption, or even between leisure and labour could be withered away. Meanwhile, communism will take over or save all the well-developed productive achievement and regain the control over production by associated individuals. Every individual could have access to develop his all-round capacities. So, the sketch of Engels’s communism as ideal in the “hunt in the morning” passage can be understood as following: “each man does not have an exclusive area of activity” means that in communist society, because of abolition of division of labour, thus none of occupational confinement or restricted intercourse of individuals will exist. “society regulates the general production” means that to build a communist society is to overturn the basis of all earlier relations of production and intercourse, so that it is possible for the association of free individuals to regain their control over the social production. On the other hand, it also suggests that economic foundation of material production is the necessary precondition of communist society.

In sum, Marx and Engels indeed have their ideas about communism as movement, more specifically, comprehensive social movement rather than simple political revolution. And the general depiction of communist society (communism as ideal) in *The German Ideology*, by contrast to all the former societies, appears to be the following state: in the former societies, just because division of labor has close relationship with private property, the private owners and the proletarians are extremely opposed. And this opposition can be demonstrated by the separation of production and consumption, enjoyment and labor etc. In contrast to these societies, due to the abolition of division of labor, there will be no exclusive sphere of activity caused by division of labor, and labor will become self-activity, thus everyone would have access to all-round development. However, Marx’s insertion to the “hunt in the morning passage” could only be interpreted as an ironic criticism

for that Marx doesn't think it is suitable to use hunter or fisherman as the occupational identity of communism, or even he despises these pre-industrial activities.

3. Comments and rejoinder: a defence of communism as unity of movement and ideal in *The German Ideology*

Many scholars would not reach agreement with me about communism as unity of movement and ideal in *The German Ideology*, for that they believe Marx's communism as movement (i.e. quotation A) is against Engels's communism as ideal (i.e. quotation F: "the hunt in the morning" passage). Specifically, they claim that when Marx said, "Communism is not [. . .] an ideal, according to which reality have to set aright", his target of criticism was Engels's communism as ideal. This is a further view of their inconsistency about the "hunt in the morning" passage. For example, Japanese scholars, Wataru Hiromatsu argues that the content of Marx's this passage has no direct relationship with Engels's other passage on this page. And Mochizuki Seiji comes up with a similar view about this problem by claiming that contrary to Marx's communism as movement, Engels's view about communism was an ideal society that escaped from the mechanical industry and went back to the folksy communism. In other words, they reach an agreement that the critical target of Marx's claim about "communism is not an ideal" is Engels's vision of communism as ideal, on the other hand, they believe that the opposition between these two thinkers lies in that Marx regards communism as movement, yet Engels regards communism as ideal (Mochizuki Seiji) or communism as a to-be-established state of affairs (Wataru Hiromatsu).

Here, I would like to offer a different reading of this matter. Firstly, it is not accurate to regard Engels merely as an advocate of communism as ideal, for that he had another statement about communism as movement elsewhere. For instance, not only in *The German Ideology* (i.e. quotation D and E), but also in *The Communists and Karl Heinzen*. He claimed that Herr Heinzen was very much incorrect about "communism is a certain doctrine which proceeds from a definite theoretical principle as its core and draws further conclusions from that" (Marx & Engels 1976, p.302.), and then Engels concluded that "communism is not a doctrine, but a movement" (Marx & Engels 1976, p.303.). Secondly, since Engels is not the target of Marx's criticism, I have to reconsider why Marx said "Communism is not [. . .] an ideal, according to which reality have to set aright" (Marx & Engels 1988, p.88.). One thing with certainty is that the specific background of this declaration is German ideologists who idealized communism, and their difference merely lies that idealized communism was approved positively by Feuerbach and True Socialism, on the contrary, was rejected by Bauer and Stirner. So the reason why Marx came up with the assertion "communism is not an ideal" was that he wanted to draw a line with these two idealist parties. Actually, according to Marx and Engels, idealized communism "was bound to occur in a country so stagnant as Germany" (Marx & Engels 1976, p.457.) which was addicted to historical speculation and had no inquire into the connection of German philosophy and German reality or the relation of their criticism to their own material surroundings. So, when it comes to "communism is not ideal", Marx's critical target is not only those ideologists, but also the German philosophy which merely concentrates on speculation or interpretation of the world, on the other hand, he declares to get rid of the ideological philosophy and to change the world. In the end, this suggests to me that Marx, in claiming "communism is not ideal", underlined communism as an actual movement in pursuit of a practical goal of the abolition of division of labour and overthrowing the ruling class in order to found society anew, namely, in order to pursue communism as ideal.

The other problem concerns the relationship between the vision of communism as unity of ideal and movement of *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* and that of *The German Ideology*. For that in the 1844 manuscripts, Marx said, "communism as such is not the goal of human development, the form of human society" (Marx & Engels 1975, p.306.). Then some commentaries argue that communism can merely be understood as a movement from the perspective of negation of communism as ideal in the 1844 manuscripts. This view is not so convincing that they ignore the significance of socialism in this manuscript. There is always a goal of human development or the form of human society in 1844 Marx, although it is not in the name of communism. Just before this passage, Marx left the suggestion that socialism as the next stage of historical development in the process of human emancipation, is "no longer mediated through the abolition of private property, through communism" (Marx & Engels 1975, p.306.). That is to say, socialism in 1844 manuscripts is an ideal vision that we should strive for through the movement of communism. In my reading, it is not accurate to understand communism as movement as a negation of an ideal vision of communism, and the shifting meaning of socialism and communism of the young Marx should be taken into consideration. According to 1844 Marx, the term of communism includes not only the positive transcendence of private property, but also the critique of crude communism, political communism. It suggests that communism of 1844 Marx, on the one hand, refers to the notion of ideal, on the other hand, it demonstrates various theories preceding Marx and the process of how Marx accepts the conception of communism. Anyway, in 1844, communism is not the unique term that can be used to characterize Marx's theory. Perhaps, that's the reason why Marx use the term "socialism as socialism" as an ideal which should be achieved through movement of communism. And even worse, in the *True Socialism*, for instance, the term of socialism conveys a negative meaning of reformism. Therefore, my view is

that after *The German Ideology*, only the notion of communism can be said to characterize Marx and Engels's theory.

In a word, even though the concept of communism and socialism of 1844 Marx are so different from that of *The German Ideology* and many other works concerning communism, he actually wants to express the idea that there will always be an ideal of a better world or a good life in the era of post-capitalism and 1844 manuscripts could not be a collateral evidence of this assertion that communism as movement is hostile to communism as ideal.

In sum, Communism as ideal (no exclusive sphere of activity caused by division of labor, self-activity, all-round development of free individuals, world-historical development) and communism as movement (transcending of private property, abolition of division of labor and the revolutionary strategy: proletarians must have control over the power) cannot be separable with each other.

Given that communism as ideal is the goal that communism as movement strives for, there is still one problem needed to be solved. Is communism a historical teleology? Many commentaries would doubt the inevitability of capitalism's collapse and the inevitability of communism from the collapse of capitalism and they believe that communism is totally an illusory historical teleology. I would like to say that in terms of communism as ideal and movement in *The German Ideology*, it is not a teleological claim of historical development. I do not say that the text of *The German Ideology* provides a deductive proof that capitalism's collapse and the emergence of communist society are inevitable. Rather, I say Engels offered us an interpretation against historical teleology and their interpretation could be a defense of the judgement that communism is a historical generation rather than a historical teleology.

In a key section of the first chapter, we read Engels's handwriting:

- G. "History is nothing but the succession of separate generations, each of which uses the materials, the capital funds, the productive forces handed down to it by all preceding generations, and thus, on the one hand, continues the traditional activity in completely changed circumstances and, on the other, modifies the old circumstances with a completely changed activity. This can be speculatively distorted so that later history is made the goal of earlier history.... Thereby history receives its own special goals and becomes "a person ranking with other persons" (to wit: "self-consciousness, criticism, the unique", etc.), while what is designated with the words "destiny", "goal", "germ", or "idea" of earlier history is nothing more than an abstraction from later history, from the active influence which earlier history exercises on later history." (Marx & Engels 1976, p.50).

This is to say, according to Engels, historical teleologists refer to those who represent later stage of society as the goal of earlier one and the necessary prerequisite of this claim is that the later stage of society is already existed. The theory of communism in *The German Ideology* involves nothing of this kind. Engels and Marx do not explain that communism teleologically by claiming that capitalism makes communist society possible. Rather they stand at the stage of capitalism and claim that communism as ideal would be possible through the process of communism as movement. It is a different logical direction from that of historical teleology. Historical teleology is a backward direction that views the present stage as the goal of previous one, on the contrary, Marx and Engels's claim about communism is a forward direction that indicates a possibility of historical development, maybe we can call it as a theory of historical generation, rather than historical teleology.

4. Conclusion

Communism still has a future today both theoretically and practically. Its negative function, could be a critical perspective to make vivid the defects of capitalism or all the previous class-societies by contrast, and its positive function, can offer us a normative perspective of a good life to gauge the progress of human beings.

We have to admit that although communism as movement is quite different from communism as ideal in Marx and Engels's formulations and it seems that communism as movement could still be tenable without its ideal aspect, it doesn't mean that difference amounts to opposition, estrangement or even separation, what's more, my conclusion is that communism as unity of ideal and movement is the first attempt of Marx and Engels to formulate a full vision of communism. In a word, communism as movement could serve as a means to pursue the goal of communism as ideal.

However, whilst the full vision of communism was established, they in the meantime developed the revolutionary strategy through their communication with the workers and the Communist League. Thus, the movement to transcend private property shifts to the movement of proletarian revolution that concerns the target of holding power by the great majority. Communism as ideal faded away gradually and cannot catch up with the development of communism as movement until Marx's claim "to each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs" in the *Critique of Gotha Programme*.

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