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‘Quadrilateral’ in Philosophy and Bie-modernism (Comments on Aleš Erjavec’s “*Zhuyi*: From Absence to Bustle? Some Comments on Wang Jianjiang’s Article ‘The Bustle and the Absence of *Zhuyi*’”)

Abstract: Aleš Erjavec proposed the global philosophical quadrilateral, giving Chinese philosophy, aesthetics, and humanities an expectation. However, the realization of this expectation hinges on the question whether Chinese philosophy as well as aesthetics and the humanities can rid themselves of the staggering level of ‘voice’ and develop their ‘speech’. To make ‘speech’, any nation should have its own idea, theory and *Zhuyi*. How to overcome the embarrassment that ‘quadrilateral’ expectation implies? Time spatialization and four-phase development theories of the Bie-modern, and great leap forward pause theory have provided an answer. The quadrilateral expectation as shown by Aleš Erjavec, is encountering the antagonism between ‘cosmopolitanism’ and ‘nationalism’. The key to resolving this antagonism is ‘my’ original achievement consisting of ‘Chinese traditional philosophy, Western philosophy, Marxism and I (myself)’. Bie-modernism is a *Zhuyi* of self-regulation, self-renewal and self-transcendence and of their practical implementation.

Keywords: philosophical quadrilateral, Bie-modern, time-spatialization, four-phase development theory, great leap forward pause theory, ‘Sino-West-Marxism- I’, Bie-modernism

Aleš Erjavec wrote “*Zhuyi*: From Absence to Bustle? Some Comments on Wang Jianjiang’s Article ‘The Bustle and the Absence of *Zhuyi*’” to comment on my article “The Bustle and the Absence of *Zhuyi*”. According to Erjavec, his aim is to facilitate global academic dialogue and international academic and cultural exchange through academic discourse. In his article he writes:

In the past academics often built bridges within the ‘republic of letters’; there is no reason why this should not be done again and on a larger scale. This need to cooperate and exchange is a necessary precondition

for any authentic understanding among individuals, nations and cultures and is a basic feature of any serious attempt to perceive 'them' as 'us'.¹

As *Zhuyi* and *-isms* are very important notions in China and in Western countries, while Erjavec is one of world's renowned aestheticians and the former president of the International Association for Aesthetics (1998–2001), therefore a dialogue with Erjavec will not only be of great significance, but will also clarify the issue of *Zhuyi* in international academic discourse.

1. 'Quadrilateral' Expectations and 'Voice' Embarrassment, Bie-Modernism

Erjavec first admits that my article is of broad international significance. He writes:

I will claim that some recent events and processes in the West to some extent resemble those in China. Dialogues such as this one should aid us to avoid unnecessary misunderstandings or stray practices that concern the coexistence, the comparative importance, and the novelty of ideas that are circulating in international academic circles.²

Since the bustle and the absence of *Zhuyi* which I have discussed in my article had also occurred in the former Soviet-bloc countries, in Yugoslavia, and in the Third World, the issue is not only the problem of Chinese academics, but also a global issue.

Erjavec believes that China will break down the barriers between philosophical empires (as conceived by Richard Shusterman, who suggested the existence the Anglo-American, the German, the French and the Far Eastern empires³) causing a new philosophical quadrilateral to emerge, and consisting of Europe, America, and Russia, with China appearing as a new player in town. He writes:

In my view the contemporary Chinese situation as regards *Zhuyi*, art and theory (aesthetics, philosophy and the humanities) is in many respects different from the present or the recent situation in the West. If some decades ago the cultural antagonism and competition in the West occurred mainly between the United States, on the one hand, and Europe

¹ Aleš Erjavec, "Zhuyi: From Absence to Bustle? Some Comments on Wang Jianjiang's Article 'The Bustle and the Absence of Zhuyi,'" *AM Journal of Art and Media Studies* 13 (2017): 111-121.

² *Ibid*, 111.

³ See Richard Shusterman, "Internationalism in Philosophy: Models, Motives and Problems," *Metaphilosophy* 28, 4 (October 1997), 289–301; Aleš Erjavec, "Philosophy: National and International," *Metaphilosophy* 28, 4 (October 1997), 329–45.

(especially France) on the other, this bipolar situation has now turned into a quadrilateral one: we are still witnesses to the American and the European culture, but there is now a new player in town, namely China. For some time it appeared that such player would be the former Soviet bloc countries, but they then never took on this role.⁴

Erjavec sounds mild and gentle in his comment, which is undoubtedly inspiring but in the same breath also stressful for Chinese scholars. As he describes it, the history of the three 'philosophical empires' – the Anglo-American, the German and the French – is a history of fighting in the realms of ideology and culture. He also presents a world map of hegemony of *Zhuyi*, which offers us a new perspective. However, the questions behind his statement are serious and profound.

First, is it elitism that the French used as a tool to fight against American mass culture? Does China possess this sort of elitism?

Second, does China possess Marxism that in the past was used as *Zhuyi* forces rather than power tools?

Third, when the French government resisted globalization and Americanization, there sprung up many *-isms* (movements) such as postmodernism, post-structuralism, etc., as well as many independent thinkers. Does China have this kind of people? If not, how can China stand firm and act on its own when facing the impact of European and American cultures?

Fourth, without great thinkers in China, can Chinese construction of *Zhuyi* become a political movement?

Last point: after such course of events, can the real *Zhuyi* be constructed?

These questions may not have all been raised directly by Erjavec, but also put forward by sensitive Chinese scholars in their own embarrassment when not selling anything on the market of ideas. When the British Nobel laureate Ronald Coase pointed out the lack of free market of ideas in China, he commented that if the Chinese academics fail to emancipate their minds, China's economic will be in danger.⁵ The same future will be that China will inevitably remain a spectator of Western movements just as I mentioned in my article.⁶

I have no idea if the quadrilateral of Erjavec is familiar with the four navigation systems, namely GPS, Galileo satellite navigation system, GLONASS system and Beidou navigation system. But his expectation of the quadrilateral, which is closely related to the difference between humans and animals, has touched upon an important issue. In the later part of his article, Erjavec passage from Aristotle's *Politics* as interpreted by contemporary French philosopher Jacques Rancière who scrutinizes

⁴ Erjavec, "Zhuyi: From Absence to Bustle?," 119.

⁵ Ronald Coase, *China's economy will be in danger if it lacks of thought market*, www.finance.ifeng.com, accessed December 15, 2011.

⁶ See Wang Jianjiang, "Chinese Aesthetics: The Bustle and the Absence of Zhuyi," *Exploration and Free Views* 2 (2012): 22–26.

the citation from Aristotle, with the latter claiming that the biggest difference between man and animal lies in the difference between speech and voice. Probably, with this criterion, scholars should search their own position. Erjavec writes:

The so-called 'Third World' has once more moved away, has remained 'mute', while China is striving to gain a 'voice' to paraphrase Jacques Rancière.⁷

Rancière's theories partly rely on Aristotle's *Politics*. There Aristotle claims that man "is political because he possesses speech, a capacity to place the just and the unjust in common, whereas all that an animal has is voice to signal pleasure and pain. But the whole question, then, is to know who possesses speech and who merely possesses voice."⁸

There are numerous small and big countries across the world that find themselves in a similar situation as concerns aesthetics, philosophy and the humanities, but not many among them are striving to have their voice heard. I see Prof. Wang's article as an attempt to articulate such a voice and make it heard both at home and abroad. I believe that such stance – to acquire voice – is of paramount importance for any successful emancipation and therefore for erecting one's own position and place in the world (and society).⁹

Here, I sense the power of speculative philosophy in Western tradition. Erjavec in the title of his article has changed my "The Bustle and the Absence of *Zhuyi*" into his "From Absence to Bustle?" The reversal of the order honestly tells us: should you bustle for the lack of *Zhuyi*?

According to Erjavec, China is striving to gain a 'voice' instead of 'speech', acknowledged by Western politicians and philosophers, thus leaving Chinese scholars actually caught in embarrassment and aphasia. For those who understand the current situation of China, what Erjavec is saying is completely true. Why should we admit that? I once mentioned when talking about *Zhuyi*, that no nation without its own *Zhuyi* can occupy the high peak of theory, thought and philosophy, or climb up to the world stage and write its own history.¹⁰ In another article of mine entitled "For-non-existence, 'For-being' and 'Yet-for-being' in Chinese Aesthetics and Literary Theory", which aroused some debates, I proposed that the most urgent problem in Chinese aesthetics and literary theory is the issue of "Yet-for-being" which means

⁷ Erjavec, "*Zhuyi*: From Absence to Bustle?," 119.

⁸ Jacques Rancière, *Aesthetics and Its Discontents* (London: Continuum, 2009), 24.

⁹ Erjavec, "*Zhuyi*: From Absence to Bustle?," 119.

¹⁰ See Jiangjiang, "Chinese Aesthetics: The Bustle and the Absence of *Zhuyi*," 22–26.

waiting for being, actually waiting for the birth of *Zhuyi* with Chinese characteristics.¹¹ As for my views on *Zhuyi* and "Yet-for-being", the academia has different opinions. Prof. Wang Hongyue and Prof. Xia Zhongyi respectively, criticized two of my articles, "Chinese Aesthetics: the Bustle and the Absence of *Zhuyi*" and "For-non-existence, 'For-being' and 'Yet-for-being' in Chinese Aesthetics and Literary Theory".¹² In reality we are still in the row of less-developed countries in thought for the lack of original *Zhuyi*.¹³ We should never ignore the fact that we are less developed in the humanities just for the sake of national emotion. Erjavec's article has to some extent responded to the criticism of me by the anti-*Zhuyi* party and has proven, once again, the necessity to build *Zhuyi* as I claim. In a globalized world, it is not praise-worthy to be proud just because one possesses a voice. Nevertheless, without voice, if we remain mute,¹⁴ what future will be awaiting us?

With his deep understanding of China, Erjavec helped move forth my train of thought, seemingly confirming and promoting my viewpoints further, while his comment to me, frankly speaking, was a query, for every part of his article including the title and examples, appeared to be asking me: you propose to build *Zhuyi*, but are you ready? China wants to join the Group of Four and become one side of the quadrilateral, but is it prepared? The question raised by Erjavec is what I have often confronted recently in domestic and international academic conferences. Every time when I finished my presentation of the construction of *Zhuyi*, some participant would ask me with much concern: "Do you have *Zhuyi*?", "What is your *Zhuyi*?" In order to avoid embarrassment, I could only propose my *Zhuyi* – Bie-modernism which is the crystallization of a lengthy process of thinking, but one that has also to induce others to come forward with their valuable contributions.

2. Bie-modernism in Spatial Juxtaposition

Why does Erjavec hold the opinion that in philosophy and aesthetics China has only gained voice rather than speech? The main reason lies in that he has not seen the real *Zhuyi* in China. Besides, he expresses his worries that if Chinese scholars start to build *Zhuyi*, this will not turn it into a political movement dominated by the government. Will it become a movement for the construction of *Zhuyi* like the five-year plan in some East European countries? He writes:

¹¹ See Wang Jianjiang, "'For-non-existence', 'For-being' and 'Yet-for-being' in Chinese Aesthetics and Literary Theory," *Academic Monthly* 10 (2015): 126–35.

¹² Wang Hongyue, "The Hesitation and the Outlet for Spiritual Construction – Also a Discussion with Prof. Wang Jianjiang," *Exploration and Free Views* 4 (2012): 36–39. Xia Zhongyi, "Questions of Academic History and the Anxiety of New Generation – And a Response to Prof. Wang Jianjiang," *Academic Monthly* 6 (2016): 93–100.

¹³ See Wang Jianjiang, "Academic Tactics in an Era of Intellectual underdevelopment: The Case of Aesthetics," *Chinese Social Sciences Review* 4 (2015): 93–104.

¹⁴ Zhongyi, "Questions of Academic History and the Anxiety of New Generation," 93–100.

Croatian philosophers obviously didn't want to pursue research in the history of little-known medieval Croatian philosophers but wanted to study Derrida, Lacan, Lyotard and the like. (In this they resembled a little their Chinese similes.) In this case as in many others it turned out that support from the government or its institutions usually doesn't produce desired results and that it is more productive to leave the researchers to pursue their own priorities. In a way the difference was like the difference between the production for the free market and production according to the five-year plan. It appears that *Zhuyi* can be born mostly from the latter.¹⁵

Erjavec further wrote:

It has been observed that *-ism* isn't a perfect rendering of the Chinese meaning of this term in Western languages, although I do agree with Prof. Wang that something similar to *Zhuyi* occurs also in the West. Perhaps the terms 'movement' and 'trend' could be partly suitable translations of *Zhuyi*?¹⁶

Here what needs to be explained is that Erjavec imagined the construction of *Zhuyi* I talked about as a five-year plan in socialist countries or a movement, which is an unnecessary worry. I said:

I believe, first of all, the construction of philosophical and aesthetic thought by ordinary people instead of official authorities should be highlighted, and the construction of thought needs to start with the establishment of *Zhuyi*. Ordinary people should keep necessary communication with official academia, and place *Zhuyi* beyond Marxism. They should construct and promote *Zhuyi* according to the policy of "let a hundred flowers bloom" and "a hundred schools of thought contend" advocated by China's ruling party. They should also build *Zhuyi* into the debate on the basis of which schools are to be established and developed.¹⁷ Obviously, the *Zhuyi* in Erjavec's understanding is somewhat distant from mine. My *Zhuyi* is the guiding thought and theory, and the academic view with personal traits and folk colors, instead of a political movement and trend led by political parties.

Of course, the question whether *Zhuyi* is a political movement and trend or a national plan may not matter; the important thing is to see what *Zhuyi* on earth you have.

Erjavec gave me an objective comment, by saying that, for instance, he "supports independent research. He ends his article by a call for the advancement and

¹⁵ Erjavec, "*Zhuyi*: From Absence to Bustle?" 118.

¹⁶ Ibid, 119.

¹⁷ Wang Jianjiang, "The Bustle and the Absence of *Zhuyi*. The Example of Chinese Aesthetics," *Filozofski vestnik* 37, 1 (2016): 157-78.

construction of *Zhuyi*.”¹⁸ In fact, I not only “support independent research”, but also conduct independent ‘individual’ research. Bie-modern and Bie-modernism are innovations of discourse, ideas, opinions, theory and *Zhuyi*. The theoretical basis of Bie-modern is temporal spatialization; its logic is manifested as the four-phase development theory.

2.1. Temporal Spatialization Theory of the Bie-modern

The Bie-modern discourse innovation is achieved on the basis of China’s reality, and in the face of China’s problems. The word *Bie-modern* is translated from the Chinese character “别”. Chinese Pinyin or Chinese phonetic alphabet *BIE* is easy to be taken literally for reading without thorough understanding. There are at least five kinds of English translation of the term, such as not be modern, farewell to modern, another modern, alternative modern, awkward modern, etc. But I hold that in the article “The Bustle and the Absence of *Zhuyi* – The Example of Chinese Aesthetics”¹⁹ the definition as a new theory regarding social form and historical stage conforms to the connotation of *Bie-modern*. Bie-modern seems to refuse modern, but is eager for modern; it seems a farewell to modern, but China has not completely entered modern times with the pre-modern nightmare is still haunting us. Bie-modern seems to be another modernity, but when modern, pre-modern and postmodern are intertwined in different proportions, we say that it is another modernity, which in fact has ignored the existence of another pre-modernity and another post-modernity, therefore it is unavoidably over generalized. Bie-modern is Bie-modern, it is neither modern, nor postmodern, particularly not pre-modern. Why should we have such demarcations? The reason is to be found in the reality of this era. We have to respect this reality, and obviously we cannot apply others’ theory directly to China’s reality, otherwise it will be completely misplaced, or will lead to its opposite. In fact, terms such as “modern”, “pre-modern”, and “postmodern” are all products of Western thought that differs greatly from juxtaposition of China’s modern, pre-modern and postmodern.

Temporal spatialization could be easily confused with Western space theories which remain prevalent in the West, such as those of Henri Lefebvre, Michel Foucault and David Harvey. But actually, the temporal spatialization I talk about is not an extension of Western space theories or their application, but the generalization of China’s reality. Precisely, it is the generalization of current social form and historical stage of development in China.

Since China is now in the process of modernization, such features of modernity as democracy, rule of law, freedom and harmony have penetrated deep into Chinese people’s minds as the core values of socialism, but at the same time, as remnants of feudal consciousness and patriarchal system of pre-modern times. They still are of

¹⁸ Erjavec, “*Zhuyi*: From Absence to Bustle?,” 120.

¹⁹ Jiangjiang, “The Bustle and the Absence of *Zhuyi*,” 157–78.

interest in a market; the post-modern (deconstructionist) avant-garde arts and culture have also gained in popularity. What is characteristic of our contemporaneity is its intertwining with the modern, the pre-modern, and the post-modern – something quite different from Western dynastic social form and historical stage of development (such as the replacement of pre-modern by modern, and the transcendence over modern by post-modern). Bie-modern is not modern, pre-modern, or post-modern.

It is the complexity of the current situation intertwined with modern, pre-modern, and post-modern that leads to the temporal spatialization, which requires no deduction of Western theories, but the realization and generalization of reality.

First, as far as the space of modern physics is concerned, the space has been defined as eleven dimensions, with time already being included in the space. (This is just the definition of physical space, and has nothing to do with the temporal spatialization or synchronization of time.)

Secondly, as for philosophy, until the appearance of the theory of “the production of space” by the French Marxist scholar Henri Lefebvre, almost all other space theories in Western philosophy, including the absolute space of Plato, relative space of Aristotle, experiential space of Leibniz, and transcendental space of Kant, as well as social space proposed by Georg Simmel to respond to natural space, are philosophical thoughts about the natural attributes of time and space, and therefore irrelevant as concerns the characteristics of the Bie-modern era.

The most important event of space theory in the 20th century comes from the production of space suggested by Lefebvre, resulting in the conceptual socialization in the fields of geographical space and philosophical space, which is known as “spatial turn” and has become an important and influential ideological source of space theoretical study. Lefebvre believes that spatiality is not only the result of production, being produced in space, but also a reproducer of the production space of capitalism, which means that space also produces capitalism. The capitalist “production” is a “self-production” beyond geographical space, which includes the production of capitalist productive relations, capital and market, and accordingly forms many spaces, such as absolute space, abstract space, sacred space, historical space, capitalist space, space of the body, imaginary space, contradictory space, and space of diversity, etc. Lefebvre summed up the historical process of spatiality into six stages, ranging from the absolute space of natural state, to the sacred space dominated by Egyptian temples and tyrants governing countries, through the historical space such as Greek polis and the political state of the Roman empire, to the abstract space which refers to the political and economic space with private property in capitalism, followed by the contradictory space with contemporary globalized capitalism vs. localization, and finally to the future space of diversity.

After Lefebvre's, there have been many other spatial theories, such as space theory of Western Marxism following in the footprints of Lefebvre, Foucault's post-modern space theory, Manuel Castells' Network space theory and Bakhtin's spatial narrative theory, etc. The largest group of theories belongs to Lefebvre and his students,

represented by Manuel Castells' urban collective consumption space, David Harvey's time-space compression, Fredric Jameson's transnational space structure, and Edward W. Soja's third space. Although Manuel Castells' Network space and Soja's third space have the intention to go beyond Lefebvre and Foucault, these subsequent theories have not succeeded in surpassing the two great thinkers in ideological aspect. In China, the narrative space has been widely used in the research of aesthetics, literary theories and comparative literature. But the truly Chinese space theory is yet to be established; compared with macro time space theory of the Bie-modern revealing the distinct features of the times, China's narrative space theory can only be regarded as a microscopic study by transplanting Western space theories.

Lefebvre and Foucault's space theories offer an inspiration for Chinese research of space theory. Bie-modern space theory is on the whole obviously different from them.

1. The social form of China is much more complicated than that of France with a single form of capitalism studied by Lefebvre. Space theories of France and even the whole West are therefore hard to be used in generalizing the complex space in China constituted by the juxtaposition of different times, different productive relations and ideologies as well as their conflicts.

2. The four phases of the Bie-modern, namely the harmony and the conspiracy, the conflict and the contradiction, the interweaving of harmony and conflict, and the self-renewal and transcendence, cannot be summarized according to the division of six historical stages in Lefebvre's space theory.

3. The Bie-modern space is a large space of the present era while Foucault's space is a tiny space of oneself. Therefore, Foucault's theory of space cannot compose the three-dimensional network space of the Bie-modern, but a tiny personal space resisting the oppression and discipline on individuals.

4. The Bie-modern era is the juxtaposition and harmony of the modern, the pre-modern and the post-modern. This social form and historical stage of development are completely different from Foucault's historical disruptions and Westernized history by period in which modern means the interruption of pre-modern, and post-modern implies the interruption of modern. In this way the theory of the temporal spatialization of the Bie-modern is a unique theory based on reality, rather than a copy of Western theories.

In brief, compared with the space theories in Western humanities and social sciences, the Bie-modern temporal spatialization theory possesses temporal continuity instead of interruption, and the direct generalization of reality instead of the grafting of Western theories. In this sense, the Bie-modern theory is Chinese own space theory that is also the most appropriate for China's current situation.

1.2 The Bie-modern Four-phase Development Theory and the Great-leap-forward Pause Theory

The activities and social practices of life on earth are associated with time to form the history of life and the history of human society. As it is known, China has at least 3000 years of recorded history. Hegel, one of the greatest German philosophers once said wrote:

“With the Empire of China History has to begin, for it is the oldest, as far as history gives us any information; and its principle has such substantiality, that for the empire in question it is at once the oldest and the newest... No People has a so strictly continuous series of Writers of History as the Chinese [...]. The Chinese have certain ancient canonical documents, from which their history, constitution, and religion can be gathered. [And] a matter of especial astonishment is the accuracy with which their historical works are executed.”²⁰

Surprisingly, Hegel later said:

Early do we see China advancing to the condition in which it is found at this day; for as the contrast between objective existence and subjective freedom of movement in it, is still wanting, every change is excluded, and the fixedness of a character which recurs perpetually, takes the place of what we should call the truly historical. China and India lie, as it were, still outside the World's History, as the mere presupposition of elements whose combination must be waited for to constitute their vital progress.²¹

Chinese history which is outside the process of world's history, is “an unhistorical history.”²²

In his *Philosophy of History, Elements of the Philosophy of Right, Lectures on the History of Philosophy* and other works, Hegel repeatedly stressed that China in essence has no history, except for the change of dynasties and monarchic regimes, and the repetition of rogues taking turns to govern the country; thus no real progress could have been made from it. He said:

²⁰ G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Liu Liqun, Shen Zhen, Zhang Donghui and Yao Yan (Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2014), 114. The book was translated from *Vorlesungen Band 12, Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*, Berlin (1822–1823), Felix Meiner Verlag GmbH, Hamburg 1996. The quotes here are from John Sibree's translation (1857). (Source: G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, with Prefaces by Charles Hegel and the translator J. Sibree (Ontario: Batoche Books, 1900).

²¹ Ibid.

²² G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. Wang Zaoshi (Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 1999): 112. The book was translated from John Sibree's translation (1857).

[In Chinese history] the element of Subjectivity – that is to say, the reflection upon itself of the individual will in antithesis to the Substantial (as the power in which it is absorbed) or the recognition of this power as one with its own essential being, in which it knows itself free – is not found on this grade of development [...].

This is the character of the Chinese people in its various aspects. Its distinguishing feature is, that everything which belongs to Spirit – unconstrained morality, in practice and theory, Heart, inward Religion, Science and Art properly so called – is alien to it.²³

The domestic philosophical circle generally thought that Hegel deduced the history of China from his own logic, thereby hindering Chinese history with his logic. If looked from the historical fact, that the history of ancient China was just as described by Hegel, though modern Chinese social history has left Hegel's view behind. However, from the viewpoint of temporal spatialization, may we claim that current China, intertwined with modern, pre-modern and postmodern, has made any real progress in history? This is an issue unable to be avoided by any theory relating to social history.

Another new conception of China's historical philosophy opposed to Hegel merits attention. Zhao Tingyang, a philosopher in the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, recently wrote in his "Future Possibility of Tian-Xia Doctrine":

The order of modernity is still in the present continuous tense, but as a "problem" it has been in present perfect tense, that is to say, modernity no longer grows, but is a problem that has ended, an object of history study, instead of one belonging to future.²⁴

If I understand correctly, Zhao Tingyang is saying that China has been a modern country or hyper-modern country. The concept of modernity no longer fits the current situation of China. Compared with Hegel's stagnation theory of Chinese history, Zhao's is clearly the take-off theory of Chinese history. But whether seen from China's history or China's present reality, China is neither a country without history, nor it has leaped directly from the history of the past. The key is what social form China takes, and what the inner organizational structure and dynamic structure of the social form are.

Hegel's statement of "China with unhistorical history" seems to be established so far as space rather than time is concerned, as Chinese feudal society for thousands of years was repeating the same behavioral pattern and circulation movement. However, if we look back on the history from today, the spatial agglomeration has been

²³ Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, 131–36.

²⁴ Tingyang Zhao, "Future Possibility of Tian-Xia Doctrine – A Response to some Current Questions," *Exploration and Free Views* 5 (2016).

thawed for a long time. But this does not mean that we have crossed the modern into the postmodern. On the contrary, we are far from the genuine modernity, while the pre-modern remains the nightmare of today's society, always haunting us, blinding us and poisoning us. Many social tragedies today reveal the shadow of pre-modern thought and system. Therefore, the problem of modernity has not become obsolete, for it is still haunting us.

The Bie-modern's temporal spatialization is neither Hegel's stagnation theory of Chinese history, nor Zhao's take-off theory of Chinese history, as the Bie-modern has its own structure and function absorbed from social reality. The primary task of Bie-modernism is to show the structure and function of the real society.

Both Hegel's view of "China with no history" and Zhao's view of "the end of modernity" involve Chinese history, its historical development and social form, thus directly relating to the recognition of the present China. As for the view of "China with no history", China today is still in the pre-modern, which has nothing to do with the modern. According to the view that the modern has become history, China has gone through the modern, and entered the postmodern or the post-post-modern. But starting from the reality of China, neither is in accordance with Chinese national condition. It is therefore, very necessary to understand China's circumstances and its concrete existence which is constituted by specific phases and forms, rather than some abstract doctrine. And the profound meaning of the Bie-modern is hidden in such concrete existence.

Bie-modernism is not simple temporal spatialization, but has concrete connotations, that is, the theory of development stage resulted from the contradiction and struggle between the modern, pre-modern and postmodern in today China. The main problem in the Bie-modern era is the disorder in complexity and the conflict in diversity, which have been clearly manifested in all aspects of social life. Therefore, Bie-modernism holds that on the basis of temporal spatialization which refers to the spatial juxtaposition of the modern, the pre-modern and the postmodern, the tension structure containing both harmonious collusion and internal conflict among the three has been established. In the tension structure, the harmony and conspiracy phase is the early stage of the Bie-modern, followed by the phase of conflict and contradiction. Because the modern and the pre-modern are in a natural antagonism in terms of ideology and the system, the harmonious period will always give way to the conflict period with the rise of social contradictions. But in the conflict and contradiction phase, because of the self-regulating capacity of a healthy society, there could also appear the juxtaposition of harmony and conflict. Take the doctor-patient conflicts in today's China as an example. At first when patients gave a red envelope to doctors (as a way of bribery), the harmony and conspiracy phase was achieved. With the increased economic burden on patients and their accumulating disappointment of doctors, the situation was reversed – patients and their families would physically harm doctors and nurses, then entering into the conflict and contradiction phase. After the opposition between patients and doctors, there would be a new balance with

the emergence of a new rule, according to which patients no longer gave doctors a red envelope, and doctors no longer accepted the red envelope nor gave excessive treatment, consequently reaching a rationalization of the doctor-patient relationship. But it is far from enough to have only harmony-struggle-harmony because no real progress will be made and it could only become an 'unhistorical history.' Therefore, the enlightened, especially those from among the management are the earliest to conduct self-reflection, self-renewal and self-transcendence, to finally come to a new management level, and meanwhile bring society to a new level of development. This process is the self-renewal and transcendence phase, which is the end of the Bie-modern.

As the modern, pre-modern and postmodern are entangled with each other, they are all harmonious and contradictory, and therefore, a new dominant power will be formed through conflict and struggle in the Bie-modern era. This power could be modernity, or pre-modernity, the direction of social development has some randomness. However, the general trend of social development and progress will not change; therefore, the four-phase theory is still valid.

The four phases of the Bie-modern, namely the harmony and conspiracy, the conflict and contradiction, the interweaving of harmony and conflict, and the self-renewal and transcendence, must be elaborated in details. Here, the Bie-modern development theory is different from Lefebvre's space theory with six historical stages. It is not just a simple slogan; on the contrary, it is a theoretical system, creative thought, and *Zhuyi* of Chinese originality as well as an inclusive theory, which involves politics, ideology, culture, art, philosophy, aesthetics and other aspects.

Bie-modernism is different from Bie-modern, and its doctrine aims to expect the emergence of a dominant force that conforms to the trend of human progress through self-regulation, self-renewal and self-transcendence of the society, to achieve the renewal, transcendence and the end of the Bie-modern, sequentially entering into a more ideal stage of social development.

The outlook of social progress of Bie-modernism comes from the idea of Great-leap-forward Pause²⁵ and that of parallel natural development and scientific development which can thus be perceived as a brand-new idea, theory, method and *Zhuyi* concerning the particular social form and social historical development stage.

Great-leap-forward Pause is concept of philosophical development I proposed to compare with the Great-leap-forward development. Great-leap-forward Pause implies a great turn accomplished when any business suddenly stops its booming and flourishing growth and tries to relieve its force of inertia and change its route of development. The strategies of drawing back wisely in face of overwhelming odds in ancient China, putting an end to autocracy with another autocracy in current Asia, and the propagation of No-Water Day, No-Tobacco Day and Car-Free Day in the globe today are all typical examples of Great-leap-forward Pause. However, different from Great-leap-forward Pause, Great-leap-forward development could be used by less developed countries to catch up with and surpass developed countries in economy,

²⁵ See Wang Jiangjiang, "Bie-modern: Great-leap-forward Pause," *Exploration and Free Views* 12 (2015): 9-14.

technology and military force though, while in social system, civilization pattern and ecology as well, it is ultimately unreliable for achieving a leapfrog development after ignoring the experimental stages that the advanced countries have undergone. The collapse of the former Soviet Union and the socialist countries in East Europe is the inevitable consequence of Great-leap-forward development surpassing the historical stage of capitalism. Although the former Soviet Union indeed had some advantages over the United States in certain aspects of economy, technology and military force, it unavoidably failed for transcending the stage of institutional civilization and building socialism on the basis of serf system. On the contrary, those Asian countries and regions that respected the law of social development and drew lessons from the former Soviet Union and East Europe, successfully adopted the thinking mode of Great-leap-forward Pause, thereby averting social turmoil and smoothly entering into democratic society.

Great-leap-forward Pause has more obvious manifestations in the formation of artistic styles and schools. On the one hand, art needs to be inherited, learned and imitated. On the other hand, more importantly, art calls for originality. Any originality means Great-leap-forward Pause on the inherited, learned and imitated object, accordingly generating a brand-new style and school.

After the theory of Great-leap-forward Pause was proposed, it has caused a heated discussion in Chinese philosophical and ideological circles, which shows that the thinking mode and philosophical approach of the Bie-modern theory could easily arouse interest in the academia. China is now in an urgent need for this unofficial and original philosophical thought with guiding significance.

Returning to Erjavec's comment, the Bie-modern theory is not the product of national five-year plan as he fered, but the personal research findings of one's own. Although the articles related to the Bie-modern theory were crowned as the partial achievements of National Social Science Fund Project when published, actually, this theory was first put forward in my "Bie-modern: the Appeal and the Construction of *Zhuyi*" in *Exploration and Free Views* in no. 12, 2014. My National Social Science Fund Project "The Deconstruction and Reconstruction of Hero Space in the Postmodern Context" was begun in 2015. The name of the project was then changed into "The Deconstruction and Reconstruction of Hero Space in Bie-modern Era" approved by the National Social Science Fund Office in June 2016. The reason for this change was that through research we found that China was not in the postmodern context, but in the Bie-modern era which has completely different social form and different characteristics of the specific social and historical stage. Therefore, the Bie-modern theory was not a product of official five-year plan, but the individual creation out of pure freedom and independence, and the individual originality with the help of the fund. As a matter of fact, advocating *Zhuyi* has been my consistent academic claim since 2012, and I have published several articles and aroused some interest and discussions in China.²⁶ The advocating of the Bie-modern was only the practice of my

²⁶ See Wang Jianjiang, "Bie-modernism: The Appeal and the Construction of *Zhuyi*," *Exploration and Free*

ideas about *Zhuyi*, which could be called Bie-modernism (Bie-Xiandai-*Zhuyi*, 别现代主义). I believe that Bie-modernism could be the best answer to the worries of scholars both at home and abroad that are concerned with Chinese philosophy, aesthetics and humanities.

3. Sino-West-Marxism-I and the Interpretation of a Paradox

Erjavec's view of philosophical quadrilateral is his revision of the philosophical empires conceived by Richard Shusterman (namely, the Anglo-American, the German, the French and the Far Eastern), with which he once agreed. Using the philosophical quadrilateral to take the place of the philosophical empires he agreed to replace the Far Eastern with the Chinese; all this will undoubtedly cause in Chinese readers some excitement. However, when we recall his opposition between speech and voice, our optimism may turn out to be obviously blind. The style of Erjavec is similar to the "ascending slightly prior to declining intensively" of Zhuangzi. Zhuangzi (2500 B. C.) said: "Forests and marshes make me joyful and glad". Everyone is happy with the beauty of the nature, whereas Zhuangzi then said by turning to the other direction, "but before the joy is ended, sadness comes and succeeds it. When sadness and joy come, I cannot prevent their approach; when they go, I cannot retain them. How sad it is that men should only be as lodging-houses for things, (and the emotions which they excite)!" This passage has been widely quoted, to praise that Zhuangzi is the big guru of naturalist aesthetics, but in fact it praises not the beauty of the nature, but tells the difficulties and sorrows of a person in the bivouac of life alienated from the outside world. When we get excited with Erjavec's quadrilateral expectation, we feel as if a bucket of cold water has been poured on us: you just uttered voice, not speech.

Are we making a speech or are uttering a voice? I think in the second part of this article I have expressed my view, that is, we not only have a voice, but speech; we do not only utter a voice but utter a speech. However, how Erjavec's theory of the distinction between voice and speech came about? Seeking to answer this question may give more depth to our discussion.

In 1997, Erjavec wrote articles to discuss the nationality and internationality of philosophy. Combined with the reality of the small country of Slovenia, he put forward his own ideas against Shusterman's theory of philosophical empires. Shusterman

Views 12 (2014): 72–77. Wang Jianjiang, "Bie-modernism: Beyond Aesthetics and after Postmodernism – On Reaction to an International Aesthetics Trend led by Welsch Wolfgang," *Journal of Shanghai Normal University (Philosophy & Social Sciences Edition)* 1 (2015): 5–14, reprinted by *Social Sciences Weekly*, 3rd page, April 9, 2015. Wang Jianjiang, "'For-non-existence', 'For-being' and 'Yet-for-being' in Chinese Aesthetics and Literary Theory," *Academic Monthly* 10 (2015): 126–35. Wang Jianjiang, "Academic Tactics in an Era of Intellectual underdevelopment: The Case of Aesthetics," *Chinese Social Sciences Review* 4 (2015): 93–104. Wang Jianjiang, "Bie-modern: Behind the Creation of Discourse," *Shanghai Culture* 12 (2015): 5–9. Jianjiang, "Bie-modern: Great-leap-forward Pause," 9–14. Wang Jianjiang, "Bie-modern: The Disciplinary Boundaries and Internal Basis of Aesthetics of Theory of Life," *Theoretical Studies in Literature and Art* 2 (2016): 164–72. A heated debate about Bie-modern and Bie-modernism was therefore raised.

holds that the philosophical principles in the world all come from philosophical empires; the vast majority adhering to the philosophical empires can only form philosophical schools attached to the empires.²⁷ While Erjavec accepted this view, he pointed out at the same time that philosophy of small countries could choose the third road, one that is unrelated to the two roads proposed by Shusterman, that is, develop its independent path and walk its own road, but meanwhile keep the interactions with the philosophical empires and the international philosophical circles.²⁸ Erjavec said so and also put his words into practice. He and his compatriot once mentioned in his article, the leading Slovenia philosopher, Slavoj Žižek, have given me much inspiration for both are great philosophers and aestheticians from a 'small country' and a 'small culture'. An economic power is not necessarily a philosophical power, and is not doomed to be a philosophical empire. The five-year plan with all the efforts of the nation may not necessarily produce a philosopher; on the contrary, due to the discipline from the authoritative ideology, a scholar that was supposed to be a philosopher could only become an ordinary unimaginative publisher. A philosopher first is an individual, one with highly spiritual freedom. Therefore, I believe that Chinese philosophy, aesthetics and humanities should take a path neither of the philosophical empires raising their arm in a call for action, nor of the other countries' that blindly follow the empires at every step instead, they should take their own path. While this path is different from the Slovenian, it is a path of the coexistence of "Sino-West-Marxism-I" which means "Chinese traditional philosophy, Western philosophy, Marxism and I (myself)". Chinese traditional philosophy, Western philosophy, and Marxism have been the inherent ingredients of recent traditional Chinese culture, ideology and philosophy, which it can never be rid of. But the absence of "I" is yet to be filled. According to Bie-modernism, the key lies in "I", that means the originality of one's own as an individual "I". The "I" is my experience, my discovery and my way. Thus, I emphasize "Chinese traditional philosophy, Western philosophy, Marxism and I (myself)" in the construction of Chinese philosophy and humanities.

In fact, Chinese philosophical circles have already demarcated one construction, which is "Sino-West-Marxism", referring to Chinese traditional philosophy, Western philosophy and Marxist philosophy.²⁹ But nowadays since with the advent of some new and original thoughts and views of individuals, the demarcation is being eliminated. The sign is that the academic thought of individual creation rather than the five-year plan is being formed, such as my Bie-modernism, Wu Xuan's negativism aesthetics, etc. Therefore, the current philosophical pattern of China should be "Chinese traditional philosophy, Western philosophy, Marxism and I (myself)", instead of "Chinese traditional philosophy, Western philosophy and Marxism" (i.e.,

²⁷ Shusterman, "Internationalism in Philosophy," 289-301.

²⁸ Erjavec, "Philosophy: National and International," 342-45.

²⁹The concept of "Sino-West-Marxism" which means Chinese traditional philosophy, Western philosophy and Marxism comes from Chinese philosophical circle. In December 2014 the concept was discussed in the 4th expert forum on Chinese philosophy, Western philosophy and Marxist philosophy held in Fudan University.

“Sino-West-Marxism”). These three as the resources of thought will be ultimately integrated into the creation of thought and theory by individual thinkers, therefore the ideological, theoretical and philosophical creation in nature belongs to individual efforts. Mentioning “Chinese traditional philosophy, Western philosophy, Marxism and I (myself)” together seems to be natural in China.

The main problem in the Bie-modern era is the contradiction constituted by developed economy, military force, politics, diplomacy and underdeveloped thought. The underdevelopment is mainly shown by the lack of *Zhuyi*, and this view of underdeveloped thought is not in reciting and following Shusterman's and Derrida's view of China as having no philosophy, but based on the basic social reality. As is suggested in my “Academic Tactics in an Era of Intellectual Underdevelopment: The Case of Aesthetics”,³⁰ the Bie-modern era is just a developing phase. In fact, the fact that Chinese philosophy takes no place among Shusterman's philosophical empires is the continuation of Hegel's thought. The same idea gets more obvious expression in Derrida's theory of China having no philosophy, which also caused great echoes in China's philosophical, ideological and academic circles. But whether it is Hegel, Shusterman, or Derrida, it is obviously wrong to use their ideas to describe ancient Chinese philosophy, and it is also inappropriate to rule out ancient China from philosophical empires. Just for Chinese modern and contemporary philosophy, Xiong Shili, Feng Youlan, Mou Zongsan and Li Zehou cannot but be regarded as philosophers. Li Zehou, in particular, is a famous Chinese aesthetician that has won the recognition of European and American philosophical and ideological circles. Therefore, the intellectual underdevelopment in China occurs between the high-speed development of economy and the relative backwardness of philosophy and humanities, which does not mean that Chinese philosophy and thought is paused. In China today, it has become a common practice to encourage originality, and cast aside copycat and I believe there will be more theories springing out besides the “Sino-West-Marxism-I”.

Erjavec's comment which inspires me most is the paradox between ‘cosmopolitanism’ and ‘nationalism’ in philosophy, aesthetics and humanities.

Thesis: Truth has no national boundaries, and no nationality, it is of the entire world, thus it is not true to speak of national truth.

Antithesis: Before the world citizens appear, truth comes about in national countries, how does truth without nationality spread among nations?

As far as the competition between French and American cultures that Erjavec exemplifies is concerned, if truth is of the entire world, then why this competition is necessary? If truth is national, how French thought became the dominant thought of the world after the confrontation and competition with Britain, American and German ones? Certainly, the profoundness of any paradox lies in that it has broken away from the arbitrariness of simple conclusion. A lot of people indeed hold that “the more national, the more world” and regard it as Marxism. But is that really true? We have seen the weak nations in poverty and backwardness hidden in the depths of

³⁰ Jiangjiang, “Academic Tactics in an Era of Intellectual Underdevelopment,” 93–104.

the mountains around the world; is their pre-modern civilization of the world significance in addition to being visited sometimes? Therefore, as French thought that stresses the sanctity of French culture, adhering to nationalism is not necessarily contradictory to the world, while those affiliated countries of philosophical empires that are advocating cosmopolitanism are not necessarily holding the truth. It is not important that philosophy is of the world or of a nation, what really matters is that if it has world value, which means the universal significance for human beings. If the French people come up with far more ideas than Americans, Germans and Russians which generate no value for the world or humanity, how could French thought be accepted by Continental, Anglo-American, and Chinese philosophies? How could France replace America and become the center of world philosophy and ideology? Thus, the contradiction or paradox between cosmopolitanism and nationalism is not equal to the sterility that Erjavec talks about, which in contrast, is most inspiring for current Chinese philosophy, aesthetics and humanities. Its enlightenment lies in how to get out of this paradox. That Chinese philosophy and aesthetics will be developed or not, largely depends on whether you are using nationalism to exclude the outside, or adopting universal truth and universal value to express a national thought.

In the pattern of "Sino-West-Marxism-I", and the paradox between cosmopolitanism and nationalism, there is no need to have the complete opposition among Chinese traditional philosophy, Western philosophy and Marxism, or use the first three to hinder or eliminate individual "I", or mix them, but to discard the paradox, the opposition or the mix, and highlight the individuality and originality of "I". Only in this way can you really solve the problem of intellectual underdevelopment and establish the present situation of the quadrilateral. Otherwise, you will forever fall into the abstract contention between nationalism and cosmopolitanism which has no help for problem-solving. Imagine if there had not been a large number of independent thinkers in France appearing in this half a century, how French nationalism could have changed into cosmopolitanism? Thus, just as Erjavec said, the various Western paths of post-colonialism are not appropriate for China. I believe Chinese path is under Chinese feet, and it is the independent creation of individual "I" based on the resources of Chinese traditional philosophy, Western philosophy and Marxism.

The Bie-modern era is a period of multiple complexities, with Chinese traditional philosophy, Western philosophy, Marxism and "I" leading the trend by taking turns. But Bie-modernism is different from the sophistication of the Bie-modern, for advocating the simplicity, which means the dominance over the Bie-modern rather than being dominated by Bie-modern. Adhering to the originality of "I", we will never lose subjectivity which happened when ancient Rome imitated ancient Greece, or Asia, Africa and Latin America followed some developed European countries or America. In fact, the Chinization and popularization of Marxism in China is also the reform and development of Marxism advancing with the times which is of individuality and originality. Therefore, I am looking forward to Chinese philosophy occupying a position in the world quadrilateral as Erjavec proposed, but the first thing I have to

consider is that the formation and maintenance of this philosophical quadrilateral must go beyond nationalism, which will never be narrow nationalism.

For narrow nationalism, Erjavec quotes the "Republic of letters" as the cultural and academic tradition of Europe, which I believe means tolerance, opening-up, communication, mutual-respect and seeking common grounds while putting aside differences, and idea-exchanging and value-sharing under the background of globalization. We are in urgent need to break out of the closed small circle of the present situation of individual work, and have greater access to the international vision and world philosophy. However, the other side of the problem is that from Hegel, Shusterman, Derrida, to the leftist Marxist philosopher Erjavec whose country left East European socialist camp and entered European Union, their theories of China having no history, philosophy or speech, are all asking the nation: do you have one? From this perspective, fighting against narrow nationalism does not mean giving up national position.

The true power can embrace multi-cultures, 'the republic of letters,' others' criticism on their backward aspects and the construction of individual *Zhuyi* by encouraging ideological and academic innovation. The big power not only has the assimilatory function of cultures but also the ability of self-regulation, self-development and self-renewal. Bie-modernism based on the background of big power is actually *Zhuyi* of self-regulation, self-renewal and self-transcendence as well as *Zhuyi* of practical implementation of the core values of freedom, democracy and legal system in China.

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