

A Comparative Study of Marx's Perceptual View of Nature and Hegel's Philosophy of Nature

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Abstract. Marx's perceptual view of nature is a positive rejection of Hegel's philosophy of nature, which retains the positive parts of Hegel's dialectic and rejects the shortcomings of objective idealism. At its root, Marx recognized the nature externalized by Hegel on the basis of abstract thought as "nothing", thus launching a critique of Hegel's natural philosophy. In the process of criticizing Hegel's natural philosophy, Marx combined nature with real and historical sensual activities, and with the dialectics of nature, showing the view of nature under the new worldview.

Keywords: Marx; Hegel; Absolute Spirit; Sensuous Nature.

1. Introduction

Hegel was a typical objective idealist, and his philosophical study of nature was also embedded in idealism. In classical German philosophy, many philosophers tried to use consciousness to reveal the intrinsic connection between the various links in the development of the world, but none of them achieved true unity. Hegel used dialectics to realize the unity of logic and history by taking the absolute spirit as the core of his philosophy. Hegel believed that philosophy is a circle returning from itself to itself.

The emergence of the concept of nature is said to be far-reaching and can be traced back as far as primitive times. Under the overall environment of extremely low productivity and the dependence of human beings on nature for food, the lack of human awareness of their own subject matter made unexplainable natural phenomena the object of worship. Since then, nature has been transformed into a "god" that dominates human behavior, and primitive tribes depicted different natural elements as different totems, which were then worshiped. In the primitive era, the knowledge of nature remained in the stage of fear due to its own limitations. Understanding the development of the concept of nature plays an important role in our study of Hegel's philosophy of nature and Marx's perceptual nature.

2. The Process of Development of the Concept of Nature before Classical German Philosophy

2.1. Physical Nature in Ancient Greece

Ancient Greece, with its vast territory, became the source of Western philosophy mainly because of its special geography, human history and other comprehensive factors. The main content of early Greek philosophy was "physis" (nature), and from the Ionian school to Neo Platonism, the focus of its research was always on the natural origin. Therefore, ancient Greek philosophy always had a strong dialectical color of absolutism and simple intuition in its research assertions.

First of all, the starting point of early Greek philosophy was natural philosophy, and the subject of its study was everything in the universe. In this period, the Greeks tried to get rid of the limitations of myths and examine the natural existence with rational eyes. "The Greeks seldom had the idea of separating man from nature; they regarded nature as a 'large universe' and man as a 'small universe', and man as a part of nature." [1] The emphasis on the wholeness of nature was an important feature of the ancient Greek description of nature. The Greeks always held a sense of admiration for nature, believing that man was a part of nature and was contained by it. Second, ancient Greek philosophy attempted to grasp the unchanging world in terms of entities, understanding nature as an eternal,

harmonious entity. Man's ability to transform the world was not perceived along with the unawakened consciousness of the human subject, and when nature was understood as an eternal entity, man could only live in the natural world as a passive recipient. Human activity is especially small in front of nature, and human subjectivity is even more worthless compared to it. Finally, the question of "what is the world" in ancient Greek philosophy was mostly answered by a single natural element, which was simple and intuitive. For example, Heraclitus, one of the representatives of The Miletus school of ancient Greece, believed that "this universe, which is identical with everything, is neither created by any god nor by anyone, but was, is, and will be an eternal living fire that burns according to a certain proportion and is extinguished according to a certain proportion." [2] On the one hand, "fire" is one of the elements of nature; on the other hand, "fire" conforms to the eternity, fluidity, universality and order of the original. In short, the discussion of ancient Greek philosophy on the concept of nature mainly focuses on the natural elements or a certain material entity as the origin of the world.

2.2. Theological Nature in the Middle Ages

In the late period of Ancient Greek philosophy, theological thought, mainly Christianity, had slowly begun to take shape and gradually became the focus of philosophical research. What we call medieval philosophy is a philosophical form that focuses on Christian theology. This philosophical form was born from the need of Christianity's own theoretical development, and then unfolded to the empirical philosophy of the common and different phases of human beings themselves. Medieval philosophy's discussion of the concept of nature is different from that of ancient Greek philosophy, which was based on God-centered religious philosophy, while in Christianity, all things in nature are created by the all-knowing, all-powerful, and all-good God. "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." This is the first sentence of the Bible, and from this sentence we can see that God is supreme as the creator of heaven and earth. For example, in ancient Greek philosophy, nature, as the original constituent element of the world, is above man, but in Christianity, both nature and man's are created by God, and it is even said that nature is governed by man. In general, the theological nature of the Middle World was a passive recipient before God and man, which led to this situation, fundamentally because of the inherent transcendence of medieval religious philosophy.

From the point of view of worldview, the ideas of religious philosophy were transcendental, and this transcendence dictated that medieval theology was naturally transcendental in reality. Bonaventure, a student of Alexander, argued that all things are facsimiles of God, that God is manifested through all things, and that one can recognize God in all things. God creates all things, all things return to God, and God exists in all things. It follows that God is the essence of all existence. Whether it is the Patristic philosophy of the pre-medieval period or the scriptural philosophy of the later period, the perspective of exploring nature always begins and ends with God. According to the Bible, God created everything and man in six days. On the sixth day, God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle of the earth, and over all the earth, and over every insect that creepeth upon the earth." It is evident that God's original intention in creating man was for him to rule over all things. In this way, nature lost its previous exalted status and thus became subordinate to man, the manager. Furthermore, the subjectivity of man and nature as God's creations is ignored, and man can only obtain eternal life in the other world through good works in the present world and faith in God.

2.3. Mechanical Nature in Modern Philosophy

During this period, the rapid development of natural science has expanded the field of human knowledge; the rise of the Renaissance movement has promoted the awakening of human subjectivity. As a result, the process of human understanding and knowledge of nature began to accelerate, and the mystery of nature slowly disintegrated. Modern philosophy in the treatment of nature, divided into idealism and materialism two paths intertwined, here, mainly to explore the materialism of the mechanical view of nature. Materialism's mechanical view of nature begins with the recognition of

the existence of nature in the first place and the belief that nature operates according to certain objective laws, so nature is causal in the materialism of modern philosophy. Descartes used the relationship between objects and mechanical motion to explain all natural phenomena, and he recognized the universe, animals, and even the human body as machines, and compared to animals, human beings have only "a few more cogs" and "the blood runs faster." It can be seen that this mechanical view of nature attributes the operation and development of the natural world to the inevitable regularity of cause and effect, and equates the nature of nature and human nature with machinery, and nature and human beings are subjugated to the objective laws. "Human beings and societies, like nature, are uniformly subject to the laws of nature, and man's nature is his natural attribute, and this determinism denies not only freedom, but also the value and dignity of man." [3]

From the above philosophical formulations of the concept of nature, we can see that, from the solid nature of ancient Greece to the mechanical nature of modern philosophy, the definition of the concept of nature or the description of its nature is of a kind of hazy speculation, emphasizing mainly the movement of nature itself or attributing it to "God", "man", "machinery" and other provisions, excluding the independence of nature. Hegel's philosophy of nature and Marx's perceptual nature are based on the previous philosophical forms of examining nature, with one starting from the absolute spirit and the other from the perceptual activity of human beings to reveal different kinds of nature.

3. Hegel's Natural Philosophy The Essential Connotation

3.1. Discerning the Subject in Hegel's Philosophy of Nature

According to Hegel, the world is the dialectical idea. For example, in an architectural drawing, the idea is the stipulation of the mechanics of the building in that place; natural philosophy is the stipulation of the alienation or externalization of the idea, the stipulation of the idea in nature; and spiritual philosophy is a series of stipulations of the idea in the subjective spirit, between the subjective spirit and the sensible object, and in the ascent of the subjective spirit. The difference between logic, natural philosophy, and spiritual philosophy, therefore, lies in the different stipulations of ideas. Hegel describes natural philosophy in the Lesser Logic as "the science of the study of the alienation or externalization of ideas." [4] In nature, we recognize nothing else but ideas. Nature is the externalized form of the idea, and what we actually recognize in nature is the idea, not nature at all, not the essential and necessary connection inherent in the object itself, which we impose on nature.

Hegel's definition of nature does not come out of thin air; he believes that nature is the nature "externalized by the absolute spirit". In Hegel's view, the idea is the origin of the world, and the absolute spirit is the existence that exists before the world and the idea, and the development of the absolute spirit needs to go through three stages, which are logical reasoning, alienation of nature, and spiritual restoration. In the first stage of the development of the Absolute Spirit, which is the logical reasoning stage, the Absolute Spirit manifests itself as an absolute idea that does not depend on the existence of any entity. As this idea develops to its peak, it inevitably becomes externalized into the world of entities, so that nature exists as an alienated form of the absolute spirit. In Hegel's eyes, nature is generated by logical reasoning to its extreme, so nature changes with the idea, and its immanence is the idea. It can be seen that Hegel believes that nature does not possess the characteristic of change, and that the change of nature is only the manifestation of the initiative of the absolute spirit. On the basis of recognizing the existence of nature, Hegel regards the absolute spirit as the beginning of the existence of nature, which has infinite boundaries but cannot escape from the stipulation of time, and which serves only as a medium for the development of the absolute spirit. Although Hegel places nature under the perspective of objective idealism as the externalization of ideas, he dialectically links man and nature under historical development to study the dialectical movement of man, nature and history. This shows that Hegel's description of nature as a stage of development is rational. Engels also praised this, "Hegel for the first time - this is his greatest achievement - the whole natural, historical and spiritual world as a process, that is, as in constant movement, change and

development, transformation and development, and attempted to reveal the inner connection of this movement and development." [5]

3.2. The Structure of Movement in Hegel's Philosophy of Nature

Hegel combined the process of movement of the Absolute Spirit with the results of the natural sciences by dividing the process of movement in nature into three parts from low to high: mechanics, physics and organics.

First of all, the natural phenomena involved in mechanics are mainly macroscopic physical phenomena, such as space, time, motion, gravity and celestial motions in the universe. These phenomena are the external nature of matter, not enough to realize the "quality" of the rise, and likewise can not constitute the natural close connection of the whole. Physics then deals with natural phenomena that are microscopic in nature, such as light, heat, sound, electricity, and the synthesis and decomposition of chemical elements. In this system, more complex interactions are realized between the existence of substances, which have a stable wholeness. Finally, organics encompasses the interactions between life, like the mutual development of animals, plants, and human beings that precede these living beings. For organics, Hegel describes it as, "The organism is a self-existing individuality which develops itself within itself into its own distinction." And within this organics, man is the highest stage of its development. Hegel's philosophical division of nature intends to show the movement of the Absolute Spirit in nature, and the evolution from the phenomenon to the life-being is essentially the process of the Absolute Spirit's reappearance.

In Hegel's philosophical system, natural philosophy, like logic, unfolds from pure nothing, which is the most empty and abstract thing, and deduces it into an organic whole in accordance with the movement of philosophical thinking. First of all, Hegel's natural philosophy shows a strong dynamism. Hegel regarded the development of nature as a dynamic whole, which is always in the process of continuous development and upward movement, which also contains rich dialectical thoughts. Secondly, Hegel's philosophy of nature shows the objective characteristics of evolution. From mechanics, physics to organic science is a continuous evolutionary process from low to high level, in which nature externalizes its inner contradictory movement into natural phenomena, from macroscopic to microscopic, and then to the living organism, which demonstrates the development path of nature as the externalization of the absolute spirit, and the continuous evolution towards the absolute spirit. Finally, starting from the abstract absolute spirit, Hegel overcomes the limitations of idealism with regard to the static development of nature and emphasizes that nature is a dialectical and holistic process of movement.

One commonality between Marx's perceptual view of nature and Hegel's philosophy of nature is that it also contains dialectics, and by rejecting Hegel's philosophy of nature, dialectics and materialism were combined to produce a view of nature that belongs to the new worldview.

4. The Emergence and Qualities of Marx's Perceptual View of Nature

4.1. The Historical Background and Formation of Marx's Perceptual View of Nature

No worldview is formed without a social background, and the industrial revolution in Britain in the mid-18th century rapidly changed the face of production in all sectors. The industrial reforms rapidly changed the face of production in various industrial sectors, and in the 1840s, the traditional handicraft production was replaced by machine production, and Britain became known as the "factory of the world". Subsequently, the Industrial Revolution swept across Europe. The acceleration of the industrial revolution was also accompanied by the development of capitalism, which first took root in several European countries and was used to accumulate wealth and establish bourgeois states. The Industrial Revolution not only brought the bourgeoisie to the center of the stage of history, but also allowed the proletariat to play an important role in world history. In the course of the ensuing capitalist economic development, along with the strengthening of the bourgeoisie's dominance, the conflicts

with the proletariat intensified. The living conditions and production conditions of the working class deteriorated, the gap between the rich and the poor between the two opposing classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, grew wider and wider, and the workers' movement and the democratic movement were on the rise. The economic crises from 1825 onwards not only inflicted heavy injuries on the working class, but also exposed the inherent defects of the capitalist system. In the successive workers' uprisings, the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie went from spontaneous to conscious, and the proletariat began to emerge as an independent political force. During the period when the capitalist mode of production was dominant, not only did alienated labor bring the working class the double oppression of both the physical and spiritual worlds, but the bourgeoisie also used nature as a tool for its plundering of wealth, and plundered it endlessly. The relationship between class and class, and between man and nature, also worsened.

Marx's perceptual view of nature had already sprouted in his secondary school thesis, "Considerations of Youth in the Choice of Occupation," in which he distinguished man from animals and argued that man possessed a transcendence that animals could not, that is, that he could achieve the ends of life through his own practical abilities. In Marx's doctoral dissertation "The Difference between the Natural Philosophy of Democritus and that of Epicurus", Marx, as a member of the Young Hegelians' Doctoral Club in Berlin, affirmed Epicurus's idea of natural philosophy, and thought that "the deviation of atoms from a straight line" was uniquely fortuitous and manifested the free spirit of self-consciousness. The spirit of freedom of self-consciousness. In his study of the atomism of Democritus and Epicurus, Marx argued that Democritus was more concerned with the necessity of nature, while Epicurus was more concerned with contingency.

The key point that allowed Marx to move from an idealistic to a materialistic philosophy of nature was the critique of Feuerbach's humanistic view of nature. In the Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844, Marx expresses the view of nature as an independent being through his critique of Feuerbach's "empirical humanism and naturalism". "Without nature, without the sensible external world, the worker can create nothing" [6] and "Nature, in so far as it is not in itself the body of man, is the inorganic body of man, who lives by nature, who is a part of nature." [6] It can be seen that Marx clearly stated in the Manuscripts that nature is an independent being that is not subject to man's consciousness, and that man is in a one-way dependence relationship with nature. In the Syllabus on Feuerbach, which Marx wrote next, Marx made practice the core of his philosophical research and reconstructed the view of nature under the new worldview.

4.2. The Subjective Qualities of Marx's Perceptual View of Nature

The old materialism regarded "object, reality, sensibility" as only the form of object or intuition, and the relationship between human beings and nature as only an abstract one. Marx incorporated the practical activities of human sensibility into the understanding of "object, reality, and sensibility," forming the new materialist conception of nature.

First of all, nature is a real sensual being, a real being that exists outside of man, and it has independence. In the humanistic view of nature inherited by Marx from Feuerbach, nature, as a sensible entity, exists independently, can be generated and explained by itself, and does not need to rely on other entities. In Feuerbach's view, nature is a sensible being, but man, who is generated by nature, has no relationship with nature, which Marx discarded by including man in the category of nature and giving nature a social-historical nature mediated by practice.

Secondly, nature is practical. In Marx's view, Feuerbach's "sensibility" is only abstract "sensibility", not real "sensibility", because Feuerbach's "sensible man" is not really a real man. Sensible man" in Feuerbach is not a truly realistic man. In Marx's Syllabus on Feuerbach, changes in the environment and human beings are regarded as "revolutionary practices". Thus Marx's perceptual view of nature must be practicable nature. In the perceptual view of nature, in the relationship between human beings and nature, human beings no longer act as passive agents who can only be changed by the changes of nature, but utilize practices to transform nature in order to achieve human beings' own purpose of

existence. The so-called "revolutionary practice" is no longer a unidirectional relationship of determining and being determined, but one in which man and nature jointly influence each other; practice is an important form of man's subjective transformation of nature, and it is precisely in practice that man and the environment reach unity and a state of coexistence.

Finally, nature is socio-historical. When the perceptual conception of nature gives nature the cognitive mediation of man's perceptual practical activity, it actually gives nature a social-historical nature. Marx believed that self-existent nature can only establish realistic object relations through human perceptual practical activities, and human perceptual practical activities and the emergence and development of society are unified, the development of society is not unchanging, but also accompanied by the progress of human practical ability and evolution. Society dialectically unites the relationship between man and nature through man's perceptual-practical activities, and perceptual nature is the natural development process of social historicity.

This practical and socio-historical nature of the perceptual view of nature is inherently dialectical and unified, which is also the most different point from other views of nature.

5. Divergence and Transcendence of Hegel's Philosophy of Nature in Marx's Perceptual View of Nature

The essence of Hegel's philosophy of nature is objective idealism, which denies the objective existence of nature and regards nature as the externalization of absolute spirit. Marx deeply criticized it in the 1844 Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, "Hegel proceeds from alienation, from entities, from absolute and unchanging abstractions, that is to say, to put it more plainly, he proceeds from religion and theology." "Nature is external to abstract thought, a loss of self for abstract thought." Nature has lost its objective antecedence as an essence in the midst of Hegel's philosophical visionary horizon, and for that matter, Marx, thinking in terms of his materialism itself, would have had to make a radical renunciation of Hegel's philosophy of nature as well.

Marx's perceptual view of nature retains Hegel's dialectical thinking of a dialectical unity of being between man and nature, and the same view of nature as an energetic process, or what Hegel calls the practical capacity of the idea. But while Marx's enervation is the enervation realized through the practical activity of human sensibility, Hegel's is the enervation of the inner movement of the absolute spirit, and the two are completely different in their grounding of enervation. Herein lies the fundamental transcendence of Marx's perceptual view of nature over Hegel. Marx's perceptual view of nature is based on the reality of human perceptual activity, and affirms the nature of nature and the dialectical unity of man and nature.

6. Summary

The essence of Hegel's philosophy of nature is objective idealism, which denies the objective existence of nature and regards nature as the externalization of absolute spirit. Marx deeply criticized it in the 1844 Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, "Hegel proceeds from alienation, from entities, from absolute and unchanging abstractions, that is to say, to put it more plainly, he proceeds from religion and theology." "Nature is external to abstract thought, a loss of self for abstract thought." Nature has lost its objective antecedence as an essence in the midst of Hegel's philosophical visionary horizon, and for that matter, Marx, thinking in terms of his materialism itself, would have had to make a radical renunciation of Hegel's philosophy of nature as well.

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