

Critique of the "Feuerbachianization of Marxism" and Its Contemporary Value

Junwei Huang

School of Marxism, Zhejiang Normal University, Jinhua 321004, Zhejiang, China

ABSTRACT

In the development and dissemination of Marxism, the so-called "Feuerbachianization of Marxism" refers to a theoretical fallacy wherein bourgeois scholars distort Marxist theories by resorting to Feuerbach's abstract humanism and intuitive materialism, which essentially abandons the category of practice and deprives Marxism of its revolutionary and scientific attributes. Such erroneous interpretation originates from bourgeois ideological prejudices as well as misreadings of the theoretical relationship between Marx and Feuerbach. From the perspective of practical philosophy, comprehensive theoretical refutation can be realized through reconstructing the core status of practice, restoring the realistic essence of human beings, expanding the historical dimension of alienation critique, and renovating the practical mission of philosophy. Practically, this critical campaign helps uphold Marxism's inherent critical spirit via dialectical negation, embed Marxist anthropology into the practice of Chinese-style modernization by adhering to practical logic, and provide theoretical guidelines for advancing human modernization and implementing the people-centered developmental philosophy on the basis of realistic human essence, hence demonstrating the scientific nature and vigorous practical vitality of Marxism.

KEYWORDS

"Feuerbachianization of Marxism"; Practical Philosophy; Marxist Anthropology.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the developmental history of Marxism, Feuerbach's humanistic materialism has acted as an indispensable intermediate link, laying vital materialist foundations for Marx to break away from Hegel's speculative philosophy. During the circulation and application of Marxist theories, a regressive theoretical trend named the "Feuerbachianization of Marxism" emerges, which degenerates the critical and revolutionary essence of Marxism into Feuerbach's intuitive materialism or abstract humanism and deserves constant academic vigilance. Such theoretical retrogression not only undermines the scientific characteristics of Marxism but also misguides social practice. What are the deep-rooted reasons behind the "Feuerbachianization of Marxism"? How can we thoroughly criticize this wrong tendency from the perspective of practical philosophy so as to defend the theoretical integrity of Marxism? Relevant discussion carries prominent practical significance for promoting the Sinicization of Marxism.

2. THE CONNOTATION AND ORIGINS OF THE "FEUERBACHIANIZATION OF MARXISM"

The "Feuerbachianization of Marxism" does not signify ideological retrogression of Marx himself; instead, it stands for biased misunderstanding and oversimplification emerging amid the

interpretation, dissemination and application of Marxist thoughts. Restricted by bourgeois rather than proletarian class standpoints, numerous bourgeois academics fail to grasp Marxism as a scientific proletarian worldview and reduce it to ahistorical and non-economic abstract humanism.

2.1. Definition of the "Feuerbachianization of Marxism"

To clarify the "Feuerbachianization of Marxism", it is necessary to first sort out Feuerbach's materialism and humanism. Feuerbach's philosophical system centers on intuitive materialism and abstract humanism, and he argues that his theoretical system can be summarized by two core concepts: nature and human beings^[1]. The former confirms the ontological priority of nature and sets up an intuition-based cognitive principle, while the latter focuses on human essence and existential value; together they constitute his theoretical weapon against speculative philosophy and religious theology.

From the standpoint of Feuerbach's intuitive materialism, nature holds inherent material reality. Engels once commented that the publication of Feuerbach's *The Essence of Christianity* brought materialism back to the dominant academic position^[2]. Feuerbach insists that nature originates from itself and exists eternally independent of any spiritual or divine domination, governed merely by immanent natural laws with no supreme deity ruling over the natural world^[1]. Such viewpoints consolidate his basic materialist stance. Meanwhile, he puts forward that existence serves as the subject and thought as the predicate; thought derives from material existence rather than the reverse, which sticks to the material priority over spirit and sensibility over rationality^[3]. Feuerbach takes sensory intuition as the only reliable cognitive pathway and claims that truthful cognition exclusively comes from sensory intuition, which guarantees both holistic and individual understanding of objects^[3]. He further classifies intuition into ordinary, philosophical and intermediate intuition, prioritizing natural scientific intuition to uncover the inherent laws of nature.

In terms of humanism, Feuerbach shifts philosophical research focus onto human beings and regards the confirmation of human value as philosophy's supreme pursuit. He states that new philosophy takes nature and humanity rooted in nature as its sole, universal and highest research object, integrating anthropology and natural science into a unified academic framework^[3]. For Feuerbach, human beings are sensuous creatures grounded in nature instead of abstract spiritual entities, and human essence is embodied in sensual desires rather than rational thinking. He proposes that the innermost essence of humanity is reflected in the proposition "I desire, therefore I am", rather than Descartes' "I think, therefore I am"^[3]. Different from traditional Hegelian philosophy which abstracts human existence into conceptual categories, Feuerbach holds that the fundamental distinction between humans and animals lies in human beings' superior sensibility, and human existence is rooted in sensuality while reason and spirit can only produce literary and theoretical works instead of creating human life^[3]. In short, Feuerbach's philosophy is constructed upon intuition and abstract reasoning.

The "Feuerbachianization of Marxism" refers to the theoretical distortion of Marxism by Western bourgeois scholars from a class-based biased perspective via Feuerbach's abstract humanism. These scholars replace historical materialism, class exploitation analysis and revolutionary practice with abstract human nature theories, psychological alienation and moral sentiments, stripping Marxism of its revolutionary and scientific connotations and falling into the theoretical trap of idealist historiography. Erich Fromm, a core thinker of the Frankfurt School, is a typical representative of such distorted interpretation. By combining Marxist theories with Freudian psychoanalysis, Fromm constructs a unique humanistic theoretical system, yet systematically distorts core Marxist doctrines from three dimensions including abstract human nature, evasion of capitalism's essential contradictions and overemphasis of redemptive love, departing from historical materialism and sliding into "Feuerbachianization of Marxism".

First, on the definition of human essence, Fromm attributes human nature to inherent existential contradictions at the biological level, including conflicts between life and death, individuation and

socialization, finite lifespan and unlimited individual potential, based on which he builds an abstract human nature model. In his view, core human dispositions consist of psychological needs generated from such existential contradictions such as the need for love and transcendence, and he defines love, rationality and creativity as universal innate human attributes^[4]. When annotating Marx's definition of human essence, Fromm deliberately deletes the critical clause "in its actuality, human essence is the ensemble of all social relations" to pave the way for his revisionist interpretation^[5]. From a Marxist perspective, Fromm's human nature theory bears fatal defects. In Theses on Feuerbach, Marx clearly defines human essence to break away from abstract individual attributes and connect it with specific modes of production and historical developments^[6]. Abandoning such scientific analytical logic, Fromm's human nature argument is divorced from concrete historical environments and class relations, and the human nature premise of his entire theoretical system lacks solid theoretical foundations^[7]. His opinions coincide with Feuerbach's abstraction of human essence into generic species features, failing to capture the historicity and class attributes of human beings shaped by material production.

Second, regarding alienation research, Fromm accepts Marx's alienation theory yet confines alienation within moral and psychological spheres instead of philosophical, economic and sociological domains^[7]. Evading private ownership of production materials-the fundamental origin of capitalist alienation, he blurs the class roots of alienation and converts systemic class exploitation under capitalism into universal human psychological predicament, arguing both capitalists and workers suffer from alienation. Based on such judgment, Fromm claims alienation can be eliminated through radical reformism such as employee participation in corporate management, grassroots consultative organizations and humanistic education without overturning capitalist institutions^[8]. However, in 1844 Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, Marx elaborates four forms of alienated labour and points out that only proletarian revolution can abolish private ownership and fundamentally eliminate alienation. Fromm's reform proposals merely adjust partial economic and political mechanisms without touching capitalism's foundational structure, amounting to utopian fantasy separated from real social conditions and deviating from the revolutionary core of Marxist alienation theory^[7].

Third, concerning the driving force of social transformation, Fromm regards love as the core power to eliminate alienation and construct sound social orders. He defines authentic love as active inner creativity consisting of care, respect, responsibility and understanding, which drives people to pursue the development and well-being of others based on innate loving capacity. From his viewpoint, social progress relies on individual psychological awakening and moral renovation rather than institutional transformation, substituting psychological critique and mental revolution for social criticism and proletarian revolution. Such views contradict historical materialism which identifies contradictions between productive forces and production relations as the fundamental driver of social changes; only proletarian revolution can dismantle outdated production relations and create realistic conditions for all-round human emancipation. Fixating social transformation on abstract love and individual spiritual improvement, Fromm severs the inherent connection between social development and material production as well as class relations, violating objective historical laws and precluding thorough social reform.

To sum up, standing on bourgeois class interests, Fromm replaces historical materialism with abstract human nature, class exploitation with psychological alienation and revolutionary practice with moral sentiment. Through selective quotation of Marxist texts and confusion of Marx's different ideological developmental phases, he exaggerates scattered humanistic elements in Marxism and backtracks to Feuerbach's abstract humanism and intuitive materialism, systematically distorting Marxism into idealist utopian speculation incapable of guiding human liberation, which fully reveals the essential implication of the "Feuerbachianization of Marxism".

2.2. Contributing Factors of "Feuerbachianization of Marxism"

The "Feuerbachianization of Marxism" represents theoretical retrogression brought about by multiple intertwined factors.

Firstly, inherent theoretical loopholes within Feuerbach's philosophy create possibilities for subsequent academic distortion. Though Feuerbach supplies crucial materialist resources for Marx's transcendence of Hegelian idealism, his intuitive materialism lacks practical dimension and his abstract humanism ignores human historicity, leaving exploitable theoretical defects. Feuerbach treats the objective world as a static object of passive observation instead of the outcome of human transformative practice, overlooking people's capacity to reshape nature and selfhood through practical activities. Meanwhile, he abstracts human beings from specific social contexts, historical evolutions and class connections and reduces human essence to universal natural instincts regardless of dynamic human development formed in real social interactions. Bourgeois scholars take advantage of such flaws to replace Marxist revolutionary practice with empty theoretical speculation, erase Marxism's class character and historicity and twist it into abstract humanitarianism, hence facilitating the spread of the "Feuerbachianization of Marxism".

Secondly, bourgeois class stance leads to the elimination of Marxism's revolutionary core. Essentially, the "Feuerbachianization of Marxism" equals bourgeois ideological filtering against Marxism, and bourgeois academic standpoint makes it impossible for relevant researchers to acknowledge Marxism's scientific and revolutionary nature, resulting in deliberate theoretical distortion. Marxism, as a proletarian scientific worldview, targets the overthrow of capitalism, abolition of private ownership and realization of universal human liberation, which fundamentally conflicts with bourgeois interests in safeguarding capitalist systems. Thinkers like Fromm conceal class conflicts by claiming capitalists also fall victim to alienation and replace proletarian revolution with abstract love and individual moral improvement to weaken Marxism's revolutionary edge. Prioritizing individual freedom within civil society rather than holistic human emancipation, bourgeois interpreters simplify Marx's ideal of all-round human development into satisfaction of personal psychological needs separated from the elimination of private ownership and institutional reform, accomplishing the de-revolutionization of Marxism via Feuerbach's abstract humanistic logic centered on love and rationality.

Thirdly, widespread misinterpretation of the sublative relationship between Marx and Feuerbach's thoughts fuels such theoretical distortion. Many bourgeois scholars overemphasize theoretical similarities between the two philosophers while ignoring Marx's revolutionary transcendence of Feuerbach grounded in practice, forcing Marxism back into Feuerbach's theoretical framework. It is undeniable that Marx absorbs reasonable components of Feuerbach's humanism including the definition of human beings as species-being and critical logic against religious alienation, and he once highly affirms Feuerbach's theoretical innovation in 1844 *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*^[9]. Feuerbach's philosophy indeed acts as an intermediate station for Marx's shift from Hegelian idealism to new materialism, yet Marx absorbs Feuerbach's thoughts through dialectical sublation instead of complete inheritance. British scholar David McLellan puts forward wrong arguments that Marx never gets rid of Hegel's theoretical influence, implicitly denying Marx's independent theoretical breakthrough beyond Feuerbach's framework^[10]. Relevant bourgeois academics deliberately magnify humanistic contents in Marx's early works and equate alienated labour theory in 1844 *Manuscripts* with Feuerbach's critique of religious alienation, ignoring Marx's pioneering combination of alienation with capitalist private ownership and productive practice, and falsely categorizing Marxism as derivative of Feuerbach's humanism.

All the above three root causes converge on the abandonment and elimination of practice-the core category of Marxism. Deprived of practical grounding, Marxism loses its power to transform real world and degenerates into detached speculative theorizing.

3. SYSTEMATIC CRITIQUE AGAINST THE "FEUERBACHIANIZATION OF MARXISM"

Since the "Feuerbachianization of Marxism" originates from deviation from practice, the fundamental solution to this theoretical fallacy lies in restoring practice to the core status of Marx's philosophical revolution. It is exactly by centering practice that Marxist new materialism realizes comprehensive transcendence over Feuerbach's philosophy and all old materialism, providing rigorous theoretical weaponry to fight against Feuerbachian distortion.

3.1. Revolutionary Reconstruction of the Category of Practice

Feuerbach's materialism remains intuitive, regarding objective reality merely as passive sensory objects rather than products of sensuous practical activities, a critical defect criticized by Marx at the very beginning of Theses on Feuerbach^[6]. All previous materialism including Feuerbach's only interprets reality from objective and intuitive perspective without understanding human sensuous practice as subjective transformative engagement with the world. Despite acknowledging nature's primacy in ontology, Feuerbach neglects human practice's transformative function on natural surroundings. Through material production and social communication, human practical activities remodel natural landscapes and create diverse living conditions as well as social relations.

Marx establishes practice as the core philosophical category defined as sensuous human activity with three fundamental attributes: objectivity rooted in material production to avoid empty idealist exaggeration of subjective initiative; dynamism oriented toward world transformation to overcome old materialism's static intuition; revolutionary character targeting restructuring of existing social structures. Marx emphasizes that practice not only serves as the foundation of human cognition but also the sole criterion to verify objective truth, and the objectivity of human thinking can only be settled via practical inspection rather than pure theoretical discussion^[6]. Furthermore, practice realizes dialectical unity between human passivity restricted by material reality and subjective initiative to reshape surroundings^[11]. Such practical philosophy integrates human-nature and human-society relations into concrete historical progression and identifies practice as the essential driving force behind humanized nature and continuous evolution of social relations. On the contrary, the "Feuerbachianization of Marxism" represented by Fromm shrinks practice into individual moral cultivation and inner spiritual awakening, substituting psychological revolution for tangible productive practice and class struggle, stripping Marxism of materiality and revolutionary character and reducing it to decontextualized empty speculation unable to change real society.

3.2. Returning Human Essence to Its Realistic Connotation

Feuerbach's abstraction of human essence stems from his limited intuitive comprehension of sensuous human existence separated from practice and historical development. He reduces human essence to universal species-specific natural features including physical instincts and abstract psychological dispositions such as love and rationality, cutting off the intrinsic link between human beings and concrete social history as well as practical interactions. As criticized in *The German Ideology*, Feuerbach confines his cognition of sensuous world to passive intuition and isolated sensory experience, viewing humans merely as passive sensuous objects rather than active sensuous agents engaged in practical activities^[6]. Unable to recognize praxis's formative influence on human society, Feuerbach defines human essence as an implicit universal natural bond separating individuals from historical evolution, constructing a hypothetical abstract humanity only existing within theoretical imagination rather than real historical scenes^[6].

Taking practice as analytical fulcrum, Marx revolutionizes human essence theory and anchors humanity within realistic contexts via his classic assertion: "the human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations"^[6]. Further

elaborated in *The German Ideology*, Marxist research starts from concrete practical agents and traces ideological formations back to people's real-life processes^[6]. Human essence is continuously shaped by dominant modes of production and exchange under distinct ownership systems throughout history, marked by intrinsic historicity and class attributes; any discussion of human essence abstracted from generational practical history inevitably falls into idealist utopianism^[6].

The "Feuerbachianization of Marxism" backtracks to Feuerbach's flawed abstraction of humanity, embodied by Fromm's deliberate truncation of Marx's complete definition of human essence to prioritize biologically conditioned psychological needs while discarding the clause concerning totality of social relations. Such reasoning replicates Feuerbach's mistake of isolating abstract individuals from historical progress and confining human nature to fixed innate emotional dispositions, as Feuerbach strips religious sentiment from historical evolution and presupposes isolated abstract human individuals^[6]. Both thinkers ignore human essence's continuous formation within material production and social communication and sink into the idealist trap of abstract human nature.

3.3. Expanding the Historical Scope of Alienation Critique

Feuerbach's alienation critique suffers from narrow interpretative boundaries and superficial causal analysis limited exclusively to religious alienation. He attributes religious alienation to human psychological dependency whereby humanity projects its intrinsic essence onto deities yet fails to extend alienation research to economic and political spheres or pinpoint private ownership and class conflict as alienation's material root. Restricting critique to theoretical refutation of religious doctrines instead of practical reform of secular social contradictions, Feuerbach's critique cannot account for systemic alienation under capitalism nor propose feasible institutional solutions to eliminate alienation.

Rooted in practical analysis, Marx expands alienation critique into comprehensive historical social criticism. Starting from alienated labour's fourfold stipulations laid out in 1844 *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, Marx locates alienation's secular origin in inherent contradictions of capitalist society, arguing alienation can only be eliminated through practical revolutionary overhaul of capitalist private ownership via proletarian revolution^[6]. This critical framework unearths alienation's historical inevitability alongside concrete pathways for its abolition, uniting scientific analysis with revolutionary practice. In stark contrast, the "Feuerbachianization of Marxism" typified by Fromm psychologizes alienation as universal human mental suffering, erases class contradictions behind capitalist alienation, advocates incremental moral improvement instead of institutional revolution and dodges capitalism's systemic flaws to produce impractical utopian reform proposals devoid of historical and revolutionary critical dimensions.

3.4. Practical Renewal of Philosophy's Mission

Feuerbach's philosophy remains confined to theoretical interpretation and lacks revolutionary practicality, failing to equip philosophy with the mission of transforming real society. Despite criticizing religious theology and Hegelian speculative philosophy, Feuerbach never transcends the old philosophical paradigm limited to merely interpreting the world, with his research capped at intuitive observation of isolated individuals and civil society rather than driving tangible social transformation^[6].

Centered on practice, Marx fundamentally redefines philosophy's historical mission with his iconic assertion from *Theses on Feuerbach*: "The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point however is to change it"^[6]. This maxim signals a paradigm shift of modern philosophy, transforming Marxist new materialism from abstract doctrinal speculation into a practical theoretical instrument serving proletarian liberation. Marxist practical philosophy pursues simultaneous transformation of the objective world and human self-development through sensuous revolutionary

praxis^[6], linking theoretical critique tightly to concrete proletarian struggles to lay theoretical groundwork for abolishing private ownership and realizing all-round human development. The "Feuerbachianization of Marxism", however, divests Marxism of its practical transformative mission by downgrading it to non-historical abstract humanitarianism, replacing systemic revolutionary practice with empty moral preaching and piecemeal psychological reform, denying the historical necessity of proletarian revolution and turning Marxism into impractical speculative dogma stripped of scientific and revolutionary merits.

To critique the "Feuerbachianization of Marxism" is to reiterate and safeguard Marxism's revolutionary core and scientific essence. Only by upholding practice's realistic, historical and revolutionary attributes can academia resist the erosion of abstract humanism and intuitive materialism and rectify distorted interpretations of Marxist theories. Beyond academic debate, such theoretical clarification delivers profound guiding value for real-world practice, especially amid contemporary ideological diversification, informing efforts to uphold Marxist theoretical tenets and advance the Sinicization and modernization of Marxism.

4. CONTEMPORARY PRACTICAL VALUE OF CRITIQUING THE "FEUERBACHIANIZATION OF MARXISM"

Critiquing the "Feuerbachianization of Marxism" essentially facilitates the return to and defense of Marxism's authentic theoretical spirit, clarifying core principles of adhering to practical grounding, historical contextualization and consistent class stance. Its contemporary value not only counters theoretical challenges facing Marxism's development but also supplies ideological guidelines for deepening the Sinicization and modernization of Marxism amid the advancement of Chinese-style modernization, embodying methodological merit for adhering to Marxist guidance, theoretical value for constructing Sinicized Marxism, and practical significance for promoting human modernization within Chinese-style modernization drive.

4.1. Upholding Theoretical Criticality: Defending Marxist Critical Spirit via Dialectical Negation

Critiquing the "Feuerbachianization of Marxism" constitutes a defence of Marxist theoretical purity. Feuerbachianized Marxism abandons dialectical negation and dissolves practical character into hollow speculative reasoning, reducing dynamic revolutionary theory into rigid dogma disconnected from real social struggles. Its proponents either overemphasize isolated humanistic fragments of Marxism to erase class and historical dimensions or evade real social contradictions through uncritical doctrinal repetition. Refuting such one-sided distortion highlights that Marxism's enduring vitality stems from its immanent critical spirit; once deprived of discernment against fallacious ideologies and capacity for self-reflection, Marxism falls vulnerable to incursions of idealist historiography. Marx long advocated relentless criticism of all existing social conditions as dialectical reflection rooted in theoretical and real-world contradictions in his letter to Ruge in 1843, forming core ideological bulwarks against interpretative distortion^[12]. Meanwhile, Engels underscores that Marx's worldview functions as a methodological toolkit rather than fixed dogma, providing starting points for empirical research instead of ready-made conclusions-core theoretical justification for countering the "Feuerbachianization of Marxism" and preserving critical consciousness^[12].

Maintaining theoretical criticality first demands adherence to dialectical negation to reject both abstract dogmatization of Marxism and nihilistic repudiation of its fundamental tenets. Authentic Marxist criticism targets erroneous distorted interpretations and harmful ideological trends rather than Marxism itself, responding to contemporary fallacies such as the reduction of Marxism to generic abstract humanitarianism by unpacking their departure from historical materialism and severed links with real social struggles.

Second, consistent self-critical awareness must be cultivated guided by Engels' emphasis on Marxism as methodological framework rather than immutable doctrine. As an open theoretical system evolving alongside practical progress, Marxism retains core axioms including dialectics between productive forces and production relations yet requires continuous theoretical renovation amid emerging real-world challenges ranging from evolving labour configurations under digital economy, intricate contradictions in common prosperity construction to setbacks against globalization. Self-critical reflection overcomes outdated cognitive confines and fuels theoretical innovation tailored to emerging practical problems in contemporary China.

Finally, critical spirit must remain grounded in concrete class stance and historical context instead of detached academic speculation, as Marxism's critical function serves proletarian transformation of reality. The "Feuerbachianization of Marxism" neutralizes Marxist critical potency via class ambiguity by replacing systemic class critique with neutral moral sermonizing. Contemporary Marxist criticism must stand firmly on the people's standpoint, targeting institutional barriers hindering productivity growth, inequitable phenomena harming public interests and fallacious ideologies eroding mainstream values emerging throughout Chinese-style modernization, safeguarding theoretical authenticity while endowing Marxism with lasting practical vitality via engagement with real-world issues.

4.2. Consolidating Practical Standpoint: Enriching Marxist Anthropological Connotation through Chinese Practical Experience

Critique against the "Feuerbachianization of Marxism" reinforces practice's irreplaceable centrality within Marxism. Feuerbachian distortion perverts practice into passive intuitive perception or isolated individual mental activity, stripping practice of material production functions and social reform capacity to render theory empty utopianism divorced from social reality. Practice distinguishes Marxism from all pre-existing philosophies and unifies its scientificity and revolutionary character; theoretical vitality can only be sustained through practical rooting, a truth fully verified by the Communist Party of China's practical explorations spanning revolutionary rural encirclement of cities, market-oriented reform and ongoing advancement of Chinese-style modernization.

Upholding the primacy of practice necessitates integrating Marxist anthropological tenets into concrete advancement of Chinese-style modernization and abandoning armchair theorizing, implementing Marx's maxim of changing the world by aligning core Marxist principles with China's developmental realities and verifying theoretical truths through iterative practical exploration. For instance, tackling core technological bottlenecks via practical-driven theoretical and engineering breakthroughs in science and innovation advances the anthropological conception of human-nature harmony through ecological civilization practices underpinned by the lucid waters and lush mountains development philosophy.

Furthermore, unique Chinese developmental experience expands the contemporary connotation of Marxist anthropology while preserving practice's material and revolutionary essence, leveraging institutional strengths of socialism with Chinese characteristics to form localized practical paradigms. In grassroots governance, evolving the Fengqiao Experience into co-governance frameworks advances Marxist humanistic ideals through conflict mediation and public empowerment; in deepening reform, problem-centred institutional innovations addressing people's most pressing livelihood concerns substantiate humanistic values anchored in tangible practical progress.

Most importantly, people-centred Chinese practice realizes dialectical integration between human modernization and practical deepening within Chinese-style modernization. Rural revitalization programmes enhance rural residents' developmental capacities and expand their social relations through industrial development, educational advancement and cultural construction, facilitating their transition from subsistence-oriented survival to comprehensive developmental prosperity. Targeted improvements in employment, healthcare, pension and education safeguard public interests and

enrich people's spiritual lives; innovative inheritance of fine traditional Chinese culture nurtures well-rounded contemporary citizens with historical awareness and global vision, enabling Marxist anthropology to retain theoretical authenticity while gaining fresh contemporary meaning through integration with China's ongoing developmental practice and synchronizing theoretical advancement with societal and human progress.

4.3. Reverting to Human's Realistic Essence: Practicing Marxist Value Proposition through Human Modernization

Critique of the "Feuerbachianization of Marxism" supplies critical theoretical guidance for advancing human modernization within Chinese-style modernization and properly implementing Marxist people-centred values.

First, human modernization under Chinese-style modernization must abide by the realistic nature of human essence to resist abstract decontextualization of humanity inherent in Feuerbachian thought. Whereas the "Feuerbachianization of Marxism" abstracts human essence into biological instincts and psychological traits separated from social relations and historical context to spawn empty humanitarianism, Marx anchors human value within concrete social reality instead of hollow abstract humanism.

Chinese-style modernization takes real concrete human beings as its starting point guided by Marx's definition of human essence as the totality of social relations, pursuing common prosperity to bridge developmental disparities across regions and demographic groups via refined income distribution and equalized public service provision^[6,13]. Improved social security systems and cultural development mitigate human alienation risks induced by capitalist logic, while the innovative, coordinated, green, open and shared development philosophy continuously expands people's social connections and developmental capabilities to break free from abstract human nature fallacies of Feuerbachianism.

Second, advancing human modernization necessitates rigorous implementation of the people-centered development philosophy, respecting the populace's historical subject status and safeguarding people's democratic governance rights. Learning from public experience and prioritizing people's aspirations for a better life, China develops whole-process people's democracy, refined social welfare systems and diversified cultural undertakings to expand people's social connections and develop their essential capacities step by step, gradually fulfilling Marxist ideals of human emancipation in contemporary China and manifesting the practical potency of Marxist value pursuits.

People's sovereignty constitutes the core pillar of human modernization: whole-process people's democracy enables citizens to participate in state governance, economic and social administration through institutionalized channels specified in relevant official documents, confirming human essence's embeddedness within multifaceted social relations and refuting Feuerbach's abstract conception of isolated natural humanity^[6,14]. Meanwhile, development of new-quality productive forces fuels human modernization via industrial upgrading and technological innovation to generate high-quality employment and advance eco-friendly production modes, freeing humankind from one-sided material dependency and realizing harmonious coexistence between humanity and nature to overcome Feuerbachian intuitive materialism's artificial separation of humans and the natural world.

Lastly, human modernization regards people's practical creation as the fundamental driver of theoretical and institutional progress. Contrary to Feuerbach's static abstract humanity, genuine human modernization unfolds dynamically amid material production and social communication throughout Chinese-style modernization, continuously enriching individual social ties and developing human essential powers. Marx highlights historical advancement originates from mass popular activity, with expanded public participation correlating with deepened historical development and progressive enrichment of human essence through real social practice^[9]. Therefore, repudiating Feuerbachian abstract humanism reaffirms people's ontological reality as social beings and restores

the populace's central creative role in history—the core connotation of people-centered development philosophy.

The authoritative assertion that modernization is essentially human modernization echoes Marxist scientific definition of human essence and directly counters the "Feuerbachianization of Marxism" and its abstract humanization fallacy^[15]. Guided by the Marxist ideal of production oriented toward universal affluence, Chinese-style modernization narrows income gaps and upgrades public services to lay solid material foundations for shared prosperity while facilitating citizens' spiritual enrichment and capacity advancement^[16,17]. The ongoing enrichment of people's spiritual life and essential faculties alongside expanding social relations precisely constitutes the progressive fulfillment of human modernization. Throughout this developmental trajectory anchored in people-centered values, China avoids Feuerbach's empty abstract speculation and capitalist instrumentalization of human beings alike, progressively materializing Marxist human emancipation ideals amid Chinese-style modernization and fully demonstrating Marxism's scientific validity and enduring practical vitality.

5. CONCLUSION

Fundamentally, critiquing the "Feuerbachianization of Marxism" delivers a core lesson to guard against any theoretical distortion that abandons practical essence and erodes revolutionary connotations of Marxism. Apart from the "Feuerbachianization of Marxism", other interpretative fallacies distort authentic Marxism, including Hegelianization which replaces material productive contradiction movement with conceptual dialectics and dogmatism that rigidly prioritizes textual dogma over concrete practice. Lessons drawn from refuting Feuerbachian distortion equip researchers to build robust ideological bulwarks against diverse theoretical misrepresentations and steadfastly preserve Marxism's authentic essence as a powerful practical theoretical weapon for transforming the contemporary world.

REFERENCES

- [1] Rong, Z. H., & Li, J. S. (Trans.). (1984). *Selected Philosophical Works of Feuerbach (Volume II)*. The Commercial Press.
- [2] Central Compilation and Translation Bureau (Trans.). (2009). *Collected Works of Marx and Engels (Volume IV)*. People's Publishing House.
- [3] Rong, Z. H., & Li, J. S. (Trans.). (1984). *Selected Philosophical Works of Feuerbach (Volume I)*. The Commercial Press.
- [4] Ouyang, Q. (1992). A review on Fromm's humanistic philosophy. *Journal of Renmin University of China*, (04).
- [5] Zhang, Y. B. (2003). Is human being the core concept in Marx's philosophy? — An interpretation of Fromm's Marx's Concept of Man. *The Journal of Humanities*, (04).
- [6] Central Compilation and Translation Bureau (Trans.). (2012). *Selected Works of Marx and Engels (Volume I)*. People's Publishing House.
- [7] Liu, S. X. (2002). A probe into Fromm's humanistic psychoanalysis. *Journal of Wuhan University of Science and Technology (Social Science Edition)*, (02).
- [8] Fromm, E. (2008). *The Art of Loving* (J. M. Li, Trans.). Shanghai Translation Publishing House.
- [9] Central Compilation and Translation Bureau (Trans.). (2009). *Collected Works of Marx and Engels (Volume I)*. People's Publishing House.
- [10] McLellan, D. (1982). *The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx* (W. Y. Xia, Q. W. Chen, & H. M. Jin, Trans.). The Commercial Press.
- [11] An, Q. N. (2015). On Marx's core philosophical thoughts and its theoretical origins — Starting from one of Marx's expositions. *Seeking Truth*, (02).
- [12] Central Compilation and Translation Bureau (Trans.). (2009). *Collected Works of Marx and Engels (Volume X)*. People's Publishing House.
- [13] Wang, L., & Che, L. J. (2025). The logical mainline of Chinese-style modernization: Human modernization. *The Journal of Humanities*, (07).

- [14] Xi, J. P. (2023). *Selected Readings from the Works of Xi Jinping (Volume II)*. People's Publishing House.
- [15] Compilation Group of Important Documents since the 18th CPC National Congress. (2014). *Selected Important Documents Since the 18th National Congress of the CPC (Volume I)*. Central Party Literature Press.
- [16] Central Compilation and Translation Bureau (Trans.). (2009). *Collected Works of Marx and Engels (Volume VIII)*. People's Publishing House.
- [17] Yu, X. J. (2025). The anthropological logic of Chinese-style modernization: An investigation based on human modernization. *Journal of Zhengzhou University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, (06).