

**Original Research Article**

**The Role of Concept of Ideology  
in Construction of Marx's Historical  
Materialism: 1842—1852\***

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## ABSTRACT

Marx's concept of ideology plays an important role in construction of historical materialism from 1842-1852. To some extent, it was through the intermediary of ideological criticism that Marx realized the transformation from idealism to materialism, and thus constructed and developed historical materialism. Specifically, through the systematic criticism of concrete ideology, Marx gradually discovered the decisive role of civil society in the superstructure, which helped him transform from idealism to materialism, and lay the foundation for the final discovery of historical materialism; through the discussion of the general ideology, Marx mainly expounded the basic principles of historical materialism, which helped him subvert the basis of the western philosophical metaphysics since Plato, and realize the logical transcendence of the previous philosophical theory; through the analysis of class ideology, Marx revealed the decisive role of economic interests on class consciousness, which helped him develop historical materialism and lay the theoretical foundation for criticism of political economy in his later writings.

*Keywords: concept of ideology; historical materialism; thought construction*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Marx's concept of ideology plays an important role during the construction of his thought. Recently, scholars tend to regard historical materialism as a clue to the development of Marx's thought, and regard it as the most important theoretical discovery in Marx's early stage. However, there seems to be less discussions on why historical materialism is constructed as the core of Marx's early thought, and this question needs to be solved based on Marx's discussions in different periods. More importantly, how the transformation process of Marx's early thought from idealism to materialism is realized by employing important discussions and core viewpoints has not been fully explained. As a matter of fact, the concept of ideology, to a certain extent, undertakes the answer to the above questions. This paper holds that the concept of ideology is one key clue and intermediary link in the construction of Marx's thought; it helps promote the transformation of Marx's thought from idealism to materialism, and directly helps construct historical materialism. However, the construction of historical materialism and Marx's transformation from idealism to materialism is a long process, which needs to go through different stages and discuss different problems. What are these problems? we can rely on Marx's interpretations on the concept of ideology in different stages. In view of this, we have re-positioned the significance of the concept of ideology to the study of Marx's thought from 1842 to 1852, and try to answer what roles the concept of ideology have played during transformation from idealism to materialism as well as the formation of historical materialism.

## 2. CRITICISM OF CONCRETE IDEOLOGY

Although, Marx had not formally proposed the concept of ideology; however, his criticism on the ideological characteristics of capitalist social consciousness such as law, religion, morality, science, art, etc., could be seen as a kind of ideological criticism; and the mentioned forms of social consciousness, to some extent, could be seen as concrete forms of ideology. This part is mainly based on the text group includes *Debates on the Law on Thefts of Wood*, *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, *The Holy Family*, and etc; and argues that the the criticism of the concrete ideology provides a focal point for people to understand the development of Marx's thought, which makes preparations for observations of superstructure from social reality.

### 2.1 The Appearance of "Concrete Ideology" in Different Texts

During the Rhine period, Marx had realized that the state and the law had been reduced to private profit-making tools. In the face of legal and governmental oppression of people who collected withered branches, Marx satirized in *Debate on Law of Forest* that "cruelty is a characteristic feature of laws dictated by cowardice, for cowardice can be energetic only by

being cruel" [1]. At the same time, "all the organs of the state become ears, eyes, arms, legs, by means of which the interest of the forest owner hears, observes, appraises, protects, reaches out, and runs" [2]. In *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, Marx criticizes Hegel's view of state as "the fact which is taken as a point of departure is not conceived as such, but as a mystical result. The actual becomes a phenomenon, but the idea has no other content than this phenomenon" [3]. To be exact, in Hegel's view, state, politics, law have become the cause of human existence; against that, Marx criticized [4] "it is not the constitution which creates the people but the people which creates the constitution." Along the same logic, in *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, Marx criticized the religion and pointed out that "man makes religion, religion does not make man", "religious distress is at the same time the expression of real distress and also the protest against real distress" [5].

In *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Marx combined philosophy with economics and demonstrated the falsehood of various forms of "concrete ideology" by introducing the "logic of alienation". He pointed out that "religion, family, state, law, morality, science, art, etc., are only particular modes of production, and fall under its general law" [6]. However, ideology is inevitably false on the basis of alienated labor and private ownership. Specifically, under the condition of private ownership, the production of workers is in a state of alienation from three perspectives: before production, "the worker sinks to the level of a commodity and becomes indeed the most wretched of commodities; that the wretchedness of the worker is in inverse proportion to the power and magnitude of his production" [7]; in production, "labour is external to the worker, i.e., it does not belong to his intrinsic nature; that in his work, therefore, he does not affirm himself but denies himself, does not feel content but unhappy, does not develop freely his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind. The worker therefore only feels himself outside his work, and in his work feels outside himself" [8]; after production, "the worker becomes all the poorer the more wealth he produces, the more his production increases in power and size. The worker becomes an ever cheaper commodity the more commodities he creates" [9]. The overall alienation of production leads to the falsehood of the consciousness determined by it.

In *The Holy Family*, Marx criticized the speculative idealism of the Young Hegelian and pointed out that [10] "real humanism has no more dangerous enemy in Germany than spiritualism or speculative idealism, which substitutes 'self-consciousness' or the 'spirit' for the real individual man and with the evangelist teaches." Specifically, this kind of philosophical consciousness tries its best to propagandize a kind of Hegelian idealistic view of history, which reverses the relationship between subject and object, elevates the creativity of "self-consciousness", and holds that human history is the history of the development of absolute spirit.

## 2.2 Logical Deepening: on the Way to Historical Materialism

The criticism of the concrete ideology laid solid the foundation for his transformation from idealism to materialism. During the Rhine period, in his criticism of state, law, religion, art, etc., Marx, for the first time, encountered the difficulty of expressing opinions on material interests, which led him to turn initially to the study on the material interests of that. The working experience of *Rhine Newspaper* not only made Marx go deeper into the social reality, but also laid the foundation for his criticism of Hegel's idealist view of state. In *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, Marx had already discovered that [11] "it is not the state which conditions and regulates civil society at all, but civil society which conditions and regulates the state, and, consequently, that policy and its history are to be explained from the economic relations and their development, and not the other way round." In his discussion of the state, Marx also discussed the relationship between private ownership and state by pointing out that the state system is actually the state system of private property. Generally speaking, at the moment, Marx had basically established the material principles and research ways to deal with the relationship between philosophy and the world or ideas and reality.

The *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* provides an economic perspective for Marx's early ideological research, opens up a new dimension for understanding social life, and marks an important turn of Marx's criticism from political science to political economy. In "*Manuscript*", Marx believed that civil society should be dissected from the dimension of political economy, rather than looking for it in the history of Hegel's absolute spiritual development. Specifically, he analyzed private property from the point of view of labor, regarded labor as the main essence of private

property **as well as** the only way for workers to confirm themselves, and put forward the theory of alienated labor based on this. In addition, Marx also initially referred to fetishism which refers to the blind pursuit of treasures, and attempts to occupy it for their own. He believed that under the condition of capitalist private ownership, the relationship of social production could be alienated into the illusory forms of goods, value, money and capital; and people will have a sense of mysterious dependence on these illusory forms when they pursue it. Although Marx was still deeply influenced by Feuerbach's humanism at this time, his analysis of alienated labor and private property grasped the essence of capitalist economy and greatly promoted the development of his own theory.

In *The Holy Family*, Marx, in his criticism of the form of speculative idealism of the Young Hegelian, further pointed out "the origin of history not in vulgar material production on the earth but in vaporous clouds in the heavens" [12], which revealed the decisive role of material production on thought. It should be noted that Marx's elaboration on labor has gone deeper from the perspective of alienation to the perspective of production practice, which helps to find the working class is an important material driving force to promote historical development. It is not difficult to find that Marx has gradually penetrated into the study of the "essence of matter" during the criticism of various forms of social consciousness.

On the whole, during the criticism of various forms of concrete ideology, Marx gradually found the way to historical materialism, and depicted the way from political liberation to human liberation. Obviously, at first Marx encountered a great theoretical problem in criticizing the concrete forms of ideology that the problems of concrete ideology can not be explained and understood through themselves. This kind of theoretical problems mainly comes from the unreality of concrete ideology, that is, the individuals and groups with different forms of consciousness regard the relations and principles derived from the social reality as general and abstract principles, and achieve their goals on the basis of them, resulting these principles seem to lack the foundation of reality. However, by analyzing various social problems, Marx was acutely aware of the strong realistic support behind the unreality. It was through the study of real material interests that Marx began to gradually transform from idealism to materialism, which laid foundation for the final discovery of historical materialism.

### **3.ANALYSIS OF GENERAL IDEOLOGY**

Marx's analysis of general ideology is revealed in *The German Ideology*, which is Marx's only work on the theme of ideology. In this work, Marx formally put forward the concept of ideology, and expounded the basic connotations, characteristics, origin, and essence of ideology. More importantly, Marx positively expounded the basic principles of historical materialism in the criticism of the Young Hegelian, "Real Socialists" and other German ideologists, which helps Marx finish the transformation from idealism to materialism and from democracy to communism.

#### **3.1 The Connotations and Characteristics of Ideology**

The direct criticism target in *The German Ideology* is the German ideologists such as the Young Hegelian and the "Real Socialists". However, **in the process of criticism**, Marx expanded the ideology in different visual thresholds, which enabled him to construct a new world outlook. Specifically, Marx elaborated the connotations and characteristics of ideology from three perspectives, including existentialism, historical materialism and political sociology.

First, from the perspective of existentialism, it refers to the conceptual system of German ideologists headed by the Young Hegelian. Marx pointed out that ideologists believe that "the real world of men has hitherto been dominated and determined by ideas, images, concepts, and that the real world is a product of the world of ideas" [13 ], thus reversed the relationship between reality and ideas. The inverted worldview leads to inverted epistemology, and in the process of people's understanding of the world, "men and their relations appear upside-down as in a camera obscura" [14]. The reality has become the externalized form of the concept, and the falsehood of ideology has come from it. The inverted epistemology leads to a conservative view of practice, thus the ideologists ignore "the connection of German philosophy

with German reality, the connection of their criticism with their own material surroundings" [15], and perceived religion, concepts, universality as the real shackle of the real world. Based on that, they argued that only by devoting ourselves to the struggle against abstract concepts can we liberate Germany.

Second, from the perspective of historical materialism, it refers to the superstructure of ideas. Historical materialism endows ideology with the status of conceptual superstructure. Marx pointed out that civil society [16] "in all ages forms the basis of the state and of the rest of the idealistic superstructure." Specifically, ideology, as a conceptual superstructure, has two characteristics: non-independence and historical inheritance. On one hand, ideology, as a superstructure, is the reflection mechanism of social reality, and it has no independent development path. When civil society changes, specific forms of ideology, such as religion and philosophy, will no longer retain the appearance of independence. On the other hand, as a superstructure, ideology has historical inheritance, which comes from the continuity of material production conditions. Marx believed that [17] "the sensuous world around him is not a thing given direct from all eternity, remaining ever the same, but the product of industry and of the state of society." That is to say, different manifestations of ideology are, after all, only abstractions derived from the influence of the early history on the later history.

Third, from the perspective of political sociology, it refers to the ruling class consciousness and revolutionary class consciousness. First of all, class consciousness refers to the ruling class consciousness. Marx pointed out that "the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas: i.e., the class which is the ruling material force of society is at the same time its ruling intellectual force" [18]. In order to safeguard vested interests, rationalize and perpetuate many of the injustices of society, the ruling class disguises its own special interests as universal interests in a distorted form, so as to paralyze the nerves of the ruled class and ease social contradictions. Secondly, class consciousness refers to revolutionary class consciousness. When the whole society can not bear the decadent rule of the ruling class, a kind of "revolutionary consciousness" which attempts to overthrow the old rule and establish a new rule in line with the common interests of the whole society will be born, and will play an important role in the revolutionary process. Specifically, the revolutionary class appeared as "the representative of the whole of society" and "present its interest as the common interest of all the members of society...give its ideas the form of universality, and present them as the only rational, universally valid ones", which provides a full ideological and public opinion guarantee for rallying forces, uniting the masses and instigating revolution. [19]

### **3.2 The Essence and Origin of Ideology**

In class society, ideology is actually a tool of class governance, which is gradually rationalized and legalized with the establishment of the country and the division of labor within the ruling class. Marx pointed out that the unequal distribution system was accompanied by the development of the division of labor, which led to the conflict between personal interests and social interests. In order to resolve the conflict, the state appears in the illusory form of "community of public interests". However, this kind of community is based on the dispute between the interests of the ruling class and the ruled class; its purpose is to eliminate the conflict of interests between the ruling class and the ruled class, and to maintain the rationality and stability of class governance. With the development of class rule, "the division of labour...manifests itself also in the ruling class as the division of mental and material labour" [20], and former ruling class became ideologists who take fabricating this class's fantasies about themselves as the main way to make a living. By universalizing the interests of the ruling class as the interests of the whole civil society, the ruling class has further consolidated the dual rule of themselves both in the material and spiritual fields.

Marx based on the contradictory movement between productive forces and relations of production (that is, based on the basic principles of historical materialism) discussed the material origin of ideology. There is no doubt that, as a form of expression of consciousness, ideology is determined by material existence. Marx pointed out that "consciousness can never be anything else than conscious being, and the being of men is their actual life-process" [21]; ideas, concepts and

consciousness are the direct products of people's material production activities, and express themselves through the carrier of language. In primitive society with low level of productivity, human consciousness is a purely animal consciousness of nature (natural religion), which is a purely passive reflection of the objective perceptible environment. With the development of productive forces, the division of labor appears in human society, and the separation between material labor and spiritual labor marks the real formation of division of labor, which really promotes the development of human consciousness, so that human beings can construct specific ideologies such as theory, theology, philosophy, morality and so on through pure (that is, divorced from material production practice) thinking. Obviously, ideology is the result of the division of labor in human society. It is divorced from the material basis in the development, and finally can construct itself in the abstraction. It can be seen that ideology, as a kind of social consciousness, arises from the division of labor between the brain and the body, and its basis lies in the field of material production practice.

### **3.3 Logical Transformation: the Construction of Historical Materialism**

It could be seen that the construction of Marx's historical materialism has actually gone through dual processes. On the one hand, in the process of criticizing religion, law and other concrete ideologies, Marx revealed the complex structure of the superstructure and discovered the mysteries of the material practice basis of ideology; and based on this, he constructed historical materialism. On the other hand, based on historical materialism, Marx realized that ideology was only a tool of class rule from the material basis of class society, only through the proletarian revolution and the establishment of communism can people get rid of the shackles of ideology and realize the all-round and free development of all mankind. It can be said that ideological criticism provides a theoretical preparation for the construction of historical materialism, and it is in the exploration of ideology "Marx found a starting point for correctly examining all human spiritual activities and spiritual products" [22], and thus completed the construction of his own theory, completely subverted the basis of the whole western philosophical metaphysics since Plato, and realized the reform and logical transcendence of the previous philosophical critical theory.

On the whole, through the intermediary of ideological criticism, Marx realized the logical transcendence of the realistic basis, historical outlook and social prospect of German philosophy. First of all, it transcends the realistic basis of German philosophy. Different from the "monism of consciousness" of German ideologists, Marx insisted on the decisive role of realistic matter in consciousness. With the help of ideological criticism, Marx discovered that civil society is the real birthplace and stage of all history, and the spiritual superstructure is nothing more than a reflection of social material production and communication. Secondly, it transcends the historical outlook of German philosophy. Marx believed that we should not "look for a category in every period", but "explains the formation of ideas from material practice". [23] According to the new view of history, the practice of "real man" constitutes the basis of historical development, and the world in which the subject lives is "indeed [a product] in the sense that it is an historical product, the result of the activity of a whole succession of generations, each standing on the shoulders of the preceding one, developing its industry and its intercourse, and modifying its social system according to the changed needs" [24]. Thirdly, it transcends the social prospect of German philosophy. Marx believed that the falsehood of ideology came from the oppression of social reality. He pointed out that since its birth, the proletariat "bear all the burdens of society without enjoying its advantages, which is ousted from society and forced into the sharpest contradiction to all other classes." [25] The severeness of the oppression of the proletariat has created the thoroughness of their revolution. In the course of the struggle against the ruling class, Marx realized that the proletariat should not only completely get rid of the dual oppression of the ruling class in material and ideological aspects, but also realize the all-round and free development of human beings and completely subvert the social foundation of the existence of the ruling class.

## **4. CONCRETE ANALYSIS OF CLASS IDEOLOGY**

Not long after the discovery of historical materialism, Marx put himself into revolutionary practice, and further practiced, tested and developed its theory by concrete analysis of class ideology. Specifically, Marx gave a general description of class ideology in his works such as the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*; at the same time, the class ideology was concretely presented in *The Class Struggles in France*, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon* which were written

during the European Revolution at that time. Through the concrete analysis of class ideology, Marx discovered the decisive role of economic interests beneath class ideology, which laid the foundation for his turn to the study of political economy. It should be noted that Marx did not directly use the concept of ideology during this period, but use the concept of spirit, consciousness, concept as the substitute during this period.

#### **4.1 Bourgeois Ideology and its Concrete Presentations**

In order to maintain governance, the bourgeoisie constructed a set of bourgeois ideology system with natural law theory and abstract epistemology to argue the permanence of capitalist existence by using a series of false words and ideas. Generally speaking, the falsehood of bourgeois ideology is mainly reflected in three aspects. The first is to cover up the interests of the class in an attempt to perpetuate class rule. Marx pointed out that "the ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class" [26], and morality, law, religion and other specific ideologies are the products of bourgeois relations of production and ownership, and the interests of the bourgeoisie are hidden behind them. Through ideological propaganda, the bourgeoisie attempted to rationalize capitalist relations of production, ownership and perpetuate interests. The second is to slander the Communists by distorting their propositions. The bourgeoisie distorted the "abolition of this state of things" pursued by the Communists as the "abolition of individuality and freedom".[27] Besides, they also distorted the union of the working class around the world as abolishing the nation, and etc. By doing that, the bourgeoisie attempted to discredit the Communists and dress themselves up as "revolutionaries". The third is to carry on the alienation education to the proletariat in an attempt to rationalize their class value. Bourgeois education is an important way to cultivate the ideology of the proletariat. it seduces the proletariat to accept the bourgeois outlook on life, values and norms of behavior by means of imperceptible influence, and identifies with the existing model of capitalism. It has become an important base for defending the legitimacy of the capitalist system.

During the period of European Revolution, the falsehood of bourgeois ideology was vividly displayed. On the one hand, in the revolution, this falsehood is reflected in the inconsistency between the revolutionary slogan and the revolutionary goal. In the February Revolution in 1848, the bourgeoisie reactivated the slogan "Freedom, Equality and Fraternity" of the Revolution of 1789. However, unlike the goal of striving for democracy and freedom of all classes in the Revolution of 1789, the bourgeoisie propagated the slogan in the February Revolution with the aim of deceiving the proletariat to help it overthrow the rule of the financial aristocracy, which can be said to be a complete retrogression. On the other hand, after the revolution, this falsehood was embodied in the betrayal of the proletariat. After the February Revolution, the bourgeoisie monopolized the victory and brutally exploited the proletariat, transforming itself from an ally of the proletariat to an enemy. Then, during the June Revolution, the bourgeoisie completely exposed its false, cruel and counter-revolutionary nature, they mercilessly massacred the proletariat and forced the proletariat to withdraw from the stage of democratic struggle. After the June Revolution, considering that French peasants still accounted for a large proportion and were deeply Napoleon, the bourgeoisie used the "Napoleon Concepts" to win the approval of the peasants and invited Napoleon's nephew Louis Bonaparte came to power to conceal class contradictions and consolidate governance. It is not difficult to find that bourgeois ideology often wears the cloak of "tradition" and under the guise of "love", in order to defraud identity and safeguard rule.

#### **4.2 Proletarian Ideology and its Concrete Presentations**

The proletariat is the inevitable result of the development of the capitalist mode of production, "not only has the bourgeoisie forged the weapons that bring death to itself; it has also called into existence the men who are to wield those weapons—the modern working class—the proletarians" [28]. The proletarian consciousness was formed in the unyielding struggle against the bourgeoisie, which made it distinct revolutionary and uncompromising. The characteristics of the proletarian consciousness was fully reflected in the theory of "Two Ruptures", that is [29] "the Communist revolution is the most radical rupture with traditional property relations; no wonder that its development involves the most radical rupture with traditional ideas." The first rapture lies in overthrowing capitalist private ownership and establishing socialist public ownership to lay the material foundation for communism; the second rapture lies in the total elimination of capitalist thought and its remnants in the ideological field, and cultivate proletarian consciousness which lays an ideological

foundation for communism. The "Two Ruptures" highlights the proletarian revolution's profundity, extensiveness and incongruity, and at the same time shows that the proletarian class consciousness is completely on the opposite side of bourgeois ideology. It should be noted that when the proletariat breaks with the traditional ownership, it must take a long time to break with the traditional concept and build the proletarian ideology. Therefore, Marx stressed that the Communist Party "never cease, for a single instant, to instill into the working class the clearest possible recognition of the hostile antagonism between bourgeoisie and proletariat" [30], so as to take advantage of various favorable situations to oppose the bourgeoisie and seize the leadership of ideology.

However, during the European revolution, the proletariat did not show the revolutionary consciousness it should have. During the February Revolution, the proletariat believed the lies of the bourgeoisie, forgot its class mission, and believed that it could realize its own interests depending on the bourgeoisie, which reserves time for the bourgeoisie to steal the fruits of the revolution. In June Revolution, the proletariat failed miserably because it failed to grasp the subjective and objective situation. However, as long as we look closely at the class situation at that time, it is not difficult to understand the abnormal behavior of the proletariat. During the February Revolution, the power of the proletariat was still very limited; in most of the places apart from Paris they "crowded into separate, scattered industrial centres, being almost lost in the superior numbers of peasants and petty bourgeois" [31], thus do not yet have the capacity for an independent revolution. At the same time, the strength of the French bourgeoisie was very strong, coupled with their existing little revolutionary spirit at that time; thus they could deceive the proletariat to a certain extent. However, revolutionary exercise is a realistic way to enhance the consciousness of the proletariat, "what succumbed in these defeats was not the revolution. It was the pre-revolutionary traditional appendages" [32]. The proletariat dares to laugh at "deride with unmerciful thoroughness the inadequacies, weaknesses and paltrinesses of their first attempts" [33], dares to sum up experience in failure, to abandon unrealistic fantasies, and finally put forward "Overthrow of the bourgeoisie! Dictatorship of the working class!" [34]

### **4.3 Logical Development : the Enrichment of Historical Materialism**

Based on the critical analysis of the ideology of all classes in the European revolutionary period, Marx's historical materialism has been enriched and developed in three aspects. First of all, the inconsistency between the superstructure and the economic base. Marx pointed out that the development of social consciousness may lag behind or advance the social existence, and the traditional concept, as the product of the traditional ownership relationship, will not immediately perish with the demise of the traditional ownership relationship; otherwise, it may be stored in people's minds as an ideology and reproduced at a particular time, reflecting the residual demands of backwardness. As a result, the bourgeoisie was able to inculcate the masses ideologically in the revolution with the help of traditions such as "fraternity" and "Napoleon Ideas". Secondly, the reaction of the superstructure to the economic base. Although ideology is determined by civil society, it in turn manipulates civil society in some special times. It is through the state machinery (including ideology) that the bourgeoisie "enmeshes, controls, regulates, superintends and tutors civil society from its most comprehensive manifestations of life down to its most insignificant stirrings, from its most general modes of being to the private existence of individuals" [35]. For the bourgeoisie, the overall control of civil society has been realized. The compromise tendency of the proletariat in the early stage of the revolution is the result of bourgeois ideological manipulation. Third, the diversity of superstructure changes. During the period of European Revolution, Marx paid more attention to the changes of ideology in different periods due to the changes of material interests. This kind of change can be divided into two types. One is the change of forms, for example, the bourgeoisie used "fraternity" as the slogan in the February Revolution, and then they used "the watch-words of the old society, 'property, family, religion, order'" [36] to against the proletariat in June Revolution. The other is the change of connotations. Both the 1789 Revolution and the February Revolution publicized "Freedom, Equality, Fraternity", but for the former it was an anti-feudal revolutionary slogan, and for the latter it was a fiction to hide the interests of the bourgeoisie.

There is no doubt that ideological criticism is still valid for the analysis of bourgeois political farce during the European revolution. Through ideological criticism, Marx was able to analyze the nature of the ideological disputes behind various political propaganda, political thoughts, political factions during the revolution, and realized that "the great law of motion of history, the law according to which all historical struggles, whether they proceed in the political, religious, philosophical or some other ideological domain, are in fact only the more or less clear expression of struggles between social classes, and

that the existence and thereby the collisions, too, of these classes are in turn conditioned by the degree of development of their economic position, by the nature and mode of their production and of their exchange as determined by it." [37](Engels, 2010, 303) At this time, the logical basis of Marx's ideological criticism more clearly embodied from "civil society" to "material interests". It could be said that it is through the material interests, Marx was able to find that the conflict of different ideologies is actually the external manifestation of the conflict of class economic interests. Furthermore, at this time, Marx's ideological criticism has been more combined with political economy, which attribute ideological disputes to disputes of economic relations and material interests. At the same time, it also lays a theoretical foundation for criticizing the capitalist society by the critique of political economy.

## 5. CONCLUSION

To sum up, this paper systematically analyzes the three main forms of the concept of ideology in Marx's different groups of works during the period from 1842 to 1852. Through systematic textual researches, this paper proves that the concept of ideology plays an important role in the development and transformation of Marx's historical materialism. Specifically, through the systematic criticism of concrete ideology, Marx gradually discovered the decisive role of civil society in the superstructure, which helps him to transform from idealism to materialism, and laid the foundation for the final discovery of historical materialism; through the discussion of the general ideology, Marx mainly expounded the basic principles of historical materialism, which helps him subvert the basis of the western philosophical metaphysics since Plato, and realize the logical transcendence of the previous philosophical theory; through the analysis of class ideology, Marx revealed the decisive role of economic interests on class consciousness, which develops historical materialism and helps lay a theoretical foundation for the criticism of political economy in his later writings.

Although presentations of concept of ideology are different in Marx's works in different periods, it was through the intermediary of ideological criticism that Marx realized the transformation from idealism to materialism. As a result, historical materialism is constructed and developed. It can be said that historical materialism is the theoretical basis for understanding the concept of ideology, and the concept of ideology is the vivid embodiment of Marx's historical materialism. It was in the concrete criticism of social consciousness that Marx gradually discovered the social foundation behind them and gradually discovered historical materialism. In *German Ideology*, Marx criticized German ideologists who understand society not from the material basis but from the consciousness. However, Marx seldom used the concept of ideology directly in his later works (after around 1852); this does not mean that he gave up ideological criticism. After the 1850s, Marx devoted almost all his energy to the study of political economy and devoted himself to writing *Das Kapital*. During this period, Marx actually emphasized the relationship between the external presentation of capitalism and its actual relations of production, and the concept of ideology was actually replaced by commodity fetishism.

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