

CHAPTER V

CONFUCIAN EDUCATION AT THE CROSSROADS

INTRODUCTION

The crisis of Chinese education is no longer a myth even if the authorities try to conceal it. Their clamorous, interminable discussions about solutions to the present crisis in education contradict, if not betray, their own belief in their ideology. Nowadays, crying for a radical change of the educational system no longer is limited to the radical intellectuals. Even our bureaucrats, who make educational policy in the Ministry of Education, begin to show their concern for our present educational system. More paradoxically, they are the loudest advocates for a change of this present system. The example of Lee Kwan-yew's Singaporean government, which pushed for a more traditional education, has been taken as a model for study in Taiwan. Our bureaucrats begin to discover the disaster of an overemphasized technological education (via Lee's policy). Now, we discuss fervently the need of returning to our roots, namely, our Confucian ideology, and seem to be as certain about its positive character as we had been confident in technology. Intellectuals, in the fever of their nostalgia about the lost ideology, appear willing to go along with the bureaucrats. Even if they still cast doubt on the claim of Lee or Confucian scholars, they are generous in giving the green light to the experiment of a "new" ideological education. To them, it is better to have, or to try, a change than to sit idle and cry in the darkness of the black hole of present education.

Whether Confucianism could be effective in solving the present crisis seems irrelevant to our bureaucrats, because they firmly believe in it, as certain as their belief in Marxism or in *The Three Principles of the People* of Sun Yat-sen. Their main task is how to get it done, and as quickly as possible.

Our doubts over Confucian education comes not from its obsolescence (visible in our history), but from its ideological, dogmatic and reactionary character. Our point in this chapter is that the illusion of the effectiveness of Confucian education is born rather from an unfortunate misunderstanding of the nature of education, which is mistakenly identified with the method used by

our educators. Thus, as long as the objective of education is unclear, any diagnosis or remedy proposed for its problems would be futile. Moreover, we insist that the method of diagnosis, and the method of solving the problems themselves are insufficient so long as the problem, or the concept of the illness, is wrongly understood.¹ The symptoms of educational crisis, discovered and analyzed by our specialists, would be of little use if these symptoms themselves are falsely conceived.² Aware of this fact, we will be content with an elaboration of the problem of understanding of the so-called crisis of education. We avoid, though do not shy away from, the question of remedial solution which we consider as too premature, and which is outside our capacity.

The misunderstanding of our educational crisis comes first from a misunderstanding of the objective of education, and secondly, from a misuse of, or better say, from an overconfidence in, a certain method. Such a misunderstanding and such an overconfidence in method are the product of what we identify as ideology. Hence, in order to deal with the problem adequately, we adopt the radical reduction of Edmund Husserl³ in doubting any kind of definition of education or its methods. To be more precise, we are not allowed to take for granted:

- a simple analysis or description of the symptom of the illness in education. The data provided from experience or natural facts need to be understood. They are not neutral as the empiricists believe. Human experiences are not transcendental in the Kantian sense, but relative and historical.

- a subjective, ideological interpretation of the cause of the illness motivated by fixed, a-historical ideas, or class-sentiment, or class-interests. The Confucianist explanation of the crisis in terms of non-congruence to their moral codes, the nationalist interpretation of the illness in terms of failure to fulfill the required patriotic code are the proto-types of subjective and ideological education.

- the myth of mechanical organism (of the behaviorists), according to which the crisis in education is a biological fact, as natural as action and reaction, stimulus and response.

Such a misunderstanding is notoriously embraced by empiricists and idealists respectively. We contest their views by arguing that such methods are insufficient to cope with education, an education which deals primarily with human development in a changing and growing society, in terms that are cognitive and

practical, pragmatic and teleological, self-conscious and communicative aspects. That means, we opt here for an integral education by not resting on a certain facet of human beings. The mistakes of both empiricist and idealist, as Hegel and especially Marx, as well as their followers, have rightly noted, are seen exactly in their concentration on a certain *facet*, and on a certain stage of man. Their diagnosis is thus not quite false if man is conceived of as something external and immobile, a-historical and asocial, which, like a stone, could be objectively observed and analyzed. Consequently, their remedial proposals may be effective for the education of such a static man. The fact that man is complex—at the same time historical and social, sentimental and rational, developing and utopian, etc.—demonstrates the danger of any “reduction” or “simplification” of man. Consequently, the remedial solutions offered by idealists and empiricists to human problems are incomplete and dangerous.

Thus, the main theme of this chapter will be centered on the crisis of understanding itself. We tentatively adopt critical theory, not as a unique method, but as a guide-line to throw more light onto the crisis of education.⁴

Of course, we do not naively reject the empirical analysis or the impact of ideology. We are aware of its function as well as its limits in understanding the problem.

This chapter consists of three main sections: the first and the second are a condensed review of some prevalent modes of understanding in education, tacitly accepted as the standards by empiricists and idealists respectively, while the final section will deal precisely with the problematics of what our educators call educational crisis from the point of view of critical theory.

EMPIRICISM AND EDUCATION

Dealing with the problems of understanding demands a treatment of both the scope and the method of understanding. Hence, to understand the crisis of education, we have to examine its objective and methods.

Here, we begin with some prevalent definitions of education adopted by most of our educators. We treat them as hypotheses which need to be carefully and analytically re-examined. We will then single out the main mistakes that may be responsible for what we understand as the crisis.

If education is understood as a right method to transform the

children into a kind of model predetermined by the adult-society, the state or the Church then the question would be which kind of method and which sort of model we are searching for. Consequently, the crisis of education could be seen from two aspects: that of method and that of objectives. The first comes from the belief that the right method determines the right path of education, while for the second it is the objective of education which dictates its method. Thus, the aim of the educators who believe in the first solution, is to work out an adequate method which could be empirical or rational. To those who happen to take the second solution, it is the task of refining the objective of education in a way that makes sense. Let us take the example of Confucian education to clarify our point: Confucian education's objective is *chun-tzu*, i.e. a man who possesses virtues of loyalty, fidelity, sincerity, frugality, benevolence, filial piety, etc.⁵ To Confucian educators, its method ought to be the right way to educate the children in these virtues. The method of "learning by heart", "obedience" and even such forceful means as laws and punishment are the most praised. Thus, for them, the educational crisis is synonymous with a crisis of method and a lack of the above virtues.

If education is understood as a simple tool or instrument which the children need to develop themselves for whatever they want to become, and if the objective of education is rather optional or conventional, then the crisis of education is limited to the mere aspect of technique. Liberal education opts for such an understanding of education. To its advocates, it is meaningless to set an objective for education. We should concentrate on the work of refining the technique, instead of building an ideal objective.

We may produce a litany of similar definitions of education based on either its objective or method,⁶ or on both, but this would be of little use for our purpose. As we will show, such definitions are insufficient or biased at the very outset because they are constructed (or mentally constituted) on a misconception of human nature or on false ideology. To prove our thesis, we will examine the objectives of education implicit in the first definition to see whether such objectives could be regarded as the true ones, and how they are constructed.

First, we discover a dangerous confusion of the object and the objective of education in such definitions. Second, there is an artificial identity of its method and objective.

The Object of Education

Actually, the object of education is the educated (children, students) and not its ideals. As often as not, the educated is bypassed or simply ignored. He or she is regarded as a simple object instead of being the real subject. Consequently, the educated is denied an active role in shaping his or her own life. He or she is destined to model, or forced to accept the ideal, predetermined by society. In a word, the educated is no longer the real object and subject of education. One plays only an auxiliary role in the game of education, going along to reach the objective, i.e. the ideal model. In both definitions, we find nowhere an active role for the educated. We mistakenly take either the ideal or the method to be the objective of education, and lapse into confusion between its object and objective. Such a mistake comes from a rather feudal, patriarchal ideology, according to which it is the absolute power of the father (the clan-chief, the king) which determines the fate of the subordinate. The subordinate or the son is simply the product, existing at the whim of the father or the chief.

The Objective of Education

As we have observed in both definitions of education, educators have taken neither the ideal or the method to be the objective of education.⁷ In order to avoid unnecessary ambiguity, we will replace the word "objective" with the word "goal" or "scope." In the first definition, it seems to us that it is the goal which dictates the course of education, while in the second it is the method that is the ultimate objective in the mind of educators.

The Goal of Education

In Confucian education, the model of *chun-tzu* (superior man) is the ultimate goal of education, while in education in Taiwan it is the patriotic hero. Of course, we discover similar ideas in other educational systems: the model of the saint in Christianity, the ideal of the socialist in Socialism, of a free man in liberalism, etc.

In all these models, one observes a common character: they are *a priori* or pre-determined, and their specific characteristics are artificially and externally constructed. We tacitly, or often forcefully and violently accept them without comprehension or consent. In the case of Confucian education, we are taught to be

loyal, obedient (blindly) to the king (or the superior) without an understanding of why we should do so. In the case of liberal education, one demands that the children have the right of self-development, without questioning the scope of development... Thus, in both cases, the demand of an ideal is often unrealistic, if not illusory. The unreality or, at least, impracticality of such an ideal has not this far been subjected to any critique.

The Method of Education

The liberal, in order to avoid the absurd demand of an unreal model, has proposed either a vague idea of freedom and self-development, or in most cases, has chosen method as the objective of education. The most evident example supporting such a view is the belief that an upgrade of the method (either in examination or in teaching) could solve the crisis of present education. In Singapore, the commission of education, nominated directly by the government with a plena-potentiary right and power of deciding the policy and planning future education, has clearly opted for method as the legitimate goal of education: Education means education for correct thinking, for science, and recently, for good behavior or moral living. Curiously, there exists hardly any effort at redefining education. In acknowledging the obsolescence of the present method of teaching and learning (didactic), the government chooses an easy path of shifting all mistakes to the problem of method, thereby reducing the business of education to a simple training of method. Again, the method of education is reduced to a mere aspect of technique.

Before we deal directly with these mistakes, it is necessary to make some remarks on the unreality of both the conservatives and the liberals on the objective of education.

- First, if the goal of education is predetermined, one has to justify the reason of such a determination. The educator may resort to the authority of God, of nature, or, simply, of the king; he may prove that such a goal is historically or scientifically constructed; or he may simply take it for granted. To rely on authority is to hide in ideology, whatever the ideology may be. However, in this case, ideology has to be proven to be the right and not the wrong one. The difficulty lies exactly in the dogmatism of ideology which makes any test impossible. The theistic ideology is as rigid and authoritative as its naturalistic or scientific counterpart. As such, justification means rather confirmation than proof.

- Second, due to the untestability of such a goal, it would be

nonsense to talk about crisis in terms of conformity to the goal. The educational crisis has to be located in other aspects, namely, those of the ability, capacity and willingness of the educated to follow the goal. This explains educational crisis in terms of a lack of will or the incapacity of the educated. Actually, this is partly right, but in most cases just begs the question. The point is whether the educated as a human being, limited and still immature, could have the capacity to perform the noble, ideal rules set by an abstract agent (God), by a utopian (absolute ruler), or whether he could be measured in terms of a natural event (set by a scientific-minded educator). The answer seems to be in the negative, exactly because the standards of education are external, neutral and, in most aspects, impractical.

- Third, if one carefully examines the goal of education, one can discover a hidden interest in its process of construction. The virtues of obedience, loyalty, fidelity, etc. benefit primarily the rulers and not necessarily the educated, or the subordinated. Love of God, love of the leader is intended to increase the power of the leader, and certainly, not for the benefit of the ruled.

- Fourth, even if the goal of education is noble and for the educated, as seen in Confucianism and Christianity, one still doubts its effectiveness. The contrast between the invariable goal and the changing person clearly indicates the alienation between the set goal and human beings. How can an invariable standard dictate to a changing subject?

- Fifth, with regard to the problems of method, one may simply raise a question concerning the relation between ends and means. Could one develop a method without setting a goal. How could we know the effectiveness of the method without calculating the effectiveness of the method for the goal? Max Weber's excellent treatment of the inseparable relation between means and ends proves that a mere belief in method is rather naive and dangerous.⁸

IDEALISM AND EDUCATION

In this section, we go a further step in examining two prevalent methods of education: those of the empiricists and the idealists, respectively. We will not, however, delve into the detail of the problems of methodology as many educators from Normal Universities have done. We have treated this issue elsewhere,¹⁰ and do not need to repeat it. The main point in this section is by means of critique to reveal the deterministic and ideological nature of the views on education held by empiricists and idealists.

The Myth of Objectivism in Education

The main tenets of empiricism are two: first, everyone educated is primarily an object who can be observed, studied and tested; second, the law of education, generated from the general law of nature, has to be constructed on an objective and causal foundation. Consequently, a successful policy of education has to be built on what we call objectivity. We will go through their arguments and see whether the myth of objectivism could save us from crisis.

In blaming the present education as unscientific, and strongly criticizing conservative education as purely subjective, empirical educators seek a scientific, objective education. Their main points and arguments are based on the concept of science and objectivity (which are identical in their mind). To be scientific, one needs first to treat the educated not as a single, particular subject, but as an object, which, like other objects, can be observed. Second, what we can study from the object is not the object itself but its phenomena, or external appearances such as behaviors and reactions. Third, in locating the most common phenomena from the least, one could divide the “regular” from the “non-regular” and “irregular.” Fourth, one observes among the “regulars” some common traits which can explain the difference between the “regular” and others, and which can explain the existence of the “regular.” Fifth, one goes a further step to establish the law of relationship among the “regulars” based on these common traits. Such laws are objective in the sense that they can satisfactorily explain and predict the behaviors (phenomena) in most cases. Finally, the empiricist educator will apply the above steps to study the “object” (i.e. educated), and to work out laws of education.

Actually, in treating man as an external, neutral object like a stone, and in reducing human activities to simple actions and reactions (when they collide), and consequently, in believing that one can establish causal laws explaining human actions and educate by such laws, the empiricist educator has committed a double mistake: that of ideological objectivism, and of a naive understanding of science.

To take human beings as external, physical objects which could be studied with the help of natural science, the empiricists have taken scientism or objectivism as their ideology. Such an ideology claims that:

- knowledge is synthetic and that synthetic knowledge is

constructed on sensory experiences.

- all sensory experiences are observed and repeated.
- meaning is grounded in observation.
- concepts and their generations only represent the particular which they are abstracted. Consequently, conceptual entities do not exist themselves, but are mere concepts.
- sciences are unified according to the methodology of the natural sciences.
- values are not facts, and hence cannot be given as such in sensory experiences.¹¹

Deduced from the premise of scientism, any theory of education claims to be objective or scientific, must be built on those above tenets. For the educators who take objectivism for granted and who follow these regulations, the business is restricted to the area of methodology. They adopt the Wittgensteinian dictum: "*Wovon man nicht sprechen darf, darüber muss man schweigen*"¹² and apply it to education: "The correct method in philosophy would really be the following: to say nothing of what can be said, i.e. propositions of natural science—i.e. something which has nothing to do with philosophy—and then, whenever someone else wants to say something metaphysical, to demonstrate to him that he has failed to give a meaning to certain signs in his propositions."¹³

One just needs to replace the word "philosophy" with "education" to understand what the empiricist educator thinks of an education with education. In this context, the method employed in education is empirical and the business of the educator is to teach the educated the proper use of such a method. One refuses to discuss the problematic of the purpose of education which appears nonsensical, metaphysical. In a stroke, they reduce all objectives of education to a single one: methodology.

It is not difficult to point out the mistake of the empiricist. We have to agree with Karl Popper, who would have rejected such an understanding of education which he called the myth of objectivism.¹⁴ Though we accept Popper's critique as being of great help to dismiss the myth of objectivism and though such a problem is worthy in a study of education, we will not tie it together with the problem of application of neutral standards to all beings for further discussion. Here, we would like to concentrate on the extravagant claim that the business of education is restricted to methodological training.

Our very first question about our knowledge of rightness and wrongness in methodology raises not only the complexity of the process of its construction but also the relation between means and ends. First, an empiricist may claim that the rightness of a method is measured

conformity to the standards of natural science, and that the right method would produce desirable result. Such a claim is in fact based on a meta-validity of the criteria of natural science. The scientific criteria are transcendental in the sense of beyond space and time. They are always correct. However, our question is not directed to the rightness or wrongness of scientific criteria, but to the role of the agent who recognizes and uses them. He is supposed to possess them beforehand prior to constructing some method. Immanuel Kant explains the human experiences of such knowledge in terms of a process of synthetic *a priori*¹⁵ while David Hume and the rest of the empiricists explain them in terms of psychological association.¹⁶ Both explanations are insufficient in the sense that they simplify and objectify human experiences. Both Kant and Hume treat experiences as simple facts or data which one can isolate in a single unit, and which could be accumulated. They forget that experiences reveal only the happened and not happening. As such, what they believe to be an internal or scientific knowledge is only historical knowledge. The difference between data (given or existing), facts (phenomena) which have happened, and phenomena which are happening has not been explored by them, so that their explanation is restrictedly based on data (existing) and as such misguided or one-sided.

Second, both Kant and Hume are convinced of a kind of universal experience that they identify as mathematical or physical. To them, such experience is certain, and provides a solid basis for constructing other knowledge.

Here, both Kant and Hume leave aside an important fact of the subjective role in experiencing. Experience is “experienced” by a certain subject. Thus, one has to properly deal with the subject as Edmund Husserl has rightly proposed in *The Cartesian Meditations*. Here, experience is constructed in terms of *Erlebniss*, and the *solipsic ego* is understood in terms of transcendental subject. We follow Husserl, and especially Heidegger of *Sein und Zeit*, to insist on an ontological analysis of the existential subject, by beginning with a radical doubt about Kant’s construction of the transcendental ego. We inquire not only into the subject’s appearances (facts), but also its appearing state by posing the questions and reducing (epoche) its non-essential features, such as what happens if the subject is falsely observed, or if it is in a state of illusion, or if it is determined by a certain ideological belief, or education. How could we warrant that man is not influenced by his milieu or by his feelings? Similarly, we know a great deal about the fact that any experience is primarily

particular and atomistic. To construct universal and regular experiences is both possible and impossible. It is possible in the case of data (suppose that all experiences are like stones, chairs, i.e. invariable, unrelated things). It is however impossible in the case of facts and especially happening phenomena. Any fact (factum) is a fact because it happened, or was done, or constructed. And of course, it could not happen by itself. The role of the subject comes to the fore here. Thus, we can say that an experience (from facts) is rather subjective, and it can thus not be detached from one's living or life-world. We cannot think of individuals in terms of general laws if we leave unanswered the question of the impossibility or possibility of universalization of individual experiences.

Third, as a consequence, experiences understood as *Erlebniss* always point to certain relationships (between the subject and the object, the subject and other subjects, the subject and one's physical and intellectual world). We understand someone or something in terms of his or its relationship to us. We experience love, fear or loss, not from the object alone, but from the subject-object relationship. The experience of love comes precisely from this relationship. The language of "we love and are loved" expresses an inter-subjective experience which is born in the act of love of the agents (subject and object). The empiricist would put aside this important aspect of relationship in his genetic construction of experience.

The impossibility of having absolute experiences points to the problem of absolute criteria for human science, and consequently the collapse of the myth of objectivity in human science. The positivist tries to correct the idea of the empiricist by taking a more radical stand. To him, only criteria of natural science could serve as the foundation deciding the rightness of method. We have no doubt about the quasi-universal characteristics of natural science, but we have reservations about its claim of absolute correctness and, especially its extravagant claim of universal application in human life. On the one hand, the birth of quantum physics does not wipe out Newton's mechanics. It rather shows its insufficiency in explaining the phenomenon of quantification, and more interestingly the impact of milieu on quantity. Similarly, we witness the fact that modern mathematics have relativized the Euclidian system.¹⁷ On the other hand, the naive belief in a universal application of criteria of natural science has crumbled even at the first stage of rationalism. Kant's skepticism of the practicality of his categorical imperatives is no longer secret. Our point is simple, as long as we cannot

transform ourselves into a kind of robot, any dream of having absolute criteria remains a dream. This claim is solidified by human objections to being deformed into robots. It would be the end of humanity.

We proceed now to the second part of our question about knowledge of the rightness of a method by discussing the means-ends relation. The empiricist claims the monopoly of method or the means, and bypasses the end which he considers metaphysical or nonsense just because there is no empirical proof of its existence. It is true to some extent that the goal does not exist concretely. The ideal of *chun-tzu* (noble man) in the *Analects*, or sainthood in Christianity remains mostly ideal and not necessarily existential; the model man in idealist education remains both vague and unrealistic.

However, not all purposes are unrealistic or abstract. In daily life, one's actions are always oriented toward a certain purpose: we eat not simply because of mechanistic reaction from our stomach, and we speak to friends not because of an organic demand but for a certain purpose, such as to communicate something or to be understood, etc. In most cases observed from our actions, we discover that it is not the means that exist beforehand, but the purpose or the ends, which stimulate the birth of method. Let us take the example of eating to clarify our point: Suppose that we are hungry and there is however available only some raw food. In order to satisfy our need, we have to discover one or other way to transform the uneatable into the eatable. We discover here culinary method. In the first stage, the empiricist may explain the act of eating as a simple reaction to the stimulus of stomach, but he is unable to explain why and how man discovers fire, instruments of cooking, and cooking methods.

We follow here Weber's excellent critique of R. Stammler's empirical approach.¹⁸ In the postscript to the essay on "Stammler's 'Refutation' of the Materialist Conception of History," Weber dismisses Stammler's claim that there is "only one kind of scientific knowledge of concrete phenomena," namely causal knowledge (which is empirical object). He says: "It is quite obvious that this sleight of hand is made possible in the following way. The unsuspecting reader learns that 'the rule presents itself as independent of the motive which the person has for following it. However this point remains obscure. In one kind of case, we—the inquirers—are engaged in a 'dogmatic' inquiry. Therefore we regard the 'rule' as having ideal axiological validity, and we bracket or abstract the actual motivation of the actor. In the other kind of case,

however, we are concerned with empirical knowledge. Actual men are included among the objects of our knowledge. By instituting a rule, they attempt to achieve an actual "goal." And in general, with varying degrees of certainty—they really succeed.

In order to insure that his scholastic obscurities will remain utterly impenetrable, Stammer personifies the "law of nature" and represents it as parallel to "precepts." They are distinguished in the following way. The purpose of the "precept" is to "constitute" a certain collective life. The purpose of the "law of nature", therefore, is to "cognitively (sic!) constitute" empirical regularity as "the unity of phenomena." The idea of a rule which "wants, means, or intends" something is at least a logically possible metaphor. In this context, of course, it is absolutely impermissible. However, the idea of a rule that "thinks" or performs "acts of cognition" is utterly absurd."¹⁹

Actually, Weber does not object to empirical science which he takes as the model for sociology. He insists on the inseparability of ends and means. In his view, to understand fact, one needs to go beyond its mere appearance; one needs to grasp its meaning. And to understand the meaning (which man gives to his act) is to understand his intention.²⁰ Similarly, and developed from Weber's idea, Alfred Schutz describes human action in terms of the agent's intention: "The project is the intended act imagined as already accomplished, the in-order-to motive is the future state of affairs to be realized by the projected action."²¹

We take up the issue brought up by Weber and Schutz and insist that, the concept of method is neither *a priori* nor independent from human interest, and therefore, from the ends. We measure method by calculating its effectiveness in reaching the purpose or goal. We rationalize method not only by taking the criteria of natural science, but much more, by upgrading the effectiveness of the goal. Applying this to education, we may judge the scientific character of a method from its effectiveness: a successful education is an education which fulfills the purpose (set either by educator, parents or society). Of course, the nobility, or the soundness of such a purpose is still in debate. But, the fact is that, without a set purpose, it is almost impossible to determinate the soundness of method.

Another fatal mistake of the empiricist educator is his misunderstanding of human nature.

First, to conceive the person as an external object, is to regard one as static, i.e. undeveloping and therefore to design a static method to deal with such a static thing. If man is non-developing, then the method for handling him should be invariable. The educator commits

the further mistake of regarding whatever is universal to be unchanging, and therefore, scientific. Thus, his scientific claim of method is built basically on his misunderstanding of human nature.

The study of Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg on human psychology, the genetic study of biologists, etc. all show that man is developing²² (either in stages as Piaget demonstrated or abruptly as Darwin showed). Actually, we know that, not only is man developing, even our interests are in an accumulating and transforming process. That is to say, the purpose of our action is not fixed but increasing, and consequently the need for ever developing new methods.

Second, by taking method as the sole criterion to judge the effectiveness of education, the educator lapses into a fundamental mistake of logic: how can he know the effectiveness without any knowledge of the purpose of education. The effectiveness of education is not seen in method, but in the agent who responds to such a method. The mechanism of method does violence to the free will of the educated.

The Myth of Idealism and Subjectivism

In opposition to the empiricist educator, the idealist tends to understand education as a mere business of training the subordinates or employees, i.e. to transform them into exactly what he has designed. The idealist could be objective (in the sense that he follows positivist, logical thinking) or subjective. But, at bottom, he is as much dogmatic as ideological. Let us look at the basic doctrine of idealist education.

First, there exists some *a priori*, or transcendental model or standard which is absolute and perfect in essence. Such a model could be created either by God or by society. The model of Christian education is man-god, free of sin and bearing the image of God himself; the Confucian model is *chun-tzu*, a super and perfect product of feudal society.

Second, such a model is the ultimate purpose of man and society, and therefore the aim of education.

Third, the model must be universal in the sense that it is invariable. It presupposes the common and noble desire of mankind to become perfect.

Consequently, the main duty of the educator consists in first discovering the virtues found in the model man which are sanctified as moral principles, and then educating in these virtues. Success or

failure of education is measured from the degree of the response of the educated and from his performance of these virtues. To be more precise, the educator has to work out a table of moral principles, or cognitive virtues, that he may call categorical imperatives (Kant), or golden rules (Confucius). Such a work is not easy because he has to deduce or extract from the model the essential features which determine the model man. In the case of Confucius, he has to examine various prominent figures in different states and history, from Kings Yao and Shun to national heroes to find their common traits such as loyalty, benevolence, fidelity, obedience, righteousness, etc. that he identifies as virtues. In Christian education, these virtues are built after the model of God. Thus, sainthood (innocence, freedom of sin), belief, trustworthiness, charity and justice are its main virtues.

Only after having built these virtues and regarded them as the objectives of education, does the educator begin to think of the methodological problem. He will try different methods, and change them as long as the virtues are not fully acquired and practiced by the educated. Thus, to him, method serves no more or less than an instrument, or a technique to obtain the set, fixed goal. As such, method plays only an auxiliary, not the decisive role we saw with empirical educators. The method of the idealist could be scientific, objective, subjective, or even illusory. He may take the stick and carrot policy as his method. He may follow the art of love, or he may use various methods at the same time. Only his objectives are invariable.

In this context, he understands the crisis of education in terms of effectiveness of method, and more importantly, of the human factor. Let us consider this second view that regards the human factor as decisive in explaining the education crisis: the idealist educator tries to explain the failure of education in the weakness or stupidity of the educated. He blames the environment (society) for weakening the will of the educated. He shifts all mistakes onto the shoulders of others, but not on his own. More interestingly, he never questions the correctness or validity of his moral principles, and pays little attention to the real object of education, i.e. the educated.

Our main argument against such a view is based on the very human question of human inability and incapacity to fully follow such noble and perfect principles.

It is true that man is weak and limited. It is also true that man is easily influenced by his environment. And, it is very true that man is motivated by interests. As such, one needs to be, as the educator argues, transformed into a strong, independent and social person.

Such an argument is based on a metaphysical claim that the objective of education is the ideal man, and of a misreading of human nature as static. Consequently, all we need are the noble principles which we take as the objectives of our education. In this sense, it is quite plausible to identify the objective with the object itself.

Such an argument looks very promising if we take the idealists' premise to be true, and if we take the object (the educated) to be the objective of education. The point is, such a premise has to be proved, and such an identification should be justified. It is quite easy to prove the falseness of such a premise as well as the confusion of such an artificial identification. By posing here the question of the human capacity for following ideal principles, we have in mind a more basic question of human nature, and consequently of human problems. What would a man be if stripped of all human characteristics, or become a sort of god? As a man, could he match the divine, the ideal, the perfect?

The difference between man and God, the normal and the ideal, the finite and the infinite is so great that man could never perform the duty of the absolute, ideal God. Such an argument is neither apologetic, not purely Nietzschean. It is in no case a defense of weakness. It is a fact of humanity. Let us take Piaget's study to prove our point. Piaget's study of the psychological and mental development of the child gives some clue to human nature: it is neither *a priori* determined, nor externally or automatically constructed. It is developing, and the factors explaining its development are so complex and total that they cannot be reduced to a single metaphysical principle.²³ One may doubt Piaget's explication of human development in stages, but one cannot refute the fact of the development of mankind. One need not be a Hegelian to discover the permanent change of human history.

Since we will return to the thesis of both empiricist and idealist in our treatment of the crisis of education (by using critical theory) in the next section, a few words with regard to their understanding of the education-crisis are raised here. We share their view that our present education is in crisis, from the most visible such as the crisis of method, to the most invisible such as that of human nature. However, we understand crisis not in a single aspect of education, but in its total relational (communicative) aspect. We do not consider crisis as something abnormal in the sense of decadence, failure, or sin but as a necessary step in human development. Moreover, we conceive development both in terms of horizontal and vertical, quantitative and qualitative growth. To be more clear, crisis is possible only in human inter-

course from human contact with different worlds and their paradigms. Thus, crisis is most visible in human dealings with the interests of classes, races or individuals, and in our struggle to solve problems. Such crisis takes the form of conflict among ideologies, between the real and the ideal, the profane and the sacred.

CRITICAL THEORY AND EDUCATION

Critical theory is the oldest and the most sought after method by scientist and philosopher. The Greek mathematicians and philosophers discovered it as the most useful tool for sharpening thinking and for seeking truth. The Chinese sages employed it to work out a primitive form of pragmatism, and the Indians refined it to develop a metaphysical system.

It is however fully developed only with Hegel and especially with Marx, and finally, became a kind of ideology with the Frankfurt School.²⁴

In order to grasp the incompleteness of empirical and rational method, we need to look back at the critical method used in these theories, and then at Hegel's contribution, and finally at Marx's revision of Hegel's idea.

To empiricists, what we observe is the external object. But to distinguish true from false objects, one has to develop the criteria which come not from the subject but from the object itself. Critical method consists in the work of observing phenomena, of distinguishing the regular from irregular, and from the work of constructing causal laws which can satisfactorily explain phenomena.

To idealists, critical method is a synonym for reflection. The thinking subject is subjected to rigorous critique. To him, the untruth comes rather from the unconscious or alienated subject.

Kant might be the first philosopher who did not agree with either the empiricist or the idealist. To him, to remain on either subject or object alone is insufficient to discover truth. Thus, he worked out a model of categories, with which, he believed, one can discover truth from untruth. The necessary conditions, as he claimed, are based on the model of arithmetic which are not conditioned by either subject or object. Thus, critical method centers on the work of applying these categories in judgment.²⁵ Unfortunately, these necessary conditions are transcendental in the sense that they are external and beyond our normal reach. As such, they can hardly deal with flexible and developing human activities.

It was Hegel who saw the impracticality of Kantianism. To Hegel, Kant failed to discover the Archimedian point and thus did not push through the promised Copernician revolution.²⁶ The Archimedian point is neither the subject, nor the object, nor the external necessary conditions. It is the point of relation between the subject and the object. To Hegel, the work of laboring the law of relation occupies the most important place. He claimed to have found such a law, i.e. the logic of history, with which he could explain and predict each historical stage.

In Marx's eyes, Hegel regretfully did not know the importance of his discovery of the point of relation;²⁷ he saw only a logical and abstract relation, not the real one. Marx promoted the sacred duty of critique, and declared the necessity of transforming critique into praxis.²⁸ To be more precise, one has to look at the relation between subject and object, subject and subject, subject and nature, subject and idea to see whether such relation is normal or correct. More importantly, Marx proposed understanding human nature from basic interests (economic) from which one can judge the normal, not yet alienated relation.

The members of the Frankfurt School have developed further Marx's arts of critique, but with the exception of Juergen Habermas, they remain in the first stage of critique that Marx himself wanted to overcome. It is true that Marx saw in the relation built by capitalist, feudal society a certain abnormality, but he did not remain on critique like those of the Frankfurt School.²⁹ He wanted to build a normal (or scientific in Louis Althusser's version) relation, the equal and just relation based on the principle of "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs."³⁰ The difficulty which Marx did not foresee is that there is no measure or criteria to determine human needs and capacity. Marx's miscalculation of human needs and capacity comes from his misunderstanding of human nature: man is social, and as such, is measured by the totality of society. Actually, Marx did not go through the most obvious consequence of his logic: if man is known by his relation to others (nature, other fellow-men) and by his own force (labor), then, in accordance with his creative labor his relation must be increasing. This means that Marx contradicted his view of developing man. Thus, his critique appears to be hypocritical. We think Habermas found this mistake in Marx when he proposed to drop Marx's utopian principle of communism, and replaced it with the principle of communication based on the linguistic model. The interesting point that we find helpful in understanding the educational crisis is that we can use

the communicative, linguistic model to study the abnormality of relation,³¹ and consequently of our education. We can also take Marx's interpretation of human conflicts from the point of view of human interests.

Thus, the strong point of Marx's and Habermas's critical theory which surpasses that practiced by previous philosophers is seen first in their emphasis on human relation which is constructed mostly from human interests (economic in Marx and total in Habermas), and then on their effort to work out a certain law of relation (equality of needs and capacity in Marx, communicative in Habermas). The following are some further explanations of the genetic process of human relation and with it, of human interests, as well as their problems, that is necessary for an understanding of human nature.

First, suppose that one is alone, like Robinson Crusoe, living in an isolated island with no relation to other human beings except himself. In this case, we have a double relationship: to the subject and to nature (environment). To the subject, the relationship is relatively simple in the sense that one may have less relation in terms of quantity and quality. The relation consists of that between the subject (conscious or unconscious) and one's body expressed in physical and biological needs. The second relation between the subject and the subject (himself in the case of a conscious subject) is expressed in the act of reflection on the subject himself, (though, in Marx's view, such a relation is difficult to an isolated, asocial man); and the third one, more visible, between the subject and his environment, which is seen in his feeling (fear, respect, wonder, hate, domination, love) or in his actions (destroy, worship, cultivate, run away, etc.) towards nature.

Second, suppose that one lives in a small society (rural, family-oriented and primitive), his relation is a bit more complex, and his needs as well as his capacity are increasing in ratio with the increasing rate of relation. Now, he has not only a certain relation to himself (his body, his soul), or to nature (his environment), but to others (parents, children, spouse, friends, and superiors, including political, cultural and religious). To preserve each relation he has to follow certain norms and develop certain feelings, and he has many more needs to sustain such relations. One can easily detect that such relations determine his social status, and even his nature.

Third, if one lives in a global, super-technical and rich cultural society, his relation is so complex that he can hardly know exactly how and what it is. We can say that toward different objects and

different subjects, or at different levels of the same subject, he develops different relations. One cannot reduce all these relations to a single spiritual relation (as did Hegel), or economic relation (as Marx believed).³²

THE GENESIS OF RELATION AND HUMAN INTERESTS

In analyzing the forms of relation, one discovers beneath the surface of each relation certain kinds of activities oriented toward certain kinds of interests (in Habermas' division, there are at least three general kinds of interests: the cognitive, the practical and the emancipatory).³³

In our sketch of three different men who live in different milieus and histories, we discover a manifoldness of relation. Each man possesses many relations depending on the objects, interests and activities. Thus, we may formulate the relations in according with its objects, human interests, and activities:

- Relation varies according to different objects (or subject in the case of self-consciousness).
- Relation takes different forms depending on its ends (cognitive, practical, aesthetic, emancipatory, etc.).
- Relation has different structures in accord with human activities (problem-solving, satisfaction, enjoyment, control, fear, love).

Let us take Robinson, the asocial man, as an example to clarify our point: Robinson first faces his body, and discovers that he is cold, hungry, thirsty, menaced, etc. Such phenomena are conscious for him because he has a need to satisfy and protect his body; and more clearly, because his body urges him to do so. Thus, we can say that Robinson discovers his body not because of an idea of body, but because of his relation to his own body through needs and satisfaction. The discovery of relation and body is mutual and reciprocal. He discovers his body because of bodily needs, and at the same time, his bodily needs make him conscious of the presence of his body. Such a relation is not single in the sense that, the subject may face many objects at the same time. The expression of "Robinson feels menaced, lonely, exhausted, thirsty and hungry" says that Robinson faces many objects at the same time, and therefore he has as many relations as the objects he encounters. He feels menaced because of his relation to the outer world (nature, event, catastrophe,

etc.), lonely because he has no subject to communicate with, thirsty because of the physical need of water, etc.

To satisfy his needs, he has to resort to a certain activity: drinking to satisfy thirst, eating to still hunger, a partner to suppress loneliness, or even violence to eliminate fear, etc.

The manifold relations are thus implicit in the existence of manifold objects (or subjects) and activities. However, not all activities, not all human needs and therefore relations, are normal. Some relations tend to distort human nature; some just hinder human development. Some are artificial, while some fulfill only a part of human nature. The task of critical theory is to discover the normal from the abnormal, the right from wrong. The point is how could we do the job without a prior knowledge of wrongness and correctness. Should we rely on some metaphysical criteria (that the idealist has adopted). The critical theoretician would not commit the same mistake of either the idealist or empiricist. He has to work with criteria which do not bear any metaphysical traits, and which do not rest on simple empirical data. Before we expose the main criteria which most critical theoreticians have taken, we wish to make our point clearer by taking the cosmopolitan man as an example of study.

We find that the cosmopolitan is much more complicated than Robinson. He has a great deal of activities (present, or still to come) because of his multi-dimensional relation to no specific number of objects. The complexity of his relation is not only due to the manifoldness of encountered objects, but also from his background, his spoken languages, and from his unlimited interests (which are born during the process of encounter or relation). From his relations, one could find some normal (in the sense of conventional), some not normal (new, or uncommon to such a society), some acceptable, some unacceptable, some comprehensible, some incomprehensible, etc.

On the one hand, from his relations, we can discover a certain number of encountered objects, activities and interests. On the other hand, we can also know or predict his new incoming relations from his actual activities in dealing with certain objects or in satisfying his interests. In this sense, we can say that the degree of complexity of the relation of the cosmopolitan could be measured, or predicted, if we know his activities, his encountered objects. Further, we may foresee his activities if we know his interests. In this context, we can say, what we understand of a human being is from his relation to certain objects, and what we discover from relation is human activities. In a step further, we can only understand human activities

if we grasp human interests. However, interests are not *a priori*. They are born from human encounter with other objects or with man himself. The genesis of interests, relations, and activities is in a reciprocal process, and they are *mutatis mutandis* acting upon each other.

We go a step further to claim that human crisis can be primarily seen in human relation. We understand crisis as something abnormal, unacceptable, or a defect born in an abnormal relation. The main point to be discussed is how do we know or judge normal relation, and how can we establish a causal law which links normal activities with normal relation. Only if this point is cleared up, can we talk about crisis, or educational crisis in particular. Thus, we return to the primary question of how do we know, i.e. how could we have some criteria to make a judgment on normality or abnormality.

Suppose that Robinson feels hungry, the first thing coming to his mind is to grab something to still his hunger. Such an action is called normal in the sense that everyone would do the same thing when he or she is involved in the same with the same happening thing (hunger). Thus, we may say that a man is sick if he does not react the same way as others do in the same case. In this case, to still hunger is a normal act sprung up from a normal relation between body needs and the subject.

We replace Mr. Robinson with a certain Mr. Smith (who happens to occupy an important place in the British House of Commons). Mr. Smith is hungry too, but he is sitting now in the House. Would he grab some bread to still his hunger in such a case? He would certainly think twice before performing such an act. He may take a sharp look to be sure if there is someone hanging around, say, a journalist, television cameraman, colleague... In each case, he has a different act, or reaction: he would take the bread and stuff it comfortably in his mouth if no one was there. He would rather suffer hunger, when the media-world is watching him, or he would discretely crunch it without disturbing his colleagues (because he is sure that they would do the same). We may judge him as a wise man, a normal man, because he performs the normal or required thing that everyone, in a normal situation, would do. In the case of Mr. Smith, one observes that he has more relations and more activities than Mr. Robinson; and that it is the relation (to media-world, to his colleagues or to himself) that determines the normalcy of his action. Here, normalcy refers to whatever is taken as common by both the subject and other subjects, or by the subject and the

object as seen in Robinson. Abnormality or crisis arises when these normal relations are distorted. Let us return back to the case of Mr. Smith. One discovers in him at least three quite visible kinds of reaction, which result from three different relations: the relation between the subject and the subject (himself), the relation between the subject and objects (his body, his needs, bread), and the relation between the subject and other subjects (colleagues, media-world, observers). In each relation, a certain act is normal or legal, other acts may be abnormal or illegal. It could be normal but illegal, or legal but abnormal. We have to carefully examine each act in each relation. The first act of stilling hunger is quite normal in the first and second relations: satisfying the need of body, of the subject. However, it could be offending others in the House and thus "abnormal," and in some case, illegal (as in the Church). That means that normalcy in certain relations is not automatically implicit in other relations, or abnormality in other relations is not translated into normalcy in certain relations. But to accept that there would be different standards of normalcy in different relations is to admit a certain relativism in norms and standards of behaviors. And as such, it is meaningless for the business of critique, because each relation has its own standard which other relations cannot criticize. We are plunged into chaos.

Let us examine the three relations of Mr. Smith to see whether there is some common value or standard among them, which can dissolve their conflicts. One discovers that, stilling hunger is the most fundamental activity. It could be temporally suppressed, but not completely abolished. Mr. Smith, due to the required etiquette of the House and consequently for fear of being exposed to scandal if he violates them would choose an insignificant physical suffering. But what if he could no longer stand the hunger during the hour of voting (which requires his presence)? In this case, he would prefer a less grave minor offense (eating) over the major one (absence during the voting), and he has reason to justify his act. The House and journalists would not blame him for such an insignificant offense, because it does not effect political consequence. This example points out an interesting order of needs and consequently, a scale of values: the most needed weights more in value than the less needed one, and, therefore, its action is more justified. Deduced from such an analysis, one could state that the most important relation, i.e. the one which is directly and vitally linked to human survival, has the legitimacy of establishing criteria of normalcy.

However, suppose that, it is during the election-period, and

suppose that the British folk lay much more emphasis on moral values and etiquette (as seen in Chinese) and suppose that the election is vital for Mr. Smith. In this case, he has to think twice before taking a piece of bread in the House. He would rather suffer hunger, content with water sipping, than offend the public. He would prefer to be taken to the hospital than to leave the House. Here, one finds that the relation between the subject and other subjects (voters) dictates his behaviors. Again, such a relation is justified by a certain ideology. Could we say that such a relation is normal because it is important to Mr. Smith, and that every politician like him would do the same in such a case? We confront now the dilemma of orders: which kind of order, the biological or the ideological (ethical, religious, political) prevails? Could we take the ethical standard to judge the biological, the subjective to criticize the objective or *vice-versa*?

Critical theory does not claim to possess a table of absolute criteria or categories like Kant, nor to want to build one (with the exception of Habermas) because such a claim contradicts human nature. However, it proposes to study human nature from the human relational, mediating activities. It wants to examine the forms of human relation to see if they are properly constructed and whether they function. It claims to contribute something to human understanding by eliminating the alienated forms of relations born in inauthentic activities and influenced by reified ideologies or cultures.

In a word, it limits itself to the work of critique. It follows Marx's intention (which is abandoned by Orthodox Marxism): "We do not anticipate the world dogmatically, but rather wish to find the new world through the criticism of the old,"³⁴ and develop it further into a kind of method.

For our purpose, we will sort out its main tenets and apply them in our critique of present education. Like Marx, we wish to deepen our understanding of the educational crisis through criticism, though, we will not stop short in this.

As seen above, one could draw a picture of critical theory showing the following characteristics:

- Critical theory demands a thorough examination of what we take for granted (i.e. what we regard as normal relations).
- It urges a radical reflection on the world of objects, which influences relations.
- It concentrates on the mediating point, or relation between the subject and the world, and not on the object (empiricism) or the

subject (idealism) alone.

- It explores the possible consequences of human activities based on human relation, with which it tries to reconstruct morals, laws, etc.

- It warns us of the danger of any kind of ideology, including technology, arts or mass-culture.³⁵

In other words, critical theory contests the view of both empiricist and idealist, which it dismisses as ideological. But what it could offer is only a litany of critiques (that most observers view as too negative).³⁶

- It criticizes any false view of human nature.

- It unmasks and criticizes the hidden ideologies which dictate or dominate our understanding of human nature.

- It objects to the methodological domination in natural science, which distorts an authentic understanding of human science.

- It rejects any kind of structure, which may help to reorganize or reconstruct some form of domination such as Nazism, Communism or Fascism.

- It opposes all kinds of alienated culture (which it suspects as ideology) such as mass-culture, instrumental culture.

In a word, it tries to reveal the hidden danger of any form of activities or structures which may cause human beings a certain alienation or reification.

Since our aim is restricted to the application of critical theory in education, we will refrain from giving further explanation, or from making any unnecessary comment which is irrelevant to our task. Sufficient to say that critical theory is far from perfect, and its negative performance would encourage other forms of ideology, the worse ones, such as anarchism or nihilism. Habermas himself feels that he has to build another version of critical theory, one that could be called scientific or quasi-scientific, and could contribute to human understanding. The model he seeks is based on a linguistic model with language-games as the transcendental rules established by human beings themselves.³⁷

Let us take critical theory at its best, namely its critique of ideology, and examine the crisis of our present education.

Our present education is constructed on our understanding of human nature, and, in turn, our understanding is often, if not always, dictated by our culture. Of course, culture is the crystallized

quintessence of a long tradition and history, which expresses the spirit or the commonality of a folk. Such a spirit is known through accepted values, or through the means that protect values (laws, morals, etc.). Thus, we recognize a certain culture in its expressive forms (arts, music, poetry, language, morals, customs).

However, the spirit of a folk may be in flux due to the ups and downs of history, or due to contact with external or foreign values, or due to revolution. Thus, with the change, culture varies in different forms—or better—culture transforms itself.

The point is our education is often dictated by a certain form, in a certain historical period and by a certain class. Thus, it is our duty to examine whether our education is built in accord with our culture understood in terms of human commonality.

Referring to Chinese culture, one thinks immediately of the three most powerful currents of thought: Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism which are quite rightly described and accepted as the most expressive forms of Chinese culture. Hence, it seems right to build our education on this foundation.

To critical theoreticians, such a justification is in question. One needs to rethink it and more radically, one has to think even of its nature in terms of its authenticity, fruitfulness, validity and legitimacy. One has to go beyond its superficial form and structure to the most fundamental, ontological question of how its fruitfulness, validity, legitimacy, etc. comes into being, and how they disappear, or are transformed in the historical current. The following is our attempt to delve into the problems of culture and consequently of our education.

First, one discovers a very disturbing thing in our education: ours is mostly based on Confucianism, and not on all three currents as the logic of culture would require. Most of the disciplines, doctrines and even methods are Confucian. Second, though, there are many Confucian schools (with different outlooks and methods, such as Neo-Confucianism, Modern Confucianism), our education has taken only the orthodox school's doctrines and method and left other schools out of consideration. Third, though orthodox Confucianism was chosen to be the backbone of education, not all but only the doctrines which are compatible to the ruling class or the regime are selected. Fourth, against the wish of Confucius, and the spirit of Confucianism, our education prefers violence over the principle of *jen* or benevolence as its method.

Our critique will focus on these abnormalities, i.e. on the uncommon traits in education, in order to dig up the hidden ideology.

The above disturbing phenomena of why our education is based fundamentally on orthodox Confucianism and not on all three currents or on Neo-Confucianism could be better explained in the context of human interests and power: the need of education (for the sake of whom) and the power of dictating its policy are primarily guided by the interests of the ruling class (monarchy). This means that the problems or the abnormalcy of education, can be grasped when the questions of class-interests and of power comes to fore, and are fully investigated. Thus, one needs only to take a critical look at historical records to see how education was designed, and executed. History reveals that education came to its bureaucratic form not under Confucius (who preferred private education with a strong emphasis on experiments and practical life, and who understood education as a kind of art helping the educated to become sage), but under the rulers of the Han-dynasty who conceived of it as an instrument to consolidate power (or to seize it), and to protect their own interests. If in the *Great Learning*, Confucius advocated a study free of selfish interests ("The way of learning to be great consists in manifesting clear character, loving the people and abiding in the highest good"³⁸), then our present education (coming down from the Han's education) lays great importance on serving the state, loyalty to the ruler, and loving the "nation."³⁹

Chinese history clearly records that with the Han-dynasty, Confucianism was taken to be the sole backbone of education at the expense of other schools of thought, but with a certain purpose: to train bureaucrats. It follows logically that only those who were trained as Confucians could become officials, i.e. could be within the reach of power. It was also evident that education was nothing but a method to protect the ruling monarchy. Hence, there was no doubt about their reason for choosing Confucianism as its ideology: it was not for its humanism, but rather for its dogmatism and authoritarianism as Han Fei-tzu candidly and proudly admitted. Here, we can understand the rulers' preference of orthodox Confucianism over Neo-Confucianism, their insistence more on its legal power and less on moral effectiveness.

The second no less disturbing enigma is that if culture is understood as the common expression of a folk, and if it is their spirit, then why is our culture monopolized by orthodox Confucianism and by the rulers, i.e. the minority who live indifferently to if not secluded from the people? If education is based on such a culture, is it helpful for the ordinary people? The fact that our culture is often identified with certain forms of thought (Confucianism), of

arts (of the nobles, aristocrats, monarchs) or of morals (of Confucianism) shows that it is born in and from the world of the rulers. We may ask how a culture of the minority could represent the spirit of the majority (the ruled, oppressed)?

It is more strange however to note that the ruled, the oppressed, and the abandoned have embraced such a culture without a second thought. They regard it as their soul of which they are proud. Such a culture is now the aroma stimulating the folk, it is, as Marx observed, the preferred, or loved opium of the people.⁴⁰

We would not follow Marx to reject such a culture, but instead pose a more serious question: if it is not from the people, how could it be loved by them? Our question applies also to the problem of education: could any education based on class ideology be taken by other classes for granted? How could Confucianism be taken as the sole ideology without protest or opposition from ordinary people?

It is with this point that we take a distant position from Marx and the critical theoreticians: we are aware of the fact that the ordinary people take Confucian education for granted not because of partisanship, but because of its seductive promise to solve their problems. Therefore, like the rulers, they conceive of education as an effective instrument, but unlike the former (who want to protect their own interests) they want to be within reach of power by means of education. They consider it as the best means for problem-solving. It is desired not for pure knowledge, but precisely for its "power-knowledge."

Since culture is dictated by the rulers, and since education is the only instrument available and within reach of ordinary people, it is taken to be the criteria to measure success, and to solve social problems. It becomes *de facto* a social value which serves as the yardstick of life. At the same time, it plays the role of a necessary condition determining human fate, to free man from poverty, humiliation, and oppression. Education thus deforms itself into a kind of ideology.

The education promoted by orthodox Confucianism has its merits and failures depending on which purposes it takes, on which methods it adopts, and on which kind of ideology it identifies with.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

As we announced at the very beginning of this chapter, our aim is restricted to the problems of understanding the crisis of education. Though this chapter does not point out a guide-line (as

did Habermas), it has shown that the crisis of education could be seen neither from the point of view of method, nor from idealist speculation alone. It proposes to tackle the problem from the perspectives of human relations and human mediating activities taken by critical theory. However, it does not claim that such a way of dealing with the problem is adequate. Indeed, we confess that such an extravagant claim may be as short sighted as the one advocated by the empiricists and idealists, the one attacked by critical theory. Actually, we see the empirical method as well as speculative reasoning helpful and complementary to critical theory. Not consenting to critical theory's radical objection to any form of ideology, we demand a full awareness of the danger of any kind or form of ideology, be it scientism, positivism, Marxism, empiricism, idealism, or rationalism and of its seductive effects like the Sirens that we, even with wax-stopped ears and blindfolded eyes, can hardly resist. Hence while against critical theory, we venture to claim that the problems of present education (crisis) are born in and from (1) the conflict of interests which are symbolized by, and abstracted from, the conflict of ideologies of classes; (2) the conflict between existing values and new emerging values which are expressed in new activities, new needs and new relations; (3) the conflict of newly adopted methods of understanding and solving problems; and (4) the conflict between the ideal and the real or the conflict of understanding problems and solutions. Neither the ideal nor the practical alone can deal effectively with human problems.

Consequently, the main focus of education should be: (1) a thorough understanding of human relations and human activities; (2) a genuine search for possible solutions to the problems arising from the conflict of, in, and from such relations; (3) flexible methods helping the educated to be conscious of human relations, conflicts, and possible solutions, and (4) finally, helping the educated to develop the capacity of discovering and dealing with the emerging problems.

NOTES

¹ Payer Lynn, *Medicine Culture* (Holt, 1988); See also Juergen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*, trans. Th. McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1975), pp. 22-49; John S. Brubacher, *A History of the Problems of Education* (1947); William Boyd, *The History of Western Education* (1954).

² Juergen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*, pp. 1-2.

³ Edmund Husserl, *Ideen 1* (1913), in *Husesrliana*, 3; ed.

Walter Biemel, pp. 33, 56; *Ideen 2* (1952), in *Husserliana*, 4, ed. Karl Schuhmann, p. 245.

⁴ See Tran Van Doan, "Devaluation and Revaluation - The Case of Confucian Values and Its Crisis," in *Modernization and Post-Industrial Society*, vol. 3 ((Seoul: Olympiad Committee, 1989).

⁵ *The Analects*, 1: 2, 8, 14; 2: 11, 13; 4: 5, 24, etc.

⁶ Cf. *The Contemporary Currents in Education*, ed. by Institute of Education (Taipei: National Taiwan Normal University, 1988).

⁷ Cf. Albert Chao, "On Education," in *The Proceedings of Philosophical Foundation for Moral Education* (Taipei: Fugen University Press, 1985), pp. 44-48.

⁸ Max Weber, *Economy and Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), vol. 1, chap. 1.

⁹ See the series on education published by the Institute of Education, National Taiwan Normal University (Taipei: Normal University Press, 1983 ff.); also Yang Shen-keng, *Theory, Hermeneutics and Praxis* (Taipei: Normal University Press, 1988), pp. 5-14.

¹⁰ Tran Van Doan, "Philosophical Education in Taiwan," in *Towards the Education in XXI Century* (Taipei: Tamkang University, 1990).

¹¹ Richard Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press, 1983), p. 32; Mary Hesse, "In Defense on Objectivity," p. 170-1 (cited by Bernstein, op. cit.); See also Karl Popper, "The Logic of the Social Sciences," in *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology* (London, 1977), pp. 90-91; Max Horkheimer, *Kritische Theorie*, II, p. 280; Juergen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), p. 117; Albrecht Wellmer, *Critical Theory of Society* (New York, 1971), pp. 15-30; Peter Winch, *The Idea of a Social Science and Its Relation to Philosophy* (London, 1958).

¹² Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Logisch-Philosophische Abhandlung*, 7. 17.

¹³ *Logisch-Philosophische Abhandlung*, 6.53a.

¹⁴ Karl Popper, "The Logic of the Social Sciences," in *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology*, p. 91.

¹⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1974), part 2.

¹⁶ David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), part 1, 13 ff.

¹⁷ Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolution* (Chicago, 1962), pp. 100-101.

¹⁸ Cf. Rudolf Stammler, *The Historical Materialist Conception of Economy and Law: A Socio-philosophical Investigation* (1906), p. 368, quoted by Max Weber in *Critique of Stammler* (New York, 1977), p. 50.

¹⁹ Max Weber, op. cit., p. 100.

²⁰ Max Weber, *The Interpretation of Social Reality*, trans. J. E. T. Eldridge (New York, 1980), p. 28.

²¹ Alfred Schutz, "The Social World and The Theory of Action," in D. Braybrooke, ed., *Philosophical Problems of the Social Sciences* (1965), p. 60; quoted by Eldridge, op. cit., p. 30.

²² Cf. Jean Piaget, *Child and Reality: Problems of Genetic Psychology* (New York, 1973); Lawrence Kohlberg, *The Psychology of Moral Development* (San Francisco, 1984).

²³ Jean Piaget, *Introduction à l'épistémologie génétique* (Paris, 1950); or *The Child and Reality: Problems of Genetic Psychology*, op. cit.

²⁴ See Tran Van Doan, "A Critical Review of Critical Theory," in Tran Van Doan, *Critical Theory and Society*, NSC Project 1998 (Taipei: National Sciences Council, 1998). To be sure, the Frankfurt School are not the discoverers but innovators of Critical Theory. The medial or relational point has been always a pride-discovery of geometricians. Hegel, Marx, and prior to Hegel, J. J. Rousseau had advocated a similar idea. In the *Emile*, Rousseau was pushing for an education based on learning-by-doing and motivation through interests rather than coercion. Similarly, John Dewey (1859-1952), shortly before the birth of the Frankfurt School, had believed that all fruitful thinking rises from a problem-situation in which man must choose from among a number of alternatives. Cf. John Donohue, "Pedagogy," in *Sacramentum Mundi* (New York: Herder, 1971) vol. II, p. 221.

²⁵ Kant had set an example of critical theory in his third Critique: *Kritik der Urteilkraft* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1968).

²⁶ G. F. W. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, in *Hegels Werke*, eds. Michel and Moldenhauer (Frankfurt, 1970 ff.), vol. 3.

²⁷ Karl Marx, *Die deutsche Ideologie*, MEW, 3 (Berlin 1956 ff.).

²⁸ Karl Marx, *Thesen ueber Feuerbach*, MEW, 3.

²⁹ Max Horkheimer - Theodor Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (1944), Frankfurt, 1969; Jürgen Habermas, *Theory*

of *Communicative Action*, vol. 2, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987), p. 119 ff.; See also Richard Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism*, op. cit., p. 43.

³⁰ Karl Marx, *Manifest der kommunistischen Partei* (1847-8), *MEW* 4, p. 475.

³¹ See for example Habermas' reappraisal of Marxism: *Zur Rekonstruktion des historischen Materialismus* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1976).

³² See Karl Popper's critique of Hegel and Marx in: Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, (1944), (London, 1950), chaps.12 and 13 respectively.

³³ Juergen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests* (1968), Appendix (1971).

³⁴ Marx in a letter to Ruge, in *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society*, ed. L. D. Easton and K. H. Guddat (New York, 1967), p. 212.

³⁵ Max Horkheimer, *Kritische Theorie*, trans. by J. O'Connell, *Selected Essays* (New York, 1972).

³⁶ Cf. Guenther Rohmoser, *Das Elend der kritischen Theorie* (Freiburg, 1970).

³⁷ Juergen Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985), 2 vols.

³⁸ *The Great Learning*, chap. 1.

³⁹ Tong K. M., *Educational Ideas of Confucius* (Youth Books, 1970); also Douglas C. Smith, "The Confucian Legacy in Taiwan Pedagogy" in *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Confucianism and The Modern World* (Taipei, 1987), p. 1401.

⁴⁰ Karl Marx, *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, op. cit.