

Utopia, Destiny and Community: Thoughts on the Challenges of Translating Marxist Terms

Abstract: This presentation is an exercise in what may be called comparative Marxist philosophy (比较马克思主义哲学). It draws on material from a joint project with former colleague at Renmin University of China. We are working on a joint project concerning the Marxist Philosophy of the Reform and Opening Up. The project takes the form of a dialogue between Eastern and Western traditions concerning ten key philosophical terms of the Reform and Opening Up. There are many reasons for the project, among which is the fact that relatively few foreigners are aware of these developments.

The presentation will use a powerpoint (ppt) to discuss three examples, moving from what is more difficult to translate to what is easier.

The first concept concerns a sense of the future that is captured by the word “Utopia.” From its original Greek, the word means “no place” and “good place [*eutopia*].” Crucially, it is a place that human beings have not seen or experienced, in a distant land or in the far-off future. Not only is it the topic of hearsay, rumour and speculation, but it is also a manifestation of the Western tradition’s emphasis on transcendence (超越). This is a concept that deeply shapes Western European culture, philosophy, tradition, society and politics. At this point, the presentation will compare this Western European concept with He Xiu’s (129-82 CE) commentary on the *Gongyangzhuan*. Here, he connects the three categories of 所传闻, 所闻 and 所见, with the three worlds: 衰乱, 升平 and 太平. Although it is not possible to examine every angle of this complex tradition, the purpose here is to suggest that the Western European concept of Utopia must undergo a significant transformation to work in a Chinese context. The fact that the Chinese term for Utopia is a loan word – 乌托邦 – suggests as much, while the term 空想社会主义 is also a good indication.

The second term is 命运, which is often translated into English as “destiny.” My colleague tells me that in the Chinese tradition, “命运” combines the senses of “fate” (命) and “fortune” (运), indicating that human beings can, through concerted focus and effort, shape history. By contrast, a Western European approach – from the ancient Greeks onwards – sees “destiny” as closer to “fate”: we cannot control our destiny, since forces greater than us determine what it will be. On the other hand, the English “future” has a more open sense, especially with a common phrase such as “our future is in our hands.” Human action can change what the future might be. In this light, it seems as though “命运” has a sense between “destiny” and “future.” Thus, sometimes we find the English translation of 人类命运共同体 as “community of common destiny,” while at other times the translation is “community with a shared future for humankind.” These two translations indicate the difficulties of translating this key concept.

The third concept comes from the same saying, 共同体, or 'community'. Initially this term seems easier, especially since – as my colleague tells me – the Chinese term comes from the usage by Marx and Engels. Or rather, that this is the term used to translate some core German terms (*Gemeinschaft*, *Gemeinwesen*, with the *gemein* root). These have the senses of togetherness, fellowship and community, or a community as a polity or political organization. However, the English word "community" derives from Latin, where the original term (*communis*) gives us a range of meanings, such as association, fellowship, partnership, community and indeed communism.

This lecture will offer a few thoughts on the challenges of translating some key (Marxist) terms. Many of us are engaged in translation on a daily basis, so we know that translation happens all the time and yet that translation is full of difficulties. Key words have different semantic fields in each language, with cultural and philosophical histories influencing the way a word is understood. In my conclusion, I will offer a few suggestions concerning translation itself, but my task is not to reflect primarily on different theories of translation.

Instead, I would like to engage in some comparative philosophy, or even comparative Marxist philosophy (if we may use such a term). In particular, I am interested in comparisons between Western European Marxism and Chinese Marxism. What this means will become apparent in my presentation.

But let me first indicate some of the background to those thoughts. More immediately, I draw from a joint project with Professor Zang Fengyu at Renmin University of China. We have called the project 'Marxist Philosophy of the Reform and Opening Up'. Our writing takes the form of a dialogue: while Professor Zang Fengyu explains the Chinese background – in ancient literature and in China's Marxist tradition – I draw upon various features of the Western European tradition in order to discuss how it influences key concepts in Marxism. Often our dialogues deals with the challenges in the translation of terms and concepts – and this is what I will use in my lecture.

Further, as will become clear, I draw on a number of languages, especially Greek, Latin, German and Chinese, apart from English. This is important, since English (and a number of other Germanic and Romance languages in Western Europe) draw upon Greek and Latin in order to construct new terms. I should also say that in the past I have taught ancient Greek, Latin and Hebrew, and currently work with German and French original texts (especially when researching Marx and Engels). At a personal level, my first language was Dutch (since my parents are from Holland) and I also speak some Danish (my wife is from Denmark). Last but not least, the motivation for studying Chinese over the last few years is not primarily for speaking and listening, but for the purpose of being able to read and work with Chinese materials and scholarship.

In what follows, I will discuss three terms: utopia, destiny and community, moving from what is more difficult to what seems to be relatively easier.

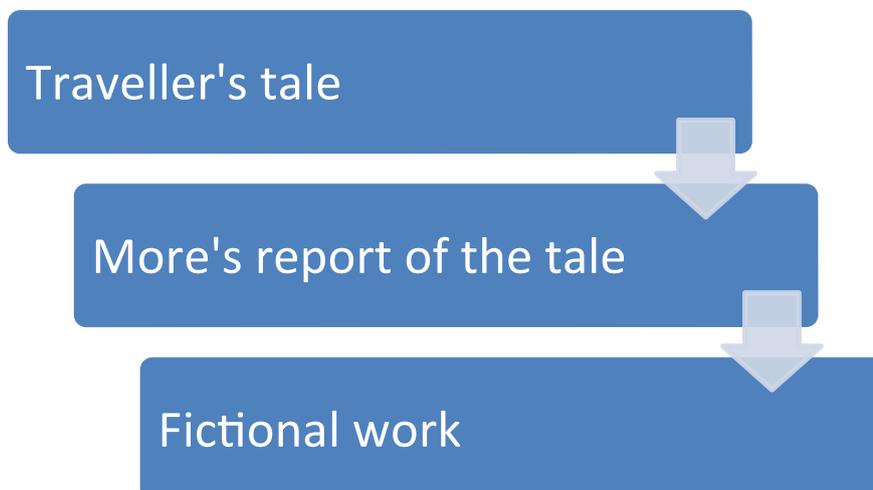
Utopia (乌托邦)

Let us begin with utopia, a term that remains very important in the Western European tradition. We will see why in a moment, but I must admit to being very intrigued by the fact that the Chinese term, 乌托邦, is a loan word. Why is this, one wonders? And why is the translation for 'Utopian socialism' (in the works of Marx and Engels) 空想社会主义 – literally 'empty thinking socialism' and thus 'daydreaming socialism'.

What is the origin of the word 'utopia'? It was invented in 1516 by a British scholar, politician and Christian, Thomas More, for the title of a book: *Utopia*. More drew on ancient Greek: 'ou' means 'not' or 'no'; 'topos' means place. So Utopia is literally a no-place (没有地方). Or as the *Cihai* (辞海) dictionary puts it, either 无处所 or 乌有之乡. At the same time, there is a pun (双关语): when pronounced, Utopia can also sound like Eutopia. In Greek, 'eu' means good. Combined with 'topos', this usage means 'good place'. So Utopia means at one and the same time 'no place' and 'good place'. There are many different interpretations of this combination, but it seems to me that the core sense is that a 'good place' or a 'better place' is precisely not the world in which we live. It is somewhere else, a place we have never visited, seen or experienced, a 'no place'.

Indeed, More's book – *Utopia* – tells a story about an imaginary island, perhaps in the South Atlantic Ocean. It outlines what life is like on the island, with no private property, simple living, highly organised communal life (with food in dining halls), dislike of war – but also slaves and subjection of women to men.

I am less interested here in the content of the story than in two features. The first is that the story is based on unverified hearsay or rumour. This hearsay does not come from More himself, but from another person, a certain Raphael Hythlodæus ('dispenser of nonsense') who had travelled to the island of Utopia. Perhaps a simple diagram is best:



In other words, the fictional work of Utopia is a report of tale told by a traveller. It has multiple layers of rumour or hearsay.

Second, let us return to the pun (双关语): Utopia is also Eutopia, the 'no-place' is also the 'good place'. Of course, the whole tradition of utopian literature, communities and so on tends to focus on this second feature: a 'utopia' is meant to be a better or ideal world than the one in which we live. But it is a world that cannot be seen, experienced or verified. It is a no-place.

This second point raises a central feature: the core concept of transcendence (超越). More strictly, it is the concept of ontological transcendence (本体论的超越), or the transcendence of being. I do not mean here a temporal transcendence (时间的超越), which concerns a better world in the future, or an inner transcendence (内在超越), which arises from within and is perhaps more characteristic of Buddhism and perhaps even Daoism.

By ontological transcendence, I mean the idea that there is a better or ideal world, of which our world is a much lesser place, full of suffering, pain and difficulty. The catch is that the ideal, transcendent world cannot be known by experience or observation. It cannot be visited in any ordinary way. Yet, it influences and shapes the world in which we live. This concept of transcendence is central to the whole Western European tradition, appearing in many forms:

- * Ancient Greek philosophy (Plato's forms)
- * Christian theology, with God and heaven and 外在超越
- * The strange shape of European politics in which some ideal form of the state determines all others.
- * The process of 'secularisation' and claims to 'immanence' in the last few hundred years, which assume this framework.
- * And the very idea of Utopia/Eutopia: a good place is exactly a no place, about which one can hear only by rumour. There is no way to verify it scientifically, no reliable information is available and no records exist.

Can such a term be translated into Chinese? At a simple level, it can of course be translated. But what about the whole Western tradition behind this word and the assumptions that the word contains, especially concerning ontological transcendence?

Since my focus is primarily on the Western European tradition, I will keep these comments on the Chinese context brief (and I am happy to be corrected if I have understood matters fully). I am very intrigued by the 'three worlds [三世]' proposed by He Xiu (129-82 CE) in his commentary on the *Gongyang*. Many Chinese scholars have elaborated on He Xiu's proposals and their place in the longer tradition (from Confucius through Kang Youwei into the present). I do not propose to go into all of the many features

here, except to make one point. In his engagement with the Confucian tradition and the development of three worlds, he makes the following distinction:

1. The world of chaos (衰乱) = rumour (所传闻)
2. The world of rising peace (升平) = what is heard (所闻)
3. The world of great peace (太平) = what is seen (所见)

In a little more detail, what is 'rumoured' becomes the 'decayed and disordered' [衰乱] world, one of chaos in which the heart is 'course and unrefined' [粗犷], the country is broken up into small states and the records virtually non-existent. Rumours abound of skulduggery, assassination, intrigue and inappropriate behaviour in light of established rituals. By contrast, the 'recorded' or reported world has records and it unites all of the Chinese people so that outside are the foreign tribes. This is the time of 'rising peace' [升平]: although not ideal, for it still has leaders and people engaging in less than appropriate behaviour, it is a distinct improvement. The 'seen' world, directly experienced, becomes the greatest peace and tranquillity (太平). Here the world is one, whether distant or nearby, large or small, while the heart (心) or inner being is now deep and thoroughly known (详).

What interests me here is the way the world of chaos is connected with rumour, unreliable words on the wind. It is a world about which one hears nothing reliable and in which no records can be found. Or as one of many Chinese sayings puts it, 三人成虎, three people talking makes a tiger. In the Western tradition, this is precisely how one finds out about 'Utopia/Eutopia'. Since it cannot be seen and verified, one must rely on rumour, unreliable hearsay. But in the Chinese tradition – as far I understand it – a world that one can know only by rumour is a world of chaos and disorder. By contrast, the world of 太平 or indeed 大同 – which one would initially assume to be similar to the Western idea of Utopia – is actually one that is 所见: this world is empirically verifiable.

It seems to me that at this point the Western and Chinese traditions are poles apart, with very different understandings of what counts as a desirable and even ideal world. For the Western tradition, one can know only about Utopia through rumour; for the Chinese tradition, one can know about 太平世 through verifiable examination.

For these reasons, it seems that Chinese had to create new terms for Utopia when the idea entered China. Thus, the book by Thomas More is called 乌托邦, while the later work by William Morris, *News From Nowhere*, is translated as 乌有乡信息. As for 'Utopia' other translations may be possible, such as 无处所 or 乌有之乡, which we find in the *Cihai* dictionary. But do these terms make sense in the context of the Chinese tradition? Perhaps the translation for 'Utopian socialism' in the work of Marx and Engels is an indication: 空想社会主义.

Destiny (命运)

The second term I would like to discuss is destiny, 命运. As you all know, it appears in a phrase promoted by Xi Jinping as a new model for international relations: 人类命运共同体. I am told by my colleague that 命运 in the Chinese tradition connects two senses in a tension but also relationship with one another.

As my colleague says, there is a saying in the *Books of Songs*: “周虽旧邦，其命维新 (zhou sui jiu bang, qi ming weixin).” It expresses the need or mission of even an ancient country to innovate. Of course, individuals are also very concerned about fate. It is said in *Zuozhuan*, that is, *Zuo's Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals*: “The people are born in the heavens and the earth, which is called destiny.” People care whether they can achieve their intended goals and grasp the course of their own lots. We often say that the introduction of Marxism into China has changed the historical destiny of China. Here I think the reference is to the way Marxism enables the Chinese people to grasp historical laws, change the past and create through practice a new future.

我的同事说：《诗经》有云：“周虽旧邦，其命维新。”讲的是古老国家的使命在于创新。当然，个体也很关心命运，《左传》中有一句话：“民受天地之中以生，所谓命也。”人们关心自己能否如愿以偿地达到预定目标，把握自己命运的航向。我们常说，马克思主义传入中国，改变了中华民族的历史命运。我想这里更多的是指马克思主义使中国人把握历史规律，在实践中改变过去、创造未来。

Further: the ancients often classified some of the dilemmas we face as the “will of the gods”, that is, there is a greater force that controls our lives. In the Song Dynasty, there was a prime minister named Lu Mengzheng, who wrote a famous Ode on Fate. He said that everything in life is “time, fate and fortune,” “this is the cycle of heaven and earth; it also recurs.” In traditional Chinese culture, there is a difference between fate and fortune: fate is deterministic, and fortune can be transformed. Confucius’s student Zi Xia also said: “Life and death are determined by fate, rank and the riches decreed by Heaven.” Fatalism is very common in ancient Chinese classics and folk culture.

Of course, the Chinese also believe that “human will triumphs over nature” and “human effort can achieve anything,” that we can strive to master the laws of nature and grasp our own destiny. For example, Mencius said that “whether life is long or short does not change one’s attitude, but through self-cultivation one waits for whatever issue, which is the way to establish destiny.”

古人经常将一些困境归为所谓的天意，就是你所认为有一个更伟大的力量控制这一切。宋朝有个宰相叫吕蒙正，写过一篇很有名的《命运赋》，说人生的一切都是“时也运也命也”，“此乃天地循环，周而复始之也。”在中国传统文化中，命和运有一定的区别：命是确定性的，运是可以转化的。孔子的弟子子夏也说过：“死生有命，富贵在天。”宿命论在中国古代典籍和民间文化中很常见。

当然，中国人也相信“人定胜天”“事在人为”，努力掌握自然的运行规律，把握自己的命运。例如，孟子就说过，“夭寿不贰，修身以俟之，所以立命也。”

The Western tradition is a little different. It is also important to understand what “destiny” means in a Western European context. Originally, the Latin word “destinare,” a verb, meant to fix or establish, and thus determine for a particular purpose or end. In this basic sense, it is relatively neutral, meaning that it could be positive or negative.

However, it was often connected with the noun “fatum.” This was a decree by the gods that determined one’s destiny or “fate.” In a little more detail, the ancient Greeks had three goddesses of fate, which were the daughters of the god Chronos (time) and Ananke (necessity). The Romans borrowed the idea for their own beliefs, so the sense of how the three goddesses (who they called “Fata”) worked is largely the same: they determine the length of one’s life and how much suffering one will endure. The basic notion was that we do not have control over our lives, for there is a greater force that controls it. This is often the sense that “destiny” and “fate” continue to have in Western contexts.

西方欧洲的传统是不一样。理解“destiny”在西欧语境中的意义也很重要。最初，“destinare”这个拉丁文是一个动词，意思是修复或建立，由此确定一个特殊的目的或终点。在这个基本的意义上，它是相对中性的，意味着它既可能是积极的，也可能是消极的。

然而，它也与“fatum”这个名词有关。这是众神决定一个人的命运（“destiny”或“fate”）的法令。更详细一点说，古希腊有三个命运女神，分别是（时间）神柯罗诺斯和（必然）神阿南刻的女儿。罗马人在他们的信仰中借用了这个观念，所以，三位女神（他们称之为“Fata”）的工作方式大致是相同的：他们决定人们生命长度以及人们将忍受怎样的痛苦。这里基本的观念是我们无法控制我们的生活，因为有一个更伟大的力量控制它。这通常是“destiny”和“fate”在西欧语境中一直以来的意思。

In other words, a Western approach sees “destiny” as closer to “fate”: we cannot control our destiny, since forces greater than us determine what it will be. On the other hand, the English “future” has a more open sense, especially with a common phrase such as “our future is in our hands.” Human action can change what the future might be. In this light, it seems as though “命运” has sense between “destiny” and “future.” Thus, sometimes we find the English translation as “community of common destiny,” while at other times the translation is “community with a shared future for humankind.” These two translations indicate the difficulties of translating this key concept. But it seems to me that it is important to keep these two senses present when discussing the term – between “fate” (命) and “fortune” (运), or between “destiny” and “our future is in our hands.”

就是说，西方人看待“命运”的思路可能更接近“fate”：我们无法控制自己的“destiny”，因为有比我们更强大的力量决定它将会怎样。另一方面，英文“未来”一词具有更开放的意义，尤其是作为常用词汇表现为诸如“我们的

未来掌握在我们手中”。人类行为可以改变未来的发展方向。从这个角度看，“命运”似乎具有“destiny”和“future”之间有意义。因此，这两个术语的翻译不同。但在我看来，在讨论这个术语时保持当前这两个意义——在“命”和“运”，或者在“destiny”和“我们的未来掌握在我们手中”之间是很重要的。

We also need to address the subsequent development of European concepts. The earlier concepts of destiny constitute only one part of this history. Another phase was the long Christian period. Europe was eventually Christianised, although it took 1,000 years for this to happen, especially in the north. On the one hand, many traditional European cultures had a sense of fate, controlled by various gods; on the other hand, some of the older Greek and Roman ideas carried through into Christianity in a complex way, especially when we keep in mind that Christian theology developed at the intersection with ancient Greek philosophy. In this light, a core problem for theology developed: is social and individual life determined by God or do human beings have some effect on their lives and future? This was the long – and still running – debate over determinism and free will. At times one side was emphasised, leading to what is called “predestination” in which God determines human lives completely, and at times the other side was emphasised in which human beings play a significant role in shaping their lives. Ideally, the tension operates in a version of theological dialectics, with determinism leading to free will, and the desire for human beings to play an active role in the pre-determined history of the world, in which they can play an active role in their own salvation. But it is a difficult dialectic to maintain.

我们还需要解决欧洲概念的后续发展问题。早期的“命运”概念只是这段历史的一部分。另一个阶段是漫长的基督教时期。欧洲后来是基督教化的，尽管这要经过 1000 年才能实现，尤其是在北方。一方面，在很多欧洲传统文化中都有关于命运由诸神控制的看法；另一方面，尤其是当我们想起基督教神学是在古希腊哲学的交叉点发展的时候，会发现有些较古老的希腊和罗马思想以复杂的方式进入基督教。有鉴于此，神学的一个核心问题是：个人的社会生活是由上帝决定的，还是人类对此有些影响？这是一场关于决定论和自由意志的漫长而且仍在继续的争论。有时人们强调这一方面，认为上帝完全决定人的生命，导致所谓的“宿命论”，有时强调另一方面，认为人类在塑造他们的生活中发挥重要作用。在理想的情况下，这个张力是在一种神学辩证法中发挥作用的，决定论导致自由意志，以及人类希望在预先确定的世界历史中发挥作用，当然其中还有他们自己的救赎。但维持这种辩证关系是困难的。

Greek, Roman and Christian ideas shaped European civilization. But we also have a profound challenge to this history, especially with the onset of modernity. Many were the challenges to the former dominance of Christian thought and culture. One type was what became liberalism, embodied above all in the first bourgeois revolution in France in 1789. Another was more radical – what soon became communism. As we know, Marx and Engels developed the most thorough philosophical and scientific basis for communism.

And they did so through a comprehensive challenge to theological frameworks for understanding history. For example, in *The German Ideology* Marx and Engels developed the first outline of what became a historical materialist approach. We find this especially in the long criticism of Max Stirner. On the one hand, they criticize Stirner for still being influenced by the Christian framework of history. On the other hand, they develop a new model that is based on contradiction at many levels. Eventually, this would become the primary contradiction between forces and relations of production.

希腊、罗马和基督教的观念塑造了欧洲文明。但是，尤其是随着现代性的冲击，这段历史也面临我们的深刻挑战。很多思想都构成对基督教思想和文化曾占据的主导地位的挑战。其中一种是自由主义，最初体现在 1789 年法国第一次资产阶级革命中。另一个更激进——很快就变成了共产主义。众所周知，马克思和恩格斯为共产主义确立了最彻底的哲学和科学基础。他们为了理解历史，对神学框架进行了彻底的挑战。例如，在《德意志意识形态》中，马克思和恩格斯提出了作为历史唯物主义方法的最初的大纲。我们尤其能在他们对麦克斯·施蒂纳的长篇批评中发现这一点。一方面，他们批判施蒂纳，因为施蒂纳仍然**认为历史**受到基督教框架的影响。另一方面，他们提出了基于多层次矛盾的新模型。最后，这成为生产力和生产关系之间的主要矛盾。

At the same time, there is human action. Perhaps we should speak of historical conditions, which need to be studied scientifically, and human action, which can change the historical conditions. Or, as Marx put it in a famous sentence from “The Eighteenth Brumaire” (1852), “Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past.” It follows that we can shape history in our own way, so that it becomes a history transmitted to future generations. Lenin would take this insight further, especially after studying Hegel (again) in 1914-1915, which led him to rediscover the Marxist dialectic and propose – in his “Letters from Afar” and “The April Theses” – that revolutionary intervention in the situation was needed to change the situation itself.

同时，我们有人们的行动。也许我们应该谈谈对历史条件的科学研究，人们的行动可以改变历史条件。或者，正如马克思在《雾月十八日》（1852）中说过的一句名言，“人们自己创造自己的历史，但是他们并不是随心所欲地创造，并不是在他们自己选定的条件下创造，而是在直接碰到的、既定的、从过去承继下来的条件下创造。”因此，我们可以用自己的方式塑造历史，使之成为传承给后代的历史。列宁将这个见解向前推进一步，尤其是在他 1914—1915 年（再次）研究黑格尔之后，这使他重新发现了马克思主义辩证法，并在他的《远方来信》和《四月提纲》中提出，对时局进行革命的干预，对改变局势而言是必要的。

It seems that we have arrived at some clarification of the sense in which Xi Jinping is using “命运.” On the one hand, it derives from Chinese tradition, with the sense of a

distinct and even determined path of society and human existence, as well as the sense of human action that can actively influence this path. On the other hand, it has a distinct Marxist sense: historical conditions, or the laws of history, unfold and must be understood scientifically; at the same time, concerted and well-directed human action creatively shapes the nature and direction of this history.

我们似乎已经明确了习近平使用的“命运”一词的意义。一方面，它源于中国传统，具有对社会和人的存在的独特甚至确定的道路的理解，以及对人类的行为能积极影响这条道路的理解。另一方面，它具有鲜明的马克思主义意蕴，历史条件或历史规律在这里展开，而且必须得到科学的理解；与此同时，协调一致的有针对性的人类行为创造性地塑造了历史的本质和方向。

Community (共同体)

Let us now turn to the final term “共同体 (*gongtongti*).” My colleague tells me that “共同体” is not a concept that derives from the Chinese tradition. This modern Chinese term first appears in the Chinese translation of the classic works of Marx and Engels. In particular, it appears in texts such as *The Paris Manuscripts*, *The German Ideology*, and the *Economic Manuscripts of 1857-1858*. They distinguished between the “real community” and the “false community,” criticized the fetish character of the capitalist “exchange community,” and pointed out that the future ideal society should be the “the union of free people.”

现在让我们回到最后这个概念“共同体”。我的同事告诉我：“共同体”不是中国传统固有的概念，这个现代汉语词汇最早应该来自于马克思恩格斯经典著作的中文翻译。你知道，马克思在《巴黎手稿》《德意志意识形态》《1857-1858年经济学手稿》等文本中用过这个概念。他们分辨了“真实的共同体”和“虚假的共同体”，批判了“货币共同体”的拜物教本质，指出未来理想社会是“自由人的联合体”。

Let us do some research on translation, especially of the German terms which are translated as “共同体 (*gongtongti*),” “共同性 (*gongtongxing*)” and so on. For example in the “Theses on Feuerbach” and in *The German Ideology* we find: *Gemeinschaft* (共同体 - *gongtongti*), with the senses of togetherness, fellowship and community; *Gemeinwesen* (共同体 - *gongtongti*), which has a stronger sense of a community as a polity or political organization; *Allgemeinheit* (共同性 - *gongtongxing*), which means commonality, universality and community. It is worth noting that sometimes *Gemeinschaft* is translated as 集体 (*jiti*).

There is a broad and narrow understanding of Marx’s concept of “community.” In a broad sense, these concepts can be understood as family similarities. Therefore, when “*Gemeinschaft*” is sometimes translated into “集体 (*jiti*)” the expression is similar.

让我们做一些翻译研究，尤其是德文术语的翻译，它们被译成“共同体”“共同性”等。例如，在《关于费尔巴哈的提纲》和《德意志意识形态》

中，我们发现，Gemeinschaft（共同体），具有和睦、团契和社群的意思；Gemeinwesen（共同体），作为一个政体或政治组织，它具有更强的社群的意思；Allgemeinheit（共同性），意味着共性、普遍性和社群。值得注意的是，Gemeinschaft 有时被译为集体。

对马克思“共同体”概念的理解有广狭之别，在广义上，对这些概念是可以做家族相似性理解的。所以，当“Gemeinschaft”有时被译为“集体”的时候，表达的也是相似的意思。

As for the adjective (also an adverb) *gemeinsam*, the Chinese translation usually has “共同 (*gongtong*).” The German word means common, together, collectively. As is the way with German, the “*gemein*” root has many variations and word combination, such as *gemeinschaftlich*, which is also translated as “共同 (*gongtong*),” but the basic sense is what is in common. For Marx and Engels, this commonality does not appear as a given concept, but arises as human beings work together in mutual interdependence - *gegenseitige (Abhängigkeit)* in German, which is translated as “相互依存关系 (*xianghu yicun guanxi*).” Obviously, for Marx and Engels it is a very good term to develop in light of “communism,” but it overlaps with the sense of human commonality, or “人类共同体 (*renlei gongtongti*).”

However, the community in question is not always a beneficial one for human beings. Marx and Engels distinguish between the false or “illusory community [*illusorische Gemeinschaft*]” and the “real community [*wirklichen Gemeinschaft*]” for which a communist movement strives. Although, at this point in the translation, the Chinese offers “虚幻的集体 (*xuhuan de jiti*)” and “真实的集体 (*zhenshi de jiti*)”!

至于作为形容词（也是副词）的 *gemeinsam*，中文通常翻译为“共同”。这个德文词的意思是共同、一起、统一。与德文一样，“*gemein*”这个词根有很多变化和合成词，例如，*gemeinschaftlich* 也被译为“共同”，但基本意思是相同的。对马克思和恩格斯来说，这种共同性不是作为一个既定概念出现的，而是随着人类在相互依赖中共同合作而产生的——*gegenseitige* 在德文中被译为“相互依存关系”（*Abhängigkeit*）。显然，对马克思和恩格斯来说，这是从“共产主义”演化而来的一个非常好的术语，但它与 *human commonality* 或“人类共同体”的意思是重叠的。

然而，问题是共同体并不总是对人类有益的。马克思和恩格斯区分了虚假的或“虚幻的共同体”（*illusorische Gemeinschaft*）和共产主义运动所追求的“真正的共同体”（*wirklichen Gemeinschaft*）。尽管这两个词在中文中被译为“虚幻的集体”和“真实的集体”！

Finally, “共同 (*gongtong*)” translates as “common” and “shared.” In English the word “common” derives from Latin “*communis*.” The “*commun*” root in Latin gives us a whole range of meanings, including association, fellowship, partnership and community.

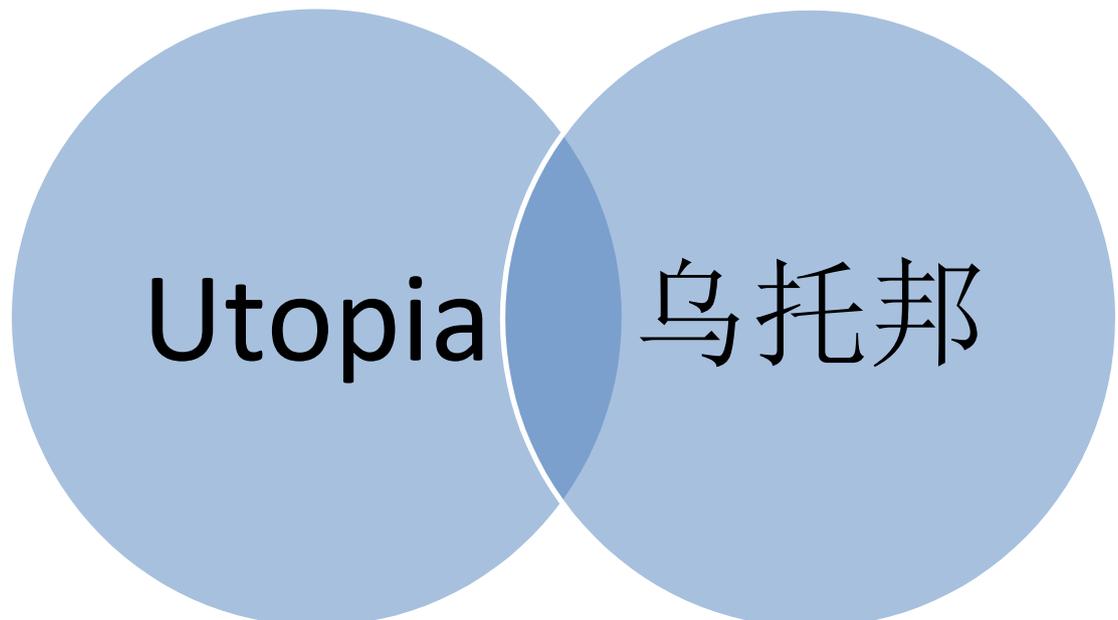
It is also the basis of the word “communism.” Already we can see a slightly different association of the words, since “communism” in Chinese is “共产主义 (*gongchanzhuyi*).”

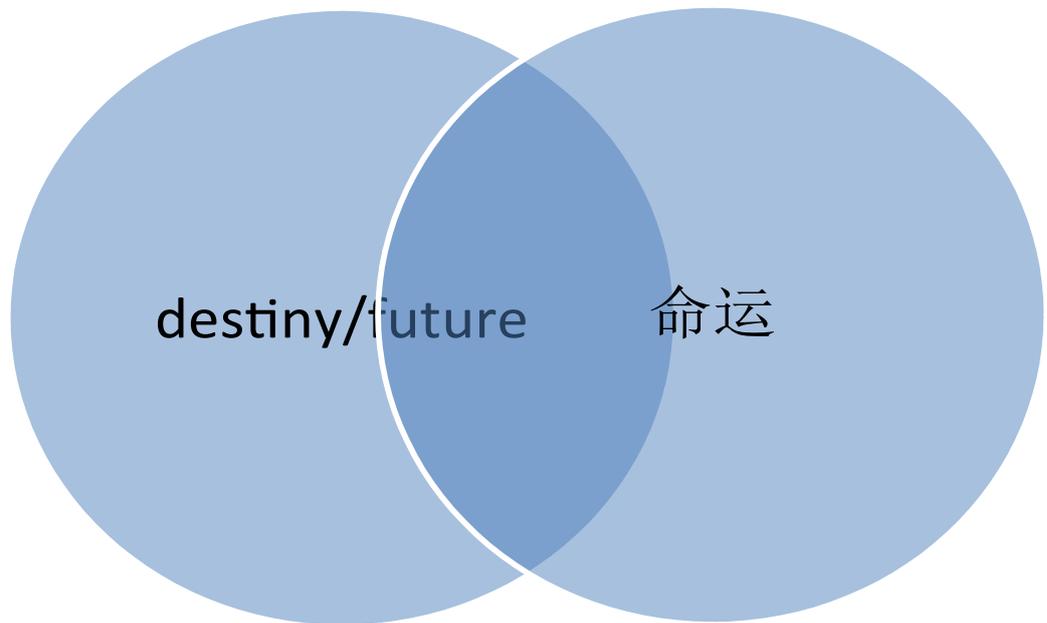
最后，我们如何翻译这个术语以及它的中文来源是什么？“共同”翻译为“common”和“shared”。在英语中，“共同”一词源于拉丁文“communis”。拉丁文词根“commun”为我们提供了一系列含义，包括协会、团契、伙伴关系和社群。它也是“共产主义”这个词的基础。我们可以看到一些词汇略有不同的联系，正如“communism”在中文中是“共产主义”。

Conclusion

I have offered a few thoughts on three terms in translation. These terms are important in the Marxist tradition: utopia, destiny and community. Concerning utopia, we found a significant contrast between Western European and Chinese traditions. As for destiny, the Chinese tradition is more subtle, since 命运 includes both fate and human action, while the Western tradition has a sharper distinction between ‘fate’ (which human beings cannot control) and ‘future’ (the future is in our hands). When we came to community (共同体), we found that the term was developed in the translation of works by Marx and Engels. Yet, even here the origins in Latin – with ‘communis’ – show connection between community and communism.

What does this mean for the continuous acts of translation? On the one hand, we do it every day; on the other hand, it is a process that has many difficulties. Semantic fields overlap, but they are not the same. To illustrate:





In the first, there is relatively little overlap, due to the different emphases of the Western European and Chinese tradition. In the second – destiny/future and 命运 – there is more overlap, but only if we keep in mind a dual sense in English between destiny and future (in our hands). In the third – community and 共同体 – there is substantial overlap and a small difference: in English community is closely connected with the

'common' and thus communism, while in Chinese the two terms (共同体 and 共产主义) are related but a little different. Does this process of translation limit our understanding or open up new perspectives? For me, it opens up many new perspectives.