

# CHAPTER 1

## Science, Scientism and Humanism

In the Introduction, we noted that in official circles, there have emerged three intellectual-political trends: 1) historical materialism as represented by Hu Qiaomu; 2) technological determinism as first put forward by Su Shaozhi; 3) Marxist humanism as advocated by Wang Ruoshui. From unofficial circles, there have emerged three intellectual-political trends also: 1) the March Towards the Future group as represented by Jin Guantao; 2) the Culture: China and the World group of Gan Yang; 3) the Chinese Academy of Culture group as represented by Li Zehou.

If we rearrange the order of these six groups, not from the perspective of official versus unofficial, but from the point of view of science, we will find that three of them have by and large adopted a scientific approach: historical materialism; technological determinism; and March Towards the Future group. The other three groups have, however, adopted a humanistic approach: Marxist humanism, the Culture: China and the World group, and the Chinese Academy of Culture group. Interestingly, these six groups could be put in pairs: 1) Marxist scientism (historical materialism) versus Marxist humanism; 2) a Chinese style scientism (technological determinism) versus a Chinese style humanism (modified Confucianism); 3) mainstream Western scientism (empiricism/positivism) versus mainstream Western humanism (critical humanism).

In this chapter, the following questions will be discussed: What is science? What is scientism? Why are there three versions of Chinese scientism in the post-Mao era? What is humanism? Why are there three versions of humanism during the period? What is the relationship between the three versions of scientism and the three versions of humanism? Finally, we discuss briefly the role played by Chinese establishment intellectuals in China's political-intellectual arena to answer the question: To what extent do these intellectuals under study represent the Chinese political consciousness during the period?

This chapter is relatively dense and Western oriented. This is because, unless the deeper philosophical issues were clarified, the current issues could not be understood. Since all of the intellectuals under study have drawn strength from the Western philosophical tradition, we need to trace the roots of their ideas. Only when the Western origins are fully comprehended, can the distinct Chinese characteristics be demonstrated.

### **What Is Science?**

It is widely agreed that modern science was born in the Scientific Revolution in Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Modern science is usually characterized by the following four principles and, until very recently, there was the agreement in what this revolution represented: 1) the empirical principle, which stresses the need for observation, hypothesis, experimentation and the return to observation; 2) the quantitative principle, which stresses the necessity to achieve exactitude in measurement, 3) the mechanical principle which stresses the need for formulating general laws or equations which describe and explain behavior; 4) the principle of progress through science.<sup>1</sup> At the turn of this century, these "scientific methods" were introduced into social sciences. As a result, metaphysics that was concerned with the relationship between matter and ideas and ethics were disqualified as part of human knowledge, because they could not be proved right or wrong by the above mentioned scientific principles.

This conventional understanding of science has been under attack in the last half century. Since the 1960s, these attacks have become more systematic. In fact, there has been a consensus among intellectual communities in the last two decades that there is no consensus concerning the meaning of science.<sup>2</sup> In the words of Chinese scholar Liu Qingfeng, "If people in the times of Newton and Galileo were able to tell with confidence what science was, nowadays, no real scientist can say this."<sup>3</sup>

In order to show why we have long misunderstood science, Thomas Kuhn (1922– ) says that people who talk about science are not empirical and historical. There have been two tendencies in the history of science. First, Eurocentric Whig popularizers and ideologists saw science as the overcoming of superstition, magic, metaphysics and bad philosophy. Secondly, there were practicing scientists who did not look at how science actually was practiced or developed. They depended upon writing recipe books for students. Kuhn criticizes tendencies in the history of science which equate science with “rationality,” or with the idea that scientific progress is a smooth road marked by attention to method.<sup>4</sup>

To the methodological transformations of the classical sciences, the contributions of Baconism as presented in the above-mentioned four scientific principles were very small, because it did not produce new theories in previously established sciences. Aristotle, for instance, stressed both deduction and the need for close observation.<sup>5</sup> Kuhn points out the insufficiency of methodological directives, by themselves, to dictate a unique substantive conclusion to many sorts of scientific questions. For instance, instructed to examine electrical or chemical phenomena, the man who is ignorant of these fields, but who knows what it is to be scientific, may legitimately reach any one of a number of incompatible conclusions. The more they study, say Aristotelian dynamics, phlogistic chemistry, or caloric thermodynamics, the more certain they feel that those once current views of nature were, as a whole, neither less scientific nor more the product of human idiosyncrasy than those current today.<sup>6</sup>

This skepticism towards the conventional understanding of science has been reinforced by scientific advances in recent centuries. For instance, the second law of thermodynamics does not conform to the “four scientific principles” in the sense that it cannot be falsified.<sup>7</sup> Yet, nobody doubts the scientific character of the second law of thermodynamics. Photons cannot be observed by positivistic means, yet nobody doubts their existence and the certain peculiar characteristics that their movements possess.<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, the allegation that pre-modern pseudo science was dominated by deduction of Aristotle and real science was born during the Scientific Revolution that stresses experiments is a myth. However, Baconism has exerted immense impact upon people’s understanding of the world, regardless of the different interpretations about it. It made new fields, often those with roots in the prior crafts, available for scientific scrutiny (for example, magnetism, chemistry, electricity and the study of heat).<sup>9</sup> Although it is a mistake to believe that Bacon invented modern science which is characterized by experiments, especially the method of induction, he did contribute substantially to popular misunderstanding.

With the overwhelming doubt towards science in the Baconian sense and the awareness that the development of modern science was a long historical process involving complex social, political and economic factors, there have recently emerged three sorts of attitudes towards science. The first attitude is taken by those who, although aware of recent criticism and usually unwilling to endorse Baconian science on an abstract level, may still largely rely on positivistic methods in concrete studies. There is, accordingly, continuous appeal to operational definitions, to the search for quantitative relations, testing, hypothesis, reliability, validity, falsification and claims that real science is not metaphysical, and not influenced by extra-scientific concerns and interests.

A second adopts what I should call a historicist or a critical realist position. Much in line with Kuhn's critique of the conventional understanding of modern science, this group of people refuse to totally rely on empirical evidence or to endorse any grand generalizations and abstractions in the study of science. A historicist holds that "[K]nowledge, mind and meaning are part of the same world that they have to do with, and they are to be studied in the same empirical spirit that animates natural sciences."<sup>10</sup> But a historicist is not scientific in the sense that he or she thinks that science can solve all problems. In addition, there will always be politics exactly because even given all the possible knowledge (an unlikely outcome) people would still need to resolve differences.

Historicists reject the four principles—at least as they are usually understood—and define positivism as holding that a scientific explanation must thoroughly eschew appeal to what is in principle beyond experience. Thus, although for historicists, science is empirical, this cannot be understood narrowly. Historicists, unlike positivists, insist that the conceptual (theoretical) and the empirical are intertwined. Moreover, for the historicist, "theoretical terms may have a non-observable reference" and a "valid scientific explanation can appeal to the in-principle non-observable."<sup>11</sup> Experimentation is, of course, desirable, but for the historicists, one can have genuine science where experimentation is impossible. Second, historicists reject the quantitative principle arguing that quantification and the use of mathematics is neither a sufficient nor, sometimes, a necessary condition for science. Third, in contrast to positivists, historicists hold that explanation does not proceed by assumption under general principles or equations which describe and explain behavior. For historicists, since outcomes are products of causal complexity, explanation more generally takes the form of a narrative, as in historical explanation. Finally, historicists are not committed to the idea there is scientific progress or that science can guarantee progress.

The third attitude towards science disagrees with both historicists and those who endorse positivism in specific studies without admitting it in a general sense. Various versions of post-modernism have adopted this attitude. It agrees with Kuhn in renouncing positivism as a legitimate means to approach truth. As a main methodological approach, post-modernists stress the need to identify the ideological implications through analyzing texts. Among the three groups, post-modernism is the least optimistic about human understanding of the world, or even about humans themselves.<sup>12</sup>

As a matter of the pursuit of knowledge, all the three approaches are useful. In a sense, they complement each other. Although positivism does not equal science, its methods, such as surveys and experiments are useful if adopted properly. Without these methods, there would be no modern science. The historicist approach is the most encompassing in terms of methodology. Its weak point is that it does not guide human research as a method. Therefore, researchers who adopt this approach may look only for the things they want to look at, because of human limitations. For one thing cited in the study, ten thousand may have been left out. Post-modernism is useful to warn us about any too optimistic assumptions of human knowledge and human power.

Therefore, this study does not define science. It is fine to accept the four principles as science, as most positivists may want to do, as long as we acknowledge the fact: 1) this science cannot solve all the problems in nature; 2) this science cannot solve most of the problems in human society. It is also fine to call these four principles positivistic principles which do not equal science, as most historicists and post-modernists may want to do, as long as we share the assumption that the science in the minds of these historicists and post-modernists is different from that in the minds of positivists in the sense that this science is the only way that leads us to truth.

As a methodological approach, this study has adopted an eclectic approach. It has drawn strength from historicism. In Chapter Two when discussing the economic origins of the new thinking, survey data is used and interpreted critically. In Chapter Nine when discussing the relations between the new thinking, which can also be called elite political culture, and the mass political culture, the results of surveys done recently by such political scientists as Andrew Nathan and Tianjian Shi have been used. The approach adopted by some of these people is by and large within the mainstream positivistic tradition.

Nevertheless, it is not possible to rely totally on positivistic methods. For instance, James R. Townsend divides Chinese political culture during the Maoist era into the elite political culture and the mass political culture.

Elite political culture is further divided into a Maoist political culture oriented toward continuing the revolutionary struggle and a bureaucratic political culture oriented more toward political stability and economic construction.<sup>13</sup> Apparently, the current study, if using Townsend's language, deals with China's political socialization from a special perspective: how scientism and humanism as parts of the Chinese elite political culture interact with the mass political culture during the post-Mao period.<sup>14</sup>

In fact, between the two methodological approaches of the configurative and the positivistic in the China field, as defined by Andrew Nathan and Ying-shih Yu, the majority of researchers have adopted the former. Perhaps aware of the possibility that this situation may have been caused by the closure of the Chinese society in the past, thus vigorous testing and scientific survey were not possible, Nathan advocated recently a more positivistic approach because it is now easier to do this kind of research.<sup>15</sup> However, vigorous testing may not be able to solve our problems in the study of China's elite political culture.

The post-modernist methodology may not be able to solve all our problems either. If the pessimistic implication of post-modernism were accepted, no intellectual pursuit would be meaningful. Nevertheless, its method of unmasking ideological implications through analyzing texts as Jacques Derrida (1930– ) did is precisely the main method that this study has adopted. This is so in spite of the fact that the current study is more conscious in relating the texts to current social reality. In addition, by having the warning of post-modernism, this study realizes its limitations and accepts the real possibility that it may not offer the only, or even the best, answer to the questions raised.

This study assumes that although the thinkers' ideas come from reality, once these ideas are formed, they have lives of their own. That is to say, although these thinkers live in the same society and share the same civilization, they have responded in quite different ways, because as individuals they have different socioeconomic, political and psychological backgrounds. Therefore, some have adopted "scientific" approaches, others have found humanistic approaches more attractive. However, that does not mean that there are no patterns for the formation of their ideas. Above all, the people have responded to their theories also with certain tendencies, which can also be analyzed systematically and empirically.

The issues involved have also been dealt with from the perspectives of social structure and functions that the New Thinking has played. On the level of structural analysis, the New Thinking has been discussed in the light of the interactions between different aspects of society, mainly the historical, political, economic and social. On the level of functional analysis, New Thinking has been dealt with according to the role that the



Chinese establishment intellectuals have played in general and how the New Thinking which implies different ideologies has helped remold Chinese political culture. I return to the patterns and formation of their ideas when discussing the theoretical assumptions of this study.

### **What Is Scientism?**

Scientism is often viewed as a matter of putting too high a value on science in comparison with other branches of learning or culture. It implies 1) science is unified; 2) there are no limits to science; 3) science has been enormously successful at prediction, explanation, and control; 4) the methods of science confer objectivity on scientific results; and 5) science has been beneficial for human beings.<sup>16</sup>

It is also identified as a form of idolatry, which could also be termed scientolatry. Science is worshipped as omniscient, omnipotent, and the bearer of man's salvation. This scientolatry claims that it can solve all problems scientifically and even examine questions of spirit, values and freedom.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, nowadays, scientism is always pejorative. It is always taken to mean an exaggeration, or over-optimism regarding science. That is, most people, at least in the West, approve of science, but there is considerable skepticism that science can cure everything.

However, people's interpretations about scientism are quite different, a situation that has significant intellectual and political connotations. In brief, Western scholars tend to regard scientism as an exaggeration of Baconian science, or empirical scientism, while the interpretations about scientism offered by some Chinese scholars such as D. W. Y. Kwok are broader. It not only includes empirical scientism but also a materialistic scientism.<sup>18</sup> A generic scientism, technological determinism, has also been found in contemporary Chinese thought by this study.

We have been unable to find "materialistic scientism" in Tom Sorell's classification of scientism. According to Sorell two kinds of scientism have existed: one intends to replace humanities; the other intends to replace philosophy. The first form of scientism is conveyed by Bacon's classification of learning: poetry and history are second-class subjects with limited scope; natural science is both incomparably more inclusive and, in principle, incomparably more valuable. This scientism is called scientific empiricism. It is a negation of metaphysics and an attempt to assimilate humanities into natural science.<sup>19</sup> The other version of scientism in Western philosophy, in addition to scientific empiricism, is a kind of naturalism that tries to assimilate philosophy into natural science.<sup>20</sup>

Similarly, no materialistic scientism has been identified in Hohn Wellmuth's classification. Wellmuth identifies three characteristics of scientism which also replace humanities and philosophy with natural science. 1) The fields of the various sciences, including such borderline or overlapping sciences as mathematical physics, biochemistry, physiochemistry and mathematical logic, are taken to be coextensive, at least in principle, with the entire field of available knowledge. 2) The scientific method, as exemplified in the above mentioned science, is the only reliable method of widening and deepening our knowledge and of making that knowledge more accurate. 3) The third characteristic of scientism is either that philosophy should be made scientific by conforming to the methods and ideals of some particular science, or that the function of philosophy is to correlate and if possible unify the findings of the other sciences by means of generalizing on a basis of these findings, after having rid itself of outworn metaphysical notions. This third characteristic is actually what Sorell describes as "naturalism," which intends to replace philosophy with science.<sup>20</sup>

How do we comprehend both Sorell's and Wellmuth's exclusion of materialistic scientism that includes the Marxist scientism of historical/dialectical materialisms under study in this book? We certainly realize the complexity in which Chinese intellectuals responded to Western science. Therefore, it is unrealistic to find exact Chinese parallels of categories concerning science and scientism in the West. However, it is worthwhile to inquire why Kwok has identified materialistic scientism but Sorell and Wellmuth have not. The fact that materialistic scientism occurred in China during the first half of the century does not seem to be accidental, or aberrational. Similar intellectual trends seem to have emerged during the post-Mao era, both in the name of science.

It seems the main reason is that in the West twentieth century scientism has been by and large various versions of positivism. Materialistic scientism is still in the discourse of metaphysics in the sense that it one-sidedly emphasizes matter to the neglect of ideas.<sup>22</sup> Metaphysics answers the question: What is reality? The central problem involved is the relationship between matter and ideas. Therefore, one-sided emphasis on matter is not only materialistic, but also metaphysical. Although orthodox Marxism which includes historical/dialectical materialisms claims that it departs from metaphysics in the sense that it is "dialectical,"<sup>23</sup> they are similar in the sense that both have the issue of matter and ideas at the center of discussions. Since metaphysics was excluded from Western social sciences at the turn of this century, this materialism stopped being regarded as having anything to do with science. Therefore, there has been no materialistic scientism in the Western academic discussions.



Such is not the case for China. First of all, although China has its own science tradition, modern science is by and large an imported matter. Consequently, China has consistently been one step behind the West in absorbing modern science. Baconian science has never occupied the center of China's intellectual arena as in the West. In addition, the relative strong voice of orthodox Marxism throughout China's modern history is decisive in keeping materialistic scientism alive. Therefore, materialistic scientism was not only one of the main versions of scientism during the first half of the twentieth century, it is still part of Chinese enlightenment today.

Given our better understanding about science in the last few decades, the legitimacy of materialistic scientism as a category in discussions of scientism may have to be considered in this new light. Ontological concerns have a legitimacy in discussions of science and scientism, although we may not go as far as to advocate the restoration of metaphysics as the main paradigm in academic discussions as some scholars have done recently.<sup>24</sup>

The linkage between materialistic scientism and metaphysics has to be noted, because conceptual confusions may arise without the clarification. For instance, although Kwok regards the 1923 debate on science as between "science" and "metaphysics" (*ke xuan zhizheng*),<sup>25</sup> as most people do, he also regards "materialistic scientism" as based on a "materialistic metaphysic."<sup>26</sup> Therefore, the *xuan xue gui*, or metaphysicians as he calls them, may include not only those who were against science, but also some of those who were for science, the materialistic scientists such as Chen Duxiu and Wu Zihui. Another difficulty with Kwok's classification is that while his empirical scientism is an exaggeration of his four scientific principles, his materialistic scientism has no necessary relations with these principles.

It is also important to clarify the relations between empirical scientism and materialistic scientism, because they carry not only different intellectual connotations but also different political implications. Empirical scientism or, scientific empiricism, is largely modelled on the experimental tradition in Western physical science. By stressing method, Baconian science, which sometimes becomes empirical scientism, does not concern itself very much with ontological questions. It does not care whether the ultimate reality is material or spiritual, or something else. Therefore, scholars functioning in this category may be naturalists such as John Dewey (1859–1952) and Hu Shi (1891–1962), or agnostics such as Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) and Thomas H. Huxley (1825–1895). In fact, most of twentieth century empirical scientisms are all positivisms. They bifurcate facts and values. They hold that value judgments, like claims about God,

the soul, etc. are not cognitive. They are neither true nor false. They are merely expressions of emotion or feeling, etc.

The political connection between empirical scientism and liberalism can be identified. Two reasons may account for this situation: 1) The point of departure of empirical scientism is not monistic as is materialistic scientism. It does not care whether the ultimate reality is material or spiritual. Consequently, it is more flexible. This view, accordingly, seems democratic and pluralistic. 2) While Marxist scientism is assumptively deductive, empirical scientism is more cautious by relying on rigorous testing. Induction is more important for empirical scientism. Historically, those Chinese intellectuals who believed in empirical scientism have proved to be more likely to be liberals.<sup>27</sup> Not surprisingly, the majority of Western mainstream social scientists are also liberals, partly because the research methods they adopt are more often than not in the Baconian science tradition.

Marxist philosophy, or historical materialism and dialectical materialism, is not in the Baconian experimental tradition. By saying Marxist philosophy, I am not referring to the various unreductionist interpretations of Marx by Western Marxist scholars,<sup>28</sup> but orthodox Marxism as interpreted by Friedrich Engels (1820–1895) and the Russian Marxists. Specifically, it has two origins in Western philosophy: 1) dialectics in methodology which emphasizes the changing nature of the world and the concept of contradiction; 2) the materialistic tradition in ontology which claims that the ultimate origin of the world lies in the objective world rather than the spiritual world of human beings. This species of Marxism believes that all events were manifestations of the fundamental nature of matter, and that there was one fundamental science which could explain all of these manifestations by means of its grasp of the nature of the material world. This science, however, was not physics, but was the dialectical interpretations of nature and man.<sup>29</sup>

In terms of political implications, all Marxists are socialists. Is there an intellectual link between Marxist science tradition and socialism? There is. First of all, materialism is monistic. That fits state socialism. Materialistic scientism lacks the pluralism and fallibility which is embodied in empirical scientism.<sup>30</sup> Second, some theories in materialistic scientism such as historical materialism and dialectical materialism do not have to be proved. The demise of capitalism and the success of communism are largely deduced from the monistic materialistic assumptions. Third, dialectics stresses contradiction, which can provide intellectual support for the political concept of class struggle.

The fact that discussions about scientism may have to be considered in the light of socioeconomic and political situation is supported by the fact that those intellectual figures from whom scientism is said to have originated may have explicitly disproved scientism. Sorell points out that “the idea that science might save us—might be a panacea—is not easy to find in seventeenth-century writers and it is not in Bacon”; nor is it found in Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) or Rene Descartes (1596–1650). Neither Bacon, Hobbes or Descartes believed that science is the only source of learning.<sup>31</sup> Clearly, the emergence of scientism cannot simply be viewed as a distortion of intellectual pursuit, but has to be considered in the light of socioeconomic and political conditions.

The Chinese-style scientism of technological determinism is largely generic. Compared with empirical scientism and Marxist scientism, it is more political than intellectual. It is actually a distortion of orthodox Marxism plus some modifications of the indigenous Chinese science tradition. It borrows from Marxist scientism crucial notions such as objective law and the idea that productive forces are the most important in the development of human society. It differs from Marxism in that it downplays the role of relations of production. Su Shaozhi’s concept of primary-stage socialism, which was later developed into a kind of technological determinism, or a Chinese style scientism, was accepted by Zhao Ziyang as one of the theoretical basis for the current regime’s reform policies.<sup>32</sup>

Chinese science tradition is closely connected with the development of Chinese society, which was highly centralized with one man at the top. China’s scientific development was characterized by: 1) politicization (*zhengzhihua*), 2) technologization (*jishuhua*);<sup>33</sup> 3) downplay of comprehensive theories. Politicization refers to the fact that science was influenced very much by politics. This is most clearly demonstrated in astrology, because the movement and formation of stars explain the mandate of the Emperor. Throughout China’s feudal history, the development of astrology was not a process during which humans’ understanding of this particular science progressed gradually. Rather, its development was a zigzag path; two steps forward, one step backward. New discoveries in astrology were subject to the ruler’s political interests.

Technologization of ancient development of Chinese science refers to the fact that those aspects of technology that were useful for the maintenance of the political system were very advanced. China’s four big scientific discoveries—paper, the compass, typographic printing, and gunpowder—are examples in point. All these discoveries were closely connected with the central government’s desire to control the vast land. None of these discoveries was closely linked with the people’s daily life.

A third characteristic of China's scientific tradition is that it does not view the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, but for solving problems "of this life, in this world."<sup>34</sup>

It is not the intention of this study to set a strict definition for scientism. The main difference I have regarding defining scientism as compared with other scholars concerned is that all the three dimensions of philosophy, ontological, methodological and epistemological, have to be considered. Even Kwok's "four principles" are not a pure method, as some scholars insisted.<sup>35</sup> They are at least as much epistemological as methodological. For practical purpose, an operational definition for scientism that is scientism in its widest possible sense is offered. It could be viewed as the belief that: 1) the objective world has to be understood by way of science, defined in whatever way; 2) science, in whatever sense, can enable us to know fully the world and solve all the problems.

Based on this definition, three species of scientism have emerged during the post-Mao China: 1) Marxist scientism as exemplified by Hu Qiaomu's historical/dialectical materialism. This is actually a continuation of Chen Duxiu's Marxist philosophy in the early part of this century. 2) Empirical scientism exemplified by the systems theory of Jin Guantao. This version of scientism can be viewed as a continuation of Hu Shi's empirical scientism during the Republic period. 3) A Chinese style scientism of technological determinism as represented by Su Shaozhi.

### **What Is Humanism?**

Like the emergence of modern science, humanism originally was also part of the Enlightenment tradition, when all the thinking of the time was designed to make man free. Although all thought of the Enlightenment was concerned with the problem of liberty, different people looked at the problem from different perspectives. Some were more scientific, as were discussed previously, others were more humanistic.

For François-Marie About De Voltaire (1694–1778), liberty meant freedom from the church and from intolerance, freedom of the mind, freedom from misconception and ignorance, the most insidious of all forms of enslavement.<sup>36</sup> For Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), the precursor of many nineteenth-century romantics who swam against the tide of the rationalism of the French eighteenth-century philosophers (the Encyclopedists), the role of sentiments and emotions were important.

Above all, humanism is closely connected with Kant. It was Kant who explicitly introduced the anthropological question, "what is man?", into

philosophy. As a result, the post-Kantian tradition was condemned to what may have thought to be an unfortunate anthropologism. The critique of humanism was thus often directed against Kant, and against the ideals of the Enlightenment that he built into our understanding of what philosophy is.<sup>37</sup>

As general intellectual trends, it has been found that, going side by side with empirical scientism, there has been a what I call critical humanism. This critical humanism covers all of those who have adopted a humanistic approach in philosophy but who are largely not part of the Marxist enterprise, for analytical convenience. One important figure of this group is Michel Foucault (1926–1984), who is known for his post-structuralism. Although Foucault once believed that modern philosophy should be based on the ideas of Marx, Freud and Nietzsche, it is now generally believed that his theory is more profoundly influenced by Nietzsche. This has ensured him an anti-rationalist position. Habermas may be considered another important figure of this group. Habermas is the most important figure of the second generation of the Frankfurt School. Although the Frankfurt School, known for its social critique theory, was profoundly influenced by Marx, Habermas openly renounced Marxism. He believed that criticism of science should replace criticism of society.<sup>38</sup>

Similarly, Marxist scientism has its counterpart too: Marxist humanism. Although Marxism surely encompasses both the scientific and humanistic aspects, people read Marx differently. Orthodox Marxist philosophy, that is, historical materialism and dialectical materialism, developed through the interpretations of the Second International and Russian Marxists, is Marxist scientism. As many malpractices in the former Soviet Union were discovered in the first half of this century, various Marxist groups in Europe began to develop their own theories which sometimes have a humanistic flavor. This is what was later called Neo-Marxism.

Largely developed since the late 1940s, Neo-Marxism encompasses a broad spectrum of theories and departs from orthodox Marxism, which was rooted in the Second International. The main departure of Neo-Marxism on a philosophical level from orthodox Marxism is a more flexible stand regarding base/superstructure relations and recognition of many ideas in the writings of the young Marx. The political implications of this flexible approach primarily lay with the different answers to the notion of whether the worldwide collapse of capitalism and the realization of communism were inevitable. Key figures here include George Lukacs (1885–1971), Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937), the Frankfurt School,<sup>39</sup> Louis Althusser (1918–1990), the Praxis Group in Yugoslavia and a wide range of so-called Western Marxists. Among the various schools of thought of Neo-Marxism, humanism has consistently been a hot topic of discussion. But sometimes

Neo-Marxism is defined in a broader sense. It includes not only Western Marxism, but also the "dissent" theories that emerged from the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries after the Twentieth National Party Congress of the Soviet Union, in which Nikita Khrushchev (1894–1971) criticized Joseph Stalin (1879–1953).<sup>40</sup>

Marxist humanism, however, has much to do with *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. The complete texts were not published until 1932. The publication of this book was viewed by Western Marxists as an extremely important text, because they not only became disillusioned with the Russian experience but also were frustrated by the failure of Second International Marxism to explain the European situation. *The Manuscripts*, together with the *German Ideology*, published in 1888, and *Grundrisse (Foundation of the Critique of Political Economy)*, which was written as early as 1857, but was not published until 1939, made a different understanding of Marx possible. These texts soon became tools for the Western Marxists to fight not only Second International Marxism, which later became orthodoxy under Stalin, but also to interpret capitalism in a different way. It was with these texts that humanism and alienation became the new paradigms of the Western Marxists, to replace the old slogans of revolution, class struggle, and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Confucianism, with its many modern modifications, is the indigenous Chinese humanism. It may be viewed as the counterpart of the Chinese style scientism, the technological determinism that focuses on developing productive forces. In line with the current regime's endorsement of technological determinism, Li Ruihuan, the ideology tsar of the party after the 1989 Tiananmen incident promoted Chinese traditional culture. Confucianism is noted for its ethic-purism and for relying on sense perception for an understanding of the world. By way of demonstration, Liang Shuming's rationality asserts that not only humans, but nature, including mountains and rivers, has a life of its own too. Just like the case with Su Shaozhi whose technological determinism has provided one of the theoretical basis for the reform policies of the current regime, Li Zehou's modified version of Confucianist humanism has been regarded as forming another part of the philosophical basis for the current regime's reform policies.<sup>41</sup>

### Theoretical Assumptions

The six intellectual-political trends introduced in this study form a model: Latitudinally, there is the dichotomy of scientism and humanism; longitudinally, there is collectivism (Marxist scientism versus Marxist humanism),



the middle of the road (a Chinese-style scientism versus a Chinese-style humanism) and liberalism (the mainstream Western scientism versus the mainstream Western humanism). This model raises the following three questions; 1) Why do the various versions of scientism necessarily have corresponding versions of humanism? 2) How are the political implications embodied in these intellectual trends? 3) How do we locate the Chinese New Thinking vis-a-vis the transformation of Chinese society? These questions can be answered based on three theoretical assumptions.

The first theoretical assumption is that philosophical starting points usually fall into a dichotomy: the scientific (often, scientistic) and the humanistic. The scientific refers to the principles embodied in science in general, not exclusively to natural science. Consequently, the so-called "two cultures" of this book are different from that defined by C. P. Snow who mainly comments on the "cultures" of natural scientists and philosophers.<sup>42</sup> This dichotomy, or sometimes tension, has been consistently perceived by people throughout human history.

In times of ancient Greece, there was Plato (427?–347 B.C.) who advocated a "non-scientific" approach by relying on the cultivation of the proper behavior of philosopher-kings.<sup>43</sup> Correspondingly, there was also Aristotle (384–322 B.C.) who was said to be the Father of Political Science, because he advocated law instead of calling for the goodness of human nature.<sup>44</sup> In modern times, there was John Locke (1632–1704) who tried to introduce the principles of hard science into social science.<sup>45</sup> Correspondingly, there was Jean-Jacques Rousseau who gave inspiration to the romantics by emphasizing sentiments and emotions.<sup>46</sup>

The tension between being scientific and humanistic has been found within individuals too. For Max Weber, he perceives a fundamental tension between the "instrumental rationality" which is "scientific," and "value rationality" which is "humanistic."<sup>47</sup> Of course, we are all familiar with a scientific Marx and a humanistic Marx. Both those who see Marx in these different perspectives have succeeded in finding textual support from Marx's works. Similarly, Kant has not only been regarded as one of the most influential figures in the Western humanistic tradition as was mentioned previously, his ideas have also been regarded as one of the main sources of modern positivism.<sup>48</sup>

The case of Chinese intellectual Wang Guowei at the beginning of this century is even more dramatic. Recent studies on Wang have gone as far as to suggest that this intellectual tension may have been at least partly responsible for Wang's committing suicide. Wang suffered because he felt that those kinds of things that can be loved cannot be believed (humanistic), while those kinds of things that can be believed cannot be loved (scientific) (*keai buke xin; kexin buke ai*).<sup>49</sup>

It seems that a humanistic approach always emerges because the so called scientific approach is unable to answer questions of the universe. But this may be true in the other way around, when one takes a humanistic stand, he or she is likely to be one-sidedly humanistic, just like the case that when one takes a scientific stand, he or she is likely to run into the trap of scientism. Those who endorse both approaches are likely to feel the tension.

The second theoretical assumption of this study is simple; politics is always embodied in theories and different theories carry different politics. From the political perspective, analysis of the elite political cultures in a transitional society could always be conducted in terms of some kind of collectivism (often socialism), middle of the road, and liberalism. Following the advice of Weber, theories are always value-laden.

The third theoretical assumption is that societies can be divided into three forms: traditional; charismatic; rational. This is largely based on Weber's notions of society.<sup>50</sup> Apparently, the Chinese dynasties belong to the category of the traditional, where authority is based on rules handed down from the past and personal status and authority rest with an individual or chief who has been chosen on a traditional basis. The Maoist period may be identified as charismatic because authority depended mainly upon success by the leader in coping with the crisis that toppled the traditional order. Chinese elite political culture during the post-Mao period can be viewed as moving towards a rational society where authority rests with rationality. This rationality, or the instrumental aspect of rationality, is characterized by a secularization or separation of religious and governmental practices, which involves a proliferation of administrative regulatory functions, the introduction of impersonal discipline and rules of procedure, and an expansion of economic activity and taxation to finance the emerging bureaucracy. The intellectual trends discussed in this study can be viewed as part of this process.

Nevertheless, if the current study has offered a model, it is a heuristic one, to say the most. First of all, none of the six intellectual trends is the sufficient condition for the existence of the others. Any sophisticated thinker—all of the six intellectuals under study are sophisticated—is always aware of the one-sidedness of taking just a scientific or a humanistic position. Therefore, all of them endorse both a scientific and a humanistic approach. Second, politics, as reflected in the theories, be it state socialism, middle of the road, or liberalism, is not clear cut. For instance, although Wang Ruoshui is put in the category of socialism because he still claims to be a communist, his platform for reform is closer to the Western liberals. Third, the three forms of society, be it traditional, charismatic, or rational, cannot be divided in any rigid way.

### **Carriers of New Thinking: The Establishment Intellectuals**

This part of the study analyzes the political-intellectual roles played by contemporary Chinese establishment intellectuals during the post-Mao era, because they are the carriers of the New Thinking. This may help us to evaluate to what extent they represent the political mentality of the average Chinese. We will find that regardless of the intellectual orientations of their scholarship, these intellectuals are indeed the voice of society on various levels. The selection of the six intellectuals as a sample will be justified in the separate chapters which deal specifically with them.

We first explain the phrase "establishment intellectuals." If it were a century ago, the word "establishment" would have been redundant. In China at that time and for roughly the previous 2,000 years since the Han dynasty when the civil service exam was gradually institutionalized, intellectuals by and large belonged to the establishment, the imperial family. Most of the scholars who had passed exams were recruited into the government bureaucracy. By contrast, it would be unusual to link establishment and intellectuals in this general sense in the Western tradition. Ideally Western intellectuals who dwell largely in civil society may not directly serve the establishment and in actuality they seldom do. With the collapse of China's last dynasty in 1911 and the subsequent creation of two authoritarian states, the Republic of China (ROC) and the People's Republic of China (PRC), Chinese intellectuals were to be divided into establishment, those who directly served rulers of one kind or another, and non-establishment scholars who did not, or only indirectly did so.

A dual role played by these intellectual leaders in serving both the ruler and the society is the best starting point for analyzing the role played by establishment intellectuals and consequently we can draw some insights as to what extent the new awareness represents the mentality of both intellectuals in general and the people. The tension of satisfying both the ruler and the people is the distinguishing characteristic of the behavior of these intellectuals.

This discussion may be useful in that these intellectual leaders have played crucial roles in China's intellectual and political arenas during the reform period, yet Western scholarship which has sought to evaluate their roles has been conflicted. Peter Moody did not explicitly make the distinction between establishment and non-establishment intellectuals, although he talked about the relationship between intellectuals when analyzing the relationship between the ruler and intellectuals.<sup>51</sup> Although she does not adopt the term "establishment intellectuals" consistently, Merle Goldman draws this distinction and says that these intellectual leaders probably numbered only "in the hundreds."<sup>52</sup>

For those who employed this distinction, there has been no consensus as to the basis on which the distinction should be made. According to Goldman, "what distinguished this tiny minority from the majority of China's intellectuals was a sense of responsibility to address issues of political policy in a public forum."<sup>53</sup> This evaluation was connected with the intellectuals' attitudes, which have historical origins not only in ancient China but also in the May Fourth Movement tradition. It has not been clearly demonstrated whether Goldman's sense of responsibility was the only distinction between the establishment and non-establishment intellectuals, or one of many.

The situation may be more complex. During the Hundred Flowers Movement in 1957 many intellectuals, not exclusively the hundreds or so intellectual leaders, rose up to criticize the imperfections of the party in response to the official call. Whether or not because of this same realization, Edward Shils believes that historical traditions may not be as important as the social functions these intellectual leaders perform and that these social functions should serve as the basis on which such a distinction should be made. In contrast to non-establishment intellectuals, the intellectual leaders would then be defined as those who serve and operate within the governing institutions and "are primarily engaged in intellectual activities that define the 'ultimate' or the ideal". . . "and have 'affirmed, accepted and served the ruling authorities.'" <sup>54</sup>

On the relationship between intellectuals and the rulers, Goldman, Hamrin and Cheek hold that it has been more of a "vertical patron-client" pattern. Hamrin and Cheek offer a chart which shows there is a gradation of political involvement for intellectuals from the center to the periphery.<sup>55</sup> They have done so to negate the viewpoint held by Moody who has claimed that the relationship was more of a dichotomy of interests, a result of the fact that the Chinese society was divided into the ruled and the ruler.<sup>56</sup> However, although the patron-client analysis may be more plausible in describing the party-intellectuals relationship than the dichotomy analogy, especially considering the changes brought about by Deng's reform, it may not be able to explain the situation in which establishment intellectuals seem to always go beyond the boundaries set by their party patrons.

Although the analyses offered by these authors bring some light to the question of modern Chinese intellectuals, they are inconsistent, not only with each other, but at times internally so. For instance, David Kelly endorses the patron-client analysis when analyzing the roles played by Wang Ruoshui, but at the same time maintains that Wang's writings "exceeded any 'contractual obligations' to a faction."<sup>57</sup> This break of contractual obligations which seems to be habitual for Chinese establish-

ment intellectuals is not characteristic of patron-client relationships. In addition, those who insist that the relationship between the ruler and the intellectuals was basically a patron-client one have not based this distinction on exactly the same ground. Some have based it on tradition, others on social function.<sup>58</sup>

The intriguing nature of the roles these intellectuals have played has led other Sinologists to leave the question open as to why intellectuals have behaved the way they have. For instance, after a brilliant analysis of Fang Lizhi's intellectual-political career, James H. Williams admits at the end of his article that what was "most important" and "least easily explained" was why Fang had dissented at all, given the high social status and reasonably good living standard Fang had enjoyed within the system.<sup>59</sup> Commenting on Yan Jiaqi, David Bachman and Dali L. Yang say that "the role and activities of insiders as reformers (establishment intellectuals) are doubly difficult to determine."<sup>60</sup> We will make a more rigorous exploration of these issues.

As will be demonstrated when we analyze the careers of the six intellectuals, they seem to have demonstrated the following characteristics: 1) They have all performed very different social-political functions when compared with regular intellectuals. Therefore, a distinction based on social-political functions is necessary. 2) They have all shared common interests with the ruler at one time or another, thus refuting the dichotomy analogy. 3) No evidence has shown that any of them has been in a typical patron-client relationship with the ruler, although all may have been close to a member of the ruling body at one time or another. All have dissented in one way or another, at one time or another. Thus the patron-client analogy is at least not sufficient. 4) All seem to have dissented for reasons of personal interest and intellectual conviction. The aspect of Chinese tradition that has had a more profound impact on them seems to be the general tendency for intellectuals to get more involved in politics than some less central concerns. Why is this?

China's centralized dynastic society was sustained by an organic tripartite whole of common ideology and state theory, that is, Confucianism, the system of prefectures and counties established in Qin (221-107 BC) (*junxianzhi*), and a landlord economy. Confucian scholars, by filling the major posts in the bureaucracy, played the crucial role of gluing these three parts together. Because of this situation, even education served mainly the purpose of training these scholars. For instance, the great majority of academies that flourished in the nineteenth century only taught the texts necessary for success in the civil exams. Because of this lack of any institutionalized mechanism for sustaining intellectual autonomy, those who sought it usually faced political estrangement.<sup>61</sup> Remonstrance was

the only way for efficient dissent. Qu Yuan, the scholar-official of Chu during the Spring and Autumn Period (770–476 BC) who killed himself in order to protest against the corruption of the king and the wickedness of his colleagues, and Zhuge Liang, the devoted Prime Minister of Shu during the Three Kingdoms Period (220–280 AD) who served the monarch, no matter whether the monarch was wise or stupid, had been models for Chinese intellectuals for over two thousand years. In fact, some Western scholars have pointed out that “classical Chinese has no word for ‘intellectual.’” The Chinese “literati,” “scholar” and “gentry” have very different connotations compared with that carried by “intellectual” in the Western context.<sup>62</sup>

The several decades of domestic chaos following the collapse of the Qing Dynasty in 1911 had a two-fold impact on Chinese intellectuals. On the one hand, it destroyed the structural basis for the Confucian style service to the state by scholars. In the early twentieth century, relative intellectual autonomy replaced remonstrance and new scholarship (*xinxue*) which was largely modelled after the Western educational system, replaced old style academies. On the other hand, however, the Confucian scholars’ tradition of getting involved with real world politics was reinforced, instead of declining. This was because national salvation called for the political involvement of Chinese intellectuals.

For example, Lu Xun, China’s most prominent literary figure at that time, originally planned to become a medical doctor, because of his father’s early death and because many Chinese people were suffering from poor health. He then began writing political stories because he realized that no matter how healthy the Chinese were, they could not save themselves without political and national emancipation. Both Chen Duxiu, the first communist theorist, and Hu Shi, the most important liberal theoretician in China prior to the founding of the PRC, were determined originally not to get involved with real world politics, but to devote themselves to raising the political consciousness of the Chinese people. This is because they believed that an emancipation of consciousness should take priority over political action. However, Chen soon found himself the first Secretary General of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and Hu the Kuomintang Ambassador to the United States, and were thus unable to resist the temptation to become politically involved.

Chinese intellectuals’ active participation in politics during the period in which the CCP and the Kuomintang competed for national power produced unintended results. In other words, the majority of leading intellectuals functioned structurally in two military organizations. This process was called by Yingshi Yu part of the marginalization of Chinese intellectuals. Drawing upon historical experience, Yu argues that during