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The Critiques of Liberalism in Korea and the New Liberalism

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I. Introduction

Studies on liberalism in Korea have increased in number since the 1990s. This implies that in the process of the consolidation and advance of democracy, there have been a series of achievements from democracy as an institution that has led to an increase in studies on the values and essence of liberalism (Moon 74). However, nothing can ensure that studies on liberalism in Korea have no flaw because these studies seem to treat many aspects of liberalism as uniform, thereby reducing the wide spectrum of liberalism. Liberalism is not a philosophy of single uniformity, but it has multi-dimensional features with its alterations, additions, and removals. Thus, it could be advisable to define liberalism as a plurality of liberalisms (Ryan 360). Scholars like Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Robert Nozick, John Rawls, Thomas Hill Green, and Leonard Trelawny Hobhouse are permitted to be described as liberal thinkers, but the values and philosophy they share are not easy to reveal. The critiques on liberalism need to develop in various levels as well, in case liberalism has various features and it has multi-dimensional existences such as plurality.¹ And, progressive liberalism, which has comments on neo-liberalism and is cited as alternative values, needs to have many aspects in terms of its ideological basis. However, it must be acknowledged that studies on liberalism in Korea are simplistic and lack reflexive considerations.

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1. “Are we dealing with liberalism or with liberalisms? It is easy to list famous liberals; it is harder to say what they have in common. John Locke, Adam Smith, Montesquieu, Thomas Jefferson, John Stuart Mill, Lord Acton, T. H. Green, John Dewey, and contemporaries such as Isaiah Berlin and John Rawls are certainly liberals but they do not agree about the boundaries of toleration, the legitimacy of the welfare state, and the virtues of democracy, to take three rather central political issues. They do not even agree on the nature of the liberty they think liberals ought to seek” (Ryan 360).

The purpose of this paper is to specify many problems from the studies and critiques on liberalism in Korea and to illustrate the New Liberalism of the late Victorian Age in England, which serves as an alternative to progressive liberalism aiming to overcome neo-liberalism. Although the New Liberalism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century is a neglect strand of the liberal tradition, it is a valuable resource. Political thinkers such as Green, Barnard Bosanquet, and Hobhouse go beyond the established dichotomy between the state and individuals, communitarianism and liberalism, by emphasizing community as well as rights and liberty. New liberals embraced strong rights as enabling power which guaranteed all citizens the opportunity to flourish and thereby contribute to the common good (Simhony and Weinstein 5). The first task in this paper is to elaborate how critiques on liberalism in Korea have developed in detail.

II. Critiques of Liberalism in Korea

The critiques of liberalism in Korea largely consist of criticism from two different standpoints. Some progressive scholars in Korea think democracy subsumed under liberalism means that liberalism should be discarded or rejected, based on the following standpoints of two kinds:

1. Liberalism is a political ideology for the haves in a modern sense, as an ideology for bourgeoisie with property.
2. As bad consequences from neo-liberalism prove, liberalism is advised to form a third way due to its inherent perils.

Those who have critical views on liberalism make their approaches to it based on the two kinds of framework above. And those who consider liberalism a dominant ideology for a bourgeois class accept it as a kind of ideological device fully accomplishing class dictatorship by the bourgeoisie, in terms of a specific paradigm, historical materialism. Thus, they take a risk of reducing civil society in liberalism to a bourgeois society representing material interests, which means they see everything endorsed by liberalism as a means for the dominant bourgeois ideology by describing civil society as an exclusive place of class domination, where bourgeoisie exerts its monopolistic power (Yoon 207).² The following

2. To be sure, there have been studies concerned specifically with this problem, which looks

arguments starkly indicate how some progressive scholars in Korea approach liberalism:

Liberal democracy is a political ideology which is embodied by the combination of two political ideologies—liberalism and democracy—at a particular phase of development, despite differences from both ideologies in terms of their orientations and historical roots.

Liberalism initially represents anti-feudal and liberation ideology for bourgeois by which those who establish economic wealth on their own as emerging bourgeois class liberate themselves from feudal restraints, and it signifies world-organizing principles for emerging bourgeois class whose psychological readiness was embodied by enlightenment and whose political completion was embodied by bourgeois civil revolution. [...] Bourgeois class representing an ideology of social progress amid its anti-feudal struggle had endorsed nothing but a political order of liberal republic for the sake of the haves in the course of a series of revolutions, and the class had not pursued beyond that kind of republic.

자유민주주의는 그 지향하는 내용과 역사적 뿌리에서 서로 구분되는 ‘자유주의’와 ‘민주주의’라는 두 개의 정치이념이 자본주의사회의 특정 발전단계에서 결합함으로써 성립된 정치이념이다. 그리고 정치체제로서의 자유민주주의는 가장 일반적으로는 다른 계급들에 대한 부르주아계급의 정치적 지배를 ‘민주적 방식’으로 관철하는 정치형태로 규정될 수 있다.

‘자유주의’는 원래 자기 자신의 힘으로 경제적 부를 쌓은 신흥 부르주아계급이 그들을 봉건적 속박으로부터 해방하는 과정에서 대변한 ‘반봉건 부르주아 해방이념’으로서 ‘계몽’에 의해 정신적으로 준비되고 ‘부르주아 시민혁명’에 의해 정치적으로 완성된 신흥 부르주아계급의 세계편성 원리다. [...] 반봉건투쟁 속에서 사회적 진보의 이념을 대변한 부르주아계급이 그러나 혁명을 통해 수립하려고 한 정치질서란 유산자들의 자유공화국이었지, 그 이상의 것이 아니었다. (S. K. Kim 321–23)

The reason why progressive scholars in Korea accept liberalism as a bourgeois ideology has its validity in some aspect. Indeed, it is a solid fact that liberalism has placed its emphasis on the individual and individualistic possession. In

at liberalism from a narrow point of view. Kim Bi-Hwan is a representative scholar who presents a variety of views on liberalism. Refer to Kim Bi-Hwan's *Jayujisangjuujadeul*.

the early classical liberalism such as Locke's theory, nothing could be more important than rights of individuals and the enhancement of freedom. As for Locke, protection of the rights of individuals is identical with purposes of community, and the rights have absoluteness (Devine). As Crawford Brough Macpherson argues, the philosophy of Hobbes is defined as possessive individualism.³ Thus, no one is allowed to argue that it is wrong for progressive scholars to give an analysis where "freedom" in classical liberalism is interpreted as "freedom of profit-pursuing" (S. K. Kim 322) from individuals under an order of "market economy" that is based on private property. However, it is not obviously feasible to establish equations such as "liberalism = dominant ideology for bourgeois" or "liberalism = capitalistic ideology of profit-pursuing." And the scholars' arguments in which liberalism must be rejected or discarded due to its traits as the bourgeois ideology have difficulty ensuring their validity. That is because "Liberalism" described by some scholars is nothing but Marx-interpreted liberalism, and the classical liberalism they deal with has a wider spectrum.

Moreover, some progressive scholars tend to understand both liberalism and democracy in a conflicting relationship. A description where liberalism and democracy are historical opposites is based on a premise indicating that liberalism is not compatible with democracy in terms of common good:

The victory of bourgeois liberalism actually was a victory besieged by the proletariat class. As a consequence, antithesis of liberalism proposed by proletariat class was democracy, which represented a series of struggles arguing that extended political rights for human beings in general be universally acknowledged. That's because democracy as a historical substitute of liberalism was embodied by how expansion of democracy restricts bourgeois possession.

부르주아 자유주의의 승리는 현실적으로 무산자계급에 의해 포위된 승리였다. 그리고 무산자계급에 의해 제시된 자유주의의 반명제는 민주주의, 즉 인간 일반으로 확대된 정치적 권리를 보편적으로 인정할 것을 주장하는 투쟁으로 나타났다. 민주주의가 자유주의의 역사적 대리물이라는 의미는 이처럼 민주주의의 확장이 부르주아의 소유권을 제한하는 방식으로 나타났기 때문이다. (D. T. Kim 22)

3. Refer to Macpherson. In fact, it is controversial to understand the philosophy of Hobbes in terms of individual and individualism. Regarding this, refer to Park Sung Jin.

The reason why freedom and the common good are placed in a conflicting dichotomy stems from a fear that portraying the common good could be reduced if freedom were maximized, and it is based on a premise that the value of community could be reduced if rights of individual were enlarged. However, individuals can be cultivated as virtuous citizens, and they can represent and realize their own identity as free existence, as long as freedom of the individual is permitted to be exerted and realized. Only freedom exerted by virtuous and active citizens in democracy makes it possible that a liberal political order is maintained as a free order, without being degraded to authoritarian one (B. H. Kim, “Gojeonjeok Jayujuui” 242). Thus, for democratic citizens, freedom functions as a necessary condition, and enlargement of freedom does not imply a reduction in a democratic or public good. It can be argued that democracy and liberalism keep each other in mutual check, and both function in interactive ways.

Besides the Marxist critiques, another ideology commenting liberalism equates liberalism with neo-liberalism and argues that liberal political groups in Korea have led liberalism in Korea to be converted to neo-liberalism by making their choices in favor of neo-liberal policies:

Liberal political groups have only equated a transition into neo-liberalism with a choice in favor of a certain economic policy, but they have not recognized the transition as a choice of a certain political line. Rather, it would be more proper to say that they do not admit the characteristic of the transition, although they recognize it. Assuming that the aims of Neo-Liberalism are to reorganize all social relations plus the natural and ecological ones associated with them, its implications signify sale of sovereignty and marketing of politics which occur at national, regional, and global levels. In this vein, it must not be forgotten that liberal political groups have structured their very own dream, ‘post democracy.’ One can evaluate that core outlines of democracy have been completed as they argue, because formal democratic procedures are still working in legal and institutional areas. However, such procedures facilitate a mixture of global capital and power, which brings about consequences of some kind of system where popular sovereignty is deteriorated and their lives are devastated.

자유주의 정치세력들은 신자유주의로의 전환을 단지 어떤 경제정책을 선택하는 것과 동일시했을 뿐, 그것이 정치노선의 선택임을 알지 못한다. 아니 알더라도 인정하지 않는다. 신자유주의의 목표가 이윤과 시장의 논리에 따라 모든 사회관계들, 그것과 연관된 자연 및 생태관계를 재편성하는 것이라면, 그것이 의미하는 바가 일국적, 지역적, 그리고 지구적 수준에서 이루어지는 주권의 세일, 정치의 시장화를 의미하는 것인데도 말이다. 이런 맥락에서 자유주의 정치세력이 추구한 바로 그 꿈인 ‘포스트 민주주의’를 구조화하였다는 점을 잊어서는 안 된다. 형식적인 민주적 절차가 여전히 법, 제도적으로 남아 작동하고 있기에 그들이 말하는 것처럼 민주주의의 대강이 완성되었다고 평가할 수는 있으나 오히려 그것을 매개로 글로벌 자본과 권력의 융합이 진전됨으로써 대중의 주권은 약화되고 그 삶이 더욱 피폐해지는 체제로의 귀결 말이다. (Lee 36-37)

These scholars who have critical attitudes against liberalism argue that liberal politics is on the decline, and that the alternative to it is a dramatic transition into commune popular politics, in addition to considering conditions and measures from the structure of the leftists’ hegemony (39).

It is true that neo-liberal institutions have caused a lot of problems, like a reduction in welfare and disparity between the rich and the poor. And it is also true that neo-liberalism is the outcome of intellectual movements by struggling liberals. However, the flaws caused by neo-liberalism are unable to mean the failure of liberal philosophy and the decline of the entire liberalism. That is because neo-liberalism working in reality is nothing but some kind of economic policy to cope with historical circumstances although neo-liberalism consists of the Vienna School that is exemplified by Friedrich von Hayek, the Chicago School exemplified by Milton Friedman, and theories from scholars like Nozick.⁴ In fact, the philosophy of Nozick is often inconsistent with current neo-liberal policies. It is allowed to argue that Nozick’s arguments for the legitimacy of initial possession by means of Lockean proviso significantly detach him from neo-liberal policies (Waldron 89-93). Furthermore, liberalism from Hayek, Friedman, and Nozick only represents one feature many liberals hold. The feature is nothing but one branch of liberalism which has been derived from the disturbance of the welfare state system since the mid-1960s and the loss of the system’s merits since the mid-1970s (B. H. Kim, “20segi Jayujuuii” 15).

Moreover, a declaration of rejection against liberalism based on challenges

4. Regarding this, refer to Kim Bi-Hwan’s *Jayujisangjuuijadeul*.

to neo-liberalism offers us a chance to detect the most familiar scene, where arguments from liberalism are revealed in the course of critiques on neo-liberalism. Flaws of neo-liberalism that are pointed out include marketing of social relations and politics and diminished sovereignty of the public. These stem from the lack of exertion for freedom by virtuous and active democratic citizens. Arguments where both citizens' recognition on sovereignty and their claims on their own rights lead to the enhancement of popular sovereignty are similar to ones from liberalism. The similarity implies that the standpoint for commenting on liberalism based on the flaws of neo-liberalism assimilates to liberal thought. In other words, liberalism is commented on by liberalism. That is, one branch of liberalism is commented on by another branch of liberalism.

In fact, the defects neo-liberalism has caused are obvious, and comments on them have a clear validity. However, as discussed above, it is considerably inappropriate to argue that all liberalism must be rejected or that liberal philosophy has collapsed due to its flaws. "Freedom" and "public good" are non-zero sum. Promotion of freedom causes no reduction in public good, nor does promotion of public good cause restriction of individual freedom.

III. The Initiative to Reestablish Korean Liberalism and Its Failure

The initiative to reestablish Korean liberalism began with seeking an alternative ideology to neo-liberalism. Scholars arguing the revision of liberalism evaluate that the success of European movements to restore progressive traits in liberalism during the first half of the twentieth century is claimed by the welfare-capitalistic system, and they expect the success to come true in Korea for the first half of the twenty-first century (T. W. Choi 11). Their initiative to actively extend liberalism makes the judgment that arguing over some problems in Korean society are allowed to be captured by particular kinds of liberalism such as "communal liberalism," "radical liberalism," and "social liberalism," despite democratization in Korea, and the initiative is based on an insight describing liberalism that has considerably powerful implications in understanding various missing conditions that Korean democracy faces and supplying them (J. J. Choi 68). Arguments from those who define neo-liberalism as a negation of social liberalism and strive to realize a "rational welfare state" by the extension of liberalism can be summarized as follows:

1. Liberalism revised puts an emphasis on civil solidarity rather than class solidarity.
2. Changes in liberalism can be embodied by the development of a democratic market economy.
3. Human imperfection in terms of recognition and morals needs to be acknowledged, and political liberalism, whose basic principles include equality of every human being, freedom and human rights, individualism, independence, and self-responsibility, freedom of thought and criticism, and toleration, needs to be accepted in itself.
4. Proper roles of government in correcting failures of capitalism need to be acknowledged, although a capitalistic economy's ability to ensure efficiency of production and freedom of the individual are basically endorsed.
5. Checks and balances on the power of the state: both autonomous associations against centralization and dispersion of power into regions are crucial.

Based on the arguments above, scholars who argue for transition and reestablishment in liberalism avoid the minimal state, pursuing promotion of individual rights, which classical liberalism supports, and they regard division of power and civil society as main themes. However, in fact, it is a challenge to determine what ideological basis their arguments have. Thus, it is also necessary to distinguish which specific kind of liberalism they argue for under existing classifications on liberalism. In terms of the three classifications by John Gray, liberal thought can be divided into “natural rights liberalism,” “Kantian liberalism,” and “deontological liberalism” developed by Kantian autonomy and practical reason, and “utilitarian liberalism” based on utilitarian thoughts from Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill.⁵ However, the newly established liberalism by the scholars belongs nowhere under the three classifications, and even a dichotomy of deontological liberalism and utilitarian liberalism easily fails to specify what their liberalism is.

Then, what makes their liberalism have such a fragile basis? The reason is that those who attempt to reestablish liberalism are oriented to a realistic view of politics as a way to understand politics, and they hold development of a

5. Cf. Gray, John. *Liberalism*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2000. Regarding classification of liberalism, refer to Kim Bi-Hwan's *Jayujisangjuuijadeul*.

certain mechanism where conflict can promote benefits and welfare of social members is able to create social harmony, based on Albert O. Hirschman's theory portraying a historical repetition of a *doux-commerce* theory regarding capitalism and other theories in contrast to the theory (132). In other words, progressive liberals in Korea are based on a positive standpoint of realism and on theories that argue that the development of capitalism is accomplished by so-called anti-thesis critiques.

Philosophers emphasizing practical reason have critical attitudes against the priority of ethics' tendency which is prior to politics permitting openness mentioned above. Making critiques against negative aspects of the real world and also making contributions to changes in reality are important to them. This trend of intellectual tradition is represented by theorists like Aristotle, Machiavelli, Montesquieu, Tocqueville, and in modern times, it is represented by theorists like Weber. In this tradition, political philosophy is basically realistic, politics focuses on human acts and contexts surrounding them. Furthermore, political phenomena and political actions have historical traits, so political philosophy concerns more understanding politics as technique and art creating something available in reality, than being engaged in normative theories pursuing perennial questions. I also think that the latter tradition offers more things to learn in Korean political reality.

On the standpoint of liberalism about conflict, social conflict serves as principle facilitating co-existence of democracy and market order, as well as contributing to the establishment of macro, social order. Thus, democracy can deal with a market economy while based on capitalistic market economy, which creates chances to establish social harmony in the midst of development of a mechanism promoting benefits and welfare of social members.

실천이성을 강조하는 철학자들은 위에서 말한 개방성을 허용하는 정치에 선행해 윤리학 우선의 경향에 대해 비판적이다. 그들에게 중요한 것은 현실 세계의 부정적인 측면을 비판하는 데서 끝나는 것이 아니라, 현실 변화에 기여할 수 있는 것이다. 이런 흐름의 지적 전통은 아리스토텔레스, 마키아벨리, 몽테스키외, 토크빌, 현대에 와서는 베버와 같은 이론가들에 의해 대표된다. 이 전통에서 정치철학은 기본적으로 현실주의적이고, 정치는 행위와 그 행위를 둘러싼 맥락을 중심으로 한 것이다. 또한 정치 현상, 정치 행위란 역사적인 성격을 갖는 것

이기 때문에 정치철학에 있어 영속적인 문제들을 추구하는 규범적인 이론에 관심을 갖기보다 정치를 현실 속에서 가능한 것을 만들어 낼 수 있는 기술 또는 기예로 이해한다. 필자 역시 한국의 정치 현실에서 이 후자의 전통으로부터 더 많은 것을 배울 수 있을 것이라고 생각한다.

갈등에 대한 자유주의의 관점에서 볼 때, 사회적 갈등은 거시적 사회질서를 만드는 데 기여할 뿐만 아니라, 민주주의와 시장질서의 공존을 가능케 하는 원리로도 작용한다. 그러므로 민주주의는 자본주의 시장경제에 기초하면서도 시장경제를 다룰 수 있고, 이를 통해 사회 구성원들의 이익과 복리를 증진할 수 있는 메커니즘을 발전시키면서 사회적 조화를 만들어 낼 수 있는 것이다. (J. J. Choi 82-87)

The arguments above define existing liberalism based on deontological ethics as idealism in line with distinction between idealism and realism, and these arguments assert that the reestablishment of liberalism has to put its foundation on realism. And they require a standpoint embracing roles of conflict positively and actively, in terms of cold realism. However, this standpoint has no exemption from the following critiques of two kinds.

First of all, their initiative to reestablish liberalism is unable to be free of a critique that it is positivism. In other words, the theory of those who support realistic positivism is not based on ethical and philosophical ideals but based on pragmatic political goals, so it is nothing but means, that is, ways to encourage an advisable consensus for a certain society. Even Aristotle, whom realists regard as a typical philosopher for realism, does not argue that action must substitute knowledge. For Aristotle, the purpose of practical philosophy is action, but action is derived from ethical bases.⁶

When there is belief that the reality in politics should be understood in accordance with the logic of pure power, the reestablishment of liberalism becomes mirage-chasing because it is buried under fragile realism while

6. The critiques of positivistic aspects that progressive liberalism in Korea has undertaken have their similarities to critiques from Otfried Höffe or Tom Campbell on the later writings of Rawls where Rawls rejects epistemological or metaphysical approaches and endorses the Autonomy of Political Philosophy. Also, Höffe pays attention to Aristotle's view on Metaphysics as the First Philosophy. Aristotle represents it as "knowledge on being qua being," "knowledge of something separated and unmovable." He argues that the First Philosophy is primary in terms of its pursuit of the most universal truth encompassing everything present, and it is also primary in terms of its inquiries on unmovable entity beyond empirical entities.

excluding values such as morality and ethics. Moreover, progressive liberalism in Korea will fail to cope with the critique that argues that the fragility of realism exposes progressive liberalism in Korea to the risk of being encircled by power materialism and vulgar pragmatism. In sum, the ways to reestablish liberalism in Korea develop in a vulnerably structured form of theory without philosophical bases, and they are exposed to a wide range of critiques.

The second challenge that the development of liberalism's reestablishment in Korea faces is that the development is exposed to the risk of nihilism, due to its focus on conflict in cold realism. What Hirschman explains in his book, *The Passion and the Interests*, is a cyclic repetition between distrust and trust regarding the market economy. Hirschman explains that conflict continuously occurs while self-destruction theories of capitalism exemplified by Marx and Schumpeter and *doux-commerce* theories symbolized by Montesquieu and Mill, Thomas Paine, and so on are repeated (131–40). However, it is excessively optimistic to argue that social conflict can function as a principle ensuring co-existence between democracy and market order, based on the theory of Hirschman, and to argue that, in turn, the principle can enhance the mechanism promoting the benefits and welfare of social members. To argue that the repetition of conflict will result in positive outcomes is an excessively positive interpretation lacking logical consistency.

Moreover, only in balances where any theory fails to seize or incorporate other theories are positive transitions of conflict viable. However, the current problem in Korea is that capitalism is in the course of incorporating other concepts. In this circumstance, conflict no longer reveals its implication discussed above. Thus, the initiative to reestablish liberalism based on conflict has no choice but to be exposed to the risk of nihilism.

Also, the initiative as an alternative to neo-liberalism raises a question whether it accomplishes ideological progress distinguished from that of the past liberals. The initiative aims to overcome contradictions and flaws from neo-liberalism, but its ideological bases are significantly insufficient. Thus, both in a realistic aspect and in a philosophical aspect, it actually fails to present fundamental solutions and it has vague features. The following passage is quoted from Choi Tae-Wook's paper on progressiveness and practicality in liberalism:

In fact, the social progress such as establishment of welfare state in order to improve status of the socioeconomic underprivileged eventually is

only secured by the privileged concession of vested rights. That is, deal and compromise with the conservative groups are required. Here, it is significantly important that moderate progressive groups play roles in treating conservative groups in open attitudes like toleration and generosity without describing them as targets of distrust and hatred.

사실, 복지국가의 건설 등과 같이 사회경제적 약자의 지위를 향상시키는 사회의 진보는 결국 어떤 식으로든 기득권층의 특권을 양보받음으로써만 가능한 일이다. 보수파와의 협상과 타협은 필수라는 것이다. 이때 보수 진영을 불신과 증오의 대상으로 보지 않고 그들을 관인과 야량의 개방적 태도로 대할 수 있는 중도 진보의 역할은 매우 중요하다. (23-24)

As the passage above proves, the initiative to reestablish liberalism on a fragile ideological basis is unexpectedly more vulnerable to concepts such as public welfare and public good than classical liberalism is. The arguments, where public welfare is only secured by concession of vested rights, seem to retreat further than Locke, who emphasizes the rights of the individual. Locke seeks to find purposes of political power in the realization of public good and general goods as well as in the rights of the individual, and he clearly reveals that the purposes of legal enactment exist in the promotion of public good or common good (Locke, *Two* 305; *Letter* 33).⁷

The progressive liberalism in Korea that retreats from common good further than classical liberalism rarely makes ideological progress, in comparison with the philosophy of Rawls. Rawls rejects allowing shares of distribution to be determined by natural lucks such as natural talents or assets. He clearly recognizes the limits of the system of natural liberty, and argues there is no reason to allow the distribution of income and wealth to be made by the distribution of natural assets, just as there is no reason to allow the distribution to be made by historical and social luck. Moreover, he recognizes the principle of equal opportunity is imperfectly realized as long as the family system exists, and he thus strives to adopt the principle to alleviate natural luck itself because the development and maturity of natural abilities are influenced by social circumstances and class aspects (Rawls 62-63). Thus, Rawls insists that the equality of individual opportunity not be influenced by disparities

7. Regarding implications of public notions in classical liberalism, refer to Kim Bi-Hwan's "Gojeonjeok Jayujuui."

in income and wealth, and he strives to establish fair equality of opportunity (Levine 189). Liberalism in Korea has more insufficient concepts of equality than Rawls, who clearly recognizes the limits of equal opportunity from the system of natural liberty and seeks to minimize flaws caused by these limits. To construct welfare mechanisms by means of the concession of the privileged, he uses merely strategies of dealing and consent.

The reestablishment of liberalism in Korea cannot be free of the critiques that it is positivism and it cannot be free of the critiques that its ideological progress has rarely advanced further than welfare-oriented liberalism like Rawls, or even no further than classical liberalism. That is because its ideological bases are not solid. Due to its establishment on the meager basis, that is, realism, liberalism in Korea is exposed to the risk of danger of nihilism as well as various critiques.

So, should the initiative to reestablish liberalism be abandoned? The transition into liberalism is a clear byproduct from requirements of the times. Its concepts are derived by requirements of new changes under circumstances where flaws from neo-liberalism are consistently exposed. Accordingly, new liberalism requires reconstruction work that abandons its meager bases and ensures solid ideological bases.

IV. New Liberalism and Reestablishment of Liberalism in Korea

1. The Individual and Freedom

Since 1987, democracy in Korea has partly succeeded, but political philosophy in Korea fails to define or explain the individual. Interpretations of the individual have been replaced by political economy or political sociology, which so far have served as dominant paradigms in studies on modern political history in Korea since 1987.⁸ The individual has thus been thrown into areas like the tradition of the authoritarian state, the capitalistic market, and the global capitalist system. And individuals are recalled as victims by actions of state power before 1987, whose legal rights were violated and human rights were infringed by state violence. The cruelty of the past state violence and rapid transfer into global capitalism system lead liberal interpretations where

8. Cf. B. H. Kim, "Jeonhwangi Hanguksahoeui." p. 12.

the individual is described as an agent of contract and symbol of right to be accepted themselves. For even those who espouse Marxism, rights of the individual are inviolable targets because what they claimed in order to protest against authorities of state was an agent of rights, that is, the individual. Since 1987, the individual in Korea has incorporated itself as a liberal individual, which is the following self-contained and lonely being:

Liberal individual has clearly separated individuality, as distinguished existence which allows no assimilation into others. Liberal individual tends to feel uncomfortable and daunted, even anxious in case the individuality has a vague boundary and it overlaps others' individuality. Thus, their permanent concern is to maintain separateness among them. They maintain separateness by building high protective walls surrounding them and allowing nothing to enter into their existences, without their own detailed examinations. The idea of self-enclosure, that is, the idea of existence with its boundary where extremely limited access is allowed for others has crucial roles in ontology of liberalism.

자유주의적 개인은 타인들과 동화될 수 없는 구분된 존재로서 확실히 분리된 개체성을 갖고 있다. 자유주의적 개인은 이 개체성의 경계가 모호해지거나 타인들의 개체성과 중첩되게 되면 불편함과 위축감 심지어는 불안을 느끼게 된다. 그러므로 그들의 항구적인 관심사는 그들의 분리성을 유지하는 것이다. 그들은 자신의 주위에 높은 보호벽을 쌓아 스스로가 정밀히 검토하지 않고서는 어떤 것들도 그들의 존재 안으로 들어오지 못하게 함으로써 그들의 분리성을 유지한다. 타인들에게 대해서는 극히 제한된 접근만이 허용된, 경계를 갖는 존재라는 관념 곧 자기 폐쇄의 관념은 자유주의 존재론의 중심적인 부분이다. (B. H. Kim, "Jeonhwangi" 16)

However, the times where extreme individualism and capitalism were disclosed are over, and the enclosed individual or individual separated from society. Here, a new kind of individual is required. Then, is a more social individual required, one based on the "social thesis"⁹ that communitarians endorse?

9. The so-called "social thesis" by Charles Taylor represents propositions summarizing characteristics of "individual within community." The social thesis argues that only an individual's life and experience within particular societies ensure an individual's knowledge on personal identity and value. According to the social thesis, it can be

According to the social thesis, the individual is a being rooted in the culture and traditions of particular community, and its moral values are communal ones. However, these arguments put the individual and society at antipodal points, and they are based on ontological thinking, which asserts that society is constructed prior to the individual who has no choice but to be incorporated into social values. This kind of thinking connotes a certain likelihood to force an individual into accepting some values generally in common in a particular society. Moreover, taking into consideration the circumstances in Korea where state power allows even no basic rights of the individual by means of illegal state interventions and its conspiracy with capital, to accommodate the social thesis itself is actually a challenge. Taking into account the circumstances, interpretations of the individual in terms of the social thesis are risky. That is, the social thesis is irrelevant to the circumstances in Korea, under its reality where disparities between the rich and the poor brought by capitalism and arbitrary interventions of state power simultaneously remain.

Here, some kind of individual which is described by the New Liberalism in England is required for us. Both the individual aiming to embody positive freedom based on negative freedom and the construction of an individual by the state through means of a manifestation of the individual's positive freedom are required. Accordingly, an individual needs to be identified both as *an-sich* existence pursuing lack of intervention and as having *für-sich* traits. Also, an individual needs to be considered as existence pursuing its self-realization while being thrown into relation networks.

As existence thrown into relations, the individual is required to be treated as an existence pursuing universal reason and the purpose of self-realization, also as existence having negative freedom and positive one, in its organic connection with society. The individual is a bearer of rights, existing as a "state without suppression," a "state of having capabilities to do something," and a

argued that the basis of knowledge on an individual's self-consciousness and moral values already requires society or particular community to which the individual belongs. Thus, "individual within community" is basically distinguished from universal and abstract existence, which is able to be any existence and to play any role by means of its choice. The "individual within community," who is embedded in its particular cultures and traditions, cannot be totally detached from the cultures and traditions. In the "individual within community," one's cultural community always serves as a background for self-consciousness and a basis for moral judgment. Refer to Kim Bi-Hwan's "Jeonhwangi Hanguksahoeui."

“state of self-realization” (Weinstein 151).

And an individual is a bearer of positive freedom and negative freedom, it needs to be specified which kind of freedom is required to be sacrificed, which kind of freedom has priority when two kinds of freedom collide. However, what is important here is that the collision between positive freedom and negative one does not imply that two kinds of freedom are in conflict. Promotion of one kind of freedom does not bring about decline in another kind, like a zero-sum game. However, it is obvious that cases where two kinds of freedoms collide occur. In those cases, we need to place some priority on harmony among the three concepts of freedom an individual has.

The harmony of the three concepts “state without suppression,” “state of having capabilities to do something,” and “state of self-realization” is promoted, intervention or restriction of positive freedom and negative freedom is ensured. The harmony among three kinds of freedom brings promotion of the entirety of freedom, and it is able to keep hold of certain kind of freedom and to prevent one kind of freedom from being incorporated into another kind.

2. Korean Society

From its vivid experiences, Korea still keeps its recollections from before the 1987 democratization. Experiences of formidable state violence by military regimes are recollected as not-so-distant facts. Also, in fact, existential danger from North Korea causes fears of totalitarianism and socialism to be real. In these circumstances, it is not viable to apply organic ideas themselves a New Liberalism in England as if that argues the same for Korea. Organic theories mainly are employed by totalitarian regimes, which argue that the whole must be prior to its parts and explain the reason in terms of society as single macro-organism. They argue that the whole organism has a purpose in itself and that it has a higher rank than the purposes of its parts do (Gray 238). Thus, it is a challenge to apply organic theories themselves to Korean society. Indeed, Korea has accomplished institutional democratization, but state violence consistently has occurred in conspiracy with capital. However, these circumstances do not support arguments on natural rights individualism as a counter-concept to the organic theories. That is because individual is already an *an-sich* and *für-sich* existence, and the state needs to make some interventions in the market and rights of individual for the sake of the harmony among freedoms, as explained above.

Organic theories themselves cannot be accepted, and society cannot be identified as representations from classical liberalism, where society is constructed by contract, and it is a guardian for natural rights, protecting the benefits of the individual, simultaneously overcoming the state of nature. However, a basic recognition needs to be shared here. The recognition is a fact that individuals or groups are interconnected and have their relations. In that case, we need to embark on the reset of the relations.¹⁰

Society is a form of manifestations of universal reason and perfection of freedom, and it needs to serve as a guardian protecting negative freedom and positive freedom, and because of this, society is required to be constructed like an organism. However, the organism dealt with here cannot be the organisms of the past. Society in the course of reestablishing liberalism in Korea needs to be an organism lacking both distinction between the core and its parts, and consistent moves in line with a single purpose. And, that kind of organism does not accept a metaphor of organism itself. In other words, society or state is an organism, but simultaneously lacks traits of organism without interconnection. This thinking is able to find its clues in the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze, which rejects the consistent moves of organism for the sake of united purposes. And he describes it as an organism but one without organs. He stipulates an organism where all parts become head and leg, due to its lack of organs.

In the works to reestablish liberalism in Korea, we cannot and do not have to accept all principles that Deleuze and Félix Guattari suggest. That is because post-modern thinking often rarely works in reality, and it barely presents alternatives though it succeeds in explaining some phenomena. Deleuze and Guattari are not, in large, exceptions to that problem. Thus, only some principles from Rhyzome, that is, body without organs, they argue, are required to be accepted and applied to organic theories.

10. The traditional methods where scholars explore rationalization by connecting organic thinking to individualistic thinking are obviously represented by ways to interpret the thinking of Herbert Spencer. To begin with, the most common way is to divide thought of one person into the early and the late. The second solution is an explanation putting weighted values on one side. The third is a view to take individualism and organicism in complementary relations. The fourth solution mentioned is an explanation arguing individualism and organism converge. However, none of these accounts succeeds in presenting an ultimate solution. In the end, these mean one side embraces another side or two sides converge. Regarding this, refer to Kim Myung-Hawn's "Spencer Jayujuuii" (325–26).

If we have succeeded in combining “the principle of interconnection,” “the principle of multiplicity,” and “the principle of decalomania” among the principles Deleuze and Guattari present with social organic theories, we are able to present social metaphysics which has its relevance to Korea where its state violence is still recollected and simultaneously possessive individualism brings about harm.

Society has no united moves like human body which is functioned by dictation of its head, but it needs to become something interconnected that has no core. A proposition in organic theories of the past, which argue that labor workers are like human feet so they should eagerly accomplish their own tasks for the entire organization, should no longer be established. Those in the working class need to be identified as an interconnected organism, a complex that enjoys politics and as both center and periphery.

And then, it is no wonder why we raise a question of whether areas for self-realization are made in the name of state under the organic society rejecting the core. In order to answer this question, we need to focus on the term, “interconnection.” In other words, we need to analyze meanings of “interconnection.” Society does not function as “the entirety” or produce united purposes. In that case, society has two kinds of existences. Society is required to become interconnection itself and, at the same time, manage the interconnection. It is required to prevent any unilateral connection or distorted one, and to ensure that connections among its parts cause no harm. For example, in the case of connection between consumer and business, society needs to ensure the connection itself and the likelihood of the connection, and it needs to take actions to make sure that it prevents the distortion of connection that brings harm to consumer or business.

The reestablishment of liberalism in Korea needs to be based on this social metaphysics. Society as a relation network itself, as an entity for the prevention of distortion in the relation network, and as a maintenance of smoothness in communication serve as ways to ensure the harmony among freedoms possessed by each individual in connection with the network.

V. Conclusion

Liberalism in Korea has a dominant position as a main political ideology. Thus, there have been various studies and critiques on liberalism and initiatives

to present alternative forms of liberalism. However, studies on liberalism in Korea have considerably simplistic aspects and they tend to make critiques on all of liberalism. The critiques on liberalism in Korea only take into account a unilateral aspect, dismissing the diversity of liberalism.

In addition to this, arguments from progressive liberalism which recognizes values of liberalism and is presented as an alternative to neo-liberalism faces a lot of limits. It dismisses bases of political philosophy, based on realism. Thus, progressive liberalism in Korea merely serves as measures or ways to create a progressive regime, and it fails to function as political philosophy.

In this circumstance, New Liberalism which appeared in England in the late eighteenth century is able to serve as a new alternative in Korea. New Liberalism in England which hopes for harmony of negative and positive freedom is offering many implications for the current society in Korea. New Liberalism is presenting a framework for Korea that facilitates a free market economy and an advance into a welfare state. New Liberalism, which came to resolve social problems such as poverty and the severe gap between the poor and the rich that England faced in the new age of transition, is expected to give a lot of help to Korea facing a new age of transition.

Many countries, including Korea, have been changing since the global financial crisis in 2008. They have been seeking new politics to save democracy under the control of economy. New politics requires new political philosophy. In this circumstance, the New Liberalism of the late eighteenth century is expected to function as a new political philosophy that is able to present a framework for the welfare state and to enhance both economic efficiency and human life itself. In other words, new liberalism is an “old future” for us.

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper to specify many problems from the studies and critiques on liberalism in Korea and to illustrate new liberalism in the late Victorian Age in England, which serves as an alternative to progressive liberalism aiming to overcome neo-liberalism. Those who have critical views on liberalism make their approaches to it based on the two kinds of frameworks above. First, those who consider liberalism a dominant ideology for the bourgeois class accept it as a kind of ideological device fully accomplishing class dictatorship by the bourgeoisie, in terms of a specific paradigm, Marxist historical materialism. Second, another ideology commenting upon liberalism is an equation of liberalism with neo-liberalism, which argues liberal political groups in Korea have led liberalism in Korea to be converted to neo-liberalism by making their choices in favor of neo-liberal policies. Liberalism in Korea has a dominant position as a main political ideology. Studies on liberalism in Korea have very simplistic aspects, and they tend to make critiques on all liberalism. The critiques on liberalism in Korea only take into account a unilateral aspect, dismissing the diversity of liberalism. In this circumstance, the new liberalism that appeared in England in the late eighteenth century is able to serve as a new alternative in Korea. New liberalism presents a framework for Korea that facilitates a free market economy and an advanced welfare state.

Keywords: liberalism, New Liberalism, Korean liberalism, individuals, society

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