

“FIS 2010 Beijing, China”;

How Is it Possible that Information Philosophy Is Regarded as Meta-Philosophy ?

wuzhuang Li

Email: liwuzhuang2005@126.com

Tel: 13772494100

Abstract: In modern society, “meta-philosophy” should be faced with contemporary reality of “modern revolution of science and technology,” “overall community transformation,” “global thinking” and reconstruct philosophy owning newly critical logic, new way of thinking, fresh mode of transcendence to the degree of three dimensions of “theory, system, method”. Information philosophy is regarded as “meta-philosophy” because great changes have occurred in the following aspects: “basic Problems of Philosophy,” “epistemology” and “axiology”, which brought us a fresh horizon of philosophy. Practice conditions and dependence outlets of information philosophy as meta- philosophy are that a series of attentions and methodologies will be paid at least.

Keywords: “Meta-philosophy”; information philosophy; realistic conditions

Acknowledgement:

Information philosophy originated from the research on “relations between artificial intelligence and Philosophy” in the 1950s, was completely unfolded in the 1980s and by now, it has increasingly become an internationally “significant study”. With regard to the published papers and data and in my vision, the term of “philosophy of information” was first seen in the paper of “ the philosophy of power and the philosophy of information ” written by Mr. Li Ming in 1984, while the name of “philosophy information” was firstly marked in the paper of “ Synopsis of philosophical Information Theory” in 1985, written by Professor Wu Kun. In fact, the philosophical contemplation on information can be traced back as early as the year of 1982, when Professor Wu Kun was writing his degree paper called “Introduction to Philosophical Information Theory” in Lanzhou University. It can be said that Professor Wu Kun is the first

scholar (at least in China) to furnish the paradigm of “information philosophy” and engineer systematic study of it. Although Luciano Floridi, philosopher of University of Oxford, was clearly named as “the founder of the information philosophy” in many papers, Floridi first stated the concept in his book of “Information and Computation” in 1996. And in 2002, the systematical analysis of it started with his declaration of “What is information philosophy”. The argument can be put aside. The problem here is whether information philosophy ——this newly born “philosophy door,” should be regarded as “meta-philosophy” or should be viewed as the current “realm philosophy” or “department philosophy” (for example, some argue that information philosophy is a new “paradigm” of philosophy of science and technology)? If, then, the former is true, how is it possible that information philosophy is regarded as meta-

philosophy ? This paper will focus on the issue.

1. What is "Meta -Philosophy" ?

The fact that word "metaphysics" is translated into "形而上学" or "after the physics"(后物理学), results in many misunderstandings and ambiguities for the "upper" (上), "after" (后) and "meta (元)". In fact, the "upper", "after" and "meta" here are not really in the sense of time or space, but rather sense of logic. Or, "upper" (上), "after" (后) and "meta (元)" are not a genetic study, but a kind of functional requirements. They (Logical and functional significance) here include double meanings at least: one refers to transcendence, the other means reflection or contemplation (including criticism). The former is equivalent to premise, the default, reason, which are equal to "transcending, beyond, more comprehension" in English; the latter, roughly equal to "nachdenken" in German, mainly states self-awareness of cognition.

The "epistemological turning" of Western philosophy can prove it. In ancient and mid-Ages western philosophy, the debates on "general and individual" ended in followings: there are only three kinds of "general". They are concepts which are earlier than things (such as God, created the world); forms of things, which are together with themselves; the names of things, which are later than the things respectively. In other words, in the sense of structure and genetics, the study on "general" has come to the end. While the relentless pursuits of "belief that was proven true"(knowledge), led people to think about the following problems: where is universal, inevitable "general knowledge" born? How does epistemology (cognition) take place or how is possible? While contemplating this issue, Western philosophers, consciously or unconsciously, adopted Kant's questioning—"How is possible". For example, "entity" concepts in Western philosophy, Kant's "thing in itself," Hegel's concept of "absolute spirit", are all based on logical, "Possible" setting (conditions, limits and premise, etc.). In fact, this is philosophical asking and answering style of "meta theory", namely, on premise, reason, limits and conditions of self-cognition.

Following above theories, we may sink into a dilemma of "meta-meta philosophy" or "evil unlimited". Yet, the problem is that "meta philosophy" owns its qualities and characterization. We know that the premise or the default is unlimited, but the levels or dimensions are different. If the premise comes to the cycle, it means we have entered the highest level, that is, the emergence of circulation or the highest level of presentation, shows us that the default has been "applied to explain all the possible knowledge" to the degree of criterion point. As the master of contemporary hermeneutics, Gadamer points out, any understanding or agreement contains a commitment to the truth. The legitimacy of "Hermeneutic circle" lies in seeking a reasonable "Archimedes point." The legitimacy of "Meta philosophy" is that it itself is the "Archimedean point"; "meta philosophy" as "all in the final analysis that may know how to study the formal speculation", reaches the highest level, namely, autonomy, self-evident, besides the result that reaches the most basic theories of philosophy. Due to this, the late Professor Liu Yongfu, from Xi'an Jiaotong University, has repeatedly stressed that "meta philosophy" should be more reasonably called "philosophical basis theory." Professor Jin Yan, from Shaanxi Normal University, questioning the legitimacy of philosophy, showed that the function of philosophy is "to make clear the logical basis of human understanding and human behavior". He criticized that modern Western philosophy was not "physics, Against Metaphysics," but "philosophy (metaphysics), guard physics". He also said that the essence of modern Western philosophy is to examine "the logic conditions of scientific knowledge"; he ridiculed that Chinese Philosophical "settling down" approach may lead metaphysics (philosophy) into a moral issue. Professor Jin's "logical basis" ("logical conditions") can be interpreted as a philosophical "meta", namely "meta philosophy" issue.

What, then, does "Basic Theory of Philosophy" or "meta philosophy" generally contain or refer to? Or, what is the fundamental to "meta philosophy"? Following Professor Liu Yongfu's exposition, "meta philosophy" is to answer the following questions: "philosophy unique theme;

philosophical nature, classification and methods of dealing with philosophical problems; philosophy unique value and purpose; philosophical criticism and daily life; the relationship between philosophy and natural science; philosophy can make progress as Natural as ", etc. In other words, it is "meta philosophy" or "philosophical basis theory" that devotes to answer above questions or at least commits to answer these questions.

In the perspective of abstract possibility, "Meta Philosophy" should begin with thinking about the well-known "fundamental questions of philosophy", and commit to answer a series of points of view, horizon, the ways, "paradigm of revolution" theme of human understanding the world; Second, it must focus on study the transformations of the world theme and their significance: whether they replace or update people's sight? Really promote advance of worldview of human beings and comprehensive innovation of methodology? Thirdly, it should be concerned about "life world", practical problems of philosophy itself in "constructive dimension" and lead the system renewal or understanding of philosophy, rather than focusing on Clarification and interpretation of individual issues.

From the horizon of concrete possibilities, "meta philosophy" should be faced with the contemporary reality of "modern revolution of science and technology," "overall community transformation", "global thinking" and reconstruct philosophy owning newly critical logic, new way of thinking, fresh mode of transcendence to the degree of three dimensions of "theory, system, method". Since philosophy is of the essence of spirit of the times.

2. information philosophy regarded as " meta philosophy "

2.1 The "basic question of philosophy."

According to Professor Wu Kun's definition of information — "Information is the philosophy catalogue of marking the indirect existence," and his argument of "two segmentations in the field of existence", we see the new dichotomy of " matter and information " different from "matter and

consciousness" . No matter this new dichotomy is reasonable or not, one thing is true at least, that is, information, as a method of us observing the world, is widespread, common and indispensable. Furthermore, when we rethink "Basic Problems of Philosophy", the attribution of information, the relationships between information and matter, information and consciousness, information and information, information and human beings, all touched on it. Thus, it is possible to establish the ontology, epistemology, value theory and methodologies of "General Information" —a newly systematic metaphysics, that is, information philosophy as "Meta philosophy". In this regard, Professor Wu Kun's contemplation is firm and clear, and his narratives and arguments are logical and believable, besides, his criticism is sharp, focused.

In fact, the rational definition of information is the premise of information philosophy. Although the nature of information is still not defined, the discussion itself is Clarification of information philosophy. Therefore, we can not consider, as some scholars believe, that because information has not reached shared definition or the "Basic Problems of Philosophy" is explained in the Perspective of information Philosophy, we ignore the appearance of information philosophy. Moreover, the "basic question of philosophy" itself is required to clarify. In "Feuerbach", Engels made clear that there's a limit to its use.

One obvious conclusion is that the Philosophical reflection on information, at least shake the base of the "Basic Problems of Philosophy." Information is expected to shake philosophical themes and bring out transformation of human sights, enough to locate information philosophy at the level of "meta philosophy".

2.2. "Epistemology".

It is no longer main approaches to observe or understand the world by referring to direct experience nowadays, although the phenomenological method is still very current. In fact, more and more people depend on Internet and other modern medium — "indirect" experience. Traditional knowledge subjects, objects and the direct interaction

between them model, with the computer network and other "virtual world" appearing, people rely more on "information intermediaries". The introduced conceptions such as "Information field", "negative entropy", "micro-quantum" is the most obvious example.

Such being the case, information, the basic elements and the ways of modern understanding, in the process of a complete cognition, relies much on the following "discoveries": "Information condensation" generates subjects of understanding; "Information field" communicates subjects and objects; Objects are accessed to subject by more levels of mediated information; Information intermediary constructs and highlights "virtual" reality.

In accordance with the definition of traditional epistemology — knowledge is active reflection of subjects to objects on the basis of practice, we point out that, traditional understanding access based on the "subjects - objects" model has been completely replaced by the mode of "subjects - information - objects" or " subjects - information ", perhaps later" information - information "mode in the "information age" . Namely, the world cognized by people is or will fully become a "space of dialogues and exchange of information". To point out or stress: this does not negate the roles of the people as the ultimate subjects of the world. People will always bear the functions of "comprehensive analysis" and the ultimate controlling information. The problem is, with the coming of information ages, the consequent domain of human knowledge, "cross-border" or "empathy" really broke the original understanding of "subject - object" quiet, bringing the "information revolution" in the sense of knowledge of new map type, which spawn a series of new problems in the field of epistemology, of which the most typical is the "truth problem."

Based on this, it can be said that updating information is completely transforming people's ways of understanding and thinking (cognition). The "information war" from the individuals, nations, states to cosmetics, has been deep implanted into our thoughts. This is not only changing our world

view, but also shaping our new methodology and epistemology, so as to confirm with information philosophy as "meta philosophy".

2.3 "Axiology".

The definition of value in Axiology focuses on the following three theories in general: relationship theory, entity theory and synthesis theory. The first is based on the relationships between subjects and objects, including properties, likes and dislikes relations, requirements, effects interests and significance and so on; The second stresses value has its own independent existence of things (such as "virtue" argued by Moore which can not be defined; "person" by Gao Qinghai and Han Dongping); The third put much emphasis on levels, structures and other methods to interpret (e.g. "representation analysis" insisted by Zhang ShiYing and "substantial research method" supported by Mou Zongshan). But the "natural nature" of value, in one way or another, has not been thoroughly Clarified. In other words, the value defined as what they said is still a subjective thing. The birth of Information breaks the ice. Previously, people tend to believe that evaluation is the value itself. But logically, how the evaluation process is equal to evaluation objects? As the most general sense, how can we ignore the value of "free world"? Is this "free world" is not worth for the "human world" and human evolution? And so on. Perhaps, we can resolve the confusion in accordance with the definition of value—"the effects of interaction between the things(matter and information), inner or outer".

Firstly, the interaction of the things can be divided into "direct effects" and "indirect effects", of which each changes or affects the world. Two effects correspond to matter value and information value respectively. The world (matter and information) is actually reflected in the existence of the "double effects". Thus, the value is at the highest level, in the sense of "natural nature" and "value general."

Secondly, Bewilderment between the "being" and "should" could be cleared off if existence (matter and information) is divided into "self-existence things" and "effect things". The former ignores the interaction facts of things, inside or outside; yet the latter will not

do like that. Furthermore, the former is non-value things, and the latter is value things. Besides, value things attach itself to "being", a kind of objective reality. Only in this way can we unify "being" and "should", that is, the "things world" and the "value world".

Thirdly, a value process of "interaction → object → effect (values)" in the domains of information can be transformed into "interaction (information exchange) → object-based (Information Change) → value effects (information building)."

Fourthly, the social value is mixed or integrated by matter value and information value (including spiritual values).

In the light of these, "natural nature" of value is discovered and "general value of philosophy" is represented before us.

According to vice-researcher Liu Gang, information philosophy "concerns about the world of information, computing and information society and the first-order phenomenon of the whole field presented by them first of all. However, in the light of its own methodology and critical areas, it is more of a kind of meta-theoretical method. That is, it may maintain a necessary tension between phenomenology and meta-theory." The so-called "meta-theoretical approach", is that "the studied topic is systematically organized knowledge." In short, as to the studied objects of information philosophy, it is more of a new field, independent, autonomous "new areas of research" than the information itself (information science). Therefore, since information philosophy can "represent a separate area of research", "provide an innovative approach to traditional and new philosophical topic", "supply conception base of information world and information society with systematical proof," information philosophy can make a reasonable explanation for the standards listed on the "element of philosophy" by Professor Liu Yongfu and, precisely establish a "meta philosophy" to understand the philosophy of information.

In Professor Wu Kun's words, "the establishments of new basic question of philosophy, philosophy ontology, epistemology, axiology and ethics, philosophy of economic and social outlook, philosophy of science and

technology, philosophical theory of the evolution and development concept", and "distinguish from all the traditional philosophy and modern philosophy in a new world view, history, social values, knowledge concept, concept and methodology of science and technology", "can become a real 'meta philosophy'." All in all, we have every reason to trust that information philosophy is of real "meta philosophy" with regard to axiology.

3. Practice conditions and dependence outlets of information philosophy as meta-philosophy

Practice conditions of information philosophy as meta philosophy are expected to solve the question of "how is it Possible that Information Philosophy Regarded as Meta-Philosophy" in the face of social realities. Although this issue still lacks conclusive results, in my opinion, a series of attentions and methodologies will be paid at least to achieve this "consensus".

3.1. Concern about the "publicity essence" of information philosophy.

Information itself is a king of existence of "publicity" or "commonality". Information philosophy is to contemplate "publicity" and information at the level of "meta theory." In the face of "modernization", "globalization" and "modern revolution of science and technologies" in the 21st century, we are really in the "global village" or "global neighbor relations". Therefore, it is no longer a "museum myth" that the "public life" of human beings was established or the "ideal of publicity" is realized. A certain scholar asserts that: publicity has become the theme of modernity after the post-modernity, "Publicity" can be included in the modern public media, public opinion, public goods, public demands, public powers, public constructions, and other concerns about modern "public sphere". The understanding of publicity, in fact, depends on the modern information science, modern information technology, modern information theory and proper use of them. In other words, the "information age" and "Public life" is of only different expression paradigms in the contemporary society, and in an open world, the same is their essence. In this sense, the construction of information philosophy also

needs the organic nutrients of "publicity". For example, the emerging information philosophy can resort partly to, comparably, more mature theory of public philosophy and so on.

3.2. Concern about the crisis of philosophy with a view to achieving "information turning" of philosophy.

Philosophy crisis indicates it is necessary that "information turn" of philosophy is coming. The "epistemological turning", and "the four shifts in modern Western philosophy" stated by Professor Zhang Zailin, especially "linguistic turning", all show us that each shift of philosophy is self-help of philosophy. The intrusion of Information technology, information science and information theory in the global scope and at all levels, makes philosophy shift from the "language analysis" and "logical analysis" to "information turning". This, perhaps is of outlet against "End of Philosophy" and "poverty of philosophy". As Professor Wukun said, information philosophy, in the essence, is of "a new philosophical paradigm."

3.3. Concern about the perplexity on "information symbols", actively attribute to effective communication, reasonable transformation of information symbols between.

The real problem here is of "language base". As Wittgenstein's "family resemblance" of language, especially Kuhn's "incommensurability" of scientific "paradigm", so is information. Moreover, compared with language, information is more complex and more difficult to translate, trade and exchange. It is not only related to time and space, but is also discourse boundaries, cross—disciplinary, cross-culture, cross-species or even cross—planets, etc, which are like such Paradigms as "gene shift" and "empathy".

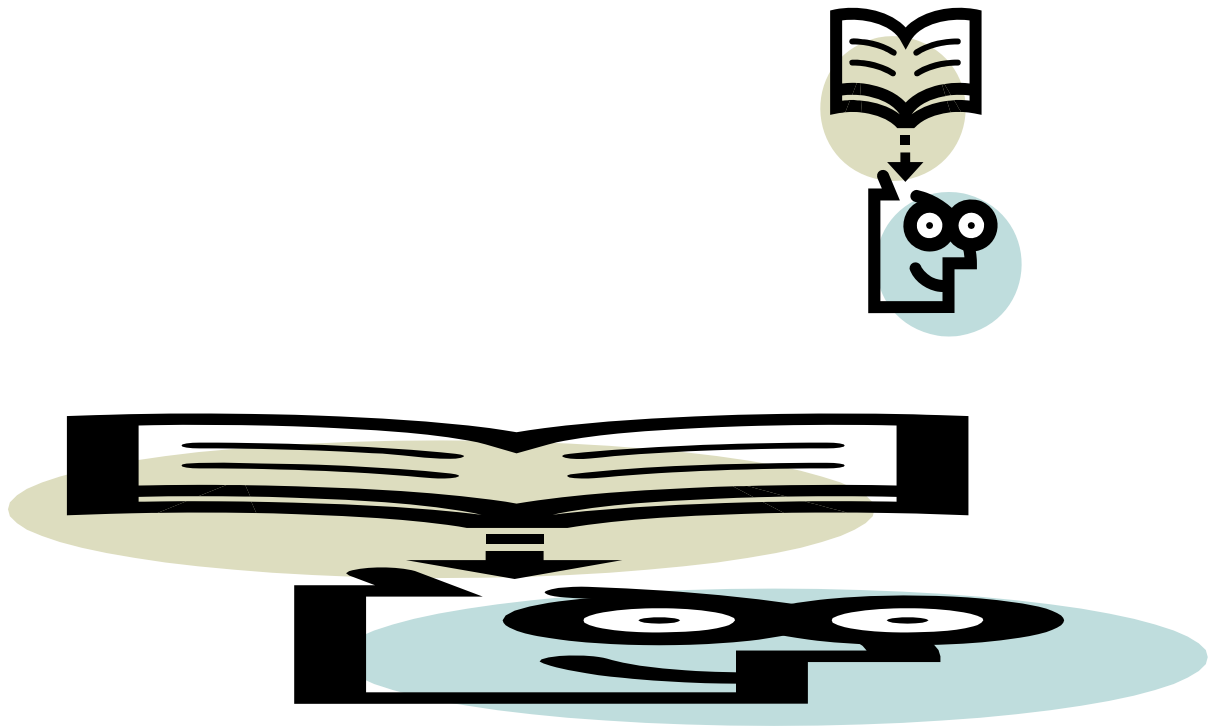
Only when we master the language of modern science (such as a computer language) as well as information related to various disciplines of symbols, diagrams, formulas, codes and their conversion mechanism, besides a comprehensive system of control can information philosophy become "meta philosophy". Otherwise, the study of information philosophy must be superficial and is of "rootless duckweed".

3.4. Close attentions should be paid to the computer and information science, communication engineering, information science, psychology, ethics, linguistics, including the emerging life sciences and other disciplines or professional concepts, methods and theories and systematically combing; be committed to the "holistic thinking" of natural sciences, social sciences, human sciences, so as to provide new ground for "meta theory" with modeling, interpretation and analysis framework.

The traditional reason is on the basis of natural science. Yet reason is different from rationality, which invokes us rethinking on Ontology of reason. As we all known, the reason is no only the ultimate cause, but also the principle of "First Principles" and "rationality". And, "Virtue of reason is not just a semicircle to achieve human life but should be able to spend their entire life, which dominate all our scientific capabilities and all our actions." Human life, "another semi-circle" is "the spirit of science" (Humanities Sciences). Therefore, to understand the whole world of information, our reason should not be confined to the natural sciences, let alone indulge in the social sciences and humanities, but should be in "big science" perspective. For instance, it should be contemplated that how to avoid "one-dimensional" person, how to resolve the issues of identity crisis.

While "cross-disciplinary study" bring "information science" more chance, "meta philosophy" should not lag behind in information age. Rapid developments of "information science" continue to present new philosophical questions, which force information philosophy to make new interpretations. Only more and more attentions will be paid to various subjects connected with the message can we truly grasp the "first-hand materials" about information. If it is true, information philosophy will become true "first philosophy".

Finally, it is stressed that so-called meta-philosophy mainly lies in construction; we need to work together to overcome the barriers of "realm philosophy" or "department philosophy".



References

- Li Ming. (1984). "The Philosophy of Power and the Philosophy of Information ", "Encyclopedic Knowledge". No. 11
- Wu Kun. (1985). Synopsis of Information Theory of Philosophy, Humanities Magazine. No. 1
- Cheng XianKun. (2005). Information Philosophy: From History to Reality. Journal of Technology University of Dalian. Edition of Humanities and Social Sciences, No. 3. P 3
- Liu Yung-fu. (2009). Two Meta Questions of Meta Philosophy:" what Is " and" How Is Possible "," Academics Monthly. "No. 2, p. 38.
- Jin Yan. (1999). On Philosophical Function. "Humanities Magazine". No.3. 1 - 6
- Liu Gang. (2002). The Background, Content and Research Program of Contemporary Philosophy of Information. "Philosophy Dynamic" No. 9, p. 19.
- Wu Kun. (2005). " information philosophy ", p. 22 . Commercial Press.
- Shen Xiangping. (2008) Publicity: Modernity Themes after the Post-modernity [J]. Journal of Jianghai Academics, No.4 P28.
- Zhang Zailin. (2004). The Four Turning of Modern Western philosophy and the Development of Contemporary Chinese Marxist philosophy. "Teaching and Research" .No.3. p 47
- Gadamer. (1998). "The Times of the Rational Science", Preface, the International Cultural Publishing Company. p.3.

About the Author

Wuzhuang Li

Male,(1974-), a PHD student , College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Xi'an Jiaotong University, Xi'an, Shaanxi, China. Focus on the research on cultural philosophy, information philosophy.