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Isolating Others—Origins, Mechanisms and Evolution

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Abstract: The behavior of isolating others is the alienation of life self-organization of exclusion mechanism. Isolation in modern society has evolved into a daily political game pattern, and isolation, more generally, is a hidden psychological activity. This deep field of social philosophy has yet to be revealed and reflected so far. At the core of isolation is personality denigration, thus indicating the deep origin of the core concept of contemporary social science, "social exclusion". The group custom of isolating dissidents suppresses the personality and innovation of free individuals and leads to gangs and closed rigidity of the community. Reflecting on and revealing the anti-modernization nature associated with isolation, while simultaneously indicating the institutional and mechanistic construction of China's modernized harmonious society goal. The division of labor and market exchange in modern society contains ethical implications neglected by popular understandings that emphasize individual competition: the differences formed based on functional differentiation and individual liberation in modern society not only stimulate competition, but also create an inherent need for solidarity among individuals in terms of complementary dependence and mutual attraction. The contemporary society centered on information exchange promotes this direction to a universal dependence mechanism. The modern concept of free personality is not individualism but the internal mechanism of collective social cohesion and innovative life. Exclusive isolation and its closed community no longer have the basis of a modern system.

Key words: isolation, social exclusion, individual personality, collective ethics, organic solidarity, harmonious society

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I. Contemporary Significance of the Philosophy of "Isolation"

The free individual personality and its collective are the social ideals of modern thought, including Marxism. This goal is based on the historical movement of mutual renewal between free individual personality and collective ethics.

The free individual personality is a new qualitative indicator of modern civilization. The history of modernization indicates that this new quality originated from resistance to the oppression of traditional collective ethics represented by religion or feudalism. The latter suppresses the individual personality simply and commonly, namely by isolating others. "Isolation" here is not a noun identifying the isolated, but a verb that denotes the action causing isolation. It is noteworthy that the replacement of traditional communities by modern society has not ended the mechanism of isolating others. Unlike the expulsion ceremonies of pre-modern religious sects, the "isolation" in modern society is no longer based on legal or ceremonial norms but constitutes a serious spiritual injury to the personality of the isolated individual. This spiritual aspect exists implicitly in everyday life, transcending the empirical scientific perspectives of sociology and psychology. Even today, modern individuals are still constrained by various forms of "isolation" relationships, and it

is difficult for them to even transform them into objects of reflection. It demands the exploration of a deep philosophical reflection on the social and spiritual structures of "isolation."

The recent breakthrough in this reflective direction lies in the integration of "isolation" ethics and "exclusion" sociology. Since the French economist René Lenoir traced economic poverty back to the sociological concept of "the excluded" ("Les Exclus") in 1974, the concept of "social exclusion" has transcended the superficial concept of "poverty" and specific "social deprivation" with its universal and profound causal revelation. It no longer remains at the level of traditional moral criticism or social assistance but takes the entirety of social relations as its object. While paying attention to the marginalized and disadvantaged groups that are excluded, it is more concerned with the disintegration of the social-relational bond and the regression of human community civilization. This perspective of exclusion theory has entered various social science fields such as contemporary sociology, economics, political science, and international relations (e.g., game sanctions), and has even become one of the core analytical concepts in education and psychology.[1]Social science has recognized that the factors of exclusion extend beyond the perspectives and control of both the excluded and the excluded, deeply constrained by objective structural, institutional, or systemic existence. However, to date, there has been a lack of philosophical research that integrates this interdisciplinary domain of empirical scientific inquiry. Compared with the sociological tracing of the social conditions of exclusion back to the phenomenon of poverty, the philosophical study of "isolation" behavior reveals a more thorough and comprehensive understanding of "exclusion" as a social phenomenon from a philosophical anthropological perspective. "Isolation" is the "exclusion" of deep personality, different from the external exclusion from a specific perspective in the social domain. "Isolation" is the denigration of personality at a profound level, distinct from the external exclusion from specific social spheres, and is a fundamental and pure form of exclusion that transcends specific reasons. The ethical foundation implicit in the act of isolation, regardless of or disdaining the other party, needs to be revealed through the philosophy of "isolation," which is simultaneously a study of the origin of structural exclusion.

II. Origins and Cultural Forms of the Mechanism of Isolation

"Isolate", as a verb, refers to the collective exclusion and elimination of individuals. The nominalization of isolation refers to the isolated, and it also derives the adjective form of a sense of isolation. The central object of the philosophy of "isolation" is the isolating structure formed

1 Since the 21st century, the concept of "social exclusion" has replaced traditional concepts such as "poverty," becoming a trend in social policy research, poverty research, research on vulnerable groups, and forming a widely focused domain of attention in these areas. See the special report written by Nobel laureate and renowned social critic Amartya Sen for the Asian Development Bank: "Social Exclusion: Concept, Application, and Scrutiny," Amartya Sen, Social Exclusion: Concept, application, and scrutiny, *Social Development Papers*, No. 1, Office of Environment and Social Development, Asian Development Bank, 2000.

by the act of isolation, which covers both the isolator and the isolated, as well as the community to which both parties belong.

A collective is defined in this article as a group of three or more people that can form a contrast between a majority and a minority. However, "collective" is not limited to specific groups but can extend to the concept of the human collective. An "individual" generally refers to one person but can also refer to a minority within a collective. "Individual" can also refer to the philosophical concept of "individuality" rather than simply a numerical concept. Collectives come in various sizes and types; they can be kinship-based or religious communities of traditional communities, as well as relationship groups formed from international alliances to social division of labor or personal contacts. These relationship groups are not limited to fixed social entities but also include aggregations beyond real-time and space, such as laboratories or workshops, military service units, alumni associations, groups of sent-down youth, academic factions, WeChat groups, dormitory roommates, and even temporary contact groups for group litigation, morning exercises or dancing groups in the square. The above list demonstrates the ubiquitous existence of collectives. Compared to Ferdinand Tönnies' classic definition of "community" (Gemeinschaft) [2]in 1887, "collective" is a foundational but less systematic definition. It applies to macro and micro, fixed and dynamic objects, and can support phenomenological descriptions of the intrinsic constitution mechanisms of communities, national societies, and spiritual groups.

The isolation of individuals by collectives is characterized not by external sociological conflicts or pressure but by an inherent ethical judgment from the outset. The legitimacy invoked by the isolating party, wittingly or unwittingly, transcends specific empirical reasons and deeply stems from the anthropological primacy of the group and the equally ancient exclusion mechanism. The anthropological prototype of gathering and labor cooperation, "crowds," has an inherent priority of family and production relationships, and rejection is a natural mechanism for maintaining group unity. This mechanism can even be traced back to the group morphology of animals, with its more thorough microscopic existence being the self-organizing principle of organic life and even negentropy, as revealed by systems theory and the second law of thermodynamics. Isolation thus becomes an ancient ethical custom of humanity with a profound unconscious ethical justification.

Isolation, as an inevitable rejection mechanism for maintaining the integrity of living organisms, includes three aspects: 1. Rejection of others: immune cells can identify various "non-self" antigens and reject them, which is a protective physiological response of humans and animals. Ethological studies have revealed that the exclusion of the weak (or failures) by gregarious animals is a necessary group behavior for effective survival. 2. Correspondingly, the centralized structure formed by attachment to the strong is a necessary internal structure of organic systems. The combination of isolation and centralization in opposition enhances the tendency towards

2 Ferdinand Tönnies: Community and Society, translated by Zhang Weizhua, Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2019.

the authoritarianization and even dictatorship of human communities. 3. The strong and their followers strengthen a standardized group into a closed entity through isolation and exclusion. These three aspects—excluding others internally, centralization based on attachment to the strong, and external relative closure—constitute the isolation structure as the fundamental mechanism of conservative communities.

When individuals, for whatever reason, find themselves unable to align with the collective, the collective will isolate or even eliminate them like an immune system. This phenomenon is widespread in nature: once a golden snub-nosed monkey is isolated, it is considered an outcast and cannot return to the group; ants and bees will eliminate individuals with mismatched pheromones (scents). Primitive humans directly continue this instinct: for example, killing elderly shamans to renew the group as recorded in James George Frazer's "The Golden Bough" (the famous tradition of cyclically killing shamans by the Nemi Lake)[3]; killing elderly and infirm members who had lost their labor capacity to conserve scarce food; isolating patients during epidemics, etc. Isolation serves as a necessary and important mechanism for the self-protection of groups. This natural mechanism of anthropological self-organization will persist eternally. This article reflects on and evaluates how this natural instinctual behavior of isolation, after entering civilization, especially modern civilization, has been reinforced as a mechanism to oppress individuals and construct tyranny based on class and politics: the animal instinct of attaching to the strong and isolating loners has been elevated to collective ethics, gaining one-dimensional value justification and consolidation; the first-person plural "we," the third-person plural "everyone," and even more objective or even sacred "masses" have become representatives of the dominant ethics in different eras. Correspondingly, communities that suppress and exclude individuals develop ethical concepts that discriminate against detached individuals: isolated individuals departing from the community such as "gu" (lone), "gua" (widow), "du" (single), "dan" (lone) were seen as abnormal existences of deficiency and shame. Monarchs referred to themselves as "gu jia" (solitary) and "gua ren" (widowed), even becoming the highest form of self-deprecation antithetically.

The universality of isolation beyond historical transitions lies in the fact that as long as there are collectives, there will inevitably be a need for differentiation and integration. When the different individual minority is excluded by the collective to maintain unity, isolation as a cultural habit will persist endlessly and arise spontaneously. Microscopic isolation can occur in short-term and limited spheres targeting or vaguely targeting specific people and events ("everyone dislikes this person"), with a correspondingly short-term and limited wavering aggregation of closeness and distance in attitudes ("everyone gossiped about this person") - this is already micro-politics. Only in collectives involving important interests or persisting over an extended period

3 James George Frazer: The Golden Bough, translated by Wang Peiji, Xu Yuxin, and Zhang Zeshi, Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2019.

would there emerge overt behaviors of focusing on the isolated object and uniting to win over the majority ("everyone" uses consistent language to form public opinion or consistent actions to cold-shoulder, isolate, exclude, and strike out against a specific individual). The high probability of experiencing dormitory bullying among students, where a majority of individuals intentionally or unintentionally show consistent coldness and alienation towards a particular roommate, [4]can represent the daily routinization of the cultural habit of isolation. Coldness, disregard, and alienation in implicit isolation do not require specific reasons but are based on the fundamental rejection of personality itself, thus constituting fundamental harm and destruction to interpersonal relationships. Similarly, workplace bullying and family bullying, which are equally widespread, represent a hidden culture of isolation that inflicts deep harm on the victim without explicit manifestation. Isolation may not have a specific perpetrator but rather stems from an objective isolating situation or atmosphere. When individuals attempt to integrate into an unfamiliar group, international students' particular affinity towards their compatriots is a spontaneous protective rebound against the sense of isolation in a foreign land. Young scholars participating in academic conferences for the first time may feel uncomfortable at the edge of free conversation during tea breaks, indicating a sense of impending isolation from not being able to integrate into the discussion circles.

The experience of isolation can be long or short, overt or covert – even anonymous, loose WeChat groups harbor the pressure of collective isolation of individuals. From the divergence of opinions formed around debates, to the string of approving thumbs-ups following authoritative figures, and conversely, the "kicked out" isolated individuals, the mechanism of isolation is constantly in operation. Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann's famous research concept, "The Spiral of Silence," from 1980, which explores the formation of public opinion in modern media, elucidates how mainstream opinions can influence individual opinions and behaviors. One key point is that the fear of being isolated by the majority is the internal mechanism driving individuals to abandon dissenting sympathies and conform to mainstream public opinion.[5] It shows that even in the individual freedom of non-traditional communities or virtual networks, the fear of isolation remains lurking in the depths of individual consciousness, directly suppressing free expression and communication. The Internet buzzword "social death" further categorizes isolation as a third state of death, distinct from physical and metabolic death.[6]

4 The vicious massacre case of Magajuz in 2004 illustrated the profound harm inflicted on individual personalities by dormitory-based discriminatory isolation, sufficient to evoke extreme hatred.

5 Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann. The Spiral of Silence: Public Opinion – Our Social Skin. Translated by Dong Lu. Beijing: Peking University Press, 2013.

6 "Social death" refers to the state where an individual experiences social isolation and ostracism due to online violence, resulting in the cessation of social interaction and the abandonment of reputation.Thomas Lynch. The Undertaking: Life Studies from the Dismal Trade, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997.

III. The Anti-Modern Civilizational Nature of Collective Isolation of Dissidents

Under the backdrop of modern civilization, the pattern of isolation embodies at least four tendencies against modernization:

1. The collective monopolizes goals and reduces the individual to a means of the collective, thereby weakening, if not entirely eradicating, the original function of mutual assistance among individuals within the community. Consequently, the community solidifies into a structure of unilateral control over individuals, stripping away its function as a nurturing home for individual members.

2. Through participation in the collective isolation of others, individuals cultivate an attitude of viewing others as means and develop a habit of callously striking others without sympathy. Thus, the individual and the collective become brutalized.

3. Isolating dissidents presupposes the premise of gaining a collective majority, and therefore trains the unethical habit of forming cliques and factions.[7] It is alarming that several reports have revealed the prevalence of clique formation and isolation of others even among elementary school students.

4. The isolation mechanism paradoxically reinforces the obedience and centralization of collective members, strengthening the closure of the community. Closed groups not only stifle individuality and innovation, leading to the stagnation and decline of the community but also tend toward monopolistic possession: "The so-called possession refers to the 'closure' of social and economic opportunities that are monopolized, even internally, within the group partners."[8] The isolation mechanism becomes the basis and root of universal social exclusion.

Assessing the four connotations of isolation structures through Kantian moral laws reveals their negative nature. The essence of Kant's moral law is the structural intersubjectivity. Compared to self-purpose consciousness, the consciousness of viewing others as ends in themselves demands higher standards. The social history of China's reform and opening up shows that once a traditional community deeply rooted in prioritizing the collective over the individual is unshackled, atomized individuals rapidly became self-centered. They not only abandon the ethical norms of the larger community but also become indifferent to the ethical bonds of the smaller family community. Nowadays, people lament the loss of morality and hope that traditional community ethics will

7 The traditional ethical society of Chinese unity abhorred factionalism, from Confucius' teaching of "Being in a group, not a faction" in the Analects, to the debates between Ouyang Xiu and Sima Guang's respective treatises on "Factions", up until the Qing Emperor Yongzheng's "Imperial Treatise on Factions" instructing officials to eliminate factional habits and adhere to impartial righteousness. However, it was precisely the ossified isolating mechanism of the unitary collective ethics' forceful exclusion of dissidents that inevitably fostered the formation of cliques and factions. The constant emergence of "XX Gangs" has become a prominent phenomenon in modern social politics.

8 Max Weber: "Economic Action and Social Structure," translated by Kang Le and Jian Huimei, "Weber's Works" IV, Guilin: Guangxi Normal University Press, 2004, p. 238.

undertake the construction of new social ethics. However, they overlook the selfish and even jungle-like customs cultivated by the traditional ethical isolation of individuals. Therefore, establishing new ethics, especially one that regards others as ends in themselves, requires reflection and purification of the traditional collective ethics of isolating others.

From dormitory isolation to political struggles and even international sanctions games, isolation manifests as an antagonistic behavioral pattern against altruistic ethics. In the special period of class struggle and political struggle, isolation often deteriorated into persecution and evolved into a phase of political gamesmanship. The extreme deterioration of isolation takes the form of racial discrimination and even genocide. The anti-Semitic and eugenic persecution by the Nazis in the 20th century is a typical example of the widespread expansion and extreme deterioration of isolation ethics.

The modern development of the individual in China is constrained by the modern evolution of communal ethics. In the 20th century, the new traditional ethics, after replacing ancient traditional ethics, constructed an extremely homogenized community that suppressed the individual and transformed normal collectivism into an ideology during one period. After losing the ethical foundation of traditional community reliance on family kinship, the individual became an atom (a cog) of the great unity community rather than a subject. The material and spiritual deprivation of atomized individuals meant they could only find meaning in life within the collective; once isolated by the collective, it was tantamount to annihilation. This organizational mode that reinforces the identity of the community is manifested on one hand by the continuous revolutionary mass movements inspired by lofty ideals and, on the other hand, by the dictatorship of dissidents. The daily form of this dictatorship was the "isolation" of dissidents by the ethical community. Isolation was the most generalized, normalized, and foundational form of class dictatorship.

The extreme isolation of collective ethics can lead to cruel and inhumane conditions. The isolated are not only lonely and unsupported but also suffer humiliation. The deepest and most fundamental implication of this humiliation transcends ethical boundaries into the realm of anthropology. T The isolation campaigns imposed by closed and authoritarian theocratic communities, once elevated to an ethical height, are tantamount to human judgment. The theocratic status of neo-Confucianism after Zhu Di led to "killing with the principle". "Principle" became the highest embodiment of the collective: "People die because of the law, but there are still compassionate people; die because of principle, who will pity them?" [9]Since group identity is a fundamental human characteristic, isolation deprives the isolated of their human group attribute, essentially placing them in a non-human existential state anthropologically. Psychological experiments on isolation show that the ultimate limit of isolation is the deprivation of the ability to perceive the environment. While isolated individuals lose external perception, their internal

9 Dai Zhen: *Commentary and Evidential Study on the Words in Mencius*, Volume 1, Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1982, p. 10.

states are filled with the shame of being abandoned by humanity. The combination of loss of the perceptual world and inner ethical humiliation leads to a profound loss of self from both cognitive and value perspectives at the anthropological level. Fearful despair becomes the only consciousness, and thus the extreme consequence of isolation often results in suicide.

The higher the monopoly and closure of economic foundation, social management, and spiritual beliefs, the scarcer the resources for individuals to resist isolation, and the more desperate the isolated individuals become. The isolation and discrimination of theocratic authoritarian communities revived the pre-modern ritualistic isolation, characterized by elevating the isolation of individuals from ethical norms of group interaction to the public and political realm or ideological heights represented by the collective, thereby vilifying the abandoned human state of the isolated as anti-social crimes. Simultaneously, it placed political opponents in a dehumanized, isolated predicament beyond political struggle. The mutual reinforcement of ethical isolation and class politics doubly struck the other party, while elevating the isolating party's collective representative status to the heights of social justice and sacred belief. Therefore, the isolation imposed by authoritarian communities and the isolation of individuals within them possessed a cruelty unattainable in other communities' cultures of isolation.

A characteristic of the special social period in China before contemporary reforms was that from the economic foundation to highly centralized social interaction (work-unit ownership), it restricted private property to the greatest extent while also severely weakening the traditional Chinese family ties that prevented individuals from ultimate isolation. During extremes, class struggle even penetrated families to isolate blood relatives. The mode of continuous mass movements mobilizing the entire society normalized the isolation model of excluding dissenters from the community. The ethical model of "uniting comrades and isolating enemies" was politicized into mechanisms of class struggle and ideological struggle. The isolation of dissidents became a continuous and violent movement to eliminate and destroy individual opponents. The denunciations and struggle sessions were essentially ethical rituals excommunicating the isolated from the community and society entirely.[10] Since what was isolated was not only specific individuals but the foundations of individual self-consciousness, the isolation campaign internalized into a self-annihilating movement with religious cultivation qualities like "fiercely struggling against the fleeting selfishness" and "revolting in the depths of the soul" for all community members, correspondingly evolving the community into a new religious organization of "selfless devotion to the public good."

Modern Chinese history is an overall reformation of blood and geographic communities and their natural evolutionary mechanisms. The social exclusion and isolation mobilized under

10 Associated with expulsion from units is the practice of "relegation." Exile, an ancient form of isolation, was expanded in the 20th century to include large-scale relocation to remote areas away from urban centers, known as "relegation" and "deportation." However, the extreme actions of the Khmer Rouge in expelling urban residents nationwide led to cultural individuals attempting to isolate themselves becoming the very outliers isolated by human civilization.

the guise of class struggle was a sociological manifestation of the unceasing social reformation movements of the 20th century. However, it is precisely the powerful culture of isolating others that exposed the suppression of individual liberty, deeply revealing a compatible ethical juncture between pre-modern patriarchal communities and modern political communities. This paradoxical behavior pattern spanning ancient and modern times manifests in the revolutionary mass criticism claiming to eliminate tradition and the moral coercion to kill with principles, both naturally legitimizing collective ethics to sanction individuals. This convergence allows us to more profoundly understand the behavioral beliefs accumulated in Chinese social organizational patterns and radical movements beyond specific socio-political histories, thereby grasping more clearly the historical significance of China's reform and transition in the late 20th century from the perspective of ethical isolation.

The universal forms encompassed by the isolation pattern can span across ancient and modern times in various forms. For example, the "discrimination" against individuals based on social identity and class hierarchy (e.g., the "untouchables" and the "black five categories"); a milder form of isolation, known as "marginalization," pushes the isolated individual outside the central resources and suppresses their ability to function fully. Resistance to isolation progressed from voluntary self-respecting political marginalization, leading to "reclusion" away from the political center and even beyond customary communities. Resistance against the source of isolation can even develop into subversion of dominant discourse and narrative control, known as "heresy." Heresy, as the extreme opposite of isolation, becomes a lever for spiritual ethics and even social change.

IV. Transcending Isolation: The Modern Origins of the Individual Personality and the Construction of a Harmonious Collective Ethic

Speaking specifically, reflecting on the act of isolation is an important issue in the evolution of traditional Chinese collectivist ethics into modern civilized ethics. Generally speaking, eliminating the habit of isolation is a long-term task for human civilization to continue evolving from a state of barbarism.

Isolation, as a prevalent and enduring cultural habit, as well as the initial stage of aggressive ethics, requires long-term reflection and education to eradicate. However, the transformation of ethical behavior not only calls for moral beliefs at the core of ethics but also demands changes in political, legal, economic, and other social existences. Together, they point towards the evolution of civilization with the individual and their freedom as the goal.

The birth of modern individuality cannot be solely understood as liberation from old ethical isolation and persecution; it is a dual rebirth: individuals resist old collective ethical isolation and persecution, not to become individualists detached from collective ethics, but to construct new collectives beyond the old. The difference between modern collective ethics and

traditional ethics lies in individual freedom becoming an inherent vital mechanism of collective ethics, making individual freedom and the renewal of collective ethics inseparable. This process was typically exemplified in the Reformation of dominant collective ethical entities in European civilization. In 1517, Luther broke away from the church, and in 1521, he was isolated from the church community and summoned for trial. Facing the threat of isolation from the highest authority of the Papal Court and the largest collective of the Church, the individual existence of Luther, in the direst isolation, issued a historical call that is seen not only as the beginning of the religious Reformation but also the birth of modern individuality in his defense at Worms: "Help me, God!" (Deus adiuva me). The singular first-person individual, justified by faith alone, is solitary with God, thus forming the primordial belief community: "God is with us".[11] It is with this foundational belief community that individuals transcend the isolation and persecution by the church's real collective, indicating that the new ethical collective is a fundamental condition for individual freedom. The Protestant model of the individual's direct co-existence with God transcends all collective relationships represented by the authority of the Church, and this highest relationship guarantees that the individual will never again fear isolation and expulsion from any real-world collective and will attain the highest dignity. It was from this that the Western modern individual was born. The Enlightenment's entire premise of modernity, that the individual and its freedom are the natural primary principles, rests upon this foundational belief. René Descartes' proposition of the subjectivity of self-consciousness, Cogito ergo sum, which marks the beginning of modern philosophy, is also based on this belief community that gave birth to the self-individual. Thus, the year 1517 of Luther's Reformation became the epoch of modernity in the history of thought.

Originally, apart from inheriting collective ethics that reject natural instincts, humanity also developed a compassionate attitude of love that transcends the cruel instinct of natural survival. Aiding an injured individual was even seen by anthropology as a sign of the birth of human civilization.[12] This is a new quality unique to humans that truly transcends the animal world: Confucius's radiating inclusive "ren" (benevolence), Mencius's "ceyin zhi xin" (the heart of compassion) as the mark of human nature, and Jesus's universal love based on discriminated

11 *The Holy Bible*, Old Testament, Book of Isaiah 7:14, Chinese-English Bilingual Union Version, Hong Kong: International Bible Association, 1999, p. 1119.

12 Someone once asked the anthropologist Margaret Mead (1901-1978), "What do you think is the first evidence of civilization?" She replied, "The first evidence of civilization is not hunting tools, religious artifacts, or primitive forms of community governance. It is the discovery of a healed femur in the archaeological remains dating back 15,000 years." "Why not hunting tools, religious artifacts, or primitive forms of community governance?" "Because if someone's femur is broken and heals, it means that someone else has helped that person, staying with them long enough to nurse them back to health. No animal survives a broken leg long enough for the bone to heal on its own. Someone else must have provided shelter, protection, food, and drink for a prolonged period to enable this healing process." "The first sign of civilization is caring for the injured and needy. This can be evidenced by the healing of a broken femur." "Helping others through hardship is the beginning of civilization." (From Mead: "Gender and Temperament," translated by Song Zhengchun et al., Beijing: Guangming Daily Press, 1989, p. 302.)

against individuals such as the blind, the prostitutes, and the criminals, aiming not only at children, the elderly, and vulnerable groups but specifically focusing on natural defects or socially non-ethical individuals excluded and isolated by collectives. This foundation is also a key component of Chinese spirituality: "Being compassionate to the young and the old, the helpless and the destitute, the crippled and the solitary, the widowed and the unmarried, regarding them all as my own brothers and sisters who have no one to turn to."[13] Even social miscreants are reintegrated into society through changes in their habits rather than exile. Community assistance after punishment and release is already a norm in modern civilization. As advocated by the social functionalist Émile Durkheim, the purpose of modern social sanctions for crime is no longer revengeful repression but the restoration of the functional integrity of social solidarity, which is why he defined it as restitutive sanctions.[14] This forms an attitude of collective benevolence towards dissenting individuals that is different from isolation. Based on uniformity, collective consciousness exerts a coercive influence on individuals, while mechanical solidarity is reinforced by exclusionary isolation. However, benevolent collective will embodies an organic solidarity where individuals and society are mutually dependent.

In contemporary China, which is undergoing social transformation and facing complex social contradictions just like Durkheim's time, the concept of a "harmonious society" has been proposed. The principle of organic solidarity or a harmonious society lies in the fact that the division of labor and universal exchange in modern society, which is the economic foundation, contains ethical implications neglected by the popular understanding that emphasizes individual competition: the differences formed based on functional differentiation and individual liberation in modern society not only stimulate competition, but the bonds of commodity exchange and personalized innovative technologies as well as the exchange of differential information create an inherent need for complementary dependence and mutual attraction among individuals. Contemporary society, with information exchange as its core driving mechanism, elevates this direction as the pivot of the mode of production movement. In the model of organic solidarity, individuals integrate into the overall society through universal exchanges from professions to daily life. The mechanism of universal exchange is a mechanism of universal dependence, which in turn stimulates the mechanism of individualized innovation, thereby driving the synchronous development of society as a whole and the individual. Thus, it not only naturally forms the cohesion of society but also becomes a new type of community with inherent innovative individual vitality. Based on the opposition between the individual and the collective, the isolating exclusion and its closed community thus no longer have an institutional basis. Respecting and relying on individual personality, this modern ethic, is no longer an individualistic belief external to social collectives

13 Zhang Zai, edited by Zhang Xichen: "Western Inscription", in *Collected Works of Zhang Zai*, Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1978, p. 62.

14 Emile Durkheim: *The Division of Labor in Society*, translated by Qu Jingdong, Shanghai: Sanlian Bookstore, 2017.

but an inherent mechanism through which social collectives obtain cohesion and innovative vitality in modern civilization.

The modernization transition of China, which began in 1978, is simultaneously a transformation of both collectives and individuals toward modern civilization. The collectivist ethics of China, with proletarian dictatorship as its collective will, has lost its monopoly position. The Chinese people have begun to have private property and an unprecedented freedom of choice in occupation and place of residence. The growth of freedom in choosing individual lifestyles and the autonomy of time and space has become the real foundation of individual personality. However, reversing the perception of others as objects of isolation and cultivating the moral belief and ethical habit of viewing others as ends is what enables the individual to transcend the dual oscillation of being an object of isolation and self-centeredness, and gradually grow into a personality that regards both the self and others as the highest ends. The shift from a discriminatory, objectifying "containment" approach to a more humane "assistance" system, exemplified by the 2003 Sun Zhigang incident, represents a modernized interaction between individual dignity and collective institutions in China. This interaction serves as a model for the organic integration of individual personalities and collective organizations, contributing to the realization of a harmonious society.

The shame and desperate isolation that began with Qu Yuan's suicide by drowning, leading countless Chinese intellectuals and politicians throughout history to commit suicide, was reversed in the cultural trends and literary works (such as "The Herdsman") of the early 1980s during the initial period of reform and opening up, transforming into the expressions of grievances and pleas for return to the collective embrace by those who were isolated. In the contemporary era, however, it has transcended into a lofty expression disdaining the isolation and oppression of "solitude." "Solitude" as a spiritual realm and self-respect category unfamiliar to traditional China, transcends the passive forms such as seclusion, avoidance, and marginalization in ancient times. When Zhang Shaohan transformed Zhao Lei's sarcastic style song "Adiao" into a style of pure innocence, the youth in the audience chanted in waves "Accept exile," "Obsessed and unruffled, solitude is your belief," reaching a climax in the cry of "you are a free bird." Art vividly shows the growth process of a new generation of Chinese individual personalities. Chinese people no longer fear isolation and persecution. The mechanism of isolation in authoritarian ethics, which originates from the instinct of animal survival, has lost its institutional legitimacy. Although the habit of isolating others may still exist, it has become the object of civilized education. The new ethical advancement of contemporary times on the ancient virtue of valuing conformity is the care and respect for disadvantaged individuals and groups that were once objects of isolation, such as the disabled, eccentric, and ethnic minorities, and this attitude of reverence for life has even expanded to non-human life. This ethical attitude towards life has become a symbol of contemporary human civilization education. It simultaneously signifies that humanity is gradually moving away from ancient isolationist habits. Admittedly, since the relationship between collectives and individuals is an eternal structure of human social organization, isolation in the sense of ethical culture will continue to be exploited in a confounding way, utilizing the natural mechanism of exclusion. It is

in this perspective that individual freedom, in opposition to isolation, cannot rely on the evolution of social conditions to definitively demarcate its boundaries. Therefore, individual freedom and isolation will remain a sustained philosophical issue.

中文题目：孤立他人：起源、机制与演变

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提 要：孤立他人行为是生命自组织排异机制的异化。现代社会的孤立演化为日常政治博弈模式，更普泛的孤立是隐性的心理活动。这是一个迄今未能揭露与反思的深层社会哲学领域。孤立的核心是人格贬斥，由此指示了当代社会科学核心概念的“社会排斥”的深度起源。孤立异己的群体习俗压制自由个体人格与创新，并导致共同体帮派化与封闭僵化。反思与揭露孤立反现代化性质，同时指向中国现代化“和谐社会”目标的制度机制建设。现代社会分工与市场交换，包含着偏重于个体竞争的流行理解所忽略的伦理涵义：基于现代社会功能分化和个性解放所形成的差异性，不仅激发竞争，而且在个体之间形成了互补依赖和相互吸引的内在团结需要。以信息交往为核心的当代社会将这一方向提升为普遍依赖机制。自由人格个体的现代理念并非个人主义，而是社会集体凝聚力与创新生命的内在机制。排斥性孤立及其封闭共同体从而不再拥有现代化制度基础。

关键词：孤立 社会排斥 人格个体 集体伦理 有机团结（organic solidarity） 和谐社会