

Triple Critique: Formal Logical Audit, Generative Verification of Intellectual History, and Consistency Test with Sinicized Marxism in the New Era – A Review of Liu Tongfang's Marx's Intellectual Measure

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ABSTRACT: This paper examines the testability of Liu Tongfang's arguments in Marx's Intellectual Scale using the text as its sole corpus. It evaluates the work across three dimensions—"logic, intellectual history, and historical consistency"—to assess its verifiability. Sentences defining concepts, establishing boundaries, and describing mechanisms were identified through clause numbering and rule extraction. The strength of reasoning was measured using indicators such as CDI, BAI, NMSI, MES, and SCR. Results indicate: - Cross-domain transfer of "standards" lacks mediating rules, leading to semantic slippage; - Insufficient boundaries and transition criteria for stage divisions risk reducing analysis to value rankings; - Some arguments substitute normative goals for contradiction-mechanism chains, while the transition to intellectual history shows weak integration with contemporary practice interfaces. The conclusion highlights the paper's overall strength but identifies areas requiring conceptual operationalization, explicit boundary conditions, and formalization of the mechanism chain. The framework is transferable for evaluating and rewriting similar texts.

KEYWORDS: Formal Logic Audit; Conceptual Semantic Stability; Stage Boundary Conditions; Era Consistency Verification.

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Introduction

Holistic interpretation has long been a crucial methodological approach in Marxist philosophy, integrating macro-historical processes, social operational mechanisms, and normative value goals into a unified theoretical framework through higher-order categories. However, as academic evaluation standards increasingly emphasize the reviewability and testability of arguments, holistic interpretation has also exposed a series of methodological risks. These include semantic instability in core concepts, the lack of falsifiable boundaries in periodization, the replacement of mechanism explanations with normative declarations, and the difficulty in translating value standards into operational analytical interfaces. Related research indicates that when abstract concepts oscillate between descriptive and normative contexts without clear derivation rules, their explanatory power often relies on rhetorical coherence rather than verifiable logical structures.

In *The Measure of Marx's Thought*, Liu Tongfang employs "measure" as an overarching concept, positing that it signifies both the spatial extension of social existence and the boundaries of consciousness, thought, and value. Based on this, he constructs a three-pronged argumentative structure: "socio-historical stage–form of productive activity–overarching value criteria." While this research theoretically enhances our grasp of the overall structure of Marx's thought, it simultaneously raises critical methodological questions: When "scale" migrates across different analytical levels, does its conceptual meaning remain stable? Do the associated deductions still meet the fundamental requirements of academic argumentation for logical verifiability and mechanism consistency? Based on this, this paper employs a systematic auditing method to examine the argumentative structure of the text, aiming to clarify its theoretical validity and interpretive boundaries.

Research Aim and Research Questions

Research Aim

This study aims to evaluate whether Liu Tongfang's argument for reconstructing Marx's thought through the concept of "scale" meets the requirements of scientific research—namely, reviewability, reproducibility, and testability—across three dimensions: formal logic, the generative nature of intellectual history, and consistency with Marxism adapted to China's new era.

Research Questions

RQ1: Does the concept of "scale" maintain semantic stability between empirical description and normative evaluation? Does its cross-domain transfer possess traceable derivation rules?

RQ2: Does the division of socio-historical stages proposed in the text meet the minimum requirements of mutual exclusivity and exhaustiveness? Are its boundaries and transition conditions clearly defined?

RQ3: Does the argument consistently follow the explanatory framework of "contradiction

mechanism–stage transition,” or does it substitute mechanism analysis with normative objectives at critical junctures?

RQ4: Can the holistic value standards proposed in the text be transformed into an index-based analytical interface responsive to “people-centered development”, “practice-based verification” and “Chinese-style modernization”?

Research Results

The triple audit results reveal: First, the concept drift index indicates significant overlap between descriptive and normative uses of the term “scale” reflecting insufficient conceptual stability. Second, the boundary adequacy index shows that while stage narratives possess macro-level integrative power, their insufficient articulation of boundary conditions and transition criteria hinders the formation of a falsifiable model. Third, the norm-mechanism substitution index reveals that some arguments replace contradictory mechanism analysis with value-oriented goals. Although the mechanism explicitness indicator shows frequent textual references to mechanistic concepts such as productive forces and relations of production, their structural coupling with stage-boundary determination remains weak. Sentence coverage results indicate that the traceability between arguments and original evidence is at a moderate level. Overall, this framework exhibits significant tension between integrative coherence and testability.

Table 1

Dynamics of introducing “Scale” as an analytical category into the sociocultural space of Marxist theory

Analytical Dimension	Description
Gradual transition from empirical description to normative evaluation	The concept of “scale” is initially employed to describe material and spatial dimensions of social production and historical development, and is gradually extended to cognitive, axiological, and normative domains. This transition enables an integrated interpretation of Marx’s theory but also introduces the risk of semantic drift when descriptive and evaluative functions overlap.
Implemented through short-term and long-term theoretical articulation	In the short term, “scale” functions as a descriptive tool for analyzing productive forces, production relations, and historical stages. In the long term, it is elevated to a normative framework for evaluating human emancipation, free individuality, and holistic value standards, thereby shaping the overall interpretive architecture of Marx’s thought.
Gradual integration into the theoretical system	The integration of “scale” occurs through its repeated application across multiple analytical levels, including social stages, modes of production, and value orientation. However, the absence of explicit cross-domain inferential rules weakens the transparency of this integration process.
Planning new organizational formats of theoretical interpretation	The use of “scale” reorganizes Marxist theory into a three-line structure—social historical stages, production activity, and holistic value standards—forming a comprehensive but highly abstract interpretive model.

Active use of conceptual and analytical components	The framework actively employs concepts such as productive forces, production relations, contradiction, and free individuality, yet the linkage between these mechanisms and stage boundaries remains insufficiently specified
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Source: author's own development

Conclusions

Research indicates that Marx's Measure of Thought demonstrates significant theoretical ambition through its holistic interpretation and integration of value. However, the explanatory efficacy of its core category—"measure"—is constrained by factors such as semantic drift, insufficient delineation of developmental stages, and inadequate explicitness of causal mechanisms. Furthermore, its alignment with the Sinicization of Marxism in the new era remains largely conceptual, lacking clear operational interfaces. To enhance its academic robustness, it is necessary to further strengthen the operational definition of concepts, clarify the criteria for periodization, and systematically elaborate on the explanatory mechanisms of contradictions. The proposed triple-criterion audit framework—"formal logic, intellectual history, and epochal consistency"—offers a reusable methodological pathway for evaluating similar comprehensive philosophical texts and provides a normative direction for deepening holistic interpretations at the level of scientific rigor.

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