The genealogy of Apple in China: towards a genetic phenomenological sociology of culture, media and technology

Qing Zhang

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Issued by Graduate School, HKBU
The Genealogy of Apple in China:
Towards a Genetic Phenomenological Sociology of Culture, Media
and Technology

ZHANG Qing

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Principal Supervisor:
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September 2017
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis represents my own work which has been done after registration for the degree of PhD at Hong Kong Baptist University, and has not been previously included in a thesis or dissertation submitted to this or any other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualifications.

I have read the University’s current research ethics guidelines, and accept responsibility for the conduct of the procedures in accordance with the University’s Committee on the Use of Human & Animal Subjects in Teaching and Research (HASC). I have attempted to identify all the risks related to this research that may arise in conducting this research, obtained the relevant ethical, and acknowledged my obligations and the rights of the participants.

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Abstract of the thesis

The genealogy of Apple in China: towards a genetic
phenomenological sociology of culture, media and technology

The state of cultural and social theories is not satisfactory though they seem to
flourish in terms of quantity. Scholars successfully describe most of the cultural and
social phenomena but propose wildly different, sometime even opposite,
interpretations of these phenomena. This thesis offers genetic phenomenological
sociology as an alternative interpretation that goes beyond structure oriented theories
and construction (agency) oriented theories. It proposes to interpret cultural and social
phenomena in the process of their emergence and transformation, and argues that this
process or genealogy is the social ontology of culture and society.

This thesis develops genetic phenomenological sociology through exploring the
genetic side of phenomenology and social theories, and through examining the
emergence and transformation of Apple in China. Genealogy is not only method and
critique, but also social ontology. This is a main theoretical argument and objective of
empirical analysis of the thesis.

Theoretically, this thesis explores the genetic side of Husserlian phenomenology,
phenomenological sociology as well as the genetic side of social theories. These
theories fully develop genealogy as method and critique and imply genealogy as social ontology. But they do not fully develop the idea of genealogy as social ontology. This underdevelopment leads to theoretical problems of subject and normativity, such as Husserlian phenomenology and Foucault’s theory. Genealogy, as social ontology, is a way out of the dichotomy of structure and construction, a way out of the philosophy of subject, and a solution to the problems of subject and normativity. This theoretical argument is further developed through theoretical investigation of meaning context, social ontology, genealogy, practice, encountering and embodiment from the perspective of genetic phenomenological sociology in the substantive chapters.

Empirically, the genetic phenomenological sociology of Apple answers the question how Apple culture emerges and transforms in China. It examines Apple in genesis in China from the 1980s to 2015. First, the meaning context of this period can be largely described as a transformation of electronic culture from modernization in the 1980s to individualism and consumerism after 2000 through marketization. Second, Apple store exemplifies the social ontology and epistemology of genetic phenomenological sociology. Third, the genealogy of Apple advertisements, media practices and media ritualization concerning Steve Jobs and the cultural encountering of Apple in the meaning context of China’s reform era illustrate how Apple culture emerges and transforms. Finally, the genetic phenomenological sociology of Apple technology
further reveals the relation between people and thing, which is embodiment.

This thesis develops genetic phenomenological sociology as an alternative approach in the study of culture, media and technology that goes beyond structure and construction oriented theories. The ontological root of genetic phenomenological sociology, which is the non-subject philosophy, needs to be further developed.
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Chapter 1 Introduction: the emergence of Apple in China: culture, media and technology

1.1 Introduction

Apple is one of the most influential cultural phenomena in recent years. According to its annual report, the net income of Apple is 233,715 million US dollars in the 2015 financial year. The biggest cultural spectacle of Apple is its new product launch events. Millions of consumers buy Apple products. Apple fans flock to the front of Apple stores and queue up for new products such as iPhones overnight. Apple Company, media, consumers and Apple technology interact to result in the emergence and transformation of Apple culture in China and in the world.

Two different kinds of social and cultural theories can be used to explain the Apple phenomenon. On the one hand, some scholars may argue that there are certain social structures behind this phenomenon that determine the actions of relevant individuals and institutions. On the other, some scholars propose that culture or specifically Apple culture is produced or constructed by the individuals and institutions. Both explanations offer profound insights, but they are partial. The root of this partiality can be traced to the classic debate of structure and agency, or structure and construction, in social theory. The structure oriented theories, the former group of theories, emphasize the material, cultural and social structure and they explain why
the culture or society is relatively stable. The construction oriented theories, however, focus on the role of human being as individuals and institutions and they explain how culture or society transform. The presupposition of both groups of theories can be traced to the division of subject and object or the philosophy of subject since Descartes.

Apple culture is changing all the time and it is in the process of emergence and transformation. This thesis tries to offer an alternative explanation of Apple culture from the perspective of genetic phenomenological sociology, a perspective that goes beyond structure and agency or construction oriented theories. What is Apple culture in China today? How does Apple culture emerge and transform? What role do Apple Company, media, consumers and Apple technology play in the emergence and transformation of Apple culture in China? To answer these questions, this thesis examines the genealogy or the descent and emergence (Foucault 1984) of Apple in China. The anchoring practices (Swidler 2001a) of Apple Company, China media and consumers, and the role of Apple technology in the emergence and transformation of Apple culture will be examined. The research question is how Apple culture emerges and transforms in China. The answer is that Apple culture is neither structured nor constructed, but genetic. I shall answer this question in four aspects, namely Apple Company, media, consumers and Apple technology. Describing the entire process of
the emergence and transformation is impossible and unnecessary for illustrating genetic phenomenological sociology. What I try to describe is the key points, thus we can get the whole picture of the emergence and transformation of Apple culture by linking these points. Moreover, I trace Apple culture to certain early social and cultural phenomenon, and explore the genealogy of Apple Culture.

The genealogy of Apple is to be identified and analyzed through two aspects of this thesis, the theoretical side and empirical side. Theoretically, this thesis develops a genetic phenomenological sociology in the analysis of Apple in China. The theory of genealogy overcomes the dichotomy of structure and agency, and the division of subject and object. It is a way out of philosophy of subject since the Enlightenment. Empirically, this thesis explores the practices and genealogy of practices of Apple Company, media and consumers and the emergence and transformation of Apple technology in China mainly from the 1980s to 2015.

This thesis has three purposes. The first is to understand and thereby interpret the emergence and transformation of Apple culture in the meaning context of social, cultural and technological history in China from the 1980s to 2015. The second and more general theoretical purpose is to develop a genetic phenomenological sociology of culture, media and technology as the way out of the division of structure and agency, object and subject, ultimately, out of philosophy of subject. The third purpose,
which I consider a secondary one, is to write a social, cultural and technological history in China from the 1980s to 2015. To fulfill the first goal — interpreting the emergence and transformation of Apple culture — I examine Apple culture and its genesis in a broad social and historical background. This connects with the second and third purposes that examine Apple culture in the social and cultural history of China from the 1980s to 2015.

1.2 Apple culture in practice

1.2.1 The end of structure and construction

Culture theories are flourishing but not satisfactory. They offer insight and sophistication, but conflict with each other and are not operational (DiMaggio 1997). Scholars have criticized existing culture theories as ‘weak’ programs. Jeffery Alexander and Philip Smith call for a strong program of cultural sociology with hermeneutic and historical study (Alexander & Smith 2005). For example, structure oriented theories conflicts with construction or agency oriented theories. There are mainly two types of cultural and social interpretation, namely structure oriented theories and construction oriented theories. The structure oriented theories examine the cultural and social phenomenon from the objective perspective, while construction oriented theories from the subjective perspective. In this sub-section, I examine their contributions and problems. I argue that a genetic phenomenological sociology,
including under its research program sub-theories of social ontology and epistemology, genealogy, practice, encountering and embodiment developed in each chapter of this thesis, is a way out of the two conflicting groups of theories.

Scholars have struggled with the relation between structure and agency (Sewell 1992) since the theory of structure was proposed. They struggle to find a place for agency. Since there is social structure, how could the social change be possible? Structure theory in social science is inspired by the structure in physics and biology. Structure oriented theories were proposed as a response to idealism in the social thought history. This is not surprising because the founder fathers of social science planned to build a social physics in social research. Similar to physical structure, social structure also has its specific functions. This is familiar to us as structural functionalism. But the problem is that this kind of structure theory fails to cover the social and historical aspects of culture. It implies an objective social structure, even though some scholars try to restore agency in this social structure. The main problem is that there is no such ‘thing’ as social structure.

The second structure oriented theory is symbolic structuralism originated from Ferdinand de Saussure and flourished after Roland Barthes, Levi Strauss and others. According to them, meaning is closely connected with symbol. Language, text, and everything existing in the human world can be a symbol and they have a meaning for
human being. Symbolic anthropology and sociology fall into this kind of structure oriented theory. But this approach fails to explain why one symbol has one meaning not the other, how the meaning attached to certain symbol, and how and why the meaning of symbol transforms.

We may find that both approaches are unclear about the role of human being and the place of agency in social structure. Scholars are fully aware of these problems. Both Anthony Giddens’ ‘duality of structure’ and Bourdieu habitus and practice theory try to solve this problem (Sewell 1992). Giddens proposes that structure not only constraints the agency, but also leave certain room for agency. Therefore, social change and emergence and transformation of new culture are possible. Bourdieu’s theory has similar argument that is why it is called genetic structuralism. However, Giddens tries to solve the problems of structure theory but he still limits himself in the field of structure theory. Bourdieu goes a little bit farther and he develops a theory of practice, which I will examine later, but he still fails and falls into the trap of subject philosophy.

The role of human beings or agency is creative. I present some example theories that develop the creative aspect of cultural and social theory. Ann Swidler (1986, 2001b) develops the toolkit theory of culture in action and successfully adopts it in empirical study. For Swidler, people have much more culture in a toolkit than they use
in everyday life. They may choose different cultures into use in settled and unsettled situations. Swidler adds normative action theory with the point that people choose and use different cultures in different situations. On the one hand, the existing culture limits people’s action, because people should choose cultures from toolkits and put them into use. On the other hand, people can choose different cultures from toolkits according to their judgment or will. This indicates that Swidler highlights the creativity of actor, or the subjective side of action in choosing cultures. But the problem is that people cannot get new cultures from old toolkits. Obviously, the creative side of action should be further developed, in order to build a complete culture and action theory. The potential for creative action is contained in Swidler’s theory, but she does not fully address it.

Similarly, contemporary scholars of cultural sociology have developed theories which either indicate the creative side of action or need a creative side of action in order to make their theories complete. For example, Williams Sewell (1992, 2005) examines Anthony Giddens’ and Bourdieu’s structure theory and try to restore the agency to actor. The agency of actor implies the creative side of action; Richard Peterson (1997) examine the emergence of the music industry, in which a creative action is needed; Harrison White (2008) develops the theory of order, identity and control, which examines the emergence of social formations; Robert Wuthnow (1987)
examines the meaning and moral order, and similar to Durkheim’s theory, the creative side of action is needed in order to explain the emergence of new meanings and moral orders; Jeffery Alexander (2005) examines the cultural trauma, and a creative action is needed in order to explain the formation of cultural trauma. The highlighting of creativity leads us to a second type of culture theory, construction oriented theories. Unlike objective structure oriented theories, that cannot solve the problem of the emergence of new culture and the transformation of society, construction oriented theories exclusively focus on the emergence of new culture and the transformation of society. Construction oriented theories highlight agency and creativity in their subjective oriented explanation.

The first type of construction oriented theory is the theory of culture production. The presupposition of culture production theory is the existing of a subject which takes culture as an object. Taking Apple culture as an example, the subject here is Apple Company. But the question is why Apple is popular now, not Nokia, or Motorola, which were popular in the early time. Why Apple culture emerges and Nokia and Motorola culture fails? Obviously, all companies like Apple want to construct a popular culture and sell their products, but some of them fail or die out. These are the questions that the theory of culture production cannot explain. The main problem is that this theory falls into the trap of the dichotomy of subject and object.
Social construction theory is better than culture production theory in the sense that it goes more beyond the dichotomy of subject and object because it presupposes a phenomenological root. However, the later development and common understanding of it lose this crucial theoretical root. Social construction theory describes the dynamic process of emergence of culture and social meaning, without assuming the dichotomy of subject and object. Phenomenological sociology is the theoretical source for social construction theory. Both of the authors of *The Social Construction of Reality*, Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, were deeply influenced by Alfred Schutz. Other social construction oriented scholar, Harold Garfinkel, develops ethnomethodology by basing on phenomenological sociology, even though ethnomethodology mainly focuses on the micro everyday life rather than social and historical operation and emergence of culture. These efforts try to overcome the dichotomy of subject and object and understanding meaning and culture in dynamic and historical everyday life.

But the term construction is not a good metaphor to use, even though it is not as bad as the term structure. It leads scholarly attention back to the perspective of subject-object, which culture production theory adopts. Meanwhile, it fails to supply an operational tool in interpreting culture. The dynamic process of emergence and transformation is still not clear and empirical study is still difficult to carry out.
Researchers adopt their own subjective opinions in interpreting culture, thus agreement on certain culture interpretation is difficult to achieve.

There are also misunderstandings of social construction theory. The critique that social constructionism reduces reality to social interaction is unfair. It is true that reality is there and cannot be reduced to social interaction. To answer the question ‘the social construction of what’ (Ian 1999), what social constructionists claim is that social reality is socially constructed. Thus social reality can be reduced to social interaction. Meanwhile, the objective thing absolutely exists with or without the existence of human beings.

To sum up, both structure and construction oriented theories are problematic in interpreting culture and society. The problem of structure theory is that it leaves no place for agency and creativity. There is no such thing called social structure. If we simply give up the structure metaphor, we do not need to do useless work of restoring agency or creativity in structure theory. For social construction, since it is more likely leading to misunderstanding, we would better adopt a new term. The root of the problems is that both structure and construction oriented theories have a presupposition of the dichotomy of subject and object.

The meaning or culture does not belong to either subject or object. It is not to say meaning emerges in a dialect relation between subject and object, because this
statement adds confusion rather than clarifying the situation. The dialect of subject and object still falls into the trap of the dichotomy of subject and object, or subject philosophy. Dialectic relation, which is similar to social construction theory, does not supply an operational tool for interpreting culture and for empirical research. The meaning or culture only emerges in the relation between human beings and things. Meaning and culture emerge in the encountering between human beings and things and the way of encountering is practice. To overcome the problem of dichotomy of subject and object, I propose a genetic phenomenological sociology of practice.

Before I move onto a genetic phenomenological sociology of practice, I would like to clarify a point about correlationism and briefly propose Chinese philosophy as a theatrical resource for a genetic phenomenological sociology of practice. To overcome the dichotomy of subject and object and to propose that meaning and culture emerge in the encountering between human beings and things does not necessitate a falling into the trap of correlationism as Quentin Meillassoux proposed. Meillassoux (2008) criticizes all the Western philosophies after Kant are correlationism, which says that all the objects are correlated to subject and the thing itself cannot be called as object since it is not related to subject. Both realism and idealism are correlationism. Meillassoux is right in the field of objective thing, the truth. For example, we do know the existing of dinosaur before the existing of human being in the world. What
Meillassoux and his supporters advocate is object-oriented ontology (Harman 2010). This group of philosophers advocates the absolute existing of objective thing, rightly, I think, and attacks a straw man which they take as phenomenology (Zahavi 2016; see Sparrow 2014). In the culture field, it is correlated to human being. Without human beings, there is no meaning or culture. This is the appropriate field to apply genetic phenomenological sociology.

Chinese philosophical ideas on the nature-human unity (天人合一) and rite (礼) are the theoretical sources for overcoming the dichotomy of subject and object (Fei 2004) and developing a genetic phenomenological sociology of practice. Unlike Western religious and modern philosophy, which assumes the division of human and nature or God, Chinese philosophy, along with nature philosophy in ancient Greece, subscribe to ideas of nature-human unity (Fei 2004). No matter the relation between God as creator (subject) and human beings as creation (object) in the medieval religion era, or the relation between human beings (subject) and nature (object) after the god is dead in the modern science era, the relations are subject-object relation in mainstream western social thought. Under this situation, science and technology developed very well in western society. But the theories on culture and meaning are relatively less developed and satisfactory. The Chinese philosophy on the nature-human unity would help to develop cultural theory, which concerns the relation between human beings
and things, between human beings. In phenomenological terms, nature-human unity is the foundation to interpret the ‘care structure’ and ‘encountering’ between human beings and things, and between human beings. Meanwhile, Chinese philosophy provides rich discussions of rite. Rite is the rule of practice. Practice is the key of genetic phenomenological sociology as I shall examine in the following.

1.2.2 Action, practice and genetic phenomenological sociology

The philosophical root of problems of culture theories is the dichotomy of subject and object. In this sub-section, I am going to further clarify these problems through examining major relevant theories and develop practice theory from the perspective of genetic phenomenological sociology as a solution.

Mainstream theories concerning culture focus on the relation between culture and action. There are four conceptions of such relation by four different groups of theories: rational action theory, normative action theory, commutative action theory and creative action theory. Weber examines both rational action and normative action. For Weber, the relationship between culture and action is a dialectical relationship. Social action is not only for ideal and material interests, but also restrained by tradition, or norms. We may call the former rational action and the latter normative action. Weber (1978) divides social action, according to the way that it may be oriented, into four types, namely instrumentally rational action, value rational action, affectual or
emotional oriented action and traditional oriented action. We may say that Weber examined both rational actions, roughly the former two types, and the normative oriented actions, roughly the latter two types. For example, the teachings are the norms for Protestants’ action, and Protestants’ action is instrumentally rational action for material interests, and value rational action to achieve ideal interests to be saved by the God. However, according to Alfred Schutz (1967), Weber fails in distinguishing motivation and reason. The motivation of people’s action is ideal or material interests. Here ideal or material interests are motivations. We normally use the term “in order to” in this situation. There may be some reasons, like traditions and norms, for people’s action. These traditions and norms are the reasons for people’s action. We normally use the term “because of” in this situation. But sometimes people may say that I have this action because of certain purpose. For example, a student works hard because of he or she wants to pass the exam. Here, the true meaning of the term “because of” is “in order to”. We can make these clear when we take time order into consideration. Motivation is connected with ideal and material interests in the future and reason with tradition or norms in the past.

Parsons (1967) highlights the normative function of culture, value and norms in people’s action. For Parsons, culture, or norm or value, is the reason for a certain social action. The term action theory is strongly connected with Parsons and his work
*The Structure of Social Action.* Parsons is not alone, speaking of highlighting the normative role of culture in people’s action. Three years before Parsons published his work *The Structure of Social Action*, Ruth Benedict (2005) published her work *Patterns of Culture* in 1934. Here I am not discussing Benedict’s influence in Anthropology or culture theory in general, and I am not judging whether the details are reasonable, for example, Benedict uses Nietzschean "Apollonian" and "Dionysian" as categories for her analysis on three native American cultures, Zuni, Dobu, and Kwakiutl culture. What I want to draw from Benedict is that she points out that different groups of people may act very divergently, according to their different cultures, which were formed under the influence of certain economic, social and other environments. People act as they will, but they also act according to culture patterns as long as it is formed. Culture pattern integrates society. Both individual and collective actions have certain culture pattern. Other scholars, like Pierre Bourdieu (habitus) and Ann Swidler (1986), make similar arguments. I argue that theories from Parsons, Benedict, Bourdieu (1990) and Swidler are similar, in the sense that the part of their theories that examine culture’s influence on action, or using Swidler’s term, culture in action, are similar. For Bourdieu, the formation of habitus is not discussed here. After the habitus is formed, it functions as culture pattern, norm and value. People have much more culture in their toolkits (Swidler 1986), but they only use
some of them in certain situations.

Communication is a bridge which connects culture and action. On the individual level, communication has an indirect role between culture and individual action. Meanwhile, communication connects culture and collective action. Collective action is a possible way through which a good society can be built. According to Habermas’ communicative action theory (1985), the crisis of legitimacy, modernity and modern society is the crisis of communication. Communication is distorted by ideologies and capitals in modern society. The social alienation of communication is the cause of all kinds of crisis in modern society. In general, Habermas tries to build a theoretical foundation, the communicative rationality, for a good society. Habermas points out that communication is the way in rebuilding the rationality of life-world, a term Habermas borrowed from phenomenology. Clearly, we can identify the following theoretical resources for Habermas’ communication action theory. There are Parsons and Weber’s action theory, Durkheim’s analysis on social integration and collective consciousness, Popper’s three world theory, symbolic interactionism, speech act theory from John Austin and John Searle, Husserl’s phenomenology and Schutz’s phenomenological sociology, and most importantly, Marxism and Neo-Marxism, from Lukacs to Frankfurt School, of which Habermas himself is a leading figure.

There are several critics on Habermas’ communication action theory. Hans Joas
takes Habermas’ communication action theory as an unhappy marriage of hermeneutics and Parsons’ functionalism. More importantly, scholars point out that power-free communication is not possible, especially when we consider Foucault’s theory on knowledge or language and power. We can’t achieve a power-free communication, as long as we use language in communication. I would like to add an extra critique, I think it is crucial, that fully communication is not easy to achieve, if not impossible. Thus communicative action theory is a utopia. The fully understanding between two subjects is difficult. This is the problem of intersubjectivity, empathy or sympathy (Stein 1989; Scheler 1970). It is a pity that Habermas uses phenomenology and phenomenological sociology theories in his book, but he fails to realize this crucial point. Anyhow, Habermas’ communication action theory represents a great attempt to tackle the problem of how to build a good society, no matter whether we can actually achieve it or not. His theory can be a guide line for practice and theoretical development. An example is deliberate democracy (Fishkin 1991, 2009).

All previously discussed theories fail to explain how new culture emerge. According to Hans Joas (1996), the reason is that none of these theories define and theorize the creative side of action. The creativity of action, as Joas illustrates in the introduction of his book, is not a new action theory. He does not try to invent a
creative action theory, but to add a creative side of action to existing action theories. Joas argues that classic theories from Weber and Durkheim already imply a creative side to action. First, Weber’s theory of charisma is problematic for it does not fit with Weber’s own typology of action. Weber’s tripartite classification of authority includes traditional authority, legal authority and charismatic authority. For the former two, we may find the place for them in Weber’s action theory, but for charismatic authority, we find that the concept of charisma is a counterbalance to Weber’s theory of rationalization. Second, Durkheim describes the origin and emergence of the concept of religion, morality and category in his works, from *The Division of Labour in Society* (1893) to *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1912). Needless to say, emergence of new category or morality is not possible without the creativity of action. Both Joas and Mary Douglas believe, unlike Parsons and Jeffery Alexander, that there is no so called break between Durkheim’s early and later works. When we consider the methods that Durkheim uses in his early and later works, we may understand Parsons’ and Alexander’s interpretation. But when we consider the important place of genesis of religion, morality and category in Durkheim’s works, we find Joas’ and Douglas’ interpretations of Durkheim to be more accurate. I take Durkheim’s theory as an attempt to answer the question of how a new category, morality or religious concept emerge and transform. This genealogical analysis is shared by both Nietzsche

Beyond this, Joas discovers five metaphors of creativity in intellectual history. The first one is expression from John Gottfried Herder. Herder attempts to grasp the expressive character of human action. Herder is interested in the mediated nature of the act of expression, as well as in the novelty of expression. This novelty of expression is the metaphor of creativity of expressive action. The second and the third metaphors of creativity of action are production and revolution from Karl Marx. If we say that the idea of expression mainly concerns the subjective world, then the idea of production connects creativity with the objective world of things. The idea of revolution deals with the relation between creative action and social world. These three metaphors of creativity of action are not enough to cover all human action and cannot produce satisfactory theory. Joas continues to examine two metaphors of creativity of action, which define creativity of action, he believes, in a more profound way. The fourth, the philosophy of life develops the concept of life in Europe, and the last one is intelligence form pragmatism in America. The terms ‘life’ and ‘intelligence’ are different ways of trying to grasp creativity. On the one hand the philosophy of life highlights the concept if life and will, on the other, pragmatism emphasizes the
concept of creative intelligence and reconstruction.

Finally, Joas points out that the existing theories are problematic without the creative side of action. On the individual level, Joas criticizes three assumptions of rational action: intention is teleological in nature, the actor is able to make instrumental use of their body, and the individual actor is primary autonomy. Each of these assumptions is problematic. On the collective level, criticisms of rational action come from Mancur Olson’s analysis on the logic of collective action (Olson 1971) and Charles Tilly’s analysis on social movement (Tilly 2003, Tilly & Wood 2009). Joas takes pragmatism and Chicago school of sociology as his theoretical source for developing creative side of action.

So far I have examined theories of rational action, normative action, communicative action and creative action. These theories discuss the relationship between culture and action to the character of action itself. Main theoretical sources that Hans Joas adopts are pragmatism, Chicago School sociology, and symbolic interactionism. These are also the key theories for Schutz and Habermas. Durkheim’s theory on the emergence of new morality and category is pregnant for new theory. We may also track the emergence of new morality to Nietzsche’s genealogy of morals. The later development of this theory would be Foucault’s genealogy of knowledge and social thought. The problem here is that the term creative or creativity still
implies the division of subject-object and it is as misleading as terms such as production and construction. Creative action theory still cannot fully solve the problem of how new morality, category, knowledge and culture emerge for the reason that it still makes the presupposition of dichotomy of subject and object. This leads us to the alternative of practice and genetic phenomenological sociology.

Practice theory has a long history from Aristotle to Karl Marx. All practices are social practices. All cultural and social phenomena can be explained by a theory of practice. One advantage of all practice theory is that it makes the study of culture operational. We can observe the process of practice and the results of practice empirically. But practice theory from the perspective of genetic phenomenological sociology is different from early practice theories. The key difference involves subject-object division. Early practice theory implies subject-object division and assumes that practice is subject’s activity on objective world. A genetic phenomenological sociology of practice refutes the subject-object dichotomy and practice is taken, ontologically, as the way of the existing of human beings, which links subject and object together.

Practice theory is well developed in social theory and philosophy. In sociology, practice theories include theories form Giddens, Bourdieu, Foucault and others. They examine practice empirically. These theories share the same phenomenological root.
In philosophy, practice theory can be traced to Martin Heidegger, Johan Huizinga, Ludwig Wittgenstein and Hans-Georg Gadamer. Practice is the fundamental ontological way of human existence. The way of being in the world is play, game, ritual and, in one word, practice. Encountering, care, play and game have the same meaning as social practice. This is the starting point of all cultural and social studies, or human related studies. We can reach the reality or social reality through language, art (Heidegger), or we can find being from consciousness (Husserl) or I think (Descartes). The presupposition here is the existence of human being. The thing in itself (Kant) and reality in itself (phenomenology) are still unachievable. This is not the concern in the thesis and I will leave it to philosophers. The existence of human being is already a solid foundation for all the cultural and social research. Practice as an ontology of cultural and social research serves to move sociological research from unobservable individual consciousness to observable social and cultural discourse and activities. Most importantly, a practice approach avoids the dichotomy of subject and object and transcends the debate between structure and agency. Practice is the starting point of the genetic phenomenological sociology. I shall fully develop a theory of genetic phenomenological sociology in chapter 2.

1.2.3 Apple culture in the perspective of genetic phenomenological sociology

We talk about culture all the time in everyday life. But, as Hegel states, the familiar is
not necessary the known. Before discussing Apple culture, we should know a little bit about culture, and specifically, which definition of culture I use in this thesis. We do not have much problem understanding each other when we talk about culture. But if you ask what is culture, it is hard to answer and difficult to achieve an agreement. As Raymond Williams (1985) writes, culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language. William Sewell (2005) is also aware of this difficulty. He says that trying to clarify what we mean by culture seems both imperative and impossible at a moment like this when the study of culture is burgeoning in all fields of human sciences. I will not try to give a finalized definition of culture here, but a work definition is needed.

Sewell (2005) develops two pregnant definitions or divisions of culture. In the first meaning, Sewell says, culture is a theoretically defined category or aspect of social life that must be extracted from human existence. Culture is a system of symbols and meanings. Here culture is contrasted with other abstract aspect or category of social life that is not culture. We have two categories here, culture or non-culture. The examples are culture vs. economy, politics, and etc. In the second meaning, Sewell says, culture is a concrete and bounded world of practices and beliefs. According to Sewell, culture in this sense is commonly assumed to belong to or to be isomorphic with a society or a clearly identifiable sub-societal group. The contrast here is a
culture and other culture. The examples are American culture, Chinese culture, cyberculture, middle class culture, Apple culture, or street dancing culture.

Sewell believes that his original distinction between culture as theoretical category and culture as concrete and bounded body of beliefs and practices is crucial for thinking clearly about culture theory. He lists theories of Levi-Strauss and Ruth Benedict as examples for the two definitions of culture respectively. Levi-Strauss’s notion that cultural meaning is structured by system of oppositions is culture in the first sense, while Ruth Benedict’s notion is that culture guides concrete beliefs and actions and is represented in them. For Benedict, there are patterns of culture, but for Levi-Strauss, there are cultural structures. Some arguments and misunderstandings are caused by the failure to recognize the distinction between two fundamental different meanings of culture.

System and practice constitute an indissoluble duality or dialectic. Sewell points out that the concept of culture as system of symbols and meanings is not at odds with the concept of culture as practice. Symbols and meanings are on the moving during the practices and practices may instantiate, reproduce and transform symbols and meanings. Hence, practice implies system and system implies practice. Taking Apple culture as an example here, Apple Company mobilizes counterculture elements in their commercials, like 1984 and Think different. A system of symbols and meanings
is on the moving in the commercials, and these practices use and transform the symbols and meanings into new Apple culture. Thus, new symbols and meanings emerge in this process of practice.

I agree with Sewell’s principle of the definition and division of culture. Following Sewell’s reworking and clarification on the concept of culture, I propose that culture is a system of symbols, meanings and practices. This definition wholly covers Sewell’s first definition of culture and partly of second definition, the abstract part of practice. Taking culture as practice in an abstract sense, culture is a sphere of practical activity shot through by willful action, power relations, struggle, contradiction and change. Meanwhile, my second definition of culture is concrete and bounded world of beliefs and actions. Culture is dynamic, and symbol and meaning are on the moving. Thus, we don’t have a static culture. In this sense, in the first definition of culture, I add practice, which is relatively abstract, comparing with action. And I use action, instead of practice, in the second definition of culture. What is the difference between practice and action? Sewell uses both of the terms but he doesn’t distinguish them. I use practice in an abstract sense and action in a concrete sense. For example, if you want to be a good pianist, you should practice a lot. The concrete thing you do, the movement your hands, or fingers, is action. In this sense, Sewell would agree to use the term action, instead of practice, in the second definition of culture and add the
term practice in the first definition of culture.

Basing on the discussion above, conclusion may draw that culture, in an abstract sense, is a system of symbols, meanings and practices. While, second definition of culture, subculture, in a relatively concrete sense, is a system of beliefs and actions. To make it even more clearly, I adopt the terms culture and subculture to describe two kinds of culture. The former culture is relatively objective and universal, comparing with the later subjective and particular culture, which is the actor’s belief and action. Objective and subjective culture are the terms following Schutz. For the later definition of culture, in order to distinguish with the first meaning of culture, I use the term subculture. With this distinction, we can distinct one kind of cultural studies, which mainly focus on culture as concrete beliefs and actions and other culture theories, from other kind of cultural studies, which focus on abstract symbols, meanings and practices. The studies of fans culture, audience culture, punks study and so on are subculture studies. Thus, the Apple subculture study means the study of Apple consumers (users) or fans’ beliefs and actions, and Apple culture study is the study of a system of symbols, meanings and practices about Apple, which concerns Apple Company, media, consumers and Apple products etc. Obviously, Apple culture is a much broad definition, which may include Apple subculture. The former is the main topic of this thesis and the latter is also included. One crucial point I would like
to point out here is that Apple subculture highlights its role of anti-hegemony (Hebdige 1981), while Apple culture highlights the culture itself.

There are a couple of terms that should be clarified from the perspective of genetic phenomenological sociology. Firstly, meaning is care structure (this point will be developed in chapter 2 theory part and chapter 4), and meaning emerges and transforms in the encountering between human beings and things, and the encountering between human beings. Meaning emerges when humans encounter things or humans encounter other humans. The relation builds between humans and things, between humans and humans. Secondly, culture is a system of symbols, meanings and practices. Here symbol could be the thing, the record of the practice etc. Practice is the mode of the encountering between humans and things or humans. Thirdly, imagination is a kind of intentionality, and is the presentation of meaning in mind and recognition is also the process that human encounters things or human. Intentionality makes recognition possible and empathy makes understanding possible. I take for granted that intentionality and empathy are possible, or recognition and understanding are possible. Our experiences tell us that it is true we can recognize things and understand other people. This is commonsense. Nobody will disagree with me if I take them for granted until we come to phenomenology and phenomenological sociology in the next chapter. The history of phenomenology and phenomenological
sociology tells us that philosophers have not found the proof that intentionality and empathy can be taken for granted. Nonetheless, I argue that we can still start from the point of intentionality and empathy, because we can prove them empirically, even though philosophers failed to prove them theoretically. It is also my ambition to find some empirical case for supporting philosophical theory. In this way, I move form philosophy to sociology. We would say that a theory is wrong if it conflicts with social fact. It is not the case here when we consider the question of to what extent we can recognize things and to what extent we can understand others. In this sense, the problem of theory on intentionality and empathy tells us fully recognition or fully understanding is difficult to achieve, but it also gives us clues to overcome this problem.

To sum it up, this thesis studies Apple culture in practice, or the process of emergence and transformation of Apple culture from the perspective of genetic phenomenological sociology. Apple culture is a system of symbols, meanings, and practice, while Apple subculture is a system of concrete beliefs and actions. Apple culture and Apple subculture are formed in the same process. This distinction is the result of different perspective. By this distinction, I am further clarifying my research topic. Practice is the ontological way of existing of human beings. The genealogy of practice concerning Apple is the process of emergence and transformation of Apple
culture. Apple culture is changing all the time. In this sense, the questions of what Apple culture is or what culture is are misleading and they lead to the answer that they are static culture.

1.3 Research methodology and phenomenological root

Apple is a significant phenomenon in recent years. Millions of Apple users and plenty of news about Apple appeared in China since 1980s. The so-called Apple culture is popular in China. More importantly, it is possible for me to trace the whole process of the emergence and transformation of Apple. This links to the aim of this thesis, the genetic phenomenological sociology theory and the emergence and transformation of Apple. The first Apple computer was introduced in 1970s and Apple was introduced into China in the 1980s. It is not too far back in history. Documents concerning the emergence and transformation of Apple, including news reports of Apple and its leader Steve Jobs, Apple advertisements, and self-reports of imaginations and user experiences of consumers, are available. Meanwhile, it is possible for the participants to recall their memories on Apple and some of the participants are using Apple products now. Generally, using Apple as example, it is possible for me to answer the question of how culture forms.

Three research methods are adopted in this thesis, namely documentary study, interviewing and participant observation. First of all, the documents, including
magazines, newspapers, information at internet, statistical information on electronic development, and so on, are examined. Magazines include China Computer World, Pc World Magazine, China Advertising, International Journal of Advertising, Printing Technology and Printing Today. China Computer World and Pc World Magazine are two of the earliest and most important magazines on computer in China. Basing on the preliminary study, I find that computers were widely used in the fields like design, printing fields, especially in the 1980s and the 1990s in China, so I add China Advertising, International Journal of Advertising, Printing Technology and Printing Today, four of leading magazines in advertising and printing fields, as research materials. That is why I chose these magazines as research materials. I check these 6 magazines in library. Meanwhile, I use CNKI (China National Knowledge Infrastructure) database and the People’s Daily database and search information about Apple and Steve Jobs. The CNKI is the biggest Chinese newspaper and magazine database and it covers most of the existing newspapers and magazines from 1949 until now in China. People’s Daily database covers all People’s Daily since 1949. Specifically, I examine how China computer world represents Apple, how people imagine Apple at different times, Apple advertisings from 1976 to 2015, news coverage about Apple, Apple products and Steve Jobs etc. Generally, I try to describe the change of electronic culture in China from the 1980s to 2015, and examining the
emergence and transformation of Apple culture in this social and cultural meaning context.

Secondly, I interview 16 people who have certain knowledge about Apple, no matter they use Apple products or not. These participants are in their 20s and 30s. All of them from mainland China, 13 males and 3 females, 14 of them hold the bachelor degree or above, and 2 of them have no college degree. These are the convenient samples but they are not students in university. These participants can not represent all people, or even a small part of people in China, but their sharing can verify and supplement of the information that I get from archive study. They are fully aware of the popularity of Apple in China. The questions in the semi-structured interview include four aspects which cover Apple company, media, Apple consumers and Apple technology. First aspect includes the participants’ opinion on Apple and its leader Steve Jobs, and their exposure and opinion on Apple advertisements. Secondly, I ask the participants about media representation of Apple and Steve Jobs. Thirdly, I let the participants share their view on the Apple consumers, Apple fans. Finally, I ask the participants to share their own stories concerning Apple technology, their experience of using Apple products or their opinion about it. What I want to find through interview is the social imaginary of Apple in China after 2000 in Chapter 7, the cultural encountering of Apple in China. The earlier encountering of Apple in
China is presented in the newspapers and magazines.

Thirdly, I examine the flagship Apple store by participant observation. What I expect is to reveal the special meanings of Apple store for understanding Apple culture. I have observed Apple store at Sanlitun and Wangfujing in Beijing and the Apple stores at Festival Walk, Causeway Bay and Canton Road in Hong Kong. I observe the consumers, visitors and Apple store workers in these Apple stores, meanwhile I observe Apple products, decoration and overall arrangement of Apple store. What I try to get is the meaning of Apple store, which is a social relation among people and Apple products. The thesis focuses on Apple culture in China mainland, but I also choose three Apple stores in Hong Kong as research sites. The reason that is Hong Kong Apple store reveals the same meaning of Apple store in mainland China. I study at Hong Kong and it is convenient for me to study Apple stores at Hong Kong. The social relations presented by Apple store at Hong Kong and mainland China are the same to the thesis. The difference between Apple store at Hong Kong and mainland China is not the concern of the thesis. A genetic phenomenological sociology of space illustrates that we encounter in the Apple store, directly and indirectly, Apple products, Apple employees, Foxconn workers, Apple consumers etc. The meaning of Apple store emerges in the encountering.

All of these methods share a phenomenological root that how cultural
establishment and interpretation are possible. This point will become clear after I examine and develop the theory of genetic phenomenological sociology. Taking phenomenological existential ontology to be the social ontology is the foundation of all research methods. This makes sure that we will not go into extremes such as social determination or technological determination. Ontologically, human world exist and human beings act accordingly. It is the start point of social research. Epistemologically, social ontology guides social research, it shows what we can expect in social research and how intersubjectivity is possible.

The phenomenological root of these three research methods includes three elements, which are meaning context, genesis and understanding or intersubjectivity. All what social researchers expect are the understanding of their research participants or research objects. Fully understanding is difficult if not impossible, even though Jürgen Habermas proposes communication theory as the solution of the understanding problems of modern society. But it is not necessary to lose hope in mutual understanding. Similar knowledge background makes us understanding the other possible. Alfred Schutz would call this a shared stock of knowledge. For example, we can understand the other who speaks the same language. Or if we want to understand the foreign, we had better to learn their language. Anthropologists do this in their research. While they carry out a study in the other cultural environment, they would
learn the local language, either a foreign language or a dialect. We want to understand not only the contemporary society, but also ancient or early society in history, thus we need to examine social phenomenon in their social and cultural meaning context. Leaning language in one way to understand the other in their meaning context, and history knowledge makes sure that we can understand historical issues in their meaning context. Finally, since things changes all the time, we should be clear about the genealogy, or the emergence and transformation of one thing, so we can really understand it. The philosophical root of genealogy is phenomenology. This point will be fully developed in the chapter on theoretical framework.

1.4 Organization of the thesis

The aim of this thesis is to examine the genealogy, or the emergence and transformation, of Apple culture in China. The key word genealogy implies the theory and methodology that this thesis adopts. Theoretically, the genealogy of Apple culture explores the descent and the emergence of Apple culture from the perspective of genetic phenomenological sociology. Methodologically, genealogy of culture as method is different from archaeology of knowledge as method in the sense that genealogy implies a phenomenological method and archaeology of knowledge implies the method of structuralism. Genetic phenomenological sociology, as the subtitle indicates, is the theoretical framework of this thesis. The subtitle, genetic
phenomenological sociology of culture, media and technology, also clarifies the research fields, which includes the anchoring practices of Apple Company, media and consumers and the role of Apple technology in the emergence and transformation of Apple culture. After this introduction, the following two chapters are theory (Chapter 2 on genetic phenomenological sociology) and the historical meaning context (Chapter 3 on the transformation of electronic culture in China). Theoretically, Chapters 4 to 8 develop sub-theories of genetic phenomenological sociology, which are social phenomenological ontology and epistemology (Chapter 4), genealogy (Chapter 5), practice (chapter 6), encountering (chapter 7) and embodiment (Chapter 8). Empirically, Chapters 4 to 8 examine Apple store (Chapter 4), Apple advertisements (Chapter 5), media practices on Steve Jobs (chapter 6), consumers (chapter 7) and Apple technology (Chapter 8). The conclusion summarizes the theory of genetic phenomenological sociology in the study of culture, media and technology.

Chapter 2, towards a genetic phenomenological sociology, explores the philosophical root of genetic phenomenological sociology and develops a theoretical framework for this thesis. First, it discusses Husserl’s static and genetic phenomenology. Husserl develops his phenomenology as rigorous science at early stage and further develops his genetic phenomenology in the analysis of life world. The early stage of his transcendental consciousness phenomenology is widely
criticized, even though it is the foundation of all kinds of later phenomenology.

Second, this chapter describes Schutz’s static phenomenological sociology. Schutz tries to answer Marx Weber’s question that how to interpret meaning by using Husserl’s phenomenological method. Schutz’s phenomenological sociology is static in the sense that he focuses on interpretation rather than the genesis of meaning and culture. Third, basing on genetic side of social theories and phenomenology, I try to develop a genetic phenomenological sociology. Unlike the genetic phenomenology which focuses on the genesis of consciousness, genetic phenomenological sociology focuses on the social and historical genesis of culture and meaning. This approach is inspired by the theories such as Durkheim’s study on religion, Nietzsche and Foucault’s genealogy, Giddens’ duality of structure and Bourdieu’s genetic structuralism, or Habitus, field and practice theory. This chapter illustrates the relational ontology and existential phenomenological ontology is the social ontology, or put it simply, genealogy is social ontology. Genealogy as social ontology is the foundation or starting point of all the cultural and social researches.

Chapter 3 situates the emergence of Apple culture in the historical meaning context of the transformation of electronic culture in China. This chapter examines the transformation of electronic culture from revolutionary modernization to romanticized individualism and consumerism, in the meaning context of China from 1956 to 2015.
The electronic culture includes the culture of computer, radio, television, mobile phone and internet. It is examined from three aspects: the state, organization and individual. The electronic culture of revolutionary modernization in the 1956-1991 was gradually replaced by romanticized individualism and consumerism after 1992. This transformation of electronic culture reflects the transformation of social culture in China and is part of it. Through historical and hermeneutic interpretation of this transformation, this chapter reveals the transformation of social culture in China from 1956 to 2015.

Chapter 4 is the social ontological and epistemological analysis or the application of genetic phenomenological sociology on Apple store. It reveals how mobile media and new technologies change our understanding of space and our practices related to space dramatically. Apple store, as a social space, is social relation. Based on this theory, existing scholarships on space can be combined into the theory of genetic phenomenological sociology of space. The genetic phenomenological sociology of space includes two parts, namely social phenomenological ontology and social phenomenological epistemology of space. Using Apple store as example, it includes being in the Apple store and encountering in the Apple store. After I examine the existence of space ontologically and the mode of the existence of space epistemologically, it becomes clear that the meaning of Apple store emerges through
encountering. Placelessness, de-distance and mediation are the three characteristics of this encounter.

After examining meaning context, social ontology and epistemology of genetic phenomenological sociology, Chapter 5 develops other key aspect of genetic phenomenological sociology, which is genealogy. Genealogy is not only method and critique, but also social ontology. The social ontology of genealogy reveals the emergence and transformation of the meaning of Apple advertisements. This chapter examines Apple advertisements as the practice of Apple Company. Apple Company claims that Apple represents counterculture and its advertisements also try to show counterculture image. But actually the counterculture is a popular commercial culture. Apple advertisements in China show that they did not convey counterculture information in early stage and they are not counterculture anymore now days even through there are elements of counterculture in Apple advertisements. The examination of the origin of counterculture in Apple advertisements and the genealogy of Apple advertisements in the meaning context tell us that counterculture changes its meaning in different meaning context. Commercialization, romanticization and aestheticization are the three mechanisms of the meaning transformation of Apple advertisements. Genealogy as social ontology from the perspective of genetic phenomenological sociology is applied in this chapter and the
whole thesis.

Chapter 6 focuses on the role of media practices in the emergence and transformation of Apple culture. Genetic phenomenological sociology of practice theory is fully developed in this chapter. Practice theory is the third approaches, namely phenomenological hermeneutic approach, in the study of culture and practice beyond the functional-empirical approach in natural sciences and natural science oriented social science, and the nonfunctional-critical approach in critical oriented studies. This chapter first examines the media practices, the news coverage on Steve Jobs’ death in China. Different media sources share a certain pattern in the coverage on Steve Jobs. This is the morphology of media practice and the mythology of Steve Jobs. Second, media ritualization is the genealogy of media practice. An analysis of the media ritualization on Steve Jobs in China media from 1980s to 2015 helps us to understand media practice better and reveals how Apple culture in China transformed.

Chapter 7 examines the change of social imaginary and the change of the way of encountering with Apple, or the cultural reception of Apple, in China from the 1980s to 2015. I first revisit the phenomenological root of cultural reception in the theoretical part. In order to distinguish my approach from existing cultural reception theory, I adopt cultural encountering, replacing the term cultural reception, to illustrate my position from the perspective of the non-subject philosophy. The theory
of social imaginary is developed from Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, Cornelius Castoriadis and Charles Taylor. Social imaginary precedes individual imaginary. After the examination of social imaginary theory and encounter theory from genetic phenomenological sociology, I examine the change of social imaginary of Apple from three stages. At the first stage, the 1980s and the early 1990s, the social imaginary of Apple is mainly modernization. The 1990s is the second stage, the period of transition. The key feather of this era is marketization. At the third stage, after 2000, individualism and consumerism gradually prevail as the main social imaginary of Apple in China. In a word, the change of social imaginary of Apple in China from the 1980s to 2015 is the change from modernization to individualism and consumerism through marketization. This change meets the mainstream social culture or meaning context in China very well. This chapter does not claim that the modernization side of Apple culture is disappeared. Rather, it reveals that individualism and consumerism gradually prevail as the main social imaginary of Apple at the front stage and the modernization as the social imaginary of Apple went to back stage in contemporary China.

We often hear negative effects of technology, especially when the technology is first introduced. Technology is neither utopian nor dystopian. This is not to say that technology is neutral either. Chapter 8 tries to explain this through examining the
emergence of Apple technology in social process. This chapter first discusses the problem and the contribution of technology of materialism and social construction of science and technology. Then it develops a theory of genetic phenomenological sociology of technology, which is mainly inspired by the classic phenomenology of technology from Heidegger and new developments of Don Ihde, Peter-Paul Verbeek and others. This chapter examines the emergence of technology rather than the effects of technology after it is introduced. By doing so, I hope we can have a new understanding of technology and its role in society from the perspective of genetic phenomenological sociology.

There are four main terms in genetic phenomenological sociology of technology, which are embodiment, mediation, potentiality, and intentionality. Mediation describes the role of technology in the relation between human beings and reality. The potentiality is a term that I used to describe the character of things. The potentiality of things shows the capacity of the thing to be encountered. Latour uses the term agency to describe this character. But it is misleading. Nonhuman does not have agency. Agency only belongs to human beings. Latour would say that the agency of nonhuman is passive agency and that passive agency is different from human’s positive agency. Therefore, the agency of nonhuman is only a metaphor. It is preferable to use different terms to describe different situation. Potentiality is a good
term that can best describe the character of nonhuman. We use it in daily life and it has also been used in traditional philosophy as a contrast against actuality. Thus, human has intentionality, which creates the way of encountering, while nonhuman has potentiality, to be encountered. Based on this crucial distinction, I develop a genetic phenomenological sociology of media and technology. Embodiment is the key word of this theory and it links potentiality and intentionality, the thing and human being.

In the conclusion, Culture in practice: the genealogy of Apple culture, I summarize the thesis through the term culture in practice. The whole thesis illustrates how culture works and how new culture emerges and transforms. Culture is a system of symbols, meanings and practices. Meaning emerges in the encountering. Practice is the way of living in the world, of encounter. In a narrow and phenomenological definition, only culture in practice, or living culture is culture. In a broad definition, which is also a definition that we use in everyday life, culture includes culture in history, culture in memory and culture in practice. The anchoring practices of Apple Company, media and individuals and the role of Apple technology in the genealogy of Apple culture in China show not only how culture works but also how new culture emerges and transforms. Apple culture and Apple technology emerge and transform in the social and historical process. The emergence and transformation of Apple is the genealogy, as social ontology, of Apple in China.
Chapter 2 Towards a genetic phenomenological sociology: genealogy and social ontology

2.1 Introduction

Genetic phenomenological sociology is the approach I develop in this thesis. In this chapter, I clarify what genetic phenomenological sociology is through the philosophy of non-subject and illustrate how it helps to overcome the dichotomy of structure and agency in social theory and overcome the dichotomy of subject and object in general. The philosophy of non-subject is the theoretical foundation for genetic phenomenological sociology, for the theories from the perspective of genetic phenomenological sociology, such as meaning context in chapter 3, social ontology and epistemology in chapter 4, genealogy in chapter 5, media practice in chapter 6, cultural encountering in chapter 7, embodiment in chapter 8. Social ontology and genealogy are the two key aspects of a genetic phenomenological sociology. Social ontology as relational ontology and genealogy as social ontology provide alternative explanation for social and cultural phenomenon, beyond structure and agency, or construction, oriented theory.

In this chapter, I first examine Husserl’s static and genetic phenomenology and then move to Schutz’s static phenomenological sociology. Both Husserl and Schutz’s theories imply but not fully develop a genetic side of phenomenological sociology. In
the third part, I develop a genetic phenomenological sociology by exploring genetic side of phenomenology from Husserl and genetic side of sociological theories from scholars such as Foucault and Durkheim. The lack of the development of genealogy as social ontology causes problems of subject and normativity in social theory and phenomenology. Genealogy as social ontology overcomes these problems. The development from static phenomenology, genetic phenomenology, static phenomenological sociology to genetic phenomenological sociology represents theoretical advancement.

2.2 Static and genetic phenomenology: from strict science to life world

Husserl devotes his whole life to develop and to prove that phenomenology is a strict science, which is a proto science for all nature sciences and humanities. Logic Investigation (Husserl 2015), Philosophy as a Strict Science (Husserl 2010) and Idea I (Husserl 2012) represent Husserl’s dream of strict science, even though his follow colleagues and students criticize that Husserl is turning back to idealism, ego centered philosophy and takes transcendental ego as his starting point in Idea I. In his later academic life, Husserl pays more attention on genetic phenomenology, intersubjectivity and life world. The relevant works in this period are Cartesian Meditations (Husserl 2002), which is based on his Pairs’ lecture in 1929, The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology (Husserl 2001) and the article
‘The origin of geometry’ (Husserl 2002). The latter two writings, together with the works form Durkheim, Schutz and Foucault, inspire my thesis. The reason for Husserl’s idealist turn is that when Husserl cannot prove his strict science through speculative philosophy on the theoretical level, he turns to empirical life world in order to find evidence to prove it. Husserl and continental philosophers would not agree with me on this point because for them, all philosophies are speculative philosophies. Moreover, it is a traditional belief, for example in Descartes’ doubt, David Hume’s skepticism and Kant’s reason, that experience and phenomena cannot be taken for granted. Husserl, like most of the continental philosophers, tries to build a grand theory, a firm foundation for explaining nature world and human society. For Husserl, we can achieve this foundation through examining our consciousness, and we can achieve the things themselves in consciousness. Things present themselves to us in our consciousness. In this sense, Husserl’s phenomenology is a conscious phenomenology, though it is a transcendental one.

Husserl’s phenomenology can be the foundation for social research, especially the later works in his genetic phenomenological period, together with the development of phenomenology by Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Sarthe, Levinas, and others. It is also strongly connected with analytic philosophy in the English-speaking world, in the sense that both of them deal with the similar topic, directly and indirectly, such as
language, communication, mind, society, intentionality, and intersubjectivity. Meanwhile phenomenological methods share analytic sense. That is why Husserl calls phenomenology an analytic phenomenology. Habermas, more or less, combines continental philosophy and analytic philosophy, in the sense that he develops life world theory, which is obviously adopted from Husserl, and his communication theory by combining philosophy of language form John Searle (2010).

Towards the end of his life, Husserl realizes that it is the time to end his dream of strict science. Husserl realizes that he has not achieved his philosophical goal. Husserl gives us more questions than the answers. But this does not have even a tiny impact on that Husserl is a leading philosopher in the 20th century. Open questions that Husserl proposed supply much more information than closed system which Husserl dreamed and some philosophers achieved. For example, Heidegger builds a relative closed system of his existential philosophy. We may say, following Whitehead’s statement that all of western philosophy is a footnote to Plato, that the 20th philosophies are footnotes to Husserl. This is especially true in Germany and France, for example, the philosophy from Scheler, Heidegger, Schutz, Althusser, Gadamer Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, Levinas, Derrida, Ricoeur etc. Heidegger says that his has read Husserl’s Logic Investigation for eight years in his article ‘My Road to Phenomenology.’ Sartre moved to Berlin and Freiburg in order to attend Husserl’s
class. In Heidegger’s memory, Sartre, whose German was not very good at that time, always asked Husserl question. Sartre read Idea I extensively. Later phenomenologists develop their own theories, which are different or even opposite to Husserl’s theory. The history of phenomenology can be seen as a history of betrayals against Husserl. Anyhow, all of them are inspired by Husserl’s phenomenology and carry the spirit of Husserl’s phenomenology, which is “to the things themselves”.

2.2.1 Static phenomenology

Husserl’s phenomenology is a static phenomenology in the first place. In the slogan of phenomenology, to the things themselves, the things are static things. The consciousness, where Husserl finds things, is a static consciousness at a certain moment. Intentionality is the function which links things and consciousness. It has the potential to be a dynamic or genetic process, but Husserl pays no attention on this dynamic or genetic side at his early works. The question Husserl deals with is how cognition possible. This question can be answered on a static level. Logically, phenomenology cannot move to genetic stage if we cannot find the answer to this question.

What does it mean to speak of the things themselves? It means that we understand the things as they present to us. In the process of understanding, we should suspend all our judgments, attitudes and knowledge. All nature attitudes and knowledge should
be bracketed. If we can achieve this goal, we find a certain starting point or ontology for our world.

The next question when we encounter phenomenology is that why Husserl takes consciousness as the starting point of his ambitious project. The simple answer is that the things present to us in our consciousness. The consciousness covers the lived experience. The division of the thing and consciousness is similar to Descartes’ division of body and mind, or thing and spirit. The difference is that Descartes stops at I Think, which he takes as a firm foundation for his philosophy, and Husserl goes further by tracing the things in consciousness. Anyhow, we can see clearly that Descartes has a big influence on Husserl for this point. One of Husserl’s books Cartesian Meditations is also an evidence for Descartes’ influence.

The analysis of consciousness connects with Husserl’s intentionality theory, which is a key theory of phenomenology. Husserl adopts this term from Franz Brentano. Consciousness is the result of intentionality. Consciousness is our consciousness and intentionality is our ability of intention. If we can understand intentionality, then we can understand consciousness. The next question would be what is intentionality. Questions of what is consciousness and what is intentionality are the same question asked from different perspectives. Consciousness is always the consciousness of something. The consciousness of something is intentionality. Husserl uses the term
noesis to describe the act of consciousness, and the term noema to describe the thing at which the consciousness acts. Here the thing is not necessary a real thing. It can be real or ideal.

How can we achieve the things themselves? Husserl develops phenomenological reduction as method. In his later works, Husserl makes it clear that phenomenological reduction is transcendental phenomenological reduction. All principles of phenomenological methods are principles of intuition. We can achieve the goal of to the things themselves through intuition. Carrying out a phenomenological reduction means that we have to suspend our judgments and bracket our nature attitudes, and all that we use is our intuition. Intuition includes intuition of essence and intuition of category. For example, we notice one kind of color and we get the information that this is a color. This is the intuition of category and we recognize the category of color. Intuition of essence takes place when we refer this color as red. Red is the essence of this color in the sense that the thing that red represents, not the word red.

Husserl promises to find evidence for phenomenology. Husserl uses the term Evidence in the sense that it is the final truth about the world. The method that Husserl used to achieve this Evidence is intuition. Husserl is not satisfied with his own solution to Evidence and intuition. In the six studies in Logic Investigation, Husserl uses the whole chapter 5 to discuss Evidence, and chapter 6 to discuss
intuition, including sense intuition and category intuition. He intended to revise these two chapters for the republished version, but he gave up the revision at the end because he cannot find a better solution.

Up till now, we are clear about what is intentionality and consciousness. But where do we, human beings, get this intentionality and consciousness at the very beginning of our lives. Husserl tries to, but never, gives a satisfactory answer of this question to himself and other scholars. If transcendental intentionality and consciousness are possible, then the problem is solved. Transcendental intentionality and consciousness are necessary for phenomenology. Unfortunately, Husserl has not proved that they are possible. Neither did other philosophers from ancient times to the present. From Aristotle to Kant, from St Augustine to Thomas Aquinas, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and others, the question shifted to the transcendental nature, transcendental God, transcendental consciousness, transcendental body, transcendental ego, or other concepts. But none of the philosophers actually solve this problem.

Probably, we cannot blame Husserl for not solving the problem of transcendental intentionality and consciousness since nobody else can solve it. Many philosophers claim that they have solved this ontological problem, but they are over-confident. For example, Heidegger proposes a fundamental ontology as an opposite to metaphysics in human history, the ontology of Dasein. Heidegger builds a wonderful philosophy of
social world but his fundamental ontology is actually social or human ontology, and not as fundamental as he believes. Husserl has not found evidence for transcendental intentionality in theory. But we may argue that this intentionality is possible in everyday life for we can recognize things and have knowledge about them. To what extent that we can recognize things and have knowledge is the other question. This gives us a clue that we may take the possibility of intentionality as a granted basis for empirical research. It leads us to the empirical study of phenomenological sociology.

2.2.2 Genetic phenomenology

In 1921, Husserl writes two articles to discuss static and genetic phenomenology (Husserl 2001a). Husserl develops a genetic phenomenology from his static phenomenology. More specifically, Husserl explores the genetic side of his phenomenology in his later academic life. Static phenomenology is not necessary contrary to genetic phenomenology. Static phenomenology is the foundation of, and always has a potential to develop, a genetic phenomenology.

What we discussed in previous sub-section is static phenomenology. I did not discuss the constitution which Husserl takes as static phenomenology and leave it to this sub-section. In the previous sub-section, what we discussed is mainly the structure of constitution. That is the first level of phenomenology. The second level of phenomenological analysis is constitutive phenomenology, and the third level of
phenomenological analysis is genetic phenomenology. We are going to talk about the latter two levels in this sub-section.

Constitution is the bridge between static and genetic phenomenology. Phenomenological investigation is static in the sense that it only examines the object and consciousness about object at certain moment. Actually, the static analysis does not take time into account. In this sense, constitution is static. But constitution involves the dynamic process of noesis and noema, and the process of consciousness formation. In this sense, constitution is genetic. Constitution involves retention, protention and the stream of consciousness. Inner-time consciousness is another key terms in Husserl’s phenomenology and it is inspired by Henri Bergson’s theory on time and consciousness.

Let me use an example of film to illustrate constitution and Inner-time consciousness. When we watch a movie, we are watching 24 static pictures moved at 1 second. Thus we get a dynamic sense of film and it seems that film presents us a real living world. When we see picture B among the 24 pictures, we have the ability to keep in the mind picture A, which has just passed by. This function is retention. Meanwhile we also take picture C in advance. This function is protention. The ability of retention and protention is the ability of inner-time consciousness. Both the abilities of retention and protention are social constructed, or learned. It is not difficult
to understand the process of retention, because we just see picture A. But how can we
have the ability of protention of picture C? The answer is we learn through our
experiences. The key point here is that protention is not just a guessing without any
support information. If the Picture B is about a running horse, we can expect the horse
is keeping on running in the picture C. What if the picture C is not as we expected?
Then the surprising comes. I should make it clear that the example of film is not a
right example but a good example. It is not right because the fact is that film is 24
pictures move in 1 second. We can change the film of running horse to the real
running horse, and then it will be a right example. Constitution is not genetic, but the
genesis of constitution is. Constitution is only about the picture B in our example,
even though it takes Picture A and C into consideration. So it is not genetic. If we
considering a series of constitutions, let say the constitutions of A, B and C, then this
is a genetic process.

We have talked about the constitution of things so far. There is one kind of special
“thing”, human being. How can we constitute the other and how can we understand
other people’s consciousness? This leads us to the problem of intersubjectivity, which
is one of the two key problems in Husserl’s phenomenology. The first problem is
about intentionality, which we have discussed. The second problem is about
intersubjectivity, about how understanding possible. Certainly, we can constitute the
other as we constitute the things at one level, for example, we can get the physical information about a man that he is a 1.8 meters tall. But at this level, we are not treating the other as an alter ego. The problem we want to solve here is how we understand the other as an alter ego. Husserl examines intersubjectivity mainly in his *Cartesian Meditation* (Basing on two Pairs lectures in 1929. 2002), which was first published in 1931 in French translated by Gabrielle Peiffer and Emmanuel Levinas. The latter translator, Levinas criticizes both Husserl and Heidegger’s philosophies are ego-centered.

Husserl believes that he solves the problem of intersubjectivity in Cartesian Meditations, especially in the fifth meditation. Husserl’s solution for the problem of intersubjectivity is empathy. He believes that we can understand the other through empathy. However, Husserl does not solve the problem. Rather he introduces another problem, the problem of empathy. We need a transcendental empathy here, just as we need a transcendental consciousness for cognition, in order to make intersubjectivity possible. Critics of intersubjectivity and empathy are Husserl’s followers, like Max Scheler, Heiddeger, Schutz and Edith Stein. Scheler (1970) criticizes Husserl’s empathy and he proposes feeling as a solution. Feeling is not any better than empathy. Schutz criticizes Husserl’s transcendental solution for both intentionality and intersubjectivity and he develops, empirically, the shared stock of knowledge as the
Genetic phenomenology only exists on the individual, psychological level as we discussed about the constitution. Husserl would not agree with the last sentence, at least at his early stage of strict science, because he distinguishes his phenomenology from psychology. I, following Schutz, try to develop an empirical phenomenological sociology. So I focus on the empirical implication of Husserl’s theory. Here comes his theory of life-world. Life-world is the meaningful world that human lived. Life world is the base of intuition, which means that things themselves are in, and only in, the life world. Life world is different from the objective and scientific world. Habermas makes clear the concept of life-world by distinguishing system from life-world. The concept of scientific world from Husserl reminds us other terms about modern world, such as Marx’s alienation, Weber’s iron cage, Lukacs’ reification, Heidegger’s the age of world picture, Guy Debord’s the spectacle, Habermas’ system.

Life world is the key point of Husserl’s exploration of social and historical side of world. In the article on static and genetic phenomenology (Husserl 2001a), Husserl states that he want to build a systematic phenomenology, which includes the historical side of the world. This “constitutive” phenomenology is a phenomenology of genesis. I will use the term construction instead of constitution when I discuss about the social and historical side of world. This follows Berger and Luckman. The word
construction is widely used after they published their book the construction of social world. The word constitution is reserved for philosophical, individual and psychological discussion.

At the very later stage of his academic life, Husserl’s genetic phenomenology contains more implications of genetic phenomenological sociology. Husserl leaves us with a clue to genetic phenomenological sociology, with the publication of his last book, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (2001b), and his manuscript “On the Origin of Geometry” (2002). A close examination of this works will be carried out later. A thrust of Husserl’s phenomenology is the turn from transcendental consciousness phenomenology to the relatively empirical life world. Not many scholastic philosophers would agree that Husserl turns from philosophy to social research though. I am not going to argue about this point in this thesis. What I am trying to do is, following Husserl’s phenomenological spirit and his latter works, to develop a genetic phenomenological sociology and put it into empirical study.

Frances Chaput Waksler (2010) applies Husserl’s phenomenology into empirical study. She gives us a vivid story about the New Orleans sniper. In January 7, 1973, the sniper, named Mark James Essex, kills seven people and hurts nine others by shooting from the Howard Johnson’s Motel in New Orleans. The sniper was gunned down by police that night at about 8:50. The story was not end and the police continued to
search for the other sniper or snipers. People, including policemen, believe that the other sniper does exist. Later report confirmed that the other, a second sniper, does not exist. The author’s goal is, in her own words, “to follow Husserl’s recommendation to explore how, in a given situation, the other is constituted, how people, with their general procedures and resources, use them to constitute an Other in a specific situation—one in which the very existence of that Other is problematic.” (Waksler 2010: 3). The author achieves her goal by this book. She mainly uses Husserl’s Cartesian Meditations as a guide book in analyzing the constitution and the unconstitution of the other sniper.

Waksler’s sniper study is a phenomenological study and it is a bridge from Husserl’s phenomenology to sociology. Husserl turns from strict science at early stage to life world at later stage, or form static phenomenology to genetic phenomenology. The work Cartesian Meditation is wrote at the later stage. This turn makes it possible that Waksler applies Husserl’s phenomenology to an empirical study. In this sense, Husserl’s theory on life world and genetic phenomenology is the bridge from philosophy to social research. In the next sub-section, I examine the first fruit from the scholar who crosses this bridge. That is Schutz’s static phenomenological sociology.
2.3 Static phenomenological sociology: form life world to social world

Schutz’s sociology is inspired by Husserl’s phenomenology, so I use the term phenomenological sociology, as it is used in the title of the English translation of his book, to describe Schutz’s theory (Schutz 1967). The original title of his book, translated literally, is The Meaningful Construction of Social World: An Introduction to the Interpretive Sociology, which was published in 1932. Husserl gives a high evaluation on this book. Husserl believes Schutz is the one who truly understands his phenomenology. We should notice that the time Husserl gives this evaluation is around 1929, when Husserl gives his Paris lecture on Cartesian Meditations. Husserl focuses on life world and intersubjectivity at this time. So we may say that, for Husserl, Schutz truly understands Husserl’s later phenomenology. Husserl tries to show us how cognition is possible and how knowledge is possible, whereas Schutz tries to prove that how society possible, how understanding possible. In this sense, Schutz develops Husserl’s life world theory to social world theory. After Schutz, theories of social construction and ethnomethodology are developed under the inspiration of his phenomenological sociology.

2.3.1 Schutz’s static phenomenological sociology

Schutz’s phenomenological sociology is a combination of Weber’s interpretive sociology and Husserl’s phenomenology. Schutz (1967) tries to use Husserl’s
phenomenology to answer Weber’s unexamined question of how to interpret meaning and Husserl’s own question of how to understand other people. Both questions are similar. If we can interpret other people’s meaning, we can understand other people. Schutz criticizes Weber’s action and meaning theory and tries to further develop it. Schutz states clear that his critique of Weber’s theory does not mean he denies it. Rather he tries to develop it and to build a solid root for it. It is a great achievement in social science that Weber connects meaning and action and develops his action theory. But we cannot achieve the meaning of action only through observation. Let us take the example of a man is cutting a tree; we cannot achieve the meaning of cutting through observation of his action whether his motive is earning money or getting firewood. If we really want to know what the cutting means to the man, we need to know the relevant meaning context. For example, the meaning context of whether the man is a worker or a farmer. The more information we know about the man, the more accurate the meaning of the cutting we can get. To solve Weber’s problem, Schutz first distinguishes ‘because of motive’ and ‘in order to motive’ according to time order. The man cutting the tree, because the tree shades his garden from the sunshine, thus the flower cannot get enough sunshine. Helping the flower getting enough sunshine is the because of motive of his action of cutting. The tree shades his garden is the fact before he start to cut the tree. If the man cuts the tree only for firewood, then getting
firewood is the in order to motive of his action.

A further development of Schutz is that he makes a clear distinction between subjective meaning and objective meaning. The definition of subjective meaning is clear to us. It is the meaning from subject. For example, the meaning of cutting a tree to the man is a subjective meaning. The objective meaning is an odd term. It is not the other people’s understandings of the meaning of cutting, because these understandings of the meaning of cutting are the subjective meaning of the other people. It is the ideal meaning, like an ideal object, for certain action. People may have different interpretations for certain action, but the interpretations are similar or near to this ideal meaning. Schutz calls this ideal meaning ‘objective meaning.’ Knowledge about subjective and objective meaning is the foundation of understanding the other.

If we can understand the people in surrounding and contemporary world, then we can understand our predecessors, and our late generations can understand us in the similar way. Here an important thing we should notice, that we could understand our predecessors only if we put the sighs and languages into their meaning context. Kittler call this meaning context the discourse network (Kittler 1990) and Schutz (1989) also describes meaning context as reference structure from subjective perspective.

Schutz does not accept that Husserl solve the problem of understanding by his intersubjectivity and empathy theory. Our discussions above show that Schutz gives
his own solution to this question. That is the sign and language system. This system makes understanding possible. This solution is similar to Habermas’ communication theory. Thus, Schutz transforms understanding problem to cognition or intentionality problem and he does not aware it or this is not his concern. Empirically, human being can cognize, but theoretically, scholars, including Husserl, cannot prove that cognition or intentionality is possible without a transcendental consciousness. Good thing is that we can get an agreement that human being has the ability of cognition. This is the presupposition of humanity and social science. Schutz spends one chapter among six to deal with the sign and language system in his unfinished book *The Structure of the Life-world*. This shows that Schutz, for his whole academic life, pays strong attention on sign and language in understanding, and he believes that he has solved the problem of intersubjectivity through his theory on sign and language.

### 2.3.2 Social construction and ethnomethodology

Schutz’s four main followers are his three graduate students at The New School, Peter Berger, Thomas Luckman and Helmut R. Wagner, and an outside follower, Harold Garfinkel. Berger and Luckman and Garfinkel develop their own theories basing on Schutz’s phenomenological sociology, but their methods somewhat diverge from Schutz. Even though they earn reputation through their works, they unconsciously give up (in the reception of their works) Schutz’s phenomenological sociology. They
contribute to sociology in their own way, by developing their own theories, sociology of knowledge and ethnomethodology. They try to make Schutz’s theory more practicable. Readers or scholars generally do not pay attention on phenomenological epistemology while reading their works, even though these theorists state clearly that they are under Schutz’s influence and they use Schutz’s phenomenological sociology in their works. In contrast, Wagner’s introduction of phenomenology is most closely related to Schutz’s original theory. And more importantly, he almost contributes his whole academic life to introduce and develop Schutz’s phenomenological sociology. He is a true believer and successor of Schutz.

Berger and Luckman (1966) combine Schutz’s theory and Mead’s symbolic interactionism in their work, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. The subtitle indicates that they try to develop a clear outline or theoretical foundation for sociology of knowledge. They believe we should examine the knowledge in the process of its formation. In the first part of the book, the authors spend a section for each of these two theories, and they spend another section to discuss language and knowledge in everyday life. Just like Schutz and Mead, they pay much attention to language. Two main parts discuss the institutionalization, legitimation, socialization, social structure and identity from both objective and subjective sides of reality. This may remind us Schutz’s terms
subjective meaning and objective meaning. Berger and Luckman’s work is good reading and widely accepted. The critiques are also raised, for example, Ian Hacking (1999) writes a book titled *The Social Construction of What?* This title, which is a question and also a critique, hints that the widely received work of Berger and Luckman is also widely misunderstood. It seems that social construction theory advocates that everything is socially constructed. To answer Hacking’s query for Berger and Luckman, it is the social construction of social reality, or meaningful side of social world. Physical reality is not socially constructed. This raises the question about what is reality and what is social reality. John Searle’s definition may answer this question. Social reality concerns human beings and reality is brute reality, which can exist without the existing of human beings. Robert Bellah would call this social reality symbolic realism, but social reality has a broader meaning than symbolic reality.

I argue that the misunderstanding is basically caused by the lack of a social ontology in Berger and Luckman’s theory. They state clearly that they deal with everyday life, not the transcendental phenomenology and not ontology. The other problem of Berger and Luckman’s theory is that it does not distinguish social construction theory form psychology. Only if this distinction is made can they call their theory a sociological theory.
Garfinkel (1967) develops ethnomethodology, which analyzes interaction in everyday life from a micro perspective, from the individual and subjective level. For better or worse, he tries to add quantitative method into his analysis. It was probably because quantitative methods started to dominate social science at the time. But by doing that, he gave up the spirit of Schutz’s phenomenological sociology and Husserl’s phenomenology. Goffman’s theory is similar to Garfinkel’s and those of later scholars such as George Psathas (1973) and Frances Chaput Waksler (2010). Garfinkel and Goffman, and earlier scholars, Mead, Cooley and Williams James, are close to psychological theory, but Husserl and Schutz diverge from psychology. Husserl states clear that his phenomenology is not psychology. Schutz does not even deal with consciousness, and he does not try to explore Husserl’s transcendental consciousness.

Schutz’s theory was forgotten by mainstream sociology, even though a few still mention his theory in the field of sociology and phenomenology. Patrik Aspers’ study on the fashion market is, as author stated, an empirical study of phenomenological sociology. In the book Market in fashion (Aspers 2006), Aspers tries to develop a phenomenological approach for social science. He studies the fashion market in Sweden and he tries to answer how one understands the market for fashion photography in Sweden. Aspers shows us what the fashion market means to
photographers, magazines and advertising agencies. This is a good attempt of putting phenomenological sociology into empirical research. He states that both Husserl and Schutz have never done empirical researches and he advocates that we should do some concrete, empirical studies of phenomenological sociology. I agree with Aspers’ advocation, but I think that Husserl had done some empirical studies. An example is ‘The Origin of Geometry’ and I will examine it later. Aspers also points out that Schutz’s approach correctly examines the static side of phenomenological sociology, but he fails to develop a dynamic phenomenological sociology. I agree with Aspers on this point, and I try to develop a genetic phenomenological sociology in this thesis.

2.4 Genetic phenomenological sociology: genealogy as social ontology

I have examined Husserl’s static and genetic phenomenology, Schutz’s static phenomenological sociology, and other relevance theories in last two parts. In this part, I would develop a genetic phenomenological sociology. Inspired by Schutz, who uses Husserl’s phenomenology to explore Weber’s unanswered question at an individual and subjective level, I try to uses Husserl’s genetic phenomenology theory to explore Durkheim’s unanswered question about the formation of category, culture, religion and society from a historical and social level.

I first briefly explore the genetic side of social theories and phenomenology. These theories imply but not fully develop to genetic phenomenological sociology. Then I
examine two representatives of genetic theory in social theory and philosophy, namely, Foucault and Husserl. Specifically, I focus on the theoretical relation between Foucault’s genealogy and phenomenology, and the problems of both of these theories, the problems of subject and normativity. Finally, genealogy, as ontology, has potential to solve the problems from both sides. Genealogy is not only a method and a critique, but also social ontology. The ontological meaning of genealogy bases on the existential ontology or relational ontology, mainly developed by Heidegger. Scholars widely discuss Being or Dasein, but many of them put time aside. I try to show the meaning of time in Heidegger’s philosophy, which is fully illustrated in his later work Contribution to Philosophy with the term ereignis, and time is genealogy as social ontology. The meaning of time and ereignis distinguishes Heidegger from other philosophers. Genealogy as social ontology is the foundation of phenomenology and social theories, the foundation of genetic phenomenological sociology, and also a way out of dichotomy of structure and agency, and the way out of philosophy of subject.

2.4.1 Genetic side of social theory and philosophy

of habitus tries to reconcile the structure theory with agency theory. He examines the
genetic side of both Giddens’ theory, structuration, and Bourdieu theory, habitus or
practice. Structuration is clearly a process, while practice is a process either. Process
is genetic. Sewell himself proposes an event sociology which also needs genealogy as
philosophical foundation.

The genetic side of Durkheim’s theory is easy to be identified too. Some scholars
say that Durkheim’s methodology has a break between his early and later works,
while some scholars hold different opinion. I agree with the later scholars. From the
very beginning, Durkheim is interests in category. Durkheim shows that Montesquieu
develops social categorization on the way of ruling in his early work titled
*Montesquieu's Contributions to the Formation of Social Science*. The division of labor
is the emergence of labor division (Durkheim 1984). The examination on the
prohibition of incest and its origin is exactly the examination of the emergence of the
prohibition of incest. The three types of suicide are also categories (Durkheim 1997).
Primitive classification is about the genealogy of category in the sense that all
theorization is categorization (Durkheim; Mauss 2009). Durkheim also examines the
evolution of the education thought in France. These facts show us that Durkheim
focuses on the category and genealogy of category in his whole academic life. Among
these works, one most important work is *The Elementary Form of The Religion Life*
(Durkheim 1995). Following the rule of treating social fact as things, Durkheim analyzes religion as a social phenomenon, as social fact. Durkheim states in the introduction that his principal aim of the book is to analyze simplest religion known to determine the elementary forms of the religious life, and the secondary aim is to examine the genesis of the fundamental notions of thought or the categories. This secondary aim is my focus in this thesis. I would like to examine the formation of Apple culture, like Durkheim examines the origin of the beliefs. It is not possible that we go back to the era of the beginning of religion or category. Durkheim chooses to use the ethnographic materials, because these ethnographic materials are about the people who, early ethnographic scholars and Durkheim believes, are at the early stage of human development. I cannot go back to the time of Apple culture emerges either, but good thing is that this time was not far from now and I can get enough materials about it, and more importantly, it is not difficult to understand these materials in its meaning context. The beginning or origin is not important in social theory.

The genetic side of philosophy is mainly from Husserl and his followers. Husserl proposes his genetic phenomenology and his followers Heidegger proposes time and ereignis, Deleuze, becoming and genesis, and Giorgio Agamben, event. This point has its origin indirectly but inherited unconsciously by aforementioned social theorists such as Durkheim and Foucault. Husserl’s theoretical source for genetic side of his
phenomenology includes life philosophy from Bergson, Dilthey and Simmel. The genealogy has a meaning of life or gene. Being is the being in time or in genealogy.

2.4.2 Genealogy, phenomenology, and the problems of subject and normativity

Genealogy is the missing link between Foucault and phenomenology. Foucault refutes phenomenology but phenomenology never abandons genealogy. What Foucault refutes is the transcendental consciousness phenomenology from Husserl, which he takes as psychological phenomenology. It is not unfounded but Husserl would not agree with him at this judgment. Foucault loses the chance to develop a phenomenological foundation for his theory under this hasty judgment. Phenomenologists since Husserl pay high attention to genealogy or genesis. This point can be proved from Husserl’s theory on constitution, ‘Static and Genetic Phenomenology’ (Husserl 2001a), and ‘The Origin of Geometry’ (Husserl 1989), as well as genetic phenomenological works on imagination and perception from Sartre (2004) and Merleau-Ponty (2012). But all these genetic phenomenological theories focus on the genesis or constitution in consciousness and lived experience, rather than the genesis in societal and historical level, to which Foucault’s theory contributes. Foucault’s theory is criticized for its lack of a normative theory (Habermas 1987b), while phenomenology, especially Husserl’s phenomenology, is criticized for it still falls into the solipsistic philosophy or subject philosophy (Habermas 1987b) even
through phenomenologists claim to overcome it.

This section argues that Foucault’s theory lacks a philosophical foundation which phenomenology can provide, while phenomenology does not fully develop a social and historical genesis, to which Foucault’s genealogy contributes. The integration of Foucault’s theory and phenomenology through genealogy would help to solve the problems from both sides. It is not possible and not necessary to examine all the works from Foucault and phenomenologists here. What I shall mainly focus on is two representative articles from both sides, ‘Nietzsche, Genealogy, History’ from Foucault, and ‘The Origin of Geometry’ from Husserl. The former article extensively shows Foucault’s idea on genealogy while the later one shows a potential to develop a social and historical genetic theory from Husserlian phenomenology. This social and historical genetic theory may help to overcome the solipsistic problem of Husserlian phenomenology. I shall also draw material from Foucault’s article on the Enlightenment (Foucault 1997) and Husserl’s article on static and genetic phenomenology. The other works form Foucault and Husserl, as well as the related works and theories from Nietzsche and phenomenologists are briefly discussed in order to support and further develop the argument.

The title of Foucault’s article, ‘Nietzsche, Genealogy, History’, clearly shows Foucault’s theoretical source, Nietzsche, research method, genealogy, and research
Foucault (1984) discusses the meaning of genealogy in the first four parts of the article and the genealogical analysis of history in the last three parts. This article shows clearly two things that Foucault inherits from Nietzsche, namely the genealogy as method and the genealogy as critique to reevaluate all values.

Nietzsche aims to reevaluate all the values, including moral, good, evil, guilt, bad conscious and so on, by the genealogy examination. Foucault is strongly influenced by Nietzsche, and he builds his theories on subject, power, and technique of self and governmentality through the archeology and genealogy of madness, clinic, prison and sexuality. In the early stage, Foucault uses the term archeology and he uses the term genealogy in his later academic life. Like Nietzsche and Foucault, I take genealogy as a method and show it is naturally connected to phenomenological sociology. Unlike Nietzsche and Foucault, the genealogy as method used for phenomenological sociology has no aims in reevaluates values. Rather, genealogy aims to the things themselves. Genealogy is social ontology.

Genealogy as method is strongly connected with Foucault’s other research method, archaeology. The difference between Foucault’s archaeology and his genealogy is that archaeology explores the condition of knowledge without consideration on time while genealogy examines power relation in the effective history over time. Foucault believes we should combine the archaeological and genealogical methods in the study
of practices. Scholars point out that the archaeology method used in Foucault’s early works was strongly influenced by structuralism and hermeneutic, but Foucault denies he is a structuralist or post-structuralist. The similar situation happens on genealogy. Scholars point out phenomenology is his theatrical resource, but Foucault distinguishes himself from phenomenology. This article tries to argue Foucault’s genealogy is a missing link between his theory and phenomenology, but Foucault refutes Husserlian phenomenology which he takes as the whole phenomenology.

‘Genealogy is gray, meticulous, and patiently documentary. It operates on a field of entangled and confused parchments, on documents that have been scratched over and recopied many times’ (Foucault 1984). This is how Foucault describes genealogy method at the beginning of the article. In what follows, he argues that genealogy is not about origin. ‘A genealogy of values, morality, asceticism, and knowledge will never confuse itself with a quest for their ‘origins’’, will never neglect as inaccessible the vicissitudes of history’. Rather it concerns the analysis of decent, which ‘permits the dissociation of self’, and emergence, ‘the moment of arising’. ‘The analysis of descent permits the dissociation of the self, its recognition and displacement as an empty synthesis, in liberating a profusion of lost events’. Meanwhile, it also permits the discovery of the myriad events through which they were formed. Foucault adopts the analysis of decent into body study and He argues it has the task ‘to expose a body
totally imprinted by history and the process of history’s destruction of the body.’ As for the genealogy as emergence, ‘the role of genealogy is to record its history: the history of morals, ideals, and metaphysical concepts, the history of the concept of liberty or of the ascetic life; as they stand for the emergence of different interpretations, they must be made to appear as events on the stage of historical process’.

After the clarification of the meaning of genealogy, Foucault discusses the relation between genealogy and history. The genealogy of history, effective history, refutes the continuity and objectivity of history. Foucault says that ‘effective history differs from traditional history in being without constants. Nothing in man- not even his body- is sufficiently stable to serve as the basis for self-recognition or for understanding other man.’ Here we can feel strongly the spirit of reevaluation of all values from Nietzsche. For Foucault, continuous and objective history must be dismantled.

Generally, genealogy is both a method and a critique in Foucault’s theory. Foucault moves from his method archaeology to genealogy. This really helps for him to distance himself from structuralism and further develops his critique of power. Nonetheless, the unexpected results are the problems of normativity and subject in Foucault’s theory. I will examine these problems after a discussion of the genetic side of Husserl’s phenomenology once again from his other works.
In 1936, Husserl publishes his last main book in his life time *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy* (Husserl 2001b). In this book and other unpublished works, Husserl examines the science crisis in Europe and their historical roots. Husserl tries to examine this crisis in the process of the formation of science. The article, ‘The Origin of Geometry’ represents this endeavor. It implies Husserl’s thought on genetic phenomenological sociology. This article is the summit of Husserl later academic life.

Husserl states that his examination on the origin of geometry is not the examination of who create geometry, is not the examination of early geometrist. What Husserl wants to explore is the origin meaning of geometry in the history. This meaning exists after it is created and is shared by the later generations. After the meaning of geometry is formed, we can get the same or similar meaning every time we come to it. After the formation of the geometry, we treat the result of this formation as fact and we do not trace back to its origin every time we encounter geometry. Husserl examines the original constitution of the meaning of geometry. This meaning is socially and historically constituted. ‘The Origin of Geometry’ is the finalization of Husserl’s phenomenology and it ends in the field of life world, the empirical world. In this sense, Husserl turns from philosophy to social research, or pay much attention on life
world. Using Husserl’s own description, his phenomenology is developed from static to genetic phenomenology. I would say that Husserl’s genetic phenomenology is already a genetic phenomenological sociology.

Husserl has two very good terms in summary of his phenomenology, namely static and genetic phenomenology. Constitution is one of the key terms in his static phenomenology. ‘Attending to constitution is not attending genesis’ (Husserl 2001a:644). Genesis is the other key term. Husserl extensively deals with both constitution and genesis in his article ‘The origin of geometry’ and most of his works. Husserl uses the term origin in the title of the article, but he states clearly that he is not going to examine the first geometer or the geometrical theory from her. He tries to explore the origin of geometry through the examination of the constitution of the meaning structure of geometry now days. He can do so because the constitution of meaning structure of geometry now days is the same as the constitution from the early geometers. Geometers and those who learn geometry now days do not reactivate all the geometrical activities from its beginning all over again. This is not the way geometry works. What we do is to read the documented chain of geometry books and constitute the geometrical theory. In this process, communication is needed. No matter we learn geometry from teacher or by ourselves. Communication is the constitution of the meaning structure of geometry. Basically, the stage of constitution belongs to
static phenomenology.

‘A phenomenology of genesis shows how consciousness arises out of consciousness, how constitutive accomplishments are also continually carried out here in the process of becoming’ (Husserl 2001a:644). The genesis of geometry presents in handing down geometry to next generation. This process is the history of geometry. The examination of the genesis of geometry is similar to the examination of all kind of histories of meaning structure. Husserl (1989:174) says history is from the start nothing other than the vital movement of the coexistence and the interweaving of original formations and sedimentations of meaning. In order to understanding these formations and sedimentations, people trace document chains of geometry and reactivate the meaning of geometry. The genesis process of geometry adds more geometrical theory to existing theories on one hand and keeps original formation on the other.

The self-evidence and the transcendental power or ability of constitution are the two conditions for Husserl to develop his argument in the origin of geometry as well as his whole phenomenology. This is the basic feature of his transcendental phenomenology. The constitution leads to the critique that Husserl’s phenomenology still belongs to subject philosophy. The constitution of geometry and the constitution of the other show that Husserl privileges subject over object, ego over the other. I
shall examine this problem in the following and tries to show Husserl has a chance to overcome it through genealogy.

The main problems of both Foucault’s theory and Husserlian phenomenology are the problems of subject and normativity. I shall explain the reasons for these problems in their theory respectively in this section. The combination of Foucault’s theory and Husserlian phenomenology through genealogy is a possible way to solve the existing problems from both sides. This combination is a genetic phenomenological sociology.

Foucault is like a naughty kid, who dismantled his toy, history, but he could not assemble it back. Leaving aside his outstanding contributions, such as power, knowledge, governmentality, technologies of the self and bio-politics, there are two problems in Foucault’s theory I want to examine here, namely the problems of normativity and subject. These two topics are exactly Foucault’s concerns in his later theories after he develops genealogy as method and critique. Foucault moves from archaeology of knowledge at early stage to the genealogy of power and the ethics of self in the later stage. Actually, the genealogy can be and should have applied into his early works in order to make his theory consistently. For Foucault, the genealogy of power and self or subject is to problematize the history of power and subject. He successfully problematizes the history, but it seems he forgets to problematize the power (Habermas 1987b). Meanwhile, he fails to problematize the subject.
The fundamental problem of Foucault’s theory is it lacks a normative orientation (Habermas 1987b). This is caused by his power theory. Foucault reveals the subtle power in modern society, but the dilemma is there is no place for freedom and emancipation in his power theory. Foucault’s problem appears in the confictions between structure and agency, discipline and liberation, and power and freedom. Probably, Foucault is not fully aware the problem of normativity until Habermas’ critique. This is understandable. His power theory is absolutely right. He brilliantly discovers the hidden subtle power in modern society. But he forgets to tell us what we should do since power exists all the time and everywhere. We have no reason to blame him for not provide us a solution. But it is also his power theory which shows us it is urgent to find a normative solution. The solution that Habermas provides is communicative rationality. Whether this solution works is not the concern here.

I would like to point out some possible reasons for the lack of a normative theory in Foucault’s power analysis. Firstly, in the article, Nietzsche, Genealogy, History, Foucault refuses the objectivity of history as well as the origin of history and metaphysics in philosophy. It is a potential risk to refuse the origin and metaphysics in the genealogy. Of course, here I am not to say that we should only focus on the origin and metaphysics neither. The exact meaning Foucault wants to say is that the history wrote by historians is not objective. What we should do when we examine history is
to adopt genealogy in order to reveal the decent and the emergence of the history. Through his genealogical analysis, Foucault tries to tell us things that we take for granted are not as reliable as we thought. I believe that he would not say the history never happened. What happened happened. But historian records it according to their understanding and needs. This is why we do not have an objective history. The problem for Foucault is that he throws out the baby with the bathwater. He refuses the origin and denies the objectivity of traditional history rightly, but he cannot deny the origin and certainty of history as it happened.

Secondly, the fundamental reason Foucault cannot develop a normative theory and fails to responses on this critique is that he presupposes a dichotomy of power and freedom, power and emancipation. The power relation is the relation between subject and object in general. So the root of the dichotomy of power and freedom, power and emancipation, is the division of subject and object. For Habermas, This problem does not exist, because the power has legitimate power and illegitimate power, and legitimate power has the potential for freedom and emancipation.

The problem of lacking a normative theory leads to second problem of Foucault’s theory, the problem of subject. Foucault’s dichotomy is strongly connected with the problem of subject in his theory. Foucault is ambiguous on the theory of subject. He tries to problematize subject by his genealogical analysis in The Order of Thing and
The Hermeneutics of Subject. But he does not find the problem of subject in the process of subjectification as he successfully does on prison and hospital. On one hand, Foucault holds positive view on subjectivity. He definitely supports the freedom and emancipation of humans being. On the other hand, He argues the human, as subject, will disappear in the future, like the face on beach near the sea. But the question is what comes after the subject. He is not clear about the answer and unfortunately he has no time to think it through.

It is Foucault’s destiny that he cannot walk out the problem of subject. I will draw from the material in his article ‘What Is Enlightenment’ to show the reason. In this article, unlike his early position which criticizes the Enlightenment, Foucault (1997) completely accepts the idea of Enlightenment and even surprisingly defends for modernity in the form of modernity as an attitude. Foucault fails to discover the root of subject is the Enlightenment. Human beings bravely use their own reason without the direction of priest, teacher, doctor or any other people and they become subject after the subject God was dead. This leads to the result that human being becomes the subject in this world. The Enlightenment is the movement that human beings liberate themselves from the self-incurred immaturity. The modernity is an attitude of modern society, rather than the epoch after the naive or archaic premodernity and before an enigmatic and troubling postmodernity. Foucault does not realize that it is Kant’s
philosophy on Enlightenment which leads to the idea of subject in the modern society. This is the unexpected dark side or unavoidable byproduct of Enlightenment. What Foucault fails to see is the emergence and the problem of the subject is the unintended result of the Enlightenment and modernity. After the Enlightenment, God, as a creator and subject, is dead, and human being, used to be creations and object, becomes subject. Foucault should problematize the subject by the genealogical analysis of subject in the philosophical history after the Enlightenment, rather than the subject history in the Greek and Roman philosophical thought.

Foucault has a chance to develop a theory as the way out of subject philosophy and overcome his division of subject and object at his early stage before he adopts genealogy. That is his analysis of the painting Las Meninas (Foucault 2002). But he does not concern the division of subject and object, and his concern is classic and modern episteme that time. He is aware of, but not clear stated, that the emergence of human being means the emergence of the subject in modern society. Las Meninas was paint by Velasques and in which the painter himself was painting the king and the queen, who show themselves to us through the mirror in the painting. Velázquez paints himself who is painting the king and the queen. The painter in the picture is painting the king and the queen. He is looking at us. In this sense, we are in the picture, or in the relation with the picture. While we look at this Painting, we take the
place which is supposed to be taken by the painter, Velázquez, the king and the queen. We are supposed to find ourselves in the mirror in the picture. There is no subject and object in these relations. This paint is a good material to illustrate a non-subject philosophy.

Generally, Foucault successfully describes the problems in the modern society, but he fails to link these problems to its deep philosophical root, the Enlightenment. He is fully aware these problems are caused by modernity but he fails to find a solution or he even does not try to do so. The last chance for Foucault to walk out the subject philosophy is his theory on subject, but his theoretical sources and his refusing of phenomenology, as well as his death prevent him to do so.

The problems in Husserlian phenomenology can be also summarized as the problems of subject or intersubjectivity and normativity. The fundamental and widely discussed problem of Husserlian phenomenology is the problem of subject or intersubjectivity. The problem of normativity or ethics is derived from the problem of subject and it is affiliated to the problem of subject or intersubjectivity. This leads to the question how we can equally and peacefully live together under the subject philosophy, or it is the ethic theory in phenomenology. Ethic is the first philosophy. Later phenomenologists, such as Heidegger, extensively discuss the normative or ethical theory which is based on the Husserlian phenomenology.
Husserl fully aware the problem of intersubjectivity and he tries to solve it, especially in his fifth mediation (Husserl 1977). This is different form Foucault, who does not fully aware his normative problems and fails to trace the philosophical root of his subject problem. In this sense, the examination of Husserl’s later master piece may help us find a clue to solve the problem of subject. The early critiques of Husserl’s problems come from the scholars like Alfred Schutz, in his article The Problem of Transcendental Intersubjectivity in Husserl (1970). Even before this, Schutz tries to solve the understanding between two people in his master work *The Phenomenology of the Social World* (1967), which, Husserl believes, shows a right understanding and is a good application of his phenomenology. Unlike Schutz who examines the intersubjective understanding in the social theory, Husserl tries to use the theory of empathy in philosophy to overcome the problem of intersubjectivity and walks out the subject philosophy. He also uses the theory of empathy in the analysis of the sharing of the ideas, including geometry, through communication. But the scholars, such as Edith Stein (1989) and Max Scheler (1970), point out Husserl fails to solve the problem of intersubjectivity through empathy. Husserl fails to walk out of the subject philosophy because the constitution, lived-experience and transcendental consciousness all belong to human beings as subject. The starting point of Husserl’s phenomenology is human being and his philosophy is still ego centered and subject
centered, even though he fully conceives this problem and tries hard to avoid it.

The problems of both Foucault’s theory and Husserl’s phenomenology are the problems of subject and normativity. The theory of genealogy, which combines the theory from Foucault and phenomenology, is a possible way to solve these problems. The philosophy of genealogy is the genesis of material and life. We may start from the material phenomenology (Henry 2008), no matter it is an absolute phenomenology as Michel Henry argues or not. The life emerges from the material and human being is one kind of life. The term genesis of material and life can be replaced by Being and ereignis from Heidegger, becoming from Deleuze. All of these scholars share similar ideas on genesis. This is not surprise to us because these scholars are all influenced by Husserlian phenomenology. Meanwhile, the genesis of material can be replaced by Dao and the genesis of human social life is the genesis of Li (rite) in Chinese philosophy. The theory of genealogy is an immanent philosophy, rather than a transcendental philosophy. For one thing, the historical and social phenomena are the material for building a ‘realistic’ immanent philosophy. This is the contribution from Foucault. For the other, the foundation of philosophy of genealogy is the incarnation or the embodiment in the case of human being. This can be developed from Husserl and the other philosophers.

The slogan of Husserlian phenomenology is to the things themselves. The things
themselves are genetic, becoming, ereignis, eventful. It is right for both Foucault and Husserl that the origin is not the main concern for their theory, even though it is wrong to abandon origin or simply leave it to metaphysics. The origin is one point of genealogy in the process of its becoming. The genealogy includes not only emergence and decent, but also origin. Sociologists do not examine origin in historical and social analysis and leave it to metaphysics and science. The reason is that the starting point of our social examination should start from the things we know.

The theory genealogy, combining both Foucault’s theory and Husserl’s theory, helps to solve the problem of subject and normativity from both sides. The fundamental contribution of genealogy is that it avoids the division of subject and object. Human beings and things are in the world together since always. People encounter other people and things. All of them are being in the world equally. None of them are subject or object and there is no two or more subject or object either. There is no such division of subject and object. The illusion of the division of subject and object is just a notion such as religion humans believe in the medieval. The concept in Chinese philosophy the unity of man and nature has similar idea. This could be the reason why phenomenologists, like Heidegger, approach to Chinese philosophy for theatrical source.

Theoretically, genealogy, encountering and practice from the perspective of
phenomenology give us a clue that non-subject philosophy is possible. But practically, it is still difficult to overcome the subject philosophy. But we have no reason to be pessimistic, because we know the idea changes in the history. For example, human beings change their idea of heliocentric theory to the idea of geocentric theory. No people really see directly that the sun is the center of the universal but we accepted it. The change of perspective may happen gradually, as long as we keep on moving in the road to truth. The origin or truth exist no matter we can achieve it or not. This is not nihilism, because we still pursue the ethic as the first philosophy, pursue a good society.

Once we walk out of the subject philosophy, we will not have the problems that we have now under the subject philosophy. The problem of normativity disappears. Being with the other in the world is the nature of human society. Genealogy is the link between their theories and it may give us clue to overcome the subject philosophy. Both Foucault and Husserl examine genesis or genealogy from their own perspective. The combination of their theories may overcome their problems of subject and normativity. A combination of phenomenology of genealogy, including both Husserl’s static and genetic phenomenology, without his ego centered constitution, and Foucault’s social and historical genealogy may be the way out subject philosophy and it will open a new horizon for human being. This is the genealogy in genetic
phenomenological sociology. Genealogy is social ontology. In the following I will illustrate this point further.

2.4.3 Time, genealogy and social ontology

The social ontology of genetic phenomenological sociology is a relational ontology and existential phenomenological ontology. Being is the being in time, being in ereignis or genealogy. The genealogy in genetic phenomenological sociology is not only a critique and a method, but also ontology. Put it simply, the social ontology and genealogy of genetic phenomenological ontology is that society and things are emerging and transforming all the time in the world.

In traditional metaphysics, ontology is about what is ultimately there and how does it exist. Philosophers have traced the ultimate existence to different nature materials, mind, God, body etc., from material to mind, from nature to God, from outside world to inside mind. Descartes finds I Think through doubting all that could be doubted. Husserl tries to find the things themselves in consciousness, and Heidegger finds Dasein in time. Heidegger says that Nietzsche ends the discussion of ontology in traditional metaphysics. I would argue that, not Nietzsche, but Heidegger closes the door of traditional metaphysics. Heidegger states that all the traditional ontologies ask the wrong question. The existence of thing is the existence of the thing itself, not the elements which compose the thing.
Similarly, social ontology is about what is ultimately existence which makes human society a society and makes it possible, and how does society like. Social ontology is the foundation and the starting point of social research. The social ontology for this thesis is the existential phenomenological ontology, which is developed from Heidegger’s theory. Existential phenomenological ontology is Heidegger’s Dasein and being-in-the-world, and the mode of existence of Dasein is Care. Basically, an existential phenomenological ontology has two level meanings, one is the objective world of objective thing, and the other is the meaningful world of significant meaning. The connection of meaning and thing is the encountering of human and thing. Human, the other and thing, as equal unit, are all in this world. Basing on existential phenomenological ontology, I inform reader that where I start my research, and what approach I develop in analyzing culture, media and technology.

Heidegger’s theory of ontology is social ontology and the ontology of Dasein. Dasein is the keyword of Heidegger’s work *Being and Time*. Dasein is not the human, neither anything rather than human. In this sense, we simply use Dasein referring human entity. The ontology of Dasein is the fundamental ontology of human being and the world. Heidegger develops his theory of the ontology of Dasein from phenomenology. Phenomenological methods helps him to achieve the things themselves, here the Dasein. Heidegger believes that all the philosophers ask a wrong
question about ontology in philosophical history, from Aristotle, Descartes to Kant. Traditionally, philosophers ask what is ultimately there. And they traced to nature material, mind or God. Heidegger criticizes that the philosophical scandal is not they did not prove their ontology, but that they keep on asking the same question and make similar mistakes. Heidegger points out that they failed to ask the true question of the meaning of being. Heidegger’s ontology of being has two levels of meanings, the first level is that the objective world of objective thing, and the second level is the meaningful world of significant thing. For example, rose has two levels of meanings. For one thing, rose, as a brute object, is an objective thing existing in the world. For the other, rose, as a representation of love, is a significant meaning in the world.

Metaphysic question has two parts, the first part is what is ultimately there and the second part is about what does it like. The ontology of Dasein answers the first part of the question that Dasein is ultimately there. Heidegger’s answer for the second part of the question is Being-in-the-world. The human, the other and the things are all embedded in the world. Human encounters the other and the things in the world. The human, the other and the things are part of the entirety world. The meaning emerges while the human encounter the other and the things. For example, in The Little Prince, the prince encounters the flower, and the flower has meanings for him. This meaning does not exist before he meets the flower (Saint-Exupéry 2000). This meeting, to be
exactly, is the encountering of the prince and the flower. We cannot say that the flower does not exist before the prince meets it and after the prince leaves. Even through there is a garden full of roses, which are similar to the prince’s flower, these roses are beautiful but empty to the prince. The prince’s rose is special because the prince has watered it, put it under the glass globe, sheltered it behind the screen, and killed the caterpillars for it. In this sense, it is the prince’s rose. The prince encounters the rose in different ways, watering, sheltering and caring. Encountering is caring for people or things. From this we can tell that encountering is not the meeting in the common sense. We cannot say that the meaning of flower is the meaning for the prince, nor the meaning of flower as a plant. The meaning of the flower only exists when the relation of the prince and the flower builds. We call this the encountering between the prince and the flower. This encountering builds a relation and the relation is social ontology of cultural and social phenomenon.

Social ontology, as relational ontology, can be also illustrated by Velasques’ painting Las Meninas as I have discussed above. This paint illustrates that the subject is elided, or the bound between subject and object is elided. Las Meninas was painted by Velasques. He painted the painter in the painting, himself, was painting the king and the queen, who appear to us in the mirror in the painting. We, as the spectators, stand in front of the painting. This means that we take the place which supposes to be
taken by the painter as real man and the objects of the painting, which are the king
and the queen. We are seeing the painting, and we are seen by the painter in the paint.
Subject has been elided in the new relation of being in the world. The man, as a
subject, as Foucault states, is erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea.
There is no subject and object in the relations between real painter, painter in the
painting, the king and queen as real people and as image, and us as observer. The
relations are built and this is the relational ontology.

The opposite of in the world is the out of the world, obviously. There are things out
of the world is possible but the things there have no meaning and they are only brute
things because of the absent of human being. When Human being explores these
things, these things become in the world. For example, Pluto was out of world before
it was discovered in 1930 by Clyde Tombaugh and now it is in the world as both a
brute thing and a significant meaning. Human being encounter Pluto through New
Horizons and this makes new meanings. Being in the world is similar to Chinese
traditional thought Nature and Man in One. Human and nature are both part of the
world and they co-embedded in the world. The harmony is the ideal condition for
human and nature.

The way of existence of Dasein is care. Heidegger gives a vivid old fable to
illustrate the being of Dasein as care and the meaning of care. Let’s follow Heidegger
(2012) to the old fable, a long quotation.

Once when "care" was crossing a river, she saw some clay; she thoughtfully took a piece and began to shape it. While she was thinking about what she had made, Jupiter came by. "Care" asked him to give it spirit, and this he gladly granted. But when she wanted her name to be bestowed upon it, Jupiter forbade this and demanded that it be given his name instead. While "Care" and Jupiter were arguing, Earth (Tellus) arose, and desired that her name be conferred upon the creature, since she had offered it part of her body. They asked Saturn to be the judge. And Saturn gave them the following decision, which seemed to be just: "Since you, Jupiter, have given its spirit, you should receive that spirit at death; and since you, Earth, have given its body. You shall receive its body. But since 'Care' first shaped this creature, she shall possess it as long as it lives. And because there is a dispute among you as to its name, let it be called 'homo,' for it is made out of humus (earth).

From this story, we learn that human exists only if human has both the body and the spirit. Human lives in this world. As long as human lives, as long as it is in the world, human belongs to Care. For Heidegger, care is to be taken as an ontological structural concept. The being of Dasein is Care. Care (Sorge) structure includes care for things (concern, Besorgen) and care for the others (solicitude, Fursorge). Care is a relationship of interaction between Dasein and objects in the world. “Caring for things”
deals with the relation between Dasein and the things while “caring for the others”
deals with the relation between Dasein and the other. Care structure deals with the
relation that Dasein encounter the things and the other. Besides this synchronic
structure, care structure also includes three dimensions of diachronic structure, which
are past (thrownness), future (understanding), and present (fallen-ness). Heidegger
gives three statuses to describe the existence of Dasein, which are thrown-ness,
understanding, fallen-ness, respectively.

Heidegger’s ontology is a social ontology of human being and society. He does not
explicitly state this, but his followers including Gadamer show this. This judgment
can be proved in Heidegger’s story of homo. In this sense, Heidegger’s existential
phenomenological ontology is, and only is, a social ontology. The existence of human
being is the center of Heidegger’s philosophical concern. His later philosophy on
language is also based on this. Language is the house of being. Homeless is the status
of human being at this moment in the world. Only a god can save human being from
the perspective of this era’s worldview. But the problem is we do not know whether
god will come or not, and even more hopelessly, we can do nothing about it.

Heidegger’s philosophy is the philosophy of human or human studies, and
Heidegger’s existential phenomenological ontology is, and only is, social ontology.
We may find the clue for this point in Heidegger’s ‘Letter on Humanitarianism’
(Heidegger 2000), which is a response to Sartre’s ‘Existentialism Is Humanitarianism’ (Sartre 2007). ‘Existentialism is humanitarianism’ is Sartre’s slogan of battle for freedom. But Heidegger points out in the ‘Letter on Humanitarianism’ that his philosophy is not Sartre’s existentialism and his ethics is not Sartre’s humanitarianism. Sartre’s existentialism and humanitarianism is totally a human centered theory. It is not necessary to say that Heidegger opposes to humanitarianism, but it shows that Heidegger pursues a nonhuman centered philosophy. Heidegger’s philosophy is about the nonhuman centered theory with a human centered starting point. His ontology is the ontology of human being. Basing on this ontology, this thesis will explore a different perspective on analyzing culture, media and technology, on the relation between human being and the other, between human being and the technology.

In his later academic life, Heidegger moved from Dasein to ereignis. Ereignis is genealogy. It explains what time means in Being and Time. Time is ereignis and genealogy. In this sense, there is no break between Heidegger’s early works and later works as some experts propose. Being is being ereignis, or being genetic. Put the philosophical jargon away, things exist in the world, and are emerging and changing all the time. The way of existing is genetic, emerging and changing. Following the slogan that we cannot walk into the same river twice, the ‘same’ Apple iPhone is different yesterday, today and tomorrow. The existential ontology as social ontology
develops to the genealogy as social ontology. Genealogy is a method, critique and more importantly, social ontology.

I have examined the theory of genealogy from phenomenology and social theory. I will continue to show the genealogy of Apple in the following chapters with empirical data. What should be stressed here is that genealogy has a strong social ontological sense. Unlike the traditional metaphysics or ontology which traces the origin of the world, the genealogy treats process as the ontology. This point are shared by Heidegger’s time and ereignis, Deleuze’ becoming and genesis, or Giorgio Agamben’s event. Time and ereignis, becoming and genesis, and event are the other term of genealogy. Genealogy as social ontology means that we are not tracing the starting point or origin in the social theory and social ontology. The process is the concern in the study of social and cultural phenomenon. This point was discussed above while I discuss Durkheim’s theory, Foucault’s theory and genealogy in phenomenology. The questions of traditional ontology or metaphysics leave to philosophers and scientists. The genealogy, or process, as social ontology is enough to be the solid starting point for social studies.

2.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter outlines a genetic phenomenological sociology. Genealogy and social ontology are two aspects of it. Genealogy refers to the decent and emergence. It
carries the meaning of life and decent, which is indicated in the root-word, gene. It also covers the meaning of genesis of life in the form of emergence. Meanwhile, genealogy is social ontology. The process of genealogy is a social ontology of cultural and social phenomenon.

Firstly, genetic phenomenological sociology is not a philosophy, but a sociological theory inspired by phenomenology and classic social theories. The transcendental method in speculative philosophy is not suitable for empirical social research. However, the speculative philosophy transforms to empirical philosophy, it is difficult to distinguish between empirical philosophy and sociology. For example, the empirical turn is advocated in the philosophy of technology. The boundary is not clear between the philosophy of technology and the sociology of science and technology. The empirical study of genetic phenomenological sociology distinguishes itself from speculative philosophy.

Secondly, the social ontology of genetic phenomenological sociology distinguishes genetic phenomenological sociology from mainstream cultural sociology and cultural studies, especially structure oriented and construction oriented theories. Existential phenomenological ontology is, and only is, the social ontology of human and social research. Based on social ontology, I define meaning as encountering, and thus culture is seen as a set of symbols, meanings and practices. Practice is the way of
Thirdly, the genealogy in genetic phenomenological sociology means that it examines the dynamic, social and historical process, unlike the static phenomenological sociology which is static, individual and subjective. Genealogy is not only method and critique, but also ontology. Genetic phenomenological sociology develops from the individual and subjective sociology, social and historical sociology and phenomenology from Weber, Durkheim and Husserl’s early works. Husserl’s theory on life world and genetic phenomenology is the main source for genetic phenomenological sociology. Classic theories from Nietzsche, Weber and Durkheim and contemporary theories from Foucault are pregnant of genetic side of sociology. Genetic phenomenological sociology stresses both its philosophical root and its social, historical and empirical analysis. Based on non-subject philosophy, it is an alternative theory that goes beyond structure oriented and agency or construction oriented theories in social and cultural analysis.
Chapter 3 The transformation of electronic culture in China: from modernization to individualism and consumerism

3.1 Introduction

China’s electronic culture has changed dramatically since the 1950s. Current studies adopt a linear history view of the six-decade period, simplistically dividing it into two eras with 1978 as a turning point. This chapter examines the transformation of electronic culture in China in the period on three levels: the state, organization and individual. It finds that an electronic culture of revolutionary modernization between 1956 and 1991 was gradually replaced by that of romanticized individualism and consumerism after 1992 through marketization. On one hand, the electronic culture of individualism and consumerism sprouted in the collective era and blossomed after the 1990s. On the other, the electronic culture of modernization flourished form the 1950s to 1970s and continued in the 1980s and early 1990s. This transformation of electronic culture reflects the transformation of social culture in China and constitutes a part of it.

Electronic devices including the computer, radio and television were taken as the symbol of modernization from the 1950s to the 1980s in China. But later on, these devices, along with mobile phone and internet, were mainly regarded as technologies of individual consumption. Social imaginary of the computer was between the 1950s
and the 1980s closely related to a social focus on production. For example, the radio and television were mainly viewed as educational tools (Liu 2015). Parents positively viewed their children spending time on computers, for it might enable them to become valuable employees in the labor market brought about by reform and the Four Modernizations. Many parents bought their children a Xiaobawang Learning Machine (小霸王学习机) for learning purposes instead of computers because computers were expensive. However, children from the 1980s cohort used the Learning Machine to play games. When computers became more accessible in the late-1990s, young people played games on computers in internet cafes. Parents and teachers started to worry about game addiction. The computer, internet and other electronic industry developed enormously in China from the 1950s to the present. The first China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC, Oct 1997) report indicates that there were only 620,000 internet users by October 1997, and the thirty-sixth CNNIC (July 2015) Report shows that the number of internet users reached 668 million by July 2015, among which were 594 million mobile phone users. The phenomena and the figures suggest that a dramatic transformation of electronic culture has occurred in China from the 1950s to the present.

This chapter traces this transformation and interprets it in the meaning context of China social history from the 1950s to the present. Technological innovation should
be seen as a social process. The view of people inventing technology and that of technology promoting social progress are too simplified. We can understand the social imaginary of electronic devices only if we examine it in its original meaning context.

Meaning context is a key term of phenomenological sociology (Schutz 1972). Schutz argues that we should examine people’s action and culture in their social and cultural structure structures in order to understand them. These social and cultural structures constitute the meaning context. The shared stock of knowledge (Schutz 1972) is the foundation of understanding. In this chapter, the meaning context is China’s social culture from the 1950s to now. A historical and hermeneutic interpretation of the transformation of electronic culture requires an examination of electronic culture in this meaning context. This chapter examines how Chinese electronic culture transformed from an ideological adherence to revolutionary modernization to a focus on romanticized individualism and consumerism. This is a preliminary and simplified description of the transformation. I will show that the transformation was not entirely linear. Three levels of actors— the state, organizations and individuals— are examined. Two periods will be identified: that from 1956 to 1991 and that after 1992.

The chapter discusses modernization, individualism and consumerism in the second part. The third part argues that the culture of modernization was the main electronic culture in China in between 1956 and 1991. The fourth part turns to the new era after
1992 and illustrates that individualism and consumerism gradually replaced modernization as the main electronic culture. In the conclusion, the overlap of different electronic culture and the potentiality of electronic devices are briefly discussed.

3.2 Modernization, individualism and consumerism in China

3.2.1 Modernization

Modernization is mainly the modernization of collective production. Modernization refers to the process that human world transforms from traditional community to modern society, economically, politically, socially, culturally and psychologically. Modernization is accompanied by industrialization and globalization, and it is the main characteristic in the past three or four hundred years. Classical social theorists describe the process of modernization as the transformation from community to society, from mechanical solidarity to organic solidarity, from the development of labor division, and the rise of capitalism along with rationality. The development of economy, the rise of national state with modern administration, mobility, urbanization and social and cultural globalization are the common characteristics of modernization. Among all of these characteristics, industrialization is the fundamental one. The industrial revolution represents the start of modernization in Western Europe. The use of machine, instead of human and animal power in production, spread around the
world since the industrial revolution, and human beings step into the age of machines.

In the social and historical context of China, modernization has a concrete meaning. As early as the later Qing dynasty, Chinese political and cultural elites dreamed of modernization, which mainly meant adopting Western technologies in manufacturing. The goal was to build a wealthy country and a strong army in order to defend foreign military invasion. The Western social thoughts were also introduced as a supplement. This dream was continued after the Qing dynasty fell in 1911 and after the People’s Republic of China founded in 1949. At the first National People's Congress in 1954, the statement of ‘four modernizations’ was proposed, which included the modernization of industry, agriculture, transportation and national defense. The first two modernizations were in production field, and the modernizations of transportation and national defense served the first two modernizations. At the third National People's Congress in 1964, Premier Zhou Enlai stated clearly the four modernizations of industry, agriculture, national defense and science and technology in his report on government work. Science and technology replaced transportation as one of the four modernizations. Later on, Deng Xiaoping claimed that science and technology were the primary productive forces. Deng set up a specific economic goal for the four modernizations which is the GDP per capital should achieve 1000 USD by the end of twenty century. Deng advocated socialist marketing economy and proposed the
famous black cat and white cat theory in 1992 when he visited southern China. In the same year, Jiang Zemin government, at the Fourteenth National Congress of the CPC in 1992, adopted Deng Xiaoping’s advocacy and set up a goal of building a prosperous, strong, democratic and culturally advanced socialist modernized country. After that, Hu Jintao’s government added the goal of building a harmonious society. As Deng puts it, ‘development is the top priority’ (发展才是硬道理). Here the development mainly refers to collective economic development. Modernization in China’s meaning context was mainly productionism and collectivism.

Unlike the conventional two-stage division that designates the period from 1949 to 1978 as collectivism era and that after 1978 as the reform era, I argue that modernization is a process that went from the 1950s to now. We were not going through the revolution stage and then modernization stage, rather the elements of modernization had buried in the collective era and I call it revolutionary modernization. The difference is whether modernization is at the front stage or the back stage. I find the change of modernization concept after 1978 in China when we move to the section of individualism and consumerism after 1992. One thing remains unchanged is that modernization is always the modernization of production for collective interests, or modernization is always about productionism and collectivism. When we consider the collectivism in socialist system from 1949 to 1978, it is
undoubted that collectivism is one side of modernization in China. But it is less and less likely to be true in the 1990s and the 21st century. The transformation starts in the 1980s and the 1990s.

3.2.2 Individualism and consumerism

Consumption becomes the center of economy and individualism rises in contemporary society. Scholars use the term post industry society or postmodern society to describe contemporary society. The difference between the industry or modern society and the post industry or postmodern society is that the former focuses on production for collective interests, or production centered, and the later focuses on consumption for individual interests, or consumption centered. I use the two terms—individualism and consumerism—to designate the opposite of collectivism and productionism and to describe two characteristics of contemporary society. The other characteristics of post-industrial or postmodern society, such as the globalization, the enhanced mobility, are less relevant for this study. Contemporary social theorists including Anthony Giddens, Zygmunt Bauman and Ulrich Beck, describe modern society with different terms, such as detraditionalization, disembedded, or reflexive modernity. They may not agree with each other about the specific characteristics of modern society, but they may agree with one thing that our society gradually transforms from modernization to individualism and consumerism.
Scholars have examined the development of individualism in Europe, America and China. Alan Macfarlane (1978) argues that English individualism, which is either the origin or result or both of capitalism, can be traced back to thirteenth century before industrialization. This suggests that private ownership, developed market, commodity trading and labor mobility already emerged in the 1250s in England. Individualism originated in England and England was the first industrial and capitalist nation. American individualism was influenced by England but differed from it. Early American colonists introduced industrialization to America. But when the social structure transformed from a focus on production and working relationship to that of consumption and personal relationship, the other-directed personality emerges and it replaces the inner-directed personality in American society, with the result that people feel lonelier in the community (Riesman 1950). Robert Bellah and his colleagues argue that individualism is the core of American culture and it is the defining characteristic of Americans, which includes the themes of success, freedom, right and justice (Bellah et al. 1985). Individualism does not mean egoism. It has two forms, utilitarian individualism and expressive individualism (Bellah et al. 1985). The former aims at specific goal, usually economic goal. The latter refers to the ways of personal life. The standard of individualism for Bellah and his colleagues, unlike Macfarlane’s standard which focuses on the economic foundation, is the goal and form of
individual interests. It is regret that Robert Bella and his colleagues did not explore the relation between individualism and pragmatism, the most important American social thought. When I examine individualism in China, I find some implications between individualism and pragmatism in the theory from the influential Chinese scholar Hu Shi, who was a student of John Dewey.

The rise of individualism in China at least can be traced to the later Qing dynasty and the New Culture Movement at the early 20 century. Political and cultural elites advocated individualism, consciously or unconsciously, at that time. Liang Qichao’s New Citizen theory highlights individual in solving the problems of internal administration and foreign relationship that Qing government faced. Hu Shi introduced pragmatism into China and developed the individual and liberal side of pragmatism (Yang 2009).

Chinese individualism or individualization (Yan 2003; 2009; 2010; Hansen & Svarverud 2010; Kipnis 2012a; Barbalet 2016; Zhang 2016) has its own characteristics. Yan Yunxiang (2009; 2010) argues that individualization unexpectedly happened in the Mao era, which was characterized by collective socialist system, and individualization developed along with the rise of private economy and awareness of personal right and national economic reform after 1978. Yan argues that individualism does not exist in China, because it lacks of democracy culture like America and
welfare system like northern Europe. What China has is individualization. Probably, we can use the term egoism to replace Yan’s term individualization, in the sense that Yan mainly talks about the rise of individualization for self-interests and lack of social morality. Yan may be right when he make this point on the people who were born before 1980 in rural areas, which are where Yan collected his data. But others argue that the 1980s and 1990s generations do have good social morality though lack of private morality, which means that they believe their personal life has not much to do with traditional social morality. Economic and other self-interests are not the only goal of their life. They may actively participate in public affairs, such as joining NGOs and donating for rural area. The spirit of these people is individualism, though individualism is the result of individualization. Jack Barbalet’s examination on the family, labor migration and right awareness show that individualization is not happening in China as it did in Western Europe (2016). If we examine the rise of the self-interest, we may find the sign of individualization, but if we consider the family obligation and filial piety (Barbalet 2016) or care and emotion (Zhang 2016), we may find the opposite result. However, searching for the self in a privatizing China is a mainstream social discourse in reform era (Zhang & Ong 2008; Tang 2012). The emergent of individualism, or individual psyche, is not disputed (Kipnis 2012b).

If we adopt Alan Macfarlane’s standard of individualism (1978), that is, the
ownership of land and other property rights, we may find some significant points about the rise of Chinese individualism in the reform era. The first is the household contract responsibility system in the early 1980s, even though the land in China is not private property. In this system, Chinese farmers ‘own’ land through long term contract, which make sure farmers have the right to use the land. The land is still owned by the collective village. But the farmer believes that the land is, using their own words, the land of their family. Second, property law was approved in 2007. This is the lawful guarantee for the rise of individualism. The third one, even more significantly, is the third judicial interpretation of marriage law which was released in 2011. According to this new judicial interpretation, the ownership and property rights are clearly divided between husband and wife. If the household contract responsibility system is still at family level, the latter two points definitely move to the individual level. These regulations and laws are the institutional guarantee for the rise of individualism in China.

Consumerism is one aspect of individualism. As early as 1899, Thorstein Veblen (1953) examined the conspicuous consumption of leisure class. He was one of the pioneers in examining consumerism and predicting the rise of it. Mike Featherstone (2007) argues consumer culture, or consumerism, is strongly connected with cultural and social transformation, media and everyday life in post capitalism, urbanization
and globalization. Consumerism is not only about buying things, more importantly, it is about consumer right and freedom of choice. So the rise of consumerism in China also means the rise of individualism, with the characteristics of, somewhat romanticized though, freedom, democracy and justice.

### 3.3 Modernization as electronic culture from the 1950s to the 1980s

The electronic culture in the period between 1956 and 1991 in China was mainly a culture of modernization. This fits the mainstream social culture of China at the time very well. The social discourse in the early 1980s was that a thousand things wait to be done (百废待兴) in the building a socialist China after the ten years Cultural Revolution. The four modernizations were the way to achieve this goal. For another, modernization as main electronic culture continued the discourse on computer industry since 1950s. Developing the computer was one key project in the Twelve Years’ Plan for the Development of Science and Technology (1956-1967) (Liu & Li 2005).

Generally, the electronic culture in the 1980s was modernization. It does not mean that individualism as electronic culture was not developed during that era. Individualism was developed in that era and it faced certain delays when it was presented in the electronic culture. Individualism as electronic culture was developed dramatically in 1990s, especially in the beginning of the 21st century. I will discuss
the individualism side of electronic culture in the next section. In this part, I focus on
the modernization side of electronic culture and examine it from three levels, namely
state, organizations and individualism.

3.3.1 The state: modern society

The state played an active role in the formation of electronic culture through relevant
policies. Its early policies mainly focused on modernization, on production and
collective interests. The first analog computer was produced in 1956 in Fudan
University. Under the guide of the twelve years’ plan for the development of science
and technology (1956-1967), the Institute of Computers was founded in The Chinese
Academy of Science in 1956 and some other similar institutions and computer
production factories were founded later on. Computers including 103 and 104
computers were produced during this period. The initial objective of making
computers was for manufacturing industries, not for personal consumption. This
objective slightly changed in 1973. The fourth Ministry of Machinery Industry, which
was in charge of the computer industry in the 1970s, revised its computer
development policy from orienting toward production and research to orienting
toward both individual use and production and research (Liu & Li 2005). The
development of minicomputers was in the plan. The DSJ130 computer, which was the
first batch of computer manufactured in China, was produced under this policy (Liu &
Wang Hongzhe (2014) examined the development of the computer industry in China from 1955 to 1984. He finds that the goal of the early development of computer in China was mainly to serve production and collective interests such as military, which was similar to the situation in American and the Soviet Union at their respective early stages of computer industry (Peters 2010). The early developments of computer in these three countries were mainly supported by the three governments. Later on, the Californian mode of developing computers (Barbrook & Cameron, 2001), which was private capital driven and consumption centered, prevailed. In the 1980s, a famous statement about computer development was made by Deng Xiaoping: the popularization of computer should start with kids (计算机的普及要从娃娃抓起). Deng said this when he saw two students using computers in a Youth Palace in Shanghai. This statement reflected the attitude of China government on the computer industry and it guided later policies. This encouraged the computer industry in China to follow the Californian mode.

The sixth five-year plan (1981-1985) supported the development of mini-computers, small-size computers in addition to industrial computers. The sixth five-year plan encouraged the development of software and Chinese word processing system and it also suggested building computer science and application research center in
universities. It planned to develop electronic products and equipment that can be used in the fields of agriculture, industry, science and technology, transportation, education and health. Similar statements appeared in the seventh five-year plan. The development of wireless and cable communication systems and optical fiber communication equipment was first mentioned in these two plans. The main goal of developing computer was for production, not individual consumption.

Policies on developing the television did not stress modernization as strongly as those on the computer. But there was an emphasis of modernization in these policies in the 1980s. In the 1956-1991 period, television was regarded to carry out three main functions: propaganda, education and entertainment. Education takes the second place after propaganda. Entertainment was secondary and there were not many entertainment television programs. The sixth five-year plan set the goal of building a Television University. Liu Yang (2015) examined the rise and fall of Television University from 1970s to 1980s in China. Television University was not designed to directly help production, but to indirectly serve production by supplying knowledgeable workers. The viewing of television as an educational tool reflects an electronic culture of modernization.

3.3.2 Organizations: serving the modernization, serving the people

Policies on developing computer and electronic industries directly influenced the
actions of organizations including corporations and schools. For example, as a response to Deng’s advice of popularizing computers among kids, a computer device called ‘Chinese Learning Machine’ was produced in 1986 by the Ministry of Electronics Industry, Tsinghua University, and state-owned enterprises. The Chinese Learning Machine is named after a famous statement from Premier Zhou Enlai: ‘reading for the rise of China.’ The production of Chinese Learning Machine was a part of Four Modernizations projects. In 1987, the Xiaobawang Learning Machine was released by a private company in Guangdong province. Although the Xiaobawang Learning Machine had the word ‘learning’ in its name, it was actually a game play station. The development of Xiaobawang Learning Machine marked the rise of the profit oriented electronic company and the rise of the electronic culture of individualism.

Other examples included the Founder Group and Qingniao Group. The Founder Group was established in 1986. Initially, its main business was computer photocomposition system. Such business orientation was related to the policy on developing software and Chinese word processing system in the sixth five-year plan. Businesses such as Founder Group were launched by the government through universities and they aimed to serve modernization and the nation. Similarly, the Qingniao project was carried out at Peking University under the guidance of the sixth
five-year plan. It focused on fundamental research on software. Later on the Qingniao
Group was founded, on the basis of the Qingniao project.

The final example is Xinhua Computer Vocational School. This school was a
branch of the Xinhua Education Group, which was founded as a private group in 1988
on the basis of a former state-owned training center. Xinhua education group had
more than 60 schools around China. The aim of Xinhua education group, according to
its website, was to ‘promote education and serve the country’ (新华教育，兴教报国).
The school was initially profit oriented, but in the name of serving the country by
training talented person for the country. The discourse was a kind of modernization
discourse. At least, it reflects the main stream culture in the society at that time.

The products or services of organizations in the previous discussion were
industry-friendly or used only in the production field. However, all these schools and
corporations turned toward consumer oriented businesses. Their change marked the
social culture transformation from modernization to individualism. These
organizations were influenced by social culture, as well as shaped social culture. We
can find the elements of modernization from all these organizations when they were
initially founded. Ironically, they turn to develop the electronic culture of
individualism and consumerism very shortly after they were founded, which will be
shown in the next section.
3.3.3 Individuals: learners and workers

I have examined the electronic culture of modernization in two aspects: state and organizations. Now I turn to the third aspect, individuals. There were numerous learners and workers among the individuals who use computer and television in the 1956-1991 period. They used electronic devises as the tools to serve modernization, directly or indirectly.

Learners used the television and computer to study. The users of Chinese Learning Machine were motivated by learning to use the machine. Some young parents took their kids to learn how to use Chinese Learning Machines in the late-1980s. Learning computer programming language was to learn a modern skill, and learning English through the machine was helpful for learning computer programing language. Chinese Learning Machines were a symbol of modernization and users of this machine were learning a skill required by the modernization. Moreover, the users of computer may be design workers, or they may learn to do design using computer program. I have mentioned the Chinese word processing system and the computer-photocomposition system developed by the Founder Group. The workers in these fields directly served production and modernization. The culture of computer, from the point view of workers and learners, was modernization in the 1956-1991 period.

Televisions were used as tool of modernization only for a very short time and in
limited areas, and television itself has more potentiality of entertainment rather than production. But we can still find an example to illustrate users of televisions were learners, students of Television University. In a craft plan sent to Deng from the Ministry of Education and Central Bureau of Broadcasting Administration in 1978, the state planned to recruit 12 million students for Television University and 20 million students for Broadcasting University in 1979 (Liu 2015:8). The total number of college students enrolled in 1979 was less than 300,000 (Liu 2015:7). Television was expected to be a tool of education from both officers and students. The students of Television University were learners, who are learning knowledge for the Four Modernizations.

The view that the internet was a modernizing tool of learning was still prevalent in the mid-1990s. Jack Linchuan Qiu (2009) vividly describes how early Chinese adopters of the internet used the internet as a learning tool. In the mid-1990s, the users of internet cafés mainly check email messages under Unix operating system. Few computers had the Netscape operating system. There were two kinds of users of internet cafés. A group was foreign students in China and the other group was Chinese students who wanted to apply postgraduate programs in foreign universities. Internet cafés initially served coffee. But as Qiu (2009: 22) finds, coffee smell has been gradually replaced by cigarette smoke. This change of smells illustrated how
modernization was replaced by individualism and consumerism.

The main stream of electronic culture was modernization in the 1956-1991 period. The state aimed to build a modern society. Computer-related organizations regard production and collective interests as their top priority. Learners and workers, contribute to the modernization culture as well. While many individuals still use computers to learning purposes nowadays, this fact cannot deny that individualism and consumerism are prevailing in the electronic culture now. As scholars (Wu & Yun 2015) states, that social imaginary of internet from 1980s till now in China is changed from modernity to neoliberalism. Generally, the electronic culture in the 1980s was modernization. It does not mean that individualism as electronic culture was entirely non-existent during that era. Individualism as electronic culture became dominant after 1992, especially in the beginning of the 21st century.

3.4 Towards an electronic culture of individualism and consumerism

In this part, I explore the rise of individualism and consumerism as electronic culture after 1992 and especially in the new century. The 1990s was a transitional period. Modernization on the one hand and individualism and consumerism on the other co-existed in China’s electronic culture in the 1990s. But individualism and consumerism gradually prevailed in the course of the decade. Current studies usually take 1992 as a turning point in contemporary China history. In 1992, Deng visited
southern China, and the fourteenth National Congress of the CPC hold at the same year. But the turning point for electronic culture transformation arrived after 1992. It took time for electronic culture to reflect mainstream social culture. By 2000, individualism and consumerism strongly prevailed in electronic culture, along with the wide accessibility of computer, internet and mobile phone.

Generally, the electronic culture after 1992 was individualism and consumerism. It does not mean that the modernization side as electronic culture disappeared during this era. Actually modernization as electronic culture was developed very well after 1992. But when comparing with the development of individualism as electronic culture, we may find that individualism was prevailing in electronic culture. In this part, I will examine individualism as electronic culture from three aspects, state, organizations and individuals, as I did when I examine modernization as electronic culture in the 1956-1991 period. In comparing, we may see clearly how the electronic culture changed from modernization in the 1956-1991 periods to individualism and consumerism in the 1990s and the 21st century.

3.4.1 The state: wealthy and harmonious society

Comparing with the sixth and the seventh five-year plan, I find the policies about electronic industry change apparently in the eighth five-year plan and the later five-year plans. This is especially true when we compare the sixth five-year plan and
the proposal for the thirteenth five-year plan. Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao were in charge of the Chinese government from the eighth to twelfth five-year plans. Jiang’s government proposed to build a prosperous, strong, democratic and culturally advanced country and Hu’s government aimed in addition to build a harmonious society. The Four Modernizations discourse was dropped. The state changed its goal from achieving Four Modernizations to constructing a prosperous, democratic, civilized, modern, and harmonious socialist country. Jiang and Hu government did not totally discard the word modernization in their narrations, but they changed the meaning of the concept.

In the eighth and ninth five-year plans, electronic infrastructure construction occupied much attention. Inspired by the plan of American national information infrastructure, the Chinese state started its Three Golden projects to improve China’s information infrastructure in 1993: gold-bridge for the internet, gold-check post for trading networks, and gold-tariff for financial transactions. This project aimed to serve the marketing and the consumption directly. The development of consumer electronics was first proposed in these two five-years-plans. The policies paid equal attention to both production and consumption in everyday life.

Similar policies continued in the eleventh and twelfth five-year-plans, as well as the proposal for the thirteenth five-year-plan. In the twelfth five-year-plan, the
government proposed to build the next generation internet, speed up its commercialization, and develop the internet industry. In the meaning context of 2010, development of the internet industry was basically to use the internet to serve consumers. We may see this point clearer in the narration of the proposal for the thirteenth five-year-plan. It proposed to develop the internet economy and sharing economy, and to carry out that Internet Plus Project, which involved using the internet in supply chain, logistics chain and business models. None of these plans and projects were about production. The Internet Plus Project was about the development of sales and services using internet, and it directly served consumption.

The television was mentioned mainly as a cultural project in five-year-plans after 1990. The main goal was to increase the accessibility of the television in the rural areas. Using the internet in modern distance education gradually replace the Television University in these five-year-plans. Television becomes a device with two functions: propaganda and entertainment. The education function of television was replaced by the computer and internet.

In the previous analysis of state policies, we find that an electronic culture of individualism and consumerism arose quickly in the 1990s. When the computer industry evolved into then internet industry, elements orienting toward production became difficult to find.
3.4.2 Organizations: serving the business, serving the individual consumer

The transformation of electronic culture found in state policies was relatively modest. In contrast, that found on the organization level was dramatic. Serving the business and serving the individual consumers were the principles for most organizations in this era. Some corporations, like those examined in a previous section, altered their business strategy in order to adapt to mainstream social culture. Otherwise they may die out. New founded corporations adhere to totally different strategies form those corporations in the 1980s. Corporations producing electronic products and services focused on user-friendliness, which was different from the focus on industry-friendliness in the 1980s.

The Founder Group changed its products in the late-1990s. Although the Group still produced industry equipment and services which serve production, the personal computer was a big part of its business operation after the 1990s. It invested in Health care medicine, real estate and finance. The Qingniao Group started its training business and training computer and software related workers. In the meaning context after 1992, this training could not claim that it is training workers for the country, rather it trains workers for the workers themselves, for workers to find a job, and for the corporation’s own profit. Similarly, Xinhua Computer Vocational School trained students for their career. In order to attract students to attend their schools, vocational
schools often claimed that their past students got very good jobs. Some vocational schools even signed a contract with their students or students’ parents, in which the schools promised that they will find a job for the students after they finish their study, and if the student cannot get certain skill in one semester, the student can join the other semester for free until they are familiar with the skill.

An unexpected result of these training schools was that they prepared skilled workers for the computer assembling and repairing shop. What the students learn from vocational school was basically computer hardware maintenance and software use, including typing. When there was a market for assembling computer, these students started to assemble computer and some of them even opened a shop to sell assembling computers and related electronic equipment. In the late-1990s, one-fourth to one-third computers in China were assembled machines (Liu & Li 2005:127). This was the origin of the Shaizhai (copycat) mobile and Shanzhai industry.

Companies like Xiaobawang also contributed to the rise of individualism and consumerism through their product promotion and customer serving. Xiaobawang initially produced some learning programs for their customers, but later on, Xiaobawang produced many games. This went on until game playing on the play station was replaced by that in internet cafes. Both Xiaobawang and internet cafes served their customers in terms of providing individual entertainment.
The newly founded corporations in the 1990s and the 21st century were born to serve individual customers. This is totally different from the corporations founded in the 1980s. For example, Xiaomi, founded in 2010, is one of the biggest mobile phone companies in China now. Its goal, as stated in its website, is ‘to let everybody enjoys the pleasure of science and technology’ (让每个人享受科技的乐趣). Its slogan for one of its mobile phone is ‘only for the enthusiastic fans’ (只为发烧而生). All of Xiaomi products are for individual consumption, for entertainment, such as mobile phone, Mi Band, Mi Pad, Mi TV. The other big electronic device suppliers, such as Meizu, share a similar strategy.

The television station and other media pay more and more attention on audience rates in the 1990s. An important objective of these organizations is to sell themselves as advertising platforms to advertising companies. 4A companies entered China in the later 1980s and the 1990s. To meet the need for audience rate of these companies, CTR (Joint Company of China International Television Cooperation and Taylor Nelson Sofres) and its subsidiary company were found. Television stations have a common goal: to sever their audience, to show advertising company that they serve more customers by getting a high rating from audience rating surveying companies.

3.4.3 Individuals: users and players

Dramatic changes of electronic culture can be found on the individual level in the
1990s and the 21st century. Individual users can be described as users and players of electronic devices, in contrast to learners and workers in the 1980s. The term users highlight their identity as individual consumers. These users and players represent the electronic culture of individualism and consumerism.

Players refer to people who use all kinds of game stations and internet bars. For example, the Xiaobawang Learning Machine was a Learning Machine when it first released. The users could be learners. But it can be easily transformed into a game station simply by changing its memory card. Almost as soon as it was released, it was used as a game station. The people who use Xiaobawang later on were mainly players, even though Xiaobawang tries to convey an image as a Learning Machine. The other group of players was in the internet bar. Unlike the early users in internet bars, who pay relative more attention on learning, users of internet bars in the later 1990s and the 21st century mainly played games, even though more and more learning materials including courses, were available online. In the 2000s, the situation in the internet bar was like this: most of the people there were young people, and they were playing computer games or watching videos, and/or they were chatting with friends online. There were many reports on parents complaining that their kids were addicted to the internet and games. Players help to construct the electronic culture of individualism and consumerism. Meanwhile, they are part of this electronic culture.
Another thing about the internet since the 1990s was online political participation (Zhou 2006) and online activism (Yang 2009) in China. Yang Guobin argues that it is misleading to think that the internet culture in China is only about government’s control and users’ entertainment. There are a group of people do use the internet in their struggle for social, economic and political rights, justice, freedom or democracy. Computer and internet were taken as symbols of romanticized individualism, freedom and democracy (Streeter 2010) in China. This leads us back to Yan Yunxiang’s argument about individualization in China. He uses the term individualization, rather than individualism to describe social change in China, because it lacks the spirit of right, freedom, justice and democracy in the process of individualization. Actually, these kinds of spirit were spread since 1980s. The young generation, born in the reform era, may adopt these spirits very well, especially in economic rights such as consumer rights. Internet users represent an electronic culture of individualism and consumerism, not only that of individualization.

The term ‘users’ refers to consumers of the electronic devices. They use electronic devices, computer and mobile phone, mainly for personal entertainment. The early vision of mobile phone was called Dageda (大哥大), which was first used in China in the later 1980s. That mobile phone was a symbol of wealth. Nowadays, smart phone is widely used and its main function is personal entertainment. The basic
communication function probably is not the main function anymore. Users are staring at their smart phone everywhere all the time. These users definitely represent the electronic culture of individualism and consumerism, and have not much to do with productionism and collectivism.

Transformations in television also reflected the shirt toward an electronic culture of individualism and consumerism in the 1990s and the 21st century. There were fewer people who used the television as a learning tool. The 1980s generation may remember that they were not allowed to watch television until they finished their homework in the 1990s, because Television was basically a tool of entertainment in 1990s. Television was taken as a symbol of modern life since the 1980s (Wen 2014). It also informed the audience what modern life is. Modern life means people live an apartment with electronic devices such as televisions, washing machines, and refrigerators. The term modernization in this chapter refers to the developing and using machines in production for the collective interests. The modern life represents the culture of individualism, family as a basic unit though, and consumerism.

Contemporary Chinese citizens to various extents achieved the dream of modern life that was presented in the television since the 1980s. These individuals, as users and players of computers, the internet, mobile phones and televisions, represent the electronic culture of individualism and consumerism in the 1990s and the 21st century,
as well as state policy and organizations’ strategies. The electronic culture after 1992 was individualism and consumerism. It does not mean that modernization side as electronic culture disappeared during this era. Actually modernization as electronic culture was also developed after 1992. But when comparing with the development of individualism as electronic culture, I find that individualism was prevailing in electronic culture.

3.5 Chapter summary

It took time for electronic culture, which is formed on the basis of consumption of different electronic devices, to converge with mainstream social culture. There are many reasons for this delayed transformation. I would like to give two main reasons here. The first one, it takes time for the diffusion of the electronic devices and electronic culture. Meanwhile, the meaning context in two eras sharps this diffusion of the electronic devices and electronic culture. The development of electronic devices and electronic culture is constrained by social, cultural, economic and political factors. For example, television programs were broadcasted in 1958 and the first Television University started in 1960 in China. The computer industry also started in 1950s in China. Both the television and computer were developed to serve production and the people. This is what I call the culture of modernization. Under this background, the computer was taken as a symbol of modernization in the 1956-1991
period. But along with the wide accessibility of television, television had become a tool of entertainment, which was a part of the culture of individualism and consumerism. In the middle and later 1990s, students use the internet mainly as a way of learning, which does not meet the mainstream social culture of individualism and consumerism at that time. But young people play online games in internet bar in the early 21st century. The culture of internet quickly caught up the main stream social culture.

The second reason is about the potentiality of different electronic devices. Potentiality of devices implies in what way that the device can be used. For example, we may use televisions and the internet as an educational tool, as well as communication and entertainment. These are potentialities of television and internet. Computers can be used to serve production as well as consumption. These are the potentialities of computers. Industrial computers, which are industry-friendly, have more potentiality to sever collectivism and productionism. However, personal computers, which are user-friendly, have more potentiality to support individualism and consumerism. This influences the change of cultural meaning of computers. As for mobile phones, however, they have less potentiality of production. They are designed to be a product of individual consumption. If the potentiality of electronic device does not meet the mainstream social culture, it may die out at an early stage of
its development, or it may not even have a chance to appear.

In conclusion, modernization was the main discourse in the period between 1956 and 1991, as a continuance of the modernization discourse since 1950s. It was gradually replaced by individualism and consumerism in the 1990s and the 21st century. In this social meaning context, this chapter reveals the transformation of the electronic culture in China. The electronic culture of modernization in the 1956-1991 period was gradually replaced by individualism and consumerism in the 1990s and the 21st century, and 1990s was the period of transition. The transformation of the electronic culture reflects and is part of the transformation of the social culture in China. This transformation of electronic culture refutes the simplified and linear explanation of social culture in China.
Chapter 4 Being in the Apple store: the genetic phenomenological sociology of social space

4.1 Introduction

Space is a medium rather than a container of action (Duan 1977; Tilley 1994). This chapter examines the space of the Apple store from the perspective of genetic phenomenological sociology. Social space is the concern in this chapter, the pure nature or physical space is not the concern in this chapter. I use the term space main to refer social space except special instruction. This is also how we use the term Apple store in everyday life. For example, we can say one Apple store moved from A to B. In this situation, Apple store purely refers to the social space, the social relations concerning Apple, such as Apple logo, Apple products, Apple store workers etc. Here Apple store does not refer to the physical space, because the physical space did not move.

Apple has more than 400 retail stores in 17 countries and an on-line store available in about 40 countries. Millions of people visit Apple stores and the on-line Apple store and buy millions of Apple products from these stores. What does it mean being in the Apple store and what are the existences of Apple stores, things and people in an Apple store? How does the meaning and culture of Apple stores emerge? To answer these questions, this chapter, based on space theory from phenomenology and Daoism,
attempts to develop a genetic phenomenological sociology of space that includes both the social phenomenological ontology and social epistemology of space.

This chapter is structured as follows. The second section briefly reviews the current cultural and social theories of space, including the political economy and phenomenology of space, and then develops a genetic phenomenological sociology of space. All of these theories imply that space is a set of social relationships. The third and fourth sections illustrate the genetic phenomenological sociology of space using the example of an Apple store and the on-line Apple store. The third section illustrates the social ontology of space, which answers the question of what it means being in the Apple store and the on-line Apple store. Here, social ontology refers to social phenomenological ontology. Following this ontological examination of the existence of space, the fourth section explores the existence of space epistemologically. It discusses the encountering in the Apple store and on-line store. I attempt to theorize the emergence of meaning or culture of space and virtual space in this part. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the implications of the genetic phenomenological sociology of space.

4.2 Space as social relation: the political economy and genetic phenomenological sociology of space

I would like to propose that space is a social relation. The existing theories on space,
such as political economy of space and phenomenology of space, examine space as social relation. For example, political economy of space examines space as the economic and power relation between people, and phenomenology of space examines space as the relation between human beings and physical space or place. The inequalities of economy and power are all present in social space as economic relation or power relation. In this part, I first examine space as economic and power relations. Then, I further develop genetic phenomenological sociology of space by identifying three kinds of relations, namely the relation among things, the relation between human and thing and the relation between people. The relation among things is about the physical or nature space, which is not the concern of this chapter. The main concerns of this chapter are social relations, which includes economy relation and power relation, and which are the relation between human and thing and the relation between people. Actually, all the space in-the-world, following Heidegger, is social space, because it is human involved. The nature space which is the relation between things is out-of-the-world. To avoid confusion, I use space as social space, which is the relation between people and things, among people, in the whole chapter. Space and related concept is too complicated. When it is necessary, I will use the term social space to distinguish it from nature space.
4.2.1 The political economy of space

The political economy of space covers two relationships: economic relations and political or power relations. The economy is the foundation of the cultural ideology and superstructure, which involves power. This is the fundamental principle of critical theory. Power exists in all kinds of practices in everyday life. Some scholars pay more attention to economic relations, whereas others pay more attention to power relations.

First, social space is an economic relationship. This view can be traced to philosophers, cultural critics and cultural geographers such as Henri Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau, Guy Debord, David Harvey, Edward Soja, Manuel Castells and Walter Benjamin. These scholars were strongly influenced by Marxism and developed theories that analysed everyday life, among which space was one concern. The transformation from classical Marxism to neo-Marxism was a transformation of the theoretical focus from industry to everyday life, from production to consumerism and from time to space.

Henri Lefebvre (1991a) pointed out that all human activity in everyday life takes place in social space. In his view, capitalism colonises everyday life through the colonising of social space in which capitalism reproduces itself. Thus, Lefebvre believed that to resist capitalism and achieve a better society, the revolution of consumption in everyday life is as important as the revolution in production. The
revolution of everyday life is the revolution of social space as an economic relationship. Later, in his work ‘The Production of Space’, Lefebvre (1991b) further developed his thoughts on social space, stating that the production of space is the reproduction of social relations in production. The meaning of space is socially produced. This process is spatialisation, which in turn influences people’s practices in and perceptions of space. The economic side of spatialisation appears as the economic relationships of the social space, and the political side of spatialisation appears as the power relationships of the social space.

Lefebvre’s everyday life theory was further developed by Michel de Certeau (1984), who argued that consumption in everyday life is the production of meaning and the reproduction of capitalism. This unconscious process implies that the practice of everyday life may be a starting point of revolution. Minor practices such as walking, dwelling and cooking are the creative resistances of ordinary people. De Certeau argued that walking in the city and traveling are practices of space, and that walking may not follow the rules or the roads designed by governments and organisations.

Lefebvre’s idea of the revolution in everyday life along with de Certeau’s practice of space can also be found in Guy Debord’s work ‘The Spectacle of Society’. Guy Debord (1995) proposed that capitalism transformed from the accumulation of commodities to the accumulation of the spectacle. The social relationship in
spectacles is mediated by images. He advocated ‘dérive’ and ‘détournement’ as forms of resistance. Détournement aims to turn the expression of the capitalist system against itself, and dérive, the art of wandering through urban space, has the same goal. Both walking in the city and ‘dérive’ may remind us of Baudelaire and Benjamin’s flaneur. All three scholars were concerned with the revolution of everyday life in social space. A presupposition of their theories is that social space is both a kind of economic relationship and a political relationship, either through production, consumption or reproduction.

A group of cultural geographers has also examined social space as an economic relationship. David Harvey and Edward Soja focused on the relationship between capital and space. They examined the uneven geographical development of capitalism and claimed that to construct a just society requires an alternative solution: a space of hope (Harvey 2000) for a spatial justice (Harvey 2009; Soja 2010). Spatial justice indicates a space turned to the examination of justice and injustice of social relations, which includes both economic and political relationships, although the economic relationship is fundamental. Castells (1977) examined social struggles in the city from a Marxist approach that regarded the city as an economic and political space before moving on to the study of the Internet and networked society (Castells 2000).

An earlier and more comprehensive study of social space as both an economic and
power relationship came from Benjamin (1999) in ‘The Arcades Project’. According to Benjamin, a representative of the Frankfurt school, the Paris arcade was a product of capitalism’s culture of consumption. The arcade was built for the convenience of customers, who were mainly the bourgeoisie in 19th century Paris. The Paris arcade was a spectacle where all kinds of commodities were displayed. Obviously, as a space, the arcade represented an economic relationship between businesspeople and consumers. Furthermore, Benjamin argued that a world exhibition is a space of pilgrimage to the commodity fetish. From the Crystal Palace in London to the Shanghai World Expo, social space is intensively presented as a set of economic relationships. This is the commodification of space. Thus, space becomes social relations.

Second, social space presents a political or power relationship. As I have noted, all of the aforementioned scholars examined social space both as an economic and a power relationship. I will now move on to the power aspect of relationships in social space to the theories of Benjamin and Michel Foucault.

The Eiffel Tower is an example from Benjamin that can be used to illustrate the power relations of social space. Benjamin argued that iron and glass made possible the railway, the arcades and the Eiffel Tower, which are symbols of modern society. The two symbolic meanings of the Eiffel Tower are industrial civilization, which
implies economy, and panorama, which implies power. Benjamin paid more attention to the economic side of the panorama and the Eiffel Tower compared with Foucault, who focused on the power of the panopticon. In modern society, a panorama of Paris is possible. This panorama that was once exclusive to the monarchy became accessible to the bourgeoisie, as they could enjoy a panoramic view of Paris simply by going to the Eiffel Tower. The relationship between the Eiffel Tower and World Expo should be noted, as the Eiffel Tower was built for the World Expo in Paris. I have examined the World Expo as a social space of economic relations. However, the relationship between the Eiffel Tower and World Expo implies both economic and political aspects of the relationship combined in a social space.

The street barricades in Paris served as another example from Benjamin of the power relations of social space. The boulevards replaced the street barricades in Paris and thus avoided battles over street barricades. As such, street barricades and boulevards represent the power relations between classes. According to the critical aforementioned scholars, the boulevards were designed by governments and prevented walking as a flaneur, the practice of ‘dérive’ and all kinds of spatial practices. Even the flaneur is in the space of capitalism, and the flaneur is outside of the economic and power space only in the sense that he is self-aware in the situation he is facing.
Foucault’s analysis of the panopticon is another example of the power relations of space (Foucault 1979). Jeremy Bentham designed the panopticon to reduce the number of watchers in a prison and reduce the contact between watchers and prisoners. The relationship between the watchers and prisoners is built through social space. As long as there is the possibility that every prisoner is being watched in the prison, a power relationship arises between the watcher and prisoners regardless of whether there is a real watcher. This is how power relations work. In modern society, all of us are prisoners in the panopticon. This is especially true when we consider the Internet, which is a kind of social space.

However, the political economic analysis of space implies a dichotomy of economy and culture, or ultimately the dichotomy of object and subject. This dichotomy distracts us from the essence of space, which is social relation. The phenomenology of space is aware of this problem but still falls into this dichotomy. The genetic phenomenological sociology of space steps out of this dilemma by moving from the consciousness and experience of phenomenology to the social relations of genetic phenomenological sociology.

4.2.2 The phenomenology of space and genetic phenomenological sociology of space

Scholars of humanistic geography (Relph 1976; Tuan 1977; Tilley 1994) have
examined space from a phenomenological perspective, which studies how space in nature presents itself to human beings or how human beings experience natural spaces. The experience of space is also a conscious relationship, which is the relationship between people and things or natural spaces. The focus of the phenomenology of space is the meaning of space to people, as Tilley (1994) stated, which means that the phenomenological study of landscape, or space in Tilley’s words, focuses on people’s experiences or understanding of the world. Here, the landscape is the social space, which is humanised natural space. Space (natural space) is transformed into place (social space) as it acquires definition and meaning (Tuan 1977: 136). This approach is strongly influenced by both phenomenology and structuralism. For one thing, the focus on experience is definitely a phenomenological approach. For another, the focus on natural space and the meaning or definition it acquires is obviously influenced by structuralism.

A critique of the phenomenological approach to space is that it relies too much on individual subjective meaning, experience or consciousness. This is a fair critique. For example, Martin Heidegger experienced and understood the Black Forest in his own way, which may be different from our own experience and understanding. As a response to this problem of the phenomenological study of space, we should take into consideration the social and cultural background, or meaning context, in Schutz’s
(1967) terminology, in the phenomenological study of space. This means our focus becomes the common or shared meaning of the Black Forest among all people. This is the genetic phenomenological sociology of space this chapter tries to develop.

The genetic phenomenological sociology of space focuses on the social relations presented in space, while the phenomenology of space focuses on the lived human experience and consciousness of space. The phenomenology of space falls into the level of lived experience and consciousness, or the psychological level, because its philosophical roots in early Husserlian phenomenology relate to consciousness and lived experience, even though Husserl stated clearly that his transcendental consciousness phenomenology was not psychology. The later development of phenomenology by Husserl and others such as Heidegger and Schutz into genetic phenomenology, existential phenomenology and genetic phenomenological sociology moved away from consciousness and psychology, and these theories form the foundation of the genetic phenomenological sociology of space.

To summarise, space can be examined as a form of social relations, such as economic, power and social phenomenological relations. All of these relationships can be examined and developed through a single theoretical resource: the existential phenomenology of Heidegger (2010). Existential phenomenological ontology has two levels of meaning. The first is the objective world of objective things, and the other is
the meaningful world of significant meanings. The first level focuses on objective
things and the natural space between these things, while the second deals with
significant meaning, in which human beings are involved. The second level also
covers the relations between people and things and the relations between people.
Existential phenomenological ontology is both an objective ontology in the first sense
and a social ontology in the second sense. The latter is the main focus of this chapter,
and correspondingly refers to two levels of care structure (Heidegger 2010).

Based on existential phenomenological ontology, I examine space from three
angles: space as relationships between things, between people and things and between
people. First, natural space comprises relationships between things. This concept is
similar to Leibniz’s definition of relative space in his early theory (Casey 1997). It
also includes the relationships between people and things and between things when
people and things are considered as objective entities. Second, social space comprises
relationships between people and things. This includes the phenomenological study of
space from both social and cultural perspectives. Experience, consciousness and
embodiment from classic phenomenology provide the theoretical resources for this
approach. Third, social space as the relationships between people indicates the
political and economic relationships in social space. This approach concerns
economic and power relations. The first aspect of natural space is a real place, the
latter two are imagined places and third place (Soja 1996), which are social spaces.

‘Imagined place’ is a term Soja developed from Lefebvre’s theory, which was inspired by the theory of the imaginary of Cornelius Castoriadis (1987). People encounter people and things in social space.

4.3 Being in the Apple store: the social phenomenological ontology of space

What does it mean being in the Apple store? To answer this question, I will first introduce theories on space from Daoism and Heidegger’s existential phenomenology. Second, I will, following the form of Heidegger’s first part of Being and Time, I examine four aspect of the social phenomenological ontology of space, namely what is the mode of existence of space, what an Apple store means, what being in the Apple store and the on-line Apple store mean, and who and what are in these Apple stores.

4.3.1 Dwellings, vessels and space

The ontology of the Apple store is both relational and social ontology. I have argued that relational ontology includes three kinds of relationships: the relationships between things, between people and things and between people. The latter two relationships are social relations that involve human beings. Daoism is mainly about the first relationship, i.e., natural space. Heidegger’s existential phenomenology mainly examines the social ontology of space. Both Daoism and Heidegger’s existential phenomenology provide the theoretical resources for relational ontology
and the social ontology of space. According to Daoism, space is the relationship between being and nothingness. For Heidegger (1971), space (thing) is the relations between heaven, earth, divinities and mortals.

The discussion about space and relational ontology in Daoism appears in Chapter 11 of the *Dao De Jing* (道德经), which states:

*Thirty spokes share one hub. It is just the space (the nothingness) and the Being (substance). Those make a cart function as a cart. Knead clay to make a vessel, and you find from the vessel the space and the Being. Those make a vessel function as a vessel. To build a house with doors and windows, and you find from the house the space and the Being. Those make a house function as a house. The Being functions together with the nothingness (space), so they can provide the condition and the usefulness*. (三十辐,共一毂,当其无有,车之用。埏埴以为器,当其无有,器之用。凿户牖以为室,当其无有,室之用。)

This chapter gives three examples, including a cart, a house and a vessel, to support

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1 This translation is based on the translation from Gu Zhengkun (1995: 87). Initially, Dao De Jing has no punctuation marks. So scholars may interpret it differently, even totally opposite, by placing punctuation marks differently. I change the place of punctuation marks and interpret it in a different way, which follows the philosophical mean of Dao De Jing in the vision of Guodianchujian (郭店楚简). Gu’s (1995:87) translation, and the text with punctuation marks are as follow: Thirty spokes share one hub. It is just the space (the nothingness) between them. That makes a cart function as a cart. Knead clay to make a vessel. And you find within it the space. That makes a vessel as a vessel. To build a house with doors and windows, and you find within the space. That makes a house function as a house. Hence the Being (substance) can provide a condition, under which usefulness is found. But the Nothingness (space) is the usefulness itself. (三十辐，共一毂，当其无有，车之用。埏埴以为器，当其无有，器之用。凿户牖以为室，当其无有，室之用。) Readers may find the difference between my translation and Gu’s. The differences are indicated in black italic Chinese characters. I did not make different punctuation mark in the last sentence, but I translate it inter-textually according to the traditional Chinese grammar.
the argument that being functions together with nothingness. Togetherness is the way that being and nothingness provide the condition and usefulness. A space is a space only on the condition that being also appears. The relational ontology of Daoism includes both nothingness and being.

This idea was well developed in two articles by Heidegger (1971), ‘The Thing’ and ‘Building, Dwelling, Thinking’, which can be read as interpretations of the vessel and the house in Chapter Eleven of the Dao De Jing. Heidegger’s interpretations of Chapter Eleven align with the concept of fore-structure (Gadamer 2004), Holderlin’s poetry and Aristotle’s theory of four causes (Wang 2004: 164-205). Heidegger argues that a building is also dwelling, which differs from the idea that people build houses and then dwell in them. This is just like the bridge that takes up space but the location becomes the space for the bridge only when the bridge appears. More importantly, the space involves human beings. For example, human beings can use the jug as a vessel for drinking or libation. Dwelling, drinking and libation are ways of existing for human beings and things. Human beings, as mortals, along with heaven, earth and divinities, are one part of the fourfold ontology in Heidegger’s later thinking. According to Heidegger, space is not nothingness. Rather it is the relationship between mortals, heaven, earth and divinities. Unlike Heidegger, who explores and reveals Dasein but avoids anthropocentrism, I go the opposite way and hide Dasein
even deeper. I try to explore what space means to human beings in this article at the level of meaning, which is human-centred, and at the level of the objective world, which is not human-centred. Thus, dwelling, drinking and libation are all social relations of space. People exist in a space by way of dwelling, drinking and libation, and relationships are built in this space between people and between people and things.

4.3.2 The Apple store

What makes a space an Apple store? First, it should have a natural space. Let’s say that Apple rents a space in a shopping mall to open an Apple store. Before Apple rents it, the space is already there, but it cannot be called an Apple store. When Apple closes the Apple store, the space is not an Apple store anymore. In these two situations, the space does not have meaning as an Apple store.

Second, to be an Apple store, the shop should have an Apple logo and appropriate things in the shop, such as Apple products. However, this is still not enough. For example, we may find the Apple logo in a shop, or put Apple products in a shop, yet we cannot call the shop an Apple store because it is not owned by Apple. At most, we can call it an imitation Apple store. This means that Apple must have a relationship with the shop for it to be an Apple store. Without this relationship, the shop cannot be called and accepted as an Apple store by consumers. As such, Apple is the third
element to make it an Apple store. The second and the third points indicate that an Apple store is about the meaning of the space. The meaning emerges when people encounter other people or things. The relationship between Apple and an Apple store is also a meaning. This meaning indicates the relationship between the people in Apple and the Apple store. Finally, the most important element of the Apple store is the people. The workers in the Apple store and the consumers who come to the Apple store are crucial for a space to be an Apple store. When people join in, the relationships between people and between people and things are built. All of these elements make a space an Apple store.

The building of relationships is key to making a space an Apple store. How are these relationships built? When we talk about relationships, we should note that these relationships are built in the moments when people and things encounter each other. There are several ways of encountering. For example, people may read an advertisement that Apple will open a new store in a certain place. This encounter makes the readers believe that the space is an Apple store. Although consumers cannot buy Apple products at this Apple store because it has not opened yet, people get the meaning of an Apple store through this encounter with Apple or, to be more exact, through reading the Apple advertisement. We may see here that the relationship is not so much about time and natural space; it is mainly about meaning. This meaning is
human meaning and the relationship is a social relationship. Meaning emerges when social relationships are built.

### 4.3.3 Being in an Apple store and on-line Apple store

What does it mean to be in a space, or in an Apple store? Apple products, Apple store employees and visitors are inside the store. This statement is about the insideness and talks about the Apple store as a natural space, in which people and things are examined as entities. I do not focus on the natural space of the Apple store. Being in the Apple store is not, or not only, the insideness of the Apple store. Being in the Apple store is mainly about being in a relationship with other people or things connected to the Apple store. This relationship is the meaning of being in the Apple store. For example, the relationships that concern the Apple store are the relationships between consumers and Apple store employees, between consumers and Apple products and between Apple store employees and Apple products.

Being in the Apple store also means that the existence of the Apple space and the people in it are one and the same. This is like a man in a ship: the existence of the man and the ship are one (Peters 2015: 101-102). As soon as people encounter an Apple store in any way, such as through listening, watching or imagining the Apple store, they are in a relationship with the Apple store and with the other people and things that concern the Apple store.
Being in the Apple store implies the vanishing of the distinction between subject and object. This vanishing indicates space as a social relationship. At the object level, all of the people and things in the Apple store as entities are at the same level. At the meaning level, meaning emerges only through the relationships in which human beings are involved. Foucault’s analysis of Las Meninas argues that there is no subject among the king, the queen and the painter in and out of the painting, or between the painting and its observers (Foucault 2002). I would add that the relationship between a painting and its observers indicates that space is a social relationship. In this case, space is the social relationship between the painting and observers, as well as the social relationships between the observers, the painter and the king and queen in the painting. The painter in the picture is looking at any observer, while the observer is looking at the painting. The distinction between subject and object has vanished. A relationship is built between the observer and the painting and the people in the painting.

As being in the Apple store is not about the insideness of the Apple store and is only about the relationship concerning the Apple store, we may say that Foxconn workers are also ‘being’ in the Apple store, as are any other related people or things. This is also true of the on-line Apple store. The on-line Apple store has no natural space, so nobody can really be inside an on-line Apple store. When we say being in
the Apple store, we can refer to both being inside the Apple store and being in a relationship with the Apple store. However, when we say being in the on-line Apple store, we can refer only to being in a relationship with the on-line Apple store.

4.3.4 People and things

Who or what is in the Apple store? I have discussed that being in the Apple store means being in a relationship with the things and people connected with the Apple store. As such, when we ask who or what is in the Apple store, we ask two questions. The first is who or what is inside the Apple store, and the second is who or what is in a relationship with the things and people connected with the Apple store. This chapter focuses on the second meaning of being in the Apple store. Of course, the people and things inside the Apple store are also in a relationship with the things and people connected with the Apple store. A social phenomenological study of the Apple store focuses on the social space, which is concerned with the meaning of the social relationships, rather than on the natural space, which is concerned with the insideness.

The Apple consumers, Apple store employees, people who know the Apple store, Foxconn workers who produce Apple products, and Apple products themselves are all in a relationship with the Apple store. Apple consumers may come to an Apple store and buy an iPhone. This visit represents a relationship between the consumers and the Apple product. The Apple store employees work inside the Apple store, but the
meaning of their insideness, not their insideness itself, is the social relations between
them and the visitors and things inside the Apple store. The people who know the
Apple store are in a relationship with the Apple store because relationships between
them and the other people and things connected to the Apple store have been built.
They might have received information from the media about Apple products, the
Apple store, Apple employees and others like the Foxconn workers. Once they get
this information, the relationship between this group of people and the people and
things connected with the Apple store is built. What do I mean when I say that the
Foxconn workers are in a relationship with the Apple store? As the Apple store
represents social relations, the relationship between Foxconn workers and Apple
products is obvious, in that the Foxconn workers produce the products sold in the
store. The Apple products inside the Apple store are a medium between people; the
relationship with Apple is mediated through Apple products.

When we consider Apple’s on-line store, we can have no doubt that being in the
Apple store is mainly, or even only, about the social relationships. Nobody can really
be inside the on-line Apple store. When we say somebody is in the on-line Apple store,
it means that he or she is visiting the on-line Apple store or selling or buying Apple
products there. This is purely a social relationship between salesmen and consumers,
as there is no shared natural space between them.
4.4 Encountering in the Apple store: the social phenomenological epistemology of space

In the previous section I examine the existence of being in the Apple store ontologically. In this section, I discuss the mode of existence of being in the Apple store epistemologically. This mode is called encountering. I will first examine encountering and the care structures through which social relations are built. I will then discuss what encountering people and things means in the Apple store and the on-line Apple store. Finally, I will discuss three characteristics of encountering in the Apple store: placelessness, de-distance and mediation.

4.4.1 Encountering and care structure

Encountering builds social relations, particularly relationships between people and things and between people. These two social relationships were conceptualised as care structures by Heidegger in ‘Being and Time’. According to Heidegger (2010), a care (sorge) structure has two levels of meaning: concern (besorgen) and solicitude (fusorgen). Concern is about Dasein in being-in-the-world and its multifarious dealings with things in the world, and solicitude is about Dasein in being-with-one-another and its multifarious dealings with other people in the world. Put simply, care structures include caring for things and caring for other people. We should note that the use of the term ‘care’ here is different from its use in everyday
We may say that ‘I do not care about something’ in everyday life. Here, ‘do not care’ is one kind of caring for Heidegger. Caring presupposes the existence of a subject. Heidegger was criticised at this point, especially for his early work, ‘Being and Time’. The critique was that Heidegger was still examining the world from the point of view of a human being, if not humanism (See ‘Letter on humanism’ in Heidegger 2000), in contradiction to his own promise not to examine Dasein from an anthropocentric point of view. To avoid this problem, we may use the term ‘encountering’ instead of ‘caring’, and say that people encounter other people and things. The examination of care structures as encountering is developed from a social phenomenological perspective. On one level, both people and things encounter each other as entities. This is about the objective world of objective things. On another level, people encounter other people or things. This is about the meaningful world of significant meaning. These are precisely the two levels of existential phenomenological ontology.

Encountering is the emergence of meaning, and practice is the way of encountering. When people encounter things or other people, meaning emerges. If the meaning is commonly shared in society and lasts for a certain time, it becomes culture. Culture, in an abstract sense, is a system of symbols, meanings and practices. This article examines the culture of the Apple store as a system of symbols, practices and
meanings. The symbols include the Apple logo, the T-shirt worn by Apple store employees, the Apple products and the other things inside the Apple store. The practices include Apple store employees selling Apple products or answering questions from customers, customers buying Apple products and visitors simply walking around inside the Apple store. The meanings differ when people encounter other people or things connected to Apple in different ways.

4.4.2 Encountering people and things

Encountering has two modes: ready to hand and present at hand (Heidegger 2010). When people encounter other people or things, these people and things may be either ready to hand or present at hand. Ready to hand means they are encountered but people do not categorise or theorise about the encounter consciously. Present at hand means people and things are encountered and people do consciously categorise or theorise about these encounters. For example, we may say that visitors encounter the Foxconn workers who produce the Apple products in the store. However, when we ask the visitors if they had any ideas in mind concerning Foxconn workers when they walked into the Apple store, a possible answer would be no. How then can we say that the visitors encountered Foxconn workers in the Apple store? According to the two modes of encountering, the visitors encounter the Foxconn workers unconsciously. In other words, the Foxconn workers are ready to hand to the visitors in this situation.
However, after we ask the visitors this question, they may be aware that Apple products are produced by Foxconn workers. They might have received this information from the media, and our asking then leads them to recall their stored knowledge. In this situation, the Foxconn workers are now present at hand to the visitors.

People encounter other people in the Apple store. Visitors, customers and Apple store employees are all inside the Apple store. For visitors and customers, the Apple store is not only a place that sells Apple products, but also a place with significant meaning. This meaning could be fashion or high-tech related. For Apple store employees, the Apple store is just a workplace. As I have argued, people not only encounter other people inside the Apple store, but also have a relationship with Apple products or the Apple store. The protestors against Apple and Foxconn, the main supplier of Apple, also come to the Apple store or other places to condemn Foxconn’s poor working conditions and long working hours. More than 20 Foxconn workers committed suicide in 2010 and 2011. For the protestors, the Apple store belongs to a company that did not fulfil its social responsibility to ensure that all of its suppliers would guarantee their employees a safe work environment and a reasonable salary. In other words, for protestors, the Apple store is a symbol of exploitation. Foxconn workers are also encountered in the Apple store. When we think about who produces
Apple products, we are encountering Foxconn workers. Even if we do not think about this question, we still encounter Foxconn workers in the ready-to-hand mode. Apple products are the medium for these encounters.

People encounter things, i.e., Apple products, in the Apple store. For Apple store employees, these things are just commodities to be sold. They are no different from other commodities. Apple store employees encounter Apple products by selling them. For consumers and visitors, the meaning of the Apple store and Apple products can be related to a sense of cool, counterculture, fashion or wealth. They encounter Apple products by looking at them, playing on them or buying them. People who do not come to the Apple store or buy Apple products also encounter Apple products, such as by reading news about Apple stores, making comments about Apple or simply imagining it. They may share the same meaning with Apple users and fans, or they may have a totally opposite understanding of Apple. For example, they may consider that Apple products are used to show off, while Apple fans and users may consider Apple products as symbols of wealth.

People may encounter other people and things through the Internet or other media. When people buy Apple products at the on-line Apple store, they also encounter people working for the on-line Apple store, people who deliver the products they ordered on-line and Foxconn workers again. The employees of the on-line Apple store
are not inside the on-line Apple store, but they have social relations with customers just as Apple store employees do. When we consider this situation, it is easier to understand that the Apple store is both a social relationship and an on-line Apple store. It has little to do with natural space; it is mainly a social space.

4.4.3 Placelessness, de-distance and mediation

Encounters on the Internet tell us that encountering does not require a natural space. Encountering is about placelessness (Relph 1976; Castell 2000; Meyrowitz 1985), de-distance and mediation. First, encountering does not necessarily happen at a place. It certainly can happen at a place, such as when people encounter other people and things inside an Apple store, but it can also happen without a place, such as when customers buy Apple products on-line. In this situation, encountering is placeless. Even in the first situation, as I have argued, encountering in the Apple store has little to do with natural space. It is mainly about the meaning of Apple and the Apple store. In other words, encountering builds social relations and social relations have little to do with natural space. Social relations are placeless, so we can say that encountering is placeless.

Placelessness is connected with de-distance. Encountering is de-distanced. When I say people encounter other people and things in the Apple store, this does not mean the encounter occurs inside the Apple store as a natural space. As such, encountering
in the Apple store is not about distance; it is only about meaning and social relations.

For Heidegger, the things at hand have the character of nearness (Heidegger 2010). Encountering is nearness but not necessarily touchability. When we say something is near, it does not mean the thing is a short distance from us; it only means that the thing is present at hand. An example Heidegger uses is eyeglasses. People who wear glasses are not normally aware of the existence of their glasses unless the glasses are broken or unsuitable. The nearness of their glasses is about them being present at hand when they are broken or unsuitable. Otherwise, they are not near, even though they are such a short distance from the people wearing them. Encountering on the Internet is another example. For instance, when customers buy Apple products on-line, this has nothing to do with distance. Customers surf on-line and place an order. In this situation, natural distance has no influence, no matter how far away the Apple store or Apple warehouse is. When people encounter the Apple Girl on-line, natural distance has no influence either. The Apple Girl is a Foxccon worker who took a photo of herself while examining an iPhone and forgot to delete the photo. The iPhone was bought by a customer from the UK, who found the photo and put it on-line. The encounter between the UK customer and the Apple Girl was de-distanced, and the iPhone was the medium.

Mediation makes possible the placelessness and de-distancing of encounters. Both
the people and things in these encounters serve as media that carry the meaning of Apple and the Apple store. Apple stores all around the world are standardised, and their decor is almost identical. Apple store employees wear the same T-shirts and use the same display tables. This decor and the other symbols represent a consistent meaning for Apple and the Apple store. Meanwhile, the Apple products and their users are forms of media. In the case of the Apple Girl, the iPhone and Internet are obviously media for spreading her photo. We do not encounter things directly nowadays, but rather encounter symbols of things through the media. Through mediation, place and distance become of no concern in a society that accumulates symbols (Debord 1995), a society of mediation.

4.5 Chapter summary

In conclusion, space is relational and social space is social relations. The relational ontology of space denotes the relationships between things, between people and things and between people. The latter two relations are social relations that involve human beings. The political economy of space encompasses political or power relations and economic relations, while the genetic phenomenological sociology of space is about the social relationships between people and things through experiences. Based on genetic phenomenological sociology, this chapter examines both the social phenomenological ontology and epistemology of space, which are exemplified by
being in the Apple store and by encounters in the Apple store, respectively. Being in the Apple store is not about being inside the Apple store, but rather about being in a relational gathering at the Apple store. Encountering in the Apple store is about the modes of being in the Apple store and the meaning of the Apple store, which emerge through encounters. This point is made clearer when we consider the on-line Apple store. Being in the on-line Apple store is only about being in a relational gathering in the on-line Apple store, as is encountering in the on-line Apple store. In essence, from the social phenomenological perspective, social space is social relations.
Chapter 5 The genealogy of Apple advertisements: the genetic phenomenological sociology of emergence and transformation

5.1 Introduction

Genealogy is not only method and critique, but also social ontology. Genealogy is about time. Time and space are two aspects of genetic phenomenological sociology. The last chapter has examined Apple store, space, as the practice or the result of the practice of Apple Company. It shows the social ontology and epistemology of genetic phenomenological sociology. All the analyses in the following chapters are based on these social ontology and epistemology. Genealogy, or genesis in time, is the focus of this chapter. In this chapter, empirically, I examine another practice of Apple Company, Apple advertisement. Theoretically, I analyze the genealogy of Apple advertisements in the meaning context (Schutz 1967) or social history of China from the perspective of genetic phenomenological sociology. Specifically, this chapter explores the emergence and transformation of the meaning of Apple advertisements. Genealogy, as social ontology, and meaning context are the two key aspects in this chapter and in the whole thesis as well.

Current studies on Apple advertisements can be divided into two groups: (1) the branding and marketing studies and (2) the cultural and critical studies. The branding and marketing studies of Apple advertisements explore the strategies of advertising
and the relation between advertisement and consumer perceptions and behaviours. These studies examine the relation between brand exposure and consumer behaviour (Fitzsimons et al. 2008), the relation between the content of advertisement and the perception (Phillips-Melancon and Dallakas 2014) and the purchasing behaviour of consumers (Das and Ahmed 2014). The branding and marketing strategies are also the focus of young Chinese scholars, and dozens of master theses examine Apple’s brand and marketing strategies through Apple’s advertisements, Apple store, etc. They examine so-called integrated marketing communication of Apple (see Xu 2012; Hu 2013; Han 2014).

The cultural and critical studies of Apple advertisements examine the symbolic meanings of advertisements and the ideology and power relation behind these advertisements. Political economy of communication and cultural studies are two theoretical sources for cultural and critical studies of Apple advertisements. For example, the constitutive rhetoric of the “1984” Macintosh advertisement and the analysis of the ideological codes and cinematic narratives that construct the advertisements reveal the role that advertisements play in the cultural discourse of Macintosh (Stein 2002). The iPod Silhouette advertisement studies show the representative form and the symbolic meaning of the advertisements (Jenkins 2008; Cooper 2009). Livingstone (2011) examines the “Get a Mac” television campaign as a
popular culture text with embedded implications about consumption, identity and class in promoting the spectacle of consumption and the myth of self-actualization through commodities. Generally, the semiotic analysis of Apple advertisements (Zheng, 2012; Zhou, 2015; Wang F, 2016) and the studies of culture and ideology of Apple advertisements (Xu 2013; Wang J 2014; Wang Y 2014; Ma 2014) compose the mainstream of cultural and critical analyses of Apple, Apple consumers and Apple advertisements.

Advertisement is one of the main ways to build commercial culture in contemporary society. The ideal achievement of advertisement is to build a popular commercial culture that may stimulate the sales of products. But Apple Company claims that Apple and its advertisements represent counterculture, for example, in the advertisements “1984” and “Think Different”. Media and consumers accept this claim without much doubt. That is why media keep on presenting Apple products as symbols of counterculture and non-mainstream products. Ironically, the millions of non-mainstream Apple products are sold every year, and the Apple iPhone has the biggest share in the China market. Consumers accept the claim of Apple advertisements and buy Apple products. But how can the same iPhone make them different from mainstream social culture? In order to reveal the mythology of Apple counterculture, I examine emergence and transformation of the meaning of Apple
advertisements and develop a new theoretical tool with the historical analysis. This is the genetic phenomenological sociology of Apple advertisements.

The genetic phenomenological sociology of Apple advertisements aims to overcome the structure-oriented and the construction-oriented explanations of Apple culture presented in advertisements, either counterculture or popular culture. In the conventional explanations, on one hand, the counterculture elements are the cultural structure for the interpretation of Apple advertising. On the other hand, Apple Company, as the producer of Apple advertising, and the audience of Apple advertisements, construct the meaning of Apple advertisements. But the problem with these two explanations is that they fail to explain the fact that the meaning of Apple advertisements changed in different places over time. The genetic phenomenological sociology tries to solve this problem and explain the emergence and transformation of the meaning of Apple advertisements in the dynamic social and historical process.

In this chapter, I first develop genealogy as method, critique and social ontology from the perspective of genetic phenomenological sociology in analyzing Apple advertisements. Second, in the empirical part, I examine the emergence and transformation of Apple culture in its advertisements, trace the origin of Apple counterculture image in advertisements and, more importantly, examine the genealogy of Apple advertisements in meaning context, from the US to China, from
modernization in the 1980s and marketization in the 1990s to individualism and consumerism after 2000 in China.

5.2 Genealogy as method, critique and social ontology: the perspective of genetic phenomenological sociology

5.2.1 Genealogy as method and critique: problematization and normativity

The genealogy as method and critique (Koopman 2013) is widely known after Foucault’s master works. But critics such as Habermas and Nancy Fraser (see Kelly 1994) point out that Foucault’s genealogy and his theories lack normativity, which critical theory provides. In this section, I first briefly examine the representative critical theories on communication and culture, namely political economy of communication and cultural studies. These theories are critical and normative, but they fall into the trap of subject philosophy, the dichotomy of subject and object, which prevents them from achieving the theory normative goal. Genealogy as critique from Foucault supplies a new approach of critique, which is problematization. The problematization is the critique of history of thought from Foucault.

Both political economy of communication and cultural studies are rooted in Marxism. The influential theories and schools in the study of culture and society include the Frankfurt school (Horkheimer and Adorno 2002; Althusser 2003), cultural studies (Williams 1983; Thompson 1991; Du Gay etc. 1997; Hall 1997; Frank 1998;
Hoggart 1998; Bennett 2001; Hesmondhalgh 2002; Lash and Lury 2007) and political economy of communication (Schiller 2006). Marxism, especially the theory of fetishism, including commodity fetishism, symbolic fetishism (Baudrillard 1998; Zizek 2002) and spectacle fetishism (Debord 1995, 1998; Kellner 2003), is the theatrical source for all of these theories.

Political economy of communication focuses on ownership and right of control (Schiller 2006), which is different from cultural studies that focus on audience and text (Ang 1985; Morley 2005). The debate appears between political economy of communication and cultural studies. Political economy of communication questioned the focus of cultural studies, which is cultural consumption rather than cultural production. There are two main rounds of debates. One is the criticism of cultural studies made by Dallas Smythe, Graham Murdoch, and Peter Golding in the 1970s, and the other debate is among Nicholas Garnham, Graham Murdock, Lawrence Grossberg and James Carey in the 1990s. The result of the debates is that the two sides agreed on the basic problems of economic determinism and the ultimate goal of both sides. Both sides agree political economy of communication is not oversimplified economic determinism, and cultural studies do not give up the economic foundation. Both sides criticize capitalism, and they both misread each other. But the methodology is still controversial. These debates are significant to
cultural studies. Cultural studies should truly articulate production, consumption achieve a combination with the political economy of communication (Kellner 1997).

The debate between political economy of communication and cultural studies is actually the debate of object-oriented theory (economy and material) and subject-oriented theory (culture and ideology). They share the same root, which is subject philosophy, the dichotomy of subject and object. This philosophical root is a trap for the critical theory in the road to equality, freedom and emancipation. Because the dilemma of subject philosophy is that it cannot treat the other, including the other people and other things, equally, this is the problem of intersubjectivity, as pointed out by phenomenologists.

The debate between political economy of communication and cultural studies leads us to genealogy as critique and further development of genealogy as social ontology. Genealogy as method and critique, through problematization, is a way out of subject philosophy. But it lacks a normative theory in Foucault’s theory, to which critical theory can contribute. In order to develop a normative theory of genealogy, we should inherit normative theory from critical theory, on one hand, and develop social ontology of genealogy, on the other.
Genealogy as social ontology: emergence, transformation and meaning context

Genealogy as social ontology is the root of genetic phenomenological sociology. Meaning emerges in the encounters between people and between things and people. This is developed from the care structure of phenomenology. The process and the duration of encountering is practice. The genesis of practice makes a dynamic and historical society. Meanwhile, the meaning is transformed in this process, because new encountering joins in. What’s more, the emergence and transformation of meaning are heavily influenced by meaning context. In this section, I examine the counterculture encounters with neoliberalism in the world, including China, as meaning context for Apple advertisements and the genealogy of Apple advertisements in meaning context.

Apple and its advertisements show the process of romanticization and commercialization of counterculture. This process is the encountering of counterculture and neoliberalism or the process of marketization and commercialization. Culture, as the web of meaning, connects history with our contemporary life. Using Apple advertisements as an example, it has brought the symbols of counterculture in the 1960s to the consumers around the world since the 1980s. Apple culture is shaped by historical and societal elements and meaning.
context. Apple claims it represents the counterculture of the 1960s, but actually, it has been the commercial culture since the very beginning. It is part of the global culture industry, globalization and neoliberalism that started in the 1980s. The counterculture and global culture industries are supposed to be opposite, but ironically, Apple claims both of them unite in the Apple culture.

In the 1960s, the counterculture movement spread throughout America, the UK and most of the Western world. This movement combined the African-American civil rights movement, the women’s rights movement, the anti-Vietnam war movement, the freedom of speech movement, etc. Students and young generations are the main force of the movement. Hippies and other alternative lifestyles, subgroups and subcultures emerged. People try to find their own ways to achieve their American dreams, to build a good society. Counterculture movement challenges the authority, the mainstream culture. One fruit of this counterculture movement, no matter bitter or sweet, is the rise of digital utopianism and cyber culture, as Fred Turner (2006) traced. Community is built through communication and connection. What can connect people are communication technologies, magazines in the 1960s and the Internet at present. This concerns one spirit of counterculture, shared through the network. Stewart Brand published the magazine *Whole Earth Catalog*, in which people may find the information about the tools they needed in the 1960s for helping people to build their
new community. Brand and his magazine supplied necessary information for people in the California area who were building their new community, living their lives in a new way. The spirit of cyber culture and digital utopianism is rooted in counterculture. The recent representative of the counterculture is the Internet. Apple is one successful case in Internet industry. Tracing this history helps us understand Apple culture in a broad meaning context.

Starting from the later 1970s and early 1980s, neoliberalism flourished in the economic field and had significant consequences on politics, culture and society. According to David Harvey (2005), the period between 1978 and 1980 was a revolutionary turning point in the world’s social and economic history. During that time, neoliberalism spread all around the world. From 1978 to 1980, Deng Xiaoping, Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan took their political place in China, the UK and the US, respectively. This was the rise of neoliberalism and the start of its flourish. The main idea of neoliberalism is a free market economic system without much government intervention. Like Thatcher said, “There is no such thing as society.” So everybody should solve his or her own problems. Earlier promotion of neoliberalism happened in Chile under Augusto Pinochet’s government. Pinochet’s government adopted the theory from the Chicago boys, a group of young Chilean economists who were influenced by Milton Friedman, who served as major advisor to US President
Ronald Reagan and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Under this background, the global economic system was developed. Apple was one representative of this stream. Apple Company was founded in 1976 and developed its computer in the 1980s and delivered its iPod in 2001 and the iPhone in 2007. All this happened in the neoliberalism era. More importantly, the global labour division was also developed in this era. We had more than one million Foxconn workers produce Apple products in China. The companies from Taiwan, Korea and other countries, mainly developing countries, were all involved in the supply chain of Apple. We were in the in a period of great prosperity of neoliberalism. Tracing the history of neoliberalism gives us a broad social and historical background for understanding Apple culture and its advertisements.

The existing scholarships describe the phenomenon of advertisements well and reveal the cultural ideology hidden in it. We want to know more about an advertisement besides its political economy and cultural ideology. How does the meaning of Apple advertisements emerge and transform, and what are the mechanisms of this emergence and transformation? Answers to these questions can be found in the genealogy of Apple advertisements in the meaning context. This leads us to genetic phenomenological sociology of Apple advertisements.

Genealogy and meaning context are two key aspects of genetic phenomenological
sociology. Genealogy is social ontology of Apple advertisements, which means Apple advertisements are grown all the time, and their meaning is in the emergence and transformation in meaning context. The meaning context of Apple culture and Apple advertisements has been the transformation of electronic culture from modernization to individualism and consumerism in China since the 1950s. Generally, the genealogy of Apple advertisements in the meaning context shows the dynamic process of cultural emergence and transformation.

The genealogy of Apple advertisements in the meaning context explores the changed Apple advertisements in unchanged meaning context and the unchanged Apple advertisement in the changed meaning context. The same Apple advertisements may have had different meanings in the 1980s and in the 2000s, or in the US and in China. The different Apple advertisements in the US and in China may convey similar meanings. I try to explain why this happens through the genetic phenomenological sociology.

The genealogy of Apple advertisements stresses the aspects of time and space. For example, for one Apple advertisement, it should be taken as two different ones when it is broadcast at different times in different places. The Apple advertisement “1984” broadcast in 1984 is different from the Apple advertisement “1984” broadcast in 2004. Meanwhile, the Apple advertisement “1984” broadcast in the US is different from the
Apple advertisement “1984” broadcast in China. Rephrasing Herakleitos’ famous saying “No man ever steps in the same river twice”, we can say here that no man can see the same Apple advertisement twice. The genealogy, or emergence and transformation, is the social ontology of Apple advertisements.

5.3 The genealogy of Apple advertisements

The genetic phenomenological sociology of Apple advertisements aims to explore the genealogy of Apple advertisements in meaning context. I examine Apple advertisements in China media in the 1990s and after 2000, trace the origin of the Apple counterculture image and interpret Apple advertisements in the meaning context in the following part. The emergence and transformation of the meaning of Apple advertisement is the social ontology of Apple advertisements.

5.3.1 Apple advertisements in China media

We can divide Apple advertisements in China into two stages. The first stage is the Apple advertisements in the 1990s, which mainly focused on the functions of the Apple computer and printer for business, publishing and graphic design. These advertisements were mainly print advertisements and appeared in professional magazines, such as PC World China, Printing Today, China Advertising and International Advertising. It is worth noting that most of the Apple advertisements at this stage were sponsored by the Apple agency in China, not Apple Company. The
second stage is the Apple advertisements from 2000 until now. These advertisements include both print and video advertisements, and the later makes up the main Apple advertisements. The content of the advertisements at this stage is mainly about individual entertainment functions and the meanings of Apple products for individual consumers. The functions include listening to music, taking pictures, chatting with family members and friends and creating music and other things. The meanings of Apple products that these advertisements convey are cool, fashionable, chic not geek, warm and sweet. Because these advertisements are sponsored directly by Apple Company under its global branding system, most of these advertisements in Chinese have a similar English version. In other words, Apple Company releases advertisements under the same creative idea with various cultural elements, Chinese or European and American elements.

Apple advertisements in the China media in the 1990s mainly showed the functions of the Apple computer in business, publishing, CAM and CAD. They didn’t have much to do with counterculture or popular culture at that stage. The following advertisements showed the image of the Apple computer in the China computer world in the 1990s. The first Apple advertisement I found in China media is the “Little Sparrow” computer advertisement (Figure 5.1), which appeared on the cover page of the ninth issue of PC World China in 1991. The Little Sparrow computer with an
office solution based on the Apple Macintosh computer was produced by Huayuan Technology Company (华远技术公司), which imported Apple Macintosh computers in 1988 (Hao 2006). The computer in this advertisement is the Macintosh Classic. The slogan of this advertisement is “Using famous brand computer, making your office work efficient. The Little Sparrow office computer is a famous brand and very efficient” (电脑用名牌,办公求效率。小麻雀办公电脑,名牌加效率!) . In the second issue of PC World China in 1992, an Apple Macintosh advertisement claimed that “Macintosh is the commander in chief of the computers in the world. It is a symbol of advanced enterprise” (Macitosh, 世界微机的统帅, 拥有它是企业级别的象征). This advertisement shows how powerful the multimedia of Macintosh was. It is worth noting that this powerful multimedia tool was for “machinery, construction, advertisement, art, decoration and CAD designs”, not for individual entertainment.

What’s more, the Apple advertisement (Figure 5.2) in the sixth issue of PC World China in 1992 surmised four fields of the Apple computer, which are multimedia, CAD, publishing and business. Finally, the Apple international company Hong Kong branch Beijing office published whole-page advertisements (Figure 5.3, 5.4) for the power Macintosh in the fifth issue of PC World China in 1995. The slogan was “The world is your oyster. Because it [power Macintosh] can follow what your heart wishes” (你当然随心所欲,因为它得心应手). According to the content of these
advertisements, power Macintosh could follow your wishes in work, publishing and business.

Figure 5.1. Little Sparrow computer advertisement (Source: PC World China, Issue 9, 1991).

Figure 5.2. Apple computer advertisement (Source: PC World China, Issue 6, 1992).

Figure 5.3 Apple advertisement. (Source: PC World China, Issue 5, 1995).

Figure 5.4 Apple advertisement. (Source: PC World China, Issue 5, 1995).
Apple advertisements convey similar information to readers of magazines such as Printing Today, China Advertising and International Advertising. In the second issue of Printing Today in 1994, the cover page Apple advertisement, sponsored by Lenovo, the Apple agency in China at that time, showed that the Apple computer creates colorful pictures. The slogan reads: “Apple computer, the leader in composing” (苹果电脑,排版领域好领导). The next advertisement in the fourth issue of Printing Today in 1994, also sponsored by Lenovo, shows some bees flying from the inside of the Apple computer screen to the colorful flowers and fruits. The slogan reads: “It is so easy to do graphic design on the Apple computer” (苹果电脑上的平面设计,就是这么简单). In 1995 and 1996, the Apple advertisements sponsored by Apple China agency’s Cordial company and Beijing Huichang Company (科迪尔技术开发有限公司,北京汇昌科贸公司) in China Advertising and International Advertising mainly focused on the graphic design function of the Apple computer. One advertisement says, “Apple computer graphic design system, from then on, you can enjoy the design” (苹果电脑平面设计,从此平面设计滋滋有味). In 1997, Apple’s new agency in China Beida Founder followed the early campaigns and focused on business, publishing and multimedia functions of Apple computers, as shown in the advertisement in the first issue of International Advertisement in 1997. The later Apple advertisements, from 1997 to 2000, in China Advertising and International
Advertising, focused on the design function, on one hand, and added computing speed in the advertisement, on the other. The slogan from one advertisement in the fifth issue of International Advertisement in 1997 was a good summary of the Apple advertisements’ content in the later 1990s, which is “Very colorful and very fast” (非常色彩 非常快) (Figure 5.5).

It is worth noting that the slogan “Think Different”, which was taken as a counterculture slogan of Apple, did appear, following the logo of Apple, in the advertisement in the later 1990s. But it did not make Apple advertisements and Apple computers any different from other computer advertisements and computers in the 1990s in China. I will come back to this point in the third section, the genealogy of Apple advertisements in meaning context of China.

Generally, Apple advertisements focused on the functions for enterprise, such as
business, graphic design, publishing and multimedia in the 1990s. But the content of Apple advertisements, which were mainly videos, transformed to personal entertainment function of Apple devices after 2000, with the release of the iPod in 2001, iPhone in 2007, iPad in 2010 and iWatch in 2014. Almost all the Apple advertisements in China at that time had a counterpart English version. Basically, there were two ways that Apple made advertisements in Chinese. First, they just simply added Chinese subtitles for the advertisements in English or replaced English narration with Chinese voices. Second, they invited Chinese characters and used Chinese culture elements to make advertisements similar to the English versions.

The advertisements for iPod went straight to its music functions and other characters. First, one iPod advertisement in China stated “1000 songs in your pocket, in a small space” (1000 首歌在你的口袋里,在一个小小的空间里) and showed hundreds of pictures of singers and CD covers. The English music that played in the advertisement was accompanied by a Chinese subtitle. Second, the advertisement for iPod Nano – chromatic (霓) in China – showed the iPod with various colors, and again, the English song in the advertisement was accompanied by a Chinese subtitle. Third, the advertisement for the iPod touch on the Apple Chinese official website focused on its functions, such as music, games, pictures and the Chinese SNS Weixin.

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2 http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XMjYyMjkzMjQ=.html
3 http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XNjgzNzg5OTI=.html
4 http://www.apple.com/cn/ipod-touch/
and Weibo. What Apple wanted to convey in these advertisements was that iPod, as the Chinese slogan of the iPod Touch goes, was a “well-made product with which consumers can enjoy themselves” (精工细作,尽情享乐之作).

The advertisements for the iPhone in China also introduced its functions with the help of the short story about family members and friends. The telecom operator China Unicom, which cooperated with Apple to sell the iPhone, sponsored the early iPhone advertisements. The iPhone 3 was introduced into the China market through China Unicom at the end of 2009\(^5\), and the iPhone 4 was introduced in September 2010.\(^6\) China Unicom released two advertisements for the iPhone 4 facetime: “Calligraphy” and “Birthday”. In the advertisement “Calligraphy”\(^7\), one boy, with the help of his mother, shows his calligraphy to his grandparents through facetime. In the advertisement “Birthday”\(^8\), one girl, with her mother, presents a birthday cake to her father through facetime. Each of two advertisements tells us the functions of the iPhone through warm and sweet family stories. Both of these two advertisements have their counterpart English versions\(^9\), and all of these advertisements for facetime share the same background music, which is “When You're Smiling”, by Louis Armstrong.

The later advertisements for the iPhone 5, iPhone 6 and iPhone 6s were similar to

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\(^5\) [http://tech.163.com/09/1028/23/5MOFVMRA00093SCG.html](http://tech.163.com/09/1028/23/5MOFVMRA00093SCG.html)

\(^6\) [http://www.cnstock.com/index/gdxw/201009/884264.htm](http://www.cnstock.com/index/gdxw/201009/884264.htm)

\(^7\) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j47POPr_z2E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j47POPr_z2E)

\(^8\) [http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XMjE1MzcyNjQ0.html](http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XMjE1MzcyNjQ0.html)

\(^9\) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0eWSiZzjM-4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0eWSiZzjM-4); [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKoLp_lGo14](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKoLp_lGo14)
the advertisements for the iPhone 4. The functions and features of the iPhone are still the main points in the advertisements. Four advertisements for the iPhone 5\textsuperscript{10}, namely “Physics”, “Ear”, “Eggplant” (茄子) and “Thumb”, show the big screen and the thin iPhone 5, the music player and camera, and that it is easy to operate only with a thumb. These four advertisements also had both Chinese and English versions based on same videos. The counterpart of the Chinese version of the advertisement “Eggplant” is called “Cheese” in the English version. Because “eggplant” in Chinese has a pronunciation similar to “cheese”. Chinese people say eggplant, like people say cheese in English while taking a photo in order to catch a big smile. The other two advertisements\textsuperscript{11}, “Photo Every Day” and “Music Every Day”, for the iPhone 5 show the camera and music functions of the iPhone 5. After they show various people from all around the world using the iPhone to take photos and listen to music in various situations, the narratation of the advertisement is: “Every day, more photos are taken with iPhone than any other phone” (每一天，都有更多的照片来自 iPhone) and “Every day, more people enjoy their music on iPhone than any other phone” (每一天，都有更多的人用 iPhone 来享受他们的音乐).

\textsuperscript{10} http://iphone.tgbus.com/news/class/201301/20130123103121.shtml; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xgEtRbMHzs
\textsuperscript{11} Chinese version: http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XNTc1NjY5NzQ0.html; English versions: Music Every Day 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C1QLMHgX_VU; Photo Every Day 2013 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jZGzXEExZcc.
One series of advertisements\textsuperscript{12} for the iPhone 6 features the voices of movie actors and director brothers Jiang Wen and Jiang Wu (姜文与姜武兄弟), while the English version\textsuperscript{13} has late night TV personality Jimmy Fallon and pop star Justin Timberlake as the narrators. They lightheartedly discuss the features of the iPhone 6 and iPhone 6 plus, such as the big screen, healthy Apps and the powerful camera.

The advertisement Timer\textsuperscript{14} for the iPhone 6s on the official Apple website shows a plush puppet making cookies, and the iPhone helps to time them. The Chinese and English versions are based on the same video, and the only difference between these two versions is the language, one in Chinese and the other in English. The other advertisement, “Onions”, on the official Apple website tells a story of a girl using the iPhone to take a video of her mother cutting onions, and she wins an art award for her video. A Chinese girl plays the part in the Chinese version, while a western girl is in the English version.

The advertisements for the iPad and iWatch focus on creativity and fashion. Apple had a Chinese electronic music band, Yaobang, for its iPad advertisement in the “Verse” series\textsuperscript{15}. This advertisement shows how creative the band is in achieving their verse, music. The slogan “What will your verse be?” indicates that iPad can help you

\textsuperscript{12} Chinese version: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=64vH_p29QdA
\textsuperscript{13} English version: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aHL4gaF6df0
\textsuperscript{15} Yaobang’s Verse: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qr4zRce-xJJ; Jason’s Verse: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nv3YU6PjIk
to achieve your dream. Apple’s advertisement for its latest product, the iWatch, presents Vogue in the China version. The picture of supermodel Liuwen wearing an iWatch appears on the front cover of the November 2014 issue. Fashion is the key element in this first cover page advertisement for the iWatch.

Most of the Apple advertisements after 2000 that I examined above are product advertisements. Apple releases many of these kinds advertisements for its products, such as the iPod, iPhone, iPad and iWatch, and its servers, such as Siri, iOS, and Health App, to introduce their functions. The other types of Apple advertisements are for the Apple company image. The following two advertisements fell into the type of company image advertisement. The first one is the advertisement “The Song” for the 2015 Chinese spring festival, and its English version is for Christmas in 2014. The advertisement tells the story of a girl who discovers an old record of her grandmother, and then she uses apple products to create and mix a duet with her and her grandmother. The grandmother is very touched when she hears the song through an iPad. The song in the Chinese version is “Smile Forever” from singer Zhou Xuan (周旋) and composer and lyricist Chen Gexin (陈歌辛), while the song in the English version is the classic and jazz standard song “Love Is Here to Stay”. The second

16 http://fashion.ifeng.com/a/20141010/40049598_0.shtml
17 Chinese version: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x8vhhAkFEBQ; English version: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rg2lwZsAPoE
advertisement\textsuperscript{18} was for the next holiday season. The Chinese version was for the 2016 spring festival, and the English version was for Christmas 2015. In the Chinese version, the song “Send A Song To You For Spring Festival” (送你一首过年歌) is based on the Chinese classic holiday song “Congratulations” (恭喜恭喜), composed and written by Chen Gexin (陈歌辛), which is performed and sung by Jonathan Lee, Li Jianqing and Bai An (李宗盛,李剑青和白安). The English version shows the musical legend Stevie Wonder singing his holiday classic “Someday At Christmas” with singer Andra Day.

Generally, Apple advertisements transformed their emphasis from the functions of Apple devices for enterprise, such as business, graphic design, publishing and multimedia, in the 1990s to the functions of personal entertainment, such as music and photos, after 2000. The counterculture elements appeared in the advertisements, for example, with the slogan “Think different, electronic and rock music”. But this was not enough to build the image of counterculture for Apple in China. In what follows, I explore the emergence of Apple counterculture in its classic advertisements.

5.3.2 The origin of Apple counterculture image

Apple’s representing counterculture is a common understanding or misunderstanding in China. It is not rare to see that newspapers report Steve Jobs as a counterculture

\textsuperscript{18} Chinese Version: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=23n38eNcUyM; English version: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hjBzoOs_dXg
hero and Apple as the representation of counterculture. The examples, written by journalists, used to prove this are normally the Apple advertisements “1984” and “Think Different”. In the existing scholarships, the scholars from cultural studies criticize the counterculture in Apple advertisements as commercial culture and ideology, while the scholars from marketing, with unhidden admiration, praise Apple’s successful marketing strategy through building a counterculture image.

We did not find much counterculture element in Apple advertisements in China. Where do these counterculture images come from? Most of the scholars use Apple advertisements like “1984” and “Think Different” as an answer. Although these advertisements were not broadcast in China, thanks to the Internet, people can easily find and watch them on the Internet. For example, just in one Chinese video on the website named Soku, there are hundreds of videos of Apple’s “1984” and “Think Different” advertisements, and some of them have been watched more than several hundred thousand times. Because of the Internet, these advertisements are also in China. Apple fans are familiar with classic Apple advertisements and with the songs by such famous singers as Bob Dylan and Paul McCartney that are in the advertisements. Being immersed in this information environment, it is no surprise that Apple fans accept Apple as counterculture.

In this section, I examine some classic Apple advertisements that are used by Apple
to build its counterculture image in China and in the world, for example: “Welcome IBM, Seriously”, “1984”, “Lemmings”, “Think Different” and “Mac vs. PC” commercials, iPod silhouette advertisements and iPod commercials with Bob Dylan and Paul McCartney. But actually, these counterculture elements in Apple advertisements represent the Apple commercial culture. They are not counterculture at all.

The print advertisement titled “Welcome IBM, Seriously” was released in 1981, when IBM introduced its first personal computer. Apple used a playful way with the spirit of counterculture to “welcome” IBM into the PC marketplace. This playful way was inherited in later Apple advertisements, such as “Lemmings”19 and the “Get a Mac” campaign, seriously20. The Apple “Lemmings” advertisement for its Macintosh Office in 1985 was released during the 1985 Super Bowl. A group of blindfolded businesspersons slowly walk to a cliff, where, one-by-one, they fall off the cliff, except for one man, who uncovers his eyes and notices the situation. A voiceover says: “Apple will launch The Macintosh Office” and “you can look into it” (like the man who uncovered his eyes) “or you can go on with business as usual” (and fall off the cliff like most of the blindfolded businesspersons). This advertisement was not successful, and it was seen as insulting to potential customers. The series of “Get a

19 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dGJ0mp4kRVo
20 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D2SBWbnmosGFE
Mac” advertisements aired from 2006 to 2009 and was also playful advertising. In the “Get a Mac” advertisement, a man, Justin Long, dressed in casual clothes as Mac and a man, John Hodgman, in a more formal suit and tie as a PC introduce the features of Mac and PC. People can learn how PC is weak, slow, uninteresting and overly concerned with work, while Mac is strong, fast, laid-back and cool.

The next well-known Apple advertisement constructing the Apple counterculture image is “1984” for Macintosh. The advertisement tells a story that a heroine, representing Macintosh, saves human beings from conformity, represented by the Big Brother-like person appearing on the big screen. After the heroine throws a hammer at the screen and Big Brother is destroyed, the voiceover reads the caption on the screen: “On January 24th, Apple Computer will introduce Macintosh. And you’ll see why 1984 won’t be like ‘1984’”. For the 20th anniversary of the Macintosh, Apple re-released the advertisement with the heroine wearing an iPod. The heroine represents Apple and its counterculture image.

The advertisement “Think Different”, released in 1997, was another influential Apple advertisement in building its counterculture image. Some historical iconic figures appeared in this one-minute-long advertisement, for example, Albert Einstein, Bob Dylan, Martin Luther King, John Lennon, Thomas Edison, Muhammad Ali,

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21 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2zfqw8nhUwA
22 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5JreOhjCJA0
23 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nmwXdGm89Tk
Maria Callas, Mohandas Gandhi and Pablo Picasso. The voiceover says: “Here's to the crazy ones. The misfits, the rebels, the troublemakers. The round pegs in the square holes. The ones who see things differently. They're not fond of rule. And they have no respect for the status quo ... While some may see them as the crazy ones, we see genius. Because the people who are crazy enough to think that they can change the world, are the ones who do.” The advertisement ends with a girl opening her eyes, as if she makes a wish or sees a bright future. Several print advertisements of “Think Different” featured a portrait of one iconic figure with a small Apple logo and the slogan “Think Different”. These advertisements built a counterculture image for Apple.

Finally, the iPod silhouette-style advertisements and music are other sources of Apple counterculture images. Typically, the advertisements are about the dark silhouetted characters dancing with the background rock, up-beat or energetic music in brightly colored backgrounds. Music is an important source of the Apple counterculture image, and two iconic singers, even though they actually represent commercial culture, Bob Dylan and Paul McCartney, are used for iPod silhouette-style advertisements. In the advertisement, Bob Dylan, dressed in black and playing a guitar, sings “Someday Baby” with the usual iPod-wearing silhouetted
dancer\textsuperscript{24}. Paul McCartney sings “Dance Tonight” in an animated TV advertisement for Apple’s iTunes and iPod\textsuperscript{25}. They are taken as the counterculture singers of which Steve Jobs, who believed he was the son of counterculture in the 1960s, was fond.

The counterculture elements in classic Apple advertisements are the sources of the Apple counterculture image in China. But can we say that Apple represents counterculture no matter what, at the beginning or in the present, especially when it is the big brother in the electronic world? Apple lets it consumers think differently in the same way of buying and using Apple products. The counterculture image in China is different from the counterculture in the US, and the counterculture in the 1960s is different from the counterculture in the 1980s, 1990s and the new century. In order to understand the Apple counterculture image, which has always been a popular commercial culture, we should examine the genealogy, from the 1960s to the 2000s, of Apple advertisements in the meaning context, from the US to China.

5.3.3 The genealogy of Apple advertisements in the meaning context

The genealogy of Apple advertisements in the meaning context includes two situations, namely the same advertisement in various meaning contexts and different advertisements in various meaning contexts. The static situations of the same advertisements or different advertisements in the same meaning context, which are the

\textsuperscript{24} https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8NZbiUCqD8E
\textsuperscript{25} https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yoP3yWi8h88f
focuses of archaeology of knowledge and structuralism, are not the concerns here.

The meaning of Apple advertisements and the counterculture image is emerging and transforming in the genealogy of Apple advertisements in various meaning contexts. Commercialization, romanticization and aestheticization are the three mechanisms responsible for this emergence and transformation.

The same advertisements and counterculture elements have different meanings, because the meaning contexts are different. The first example is the advertisement “1984”. Apple was a small computer company when the advertisement was released in the early 1980s. In that meaning context, the heroine representing Apple was a rebel in the computer world, and the big brother was big computer companies, like IBM. But Apple, ironically, became the big brother in the electronic world, and it is one of the biggest electronic companies now. Apple re-released the advertisement “1984” to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of Macintosh in 2004. The meaning of this version of the 1984 advertisement is definitely different from its original meaning, even though Apple claims it still represents the counterculture image of Apple. This is the nature experiment of the genealogy of Apple advertisements.

The second example is the advertisement “Think Different”. Apple tried to convince its consumers that Apple is creative and unique, and Apple consumers can be creative and unique as well, just like the characters who achieve their dream in the
series of “Verse” advertisements, once they use Apple devices. The Apple product was unique when the Apple product was used by a small group of consumers. But the meaning context has changed. The Apple iPhone became a popular phone, and the users can be found everywhere on the street now. The ironic thing for the Apple slogan “Think Different” is that so many consumers think differently in the same way. “Think Different” is a good summary of the counterculture spirit in the 1960s, but the meaning of “think different” has changed in the new meaning context of Apple advertisements, the meaning context of the 1990s in America or in the later 1990s and the new century in China.

The third example is the counterculture icons in Apple advertisements. The iconic figures in the advertisement “Think Different” are genius but do not have much to do with business and commercials. Bob Dylan and Paul McCartney represented commercial culture as soon as they joined the commercial operation and appeared in the Apple advertisements. This means that they may not represent counterculture at all in the Apple advertisement. What they represent is the counterculture symbols with the meaning of the commercial culture. One point worth noting is that these singers were taken as counterculture icons in China in the 1980s and 1990s when they were introduced into China. During that time, the cultural elements from the west were counter to mainstream Chinese social culture. Similarly, it is acceptable to say that
there are some counterculture elements reflected by Jiang wen, the narrator of the iPhone 6. But in the meaning context of the reform era in China, Jiang wen and Jonathan Lee, in the advertisement “Send you a song for spring festival” are just popular stars.

Finally, Apple released various advertisements for China and other countries. The reason is obvious that the meaning context is different. That is why Apple invited Chinese characters, Chinese popular stars, to perform for their advertisements in the China market. But these advertisements are different in form and the same in nature. The counterpart advertisements I have examined above actually are the same advertisements following Apple's global marketing strategy. The topics of Apple advertisements, especially the advertisements after 2000, were mainly about the functions of Apple products and the sweet and warm stories between family members related to Apple products. The meaning context for these advertisements is the rise of individualism and consumerism in China and their prevailing around the world after 2000.

It is obvious that the meanings of various advertisements in different meaning context are not the same. The examples are the advertisements in the 1990s in China. These advertisements are different from the Apple advertisements in the US. In the early 1990s, the print advertisements sponsored by the Apple agency in China focused
on the functions for enterprises. The meaning context for us to understand this is that the electronic culture in the 1990s was in the transformation from modernization to individualism and consumerism. Computers were still taken as a symbol of high technology for production and modernization, not for individual entertainment, at that time. That is why the advertisements aimed to attract enterprise customers. The advertisements in China did mention multimedia functions and symbols of social status of the Apple computer in the 1990s, but these are for enterprises, not individuals. To summarize, we may say that Apple advertisements transformed from modernization culture to popular culture in China.

Apple still claims its counterculture image, but the meaning of counterculture of Apple is changed, or Apple changed the meaning of counterculture. Commercialization, romanticization and aestheticization are the three mechanisms of the meaning transformation of Apple advertisements. Once the counterculture elements used in Apple advertisements or counterculture representatives like Bob Dylan appeared in Apple advertisements, the counterculture was commercialized. All the Apple advertisements, no matter what they claimed, were commercialized. Apple Company as capital plays a main role in the commercialization of counterculture. Romanticization and aestheticization of counterculture closely connects to the process of commercialization. The commercialization of counterculture involves only Apple,
while the romanticization and aestheticization of counterculture involves not only Apple but also individual consumers and other organizations like the media. For example, Apple Company claims that Apple products are creative at their best. The media and individual consumers accept this claim and romanticize Steve Jobs, the leader of Apple, as the hero of creativity and aestheticize Apple products with special meanings, such as being cool or fashionable. The romanticization and aestheticization of Apple and counterculture are crucial in the formation of the Apple culture, otherwise the advertisement “1984”, which has only been broadcast once, would have much less influence (Streeter 2011). In general, the counterculture was commercialized by Apple through its advertisements and was romanticized and aestheticized by Apple, media and individuals.

5.4 Chapter summary

The emergence and transformation of the meaning of Apple advertisements in the meaning context shows that Apple advertisements use counterculture elements, but they are not counterculture at all. Without any doubt, Apple tries to build a commercial culture through advertisements, and what they did was make counterculture popular. The early advertisements show more about the functions of Apple products, while the later advertisements pay more attention to individual entertainment in China. The meaning context changed from modernization to
individualism and consumerism in China, but the counterculture image of Apple and its founder Steve Jobs is still widely accepted in contemporary society. Actually, this image is not counterculture anymore.

The examination of the genealogy of Apple advertisements not only reveals that the counterculture in Apple advertisements is commercial culture, but more importantly, it also illustrates the emergence and transformation of the meaning of Apple advertisements in the meaning context. The mechanism of genealogy helps us to understand the emergence and transformation of cultural and social phenomena. Genealogy is social ontology and is the philosophical foundation for the examination of the emergence and transformation of social and cultural phenomena. It is an alternative explanation of social and cultural phenomena beyond structure-oriented and construction-oriented theories. The genetic phenomenological sociology of Apple advertisements moves to the study of dynamic social and cultural processes rather than the static social and cultural phenomena. This is the contribution of genetic phenomenological sociology to cultural and social studies.

Apple advertisement is one kind of practice in building Apple culture, but it is not enough to build Apple culture in China. The other actors also function in the building of Apple culture. This leads us to the media practices and consumer practices in the next two chapters.
Chapter 6 Media ritualization of Steve Jobs in China: the genetic phenomenological sociology of media practice

6.1 Introduction

I have examined Apple store and Apple advertisements in the last two chapters. These are the practices, or the result of practices of Apple Company. The practices from Apple Company are not enough to construct Apple culture in China. In the following two chapters, I will examine the practices of media and consumers in the formation of Apple culture. Practice theory is the foundation of all these analyses. So, in this chapter, I will first explore practice theory from the perspective of genetic phenomenological sociology and then develop a media practice theory in the examination of media practices and ritualization concerning Steve Jobs in China media.

Media plays a more and more important role in modern society. It also plays a key role in the formation of the Apple culture in China. I attempt to develop media practice and media ritualization theories in order to interpret the role of media in this formation. This chapter has two purposes. The first one is to trace the philosophical roots of practice theory to genetic phenomenological sociology. The second goal, unlike the media-oriented practice theory (Couldry 2004, 2012), which focuses on what people do that is related to media (Couldry 2012: 35) from the perspective of the
audience at the individual level, is to explore what media does that is related to the Apple culture at the organizational or institutional level. This chapter attempts to develop social practice theory with philosophical perseverance, on one hand, and with empirical social and cultural analysis, on the other (Reckwitz 2002). Social practice theory is not only developed and applied in this chapter of media, but also in the whole thesis in analyzing the roles of individuals and organizations in the formation of Apple culture.

In what follows, I first examine the theories of media practice and media ritualization from the perspective of genetic phenomenological sociology. The philosophical root of media practice theory is examined in this part. There are three interests in knowledge inquiries in general, namely, empirical analysis-oriented technical interest, critical-emancipatory interest and practice-oriented interest (Habermas 1972). This chapter and the whole thesis, the study of media practice, media ritualization and the study of the formation of the Apple culture, follow the third approach. Second, I discuss media practice with the example of the news coverage in China media of Steve Jobs’ death. This shows the media convention (Schudson 1982), which is the result of media ritualization, through these reports. Third, the further development of media practice theory is followed by the examination of media ritualization. To answer the question why media practice in a
certain pattern or why media convention emerges, I further develop the media ritualization theory from the perspective of genetic phenomenological sociology or historical hermeneutical phenomenology, by examining Steve jobs in China media from the 1980s to 2015. Finally, I briefly discuss the implication of practice theory for the studies on institutional or organizational and individual practice and for media study, cultural studies and cultural sociology in general.

6.2 Genetic phenomenological sociology of media practice and media ritualization

6.2.1 Mediated ritual and ritualized media practice

Media ritualization is the genealogy of media practices. This chapter transforms the focus of ritual-oriented media study from mediated ritual, the event or content, to ritualized media, the institution. It attempts to propose the third approach, namely genetic phenomenological sociology or hermeneutic approach, besides two existing approaches, namely the functional-empirical approach and the nonfunctional-critical approach, in the study of media as an institution. This approach is inspired by the phenomenology of media as technology, for example, the existential enquiry into television (Scannell 2014).

These three approaches meet Jurgen Habermas’ three knowledge-constitutive interests very well. According to Habermas (1972), the human interests and the
processes of knowledge inquiry have three types. The first one, technical interest, is mainly empirical-analytic sciences, such as natural sciences and natural science oriented social research, and it approaches nature and society as objects of possible knowledge. The second knowledge-constitutive interest is emancipatory interest, which are critical oriented studies. The third interest, practice interest, is represented in interpretive or cultural-hermeneutic studies and it secures and expands the possibilities of mutual and self-understanding in everyday life. Habermas’ communication theory goes beyond positivist perspective of the natural and social sciences, which is the first knowledge inquiry, and develops a critical theory, combining the latter two knowledge inquiries, which can be explanatory, practical, and normative at the same time.

Functional-empirical approach, the first approach of media study is rooted in the tradition of media effects study and functionalism in social science in general. For example, Paul Lazarsfeld and Robert Merton (1971) study the function of media, specifically the narcotizing dysfunction that is the effect of media in our society. Lazarsfeld, with Elihu Katz (1955), also examines the effects of media on people’s attitudes and behaviours. Generally, the functional-empirical approach can be traced back to Durkheim’s argument that ritual may function for social solidarity, for example, the social function of the coronation of Queen Elisabeth II (Shils and Young
Second, the nonfunctional-critical approach in the ritual-oriented media study is proposed by Nick Couldry (2003) in his book Media Rituals: A Critical Approach. Couldry challenges the functional approach in media ritual study and advocates media scholars to reveal media institutions’ privileged position in the distribution of social power (2003: xi). Obviously, what concerns Couldry is the power of media as an institution. This approach is well developed in political economic analysis of media. Couldry distinguishes his critical study of media ritual from cultural studies, which focus on media content and audience (Ang 1985; Du Gay et al. 1997; Hall 1997; Morley 1992). For the cultural studies scholars, media ritual or media spectacle (Debord 1995, 1998; Kellner 2003) focuses on the content of media and the practice of audience, which indicates social hierarchy and political inequality and economical and cultural ideology. Couldry uses the term media practice to describe the practice of audience with media. To be exact, that is the practice of audience. In this chapter, I use the term media practice to describe the practice of media as an institution. More importantly, I distinguish my approach on practice by exploring its theoretical meaning from genetic phenomenological sociology. This leads us to the third approach in ritualized media or media ritualization.

The third approach, inspired by theories on ritual (Gennep 1961; Turner 1969) and
ritualization (Bell 1997, 2009; Grimes 2006), is the genetic phenomenological sociological approach in the study of the ritualized media or media ritualization, which examines the emergence of the convention of media (Schudson 1978, 1982, 2003), historically and hermeneutically. This is a practice approach that moves from mind, idea, value and consciousness to the physical, the habitual, activity and discourse from unobserved things to observable practice and discourse (Swidler 2001). This advantage, observable process (practice) and result (discourse and text), makes the practice approach very promising in the cultural and social study. This approach focuses on the genealogy of media convention or the process of media ritualization. As the third approach beyond the functional-empirical and nonfunctional-critical approaches, it enriches ritual-oriented media study. This approach, inspired by Alfred Schutz’s (1967) phenomenological interpretation of Max Weber’s theory, is a development and an application of Max Weber’s interpretive sociology, as well as a phenomenological hermeneutic reinterpretation, beyond functional approach, of Durkheim’s examination of the emergence of category and religion. Unlike Schutzian’s subjective interpretation, this study focuses on social and historical interpretation of media practice or examines media practice in the genealogy (Foucault 1984; Nietzsche 2006) or in social process (Elias 2000; Turner 2011). Chinese wisdom on rite and ritual focuses on social practice in process as well. The
China Thirteen Classics write widely on rites and ritual and three of them mainly focus on rite. They cover the rules of conduct or ritual performance, the formation of the rule, the performances or practices and the meaning of the performances or practices. This approach is shared by some anthropology studies. The undeveloped side in these Classics is the ritual effects, which is the functional-empirical approach. These Classics indicate the power or social hierarchy of rite and ritual, but not critical. This approach emphasizes practice in history and the meaning and interpretation, or in a word, human beings themselves, rather than the effects and power. All of these theories related to the third approach share the same philosophical root. In the next, I explore this root of social practice and social process, specifically, of media practice and media ritualization.

6.2.2 Media practice and media ritualization

The routine or convention of media practice is the result of media ritualization. Media practice theory is rooted in genetic phenomenological sociology. So media ritualization also shares the same phenomenological root. Genetic phenomenological sociology of practice is different from practice from Aristotle to Marx in the sense that traditional practice theory has a presumption of the dichotomy of subject and object, while the genetic phenomenological sociology of practice tries to avoid this dichotomy. Practice is not the subject’s practice on the object. Rather, it is the way of
the existence of the human being. Practice links the human being to the other people
and things in the world.

Media practice refers to both the audience’s practice, as individual, related to media
and media’s practice, as institution. In order to distinguish them, I use media-related
practice or audience practice for the former and media practice for the latter. The
former can be best illustrated by Steele and Jane’s study on adolescent room culture as
well as Couldry and Hobart’s media practice theory. Steele and Jane (1995) propose a
media practice model in explaining adolescent media activities and routines in
everyday life. This is still a media effect study, even though they adopt practice theory
from scholars such as Bourdieu, which is also the theatrical resource for genetic
phenomenological sociology of practice. Moreover, Couldry tries to develop a media
practice theory that moves beyond media effects, audience study and political
economic analysis. This media practice theory does not narrowly concentrate on
audience practice but examines the whole range of practices related to media and the
role of media in ordering other practice as well (Couldry 2004). What concerns
Couldry, inspired by Ann Swidler’s anchoring practice (2001), is how media-related
practice anchors other practices of audience. Like Couldry, Hobart also discusses the
media-related practice. Unlike Couldry, Hobart takes practice theory as a radical
ontological turning, while Couldry uses practice theory as an instrumental application
into media study (Couldry 2010; Couldry & Hobart 2010; Hobart 2010). For Hobart, it seems that practice theory is not a supplement to notions such as system, structure, order and individuals but replaces them (Hobart 2010: 62). This point will be supported when I move to the phenomenological root of practice theory.

This chapter focuses on the second meaning of media practice at the institutional level. The inner practice of media institution, how media institution operates and how editors and journalists frame the news (see Gans 1979; Tuchman 1978) are not the concern here. My focus is the practice of media as an actor, an institution, in the whole. The result of media practice is presented as media content. The practice for journalists and editors reflects in the result of the media report. In this chapter, I examine media practice from these reports. This is the second advantage of practice theory, observing practice results, besides the first advantage, observing the process of practice. Media content is the research object of both media practice and media content analysis. However, unlike the media content analysis, which examines what media present, media practice approach explores how media present (practice) and explains why media present (practice) in this way. It is possible to answer later questions only if we put the media practice into historical-meaning context. There are many possible economic, political and social elements, for example, censorship, which may influence media practice, thus influencing media content. But it is still
safe to distinguish media practice from media content, because the relationship between media practice and media content is direct and clear. This is unlike the relationship between media content and media effects. This chapter tries to examine media practice through how media present content and through what media present.

Practice theory, the theoretical source of media practice theory, has two levels of meanings – the meaning at the micro interpersonal level and at the institutional or social level. If we need to draw a line between these meanings, the line could be the number of people involved in the practice. For example, the conversation between two people is a practice at the micro level, while a man speaking to a group of people is a practice at the social level. Symbolic interactionism from Mead and Goffman, ethnomethodology from Garfinkel and Sacks, symbolic anthropology from Mary Douglas and other anthropologists as well as most of the practice in everyday life from de Certeau fall into the former meaning. The theater metaphor from Turner and Arendt and the practice theory from Giddens and Bourdieu move the practice theory from the micro level to the social level, even though the micro level meaning and symbolic approach are still obvious in their theories. Giddens and Bourdieu are the most outstanding scholars who develop practice theory in order to solve the problem of structure and agency (Sewell 1992). But Giddens’ duality of structuration is still a structure theory that has no place for agency; meanwhile, Bourdieu refutes, rightly,
phenomenology of consciousness in his practice theory, but he refutes phenomenology as the whole; thus, this prevents him from exploring the phenomenological foundation of practice theory. Bourdieu’s habitus and field without a phenomenological foundation still share a strong meaning of structuralism. All the theories about social structure could be wrong if we accept that social structure does not exist. Radical practice theory replaces social structure theory. Besides the social researchers mentioned above, philosophers are also trying to examine practice in the site of the society and history (Schatzki 1996, 2002). These are the moderate practice theories, which, as a cultural theory, are an alternative to other culturalist mentalism, textualism and intersubjectivism (Rechwitz 2002). When we come to the ontology of practice theory, we may find that practice theory, the radical practice theory (Hobart 2010), replaces or covers all the social and cultural theories.

Practice is the fundamental way, ontologically, of human existence. The ontological root of practice theory can be traced to the theories from Martin Heidegger, Johan Huizinga, Ludwig Wittgenstein and Hans-Georg Gadamer. For Heidegger, practice is the way of encountering or caring between people and between people and things. In this sense, Heidegger’s ontology is a relational ontology. Dasein, or simplified as human being, is the ontology of encountering and practice, the ontology of our society and the world. His student Gadamer further developed this idea in Truth and Method
on the theory of play. Gadamer interprets play ontologically rather than epistemologically. This means play includes people and the thing rather than only the thing as the object. There is no such thing called subject or object. Playing games is not a subjective action but a way of existence. The true subject of play is the play itself. Play represents itself in the playing. The art and truth exist in the play. The method is not the way to truth; on the opposite, truth escapes from the people who have the method. For Huizinga, play, as a cultural phenomenon, includes all social activities, such as language, law, war, poetry, art and philosophy. Wittgenstein proposes language game theory to illustrate the way of the existence of the human being. This is the philosophical root of speech as action and communication as ritual (Carey 2009).

The theories above can be summarized as the social ontology of the human being and society. The forms of being in the world are play, game and ritual, or, in one word, practice. Encountering care, play and game has the same meaning as social practice. This ontology is, to put it simply, the starting point of all cultural and social studies or human studies. Unlike the other three scholars, Huizinga, Wittgenstein and Gadamer, who do not refute that their ontology is the ontology of human studies, Heidegger denies this. His analysis of Dasein and language as the home of the being starts from humans or humans’ language. It is true that all the things that we can talk about are in
the home of language. But the world exists before language. Human beings and the things out of language do exist, even though we do not know them. There is no difference between finding being from language or finding being from consciousness (Husserl), I think (Descartes), reason (Kant). All of the approaches share a presupposition that is the existence of the human being. The thing in itself (Kant) and reality in itself (Phenomenology) are still unachievable without this presupposition. However, this is not the concern in this chapter. The existence of the human being is already a solid foundation for all the cultural and social research, including this thesis.

Practice, as ontology of cultural and social research, moves our study from unobservable individual consciousness to observable social and cultural discourse and activities. More importantly, practice approach avoids the division of subject and object and surpasses the debate between structure and agency. So practice is the starting point of the genetic phenomenological sociology.

Media practice strongly connects with media ritualization. The routines of practice emerge in the process of ritualization. Great scholarships present to us how the practice and concept emerge in history. For example, for the genealogy of moral (Nietzsche); the practices emerge in the civilizing process; the religion concept emerges in the early society (Durkheim); the emergence of concept of madness and the development of hospital and prison (Foucault). September 11 was a normal day
before 2001, and it became a day of antiterrorism later on. The ritualized September 11 (Grimes 2006) includes certain routines of practices. Ritual theories from anthropological and religious studies were adopted and well developed by scholars in media and communication studies (Carey 2009; Couldry 2003; Dayan & Katz 1992; Sumiala 2013). In the media study field, Schudson (1982) shows us the media convention emergence. In what follows, this chapter takes the news coverage of the death of Steve Jobs in China media to illustrate media practices, and then it further examines the routines of these media practices in the media ritualization of Steve Jobs from the 1980s to 2015 in China.

6.3 Media practice: the news coverage in China of Steve Jobs’ death

6.3.1 The morphology of news coverage on Steve Jobs’ death

On October 5, 2011, Steve Jobs passed away. In the following days, media from all around the world rushed to report the stories of Steve Jobs. China media never fell behind on this kind of global media event. The national newspapers, such as People’s Daily, Guangming Daily and Xinhua Daily Telegraph, and the local newspapers, such as Beijing Daily, Jiefang Daily and Nanfang Daily, all covered the information of the death of Steve Jobs, needless to say, on their websites. Almost all the commercial portal websites, such as Sina, Tencent and Phoenix, set a special website for Steve Jobs. No other way is more appropriate than special a website to memorialize the
computer hero of the Internet era. China Xinhua news agency and China Central Television also covered this news. It is worth noting that the Xinwen Lianbo programme from China Central Television used about one and half minutes in its thirty-minute programme to report the death of Steve Jobs and his brief but significant life story. All of these reports were, as the Chinese proverb goes, the final judgement of Steve Jobs' merits or demerits after his death.

People’s Daily, the party newspaper of the central committee of Communist China, reported Steve Jobs’ death with the title “America deplore for losing creative genius” (美国痛惜失去创新天才) on the third page on October 5, 2011. The report briefly summarized the life story of Steve Jobs as follows. Steve Jobs had a legendary personal experience. He quit the university after the first semester. He turned to, using his own words, addiction in the courses he wanted to learn himself. Apple Company fired Steve Jobs, because he insisted on his own ideas when disagreements appeared between Jobs and the leadership team of the company. He cut away the uncompetitive product line when he came back to the Apple, even though dissenting views prevailed. Apple products were reduced from about 350 to about 10. Because of his unique and innovative management style, Steve Jobs brought the dying Apple Company back to life and made it the most valuable company in the world, surpassing Exxon Mobil.

Guangming Daily, another newspaper of the central committee of China
Communist Party, covered Steve Jobs’ death on the third page on October 7, 2011. The title of the news was “Illusionist Jobs has passed away” (幻想家”乔布斯辞世). After a brief summary of the comments on Steve Jobs from celebrities, such as Barack Obama, Bill Gates, Tim Cook and the newspapers around the world, Guangming Daily introduced the life story of Steve Jobs. Steve Jobs was born in 1955 in San Francisco. He was abandoned by his birth parents one week after his birth. His adoptive parents raised him. As a student, Jobs was smart, naughty and self-willed. He dropped out of college after the first year of his study. In 1976, Steve Jobs founded the Apple Company in his parents’ garage and released Apple that same year. The second generation of Apple computer Apple II and the later Apple computer Macintosh were very successful in the 1980s, and they earned the reputation for both Steve Jobs and the Apple Company. Because of the struggle in the Apple Company, Jobs left the company in 1985 and founded Pixar Animation Studios in 1986, which was famous for its animation film Toy Story. Steve Jobs came back to Apple as the CEO, when the company faced great difficulty, and he led Apple to be the most valuable company in the world. Steve Jobs had a revolutionary contribution to digital music, the smart phone and the tablet PC. He was one of the most outstanding CEOs in the past decade.

China Central Television broadcasted the news of Steve Jobs’ death in the most
political programme, Xinwen Lianbo, on October 6, 2011. Normally, Xinwen Lianbo
only covered the stories of party leaders of Communist China and the big national
issues and briefly covered the international political issues. The news made the
announcement with a picture of Steve Jobs from the official Apple website and told
that Steve Jobs, as a legendary person and one of the founders of Apple, died at the
age of 56. The CEO of Apple, Tim Cook, said that Apple lost a person who was full of
foresight and creativity, and the world lost a person who was inconceivable. The
announcement from the board of directors of Apple said that the talent, passion and
experience of Steve Jobs were the sources of uncountable innovations. These
innovations enriched and improved people’s lives. After these reports, China Central
Television gave its comments and life story of Steve Jobs. As a legendary person who
started the business from a garage in Silicon Valley and one of the founders of Apple,
Steve Jobs and his partners released Apple II in the 1980s. Apple II was one of the
first personal computers that succeeded commercially. Apple II was an epoch-making
product in the process of popularization of a computer for home and personal use.
Steve Jobs’ contributions to digital music, the smart phone and the tablet PC are
revolutionary. He was one of the most outstanding CEOs in past decade. Because of
health problems, Steve Jobs left Apple and ended his era of Apple.

Besides national newspapers and television, local newspapers also covered the
story of Steve Jobs’ death in a similar way. Beijing Daily covered Steve Jobs’ life story similarly on the seventh page on October 8, 2011 besides the information of his health problems and the discussion of the future of Apple after Steve Jobs. According to the report, Steve Jobs was a genius who never gave up when he faced difficulty. He successfully led Apple to be a great company in the world. But this time, he left Apple and the world forever. His last departure from Apple caused the dreariness of Apple for ten years. This is why people worried about the dissolution of the Apple Empire after Steve Jobs. NanFang Daily, the official newspaper of the Guangdong committee of the Communist China Party, and Jiefang Daily, the official newspaper of the Shanghai committee of the Communist China Party, also covered Steve Jobs’ death. Both of these reports praised Steve Jobs for his genius and innovation. One article, titled “Jobs: one miracle, two personalities, three aesthetics, four contributions” (乔布斯:一代传奇 两世为人 三大美学 四大巅峰), from Beijing News widely spread on the Internet. It was a summary of the life and contributions of Steve Jobs. The article praised Steve Jobs’ life as a miracle. He had two kinds of personalities, both as a despot and as a great man. Steve Jobs’ three aesthetics were quality, concentration and usability. His four revolutionary contributions were graphic interface system, computer animation, digital music and devices for the mobile era. At the end, the article did not fail to state that Steve Jobs’ life changed the world.
The Internet is the main field for news and the memory of Steve Jobs. Official portal websites, like Peoples Network, and Commercial portals websites, such as Sina, Phoenix, Tencent, set special websites for Steve Jobs in order to memorialize this computer hero in the Internet era. Thanks to the multimedia technology and hyperlink, one website can cover all the information about Steve Jobs, his life, Apple products, Apple Company, media reports, comments, memories from celebrities and fans, etc. Barack Obama’s memorial words can be found on all the four special websites mentioned above. Obama said: “Steve was among the greatest of American innovators – brave enough to think differently, bold enough to believe he could change the world, and talented enough to do it”, and “he changed the way each of us sees the world”. Other memory and praise came from Bill Gates, Eric Schmidt, Mark Zuckerberg, Larry Page, Li kaifu, Ma Huateng, Wang Jianzhou, etc. All the websites covered the pictures and videos of the memorial activity from all around the world. They also covered the reports from international newspapers and Chinese newspapers.

Living for changing the world is the title for the websites from Sina and Tencent. Two kinds of timeline were presented at these two websites, the timeline of Steve Jobs’ life and activities and the timeline of the Apple products. The special website in Sina uses five key words to describe Steve Jobs’ life. These are starting up business (1976 - 1983), Leaving Apple (1983 - 1986), independent (1986 - 1996), return (1996
- 1998) and glory (1999 - 2011). This is, using the words from Sina website, the life of an American hero. One picture from the special website from Tencent shows the big event in the life of Steve Jobs. He was born in 1955 and his mother was unmarried at that time. He dropped out from university and founded Apple Company. Apple computer was successful but he was fired by the company later on. So he started his new business, but failed at first. He came back to Apple Company when it faced difficulty and lead Apple to be a great Company in the world. Basically, the life story of Steve Jobs is about his genius and sufferings before his success.

Figure 6.1 The legendary life of Steve Jobs. From Tencent Memorial website of Steve Jobs. Source: http://tech.qq.com/zt2011/jobs_forever/

All the stories of Steve Jobs appearing on different media platforms share a similar structure. This structure is what Vladimir Propp (1968) called the morphology of
stories. Propp examines 100 Russian folk tales and summarize the narrative structure and the rule of composition of the folk tales. He proposes 31 functions and 7 kinds of characters in the analysis the folk tales. He argues that all the folk tales and the stories in general have no more types of characters and functions beyond the 31 functions and 7 kinds of characters he proposed. It is not necessary to have all the functions and characters in one story, but it should cover some of them. Propp’s theory of morphology is the theoretical root for structuralism scholars such as Claude Lévi-Strauss and Roland Barthes. I will examine Roland Barthes’ key concept, mythology, in the next part.

If we analyze the stories of Steve Jobs in China media, we may find the morphology or the compositions of the reports on Steve Jobs. Steve Jobs is the main character in his life story, and I summarize eight functions in narrative structure of the reports on Steve Jobs. First, Steve Jobs had a miserable childhood, which is indicated by the story that his mother was an unmarried mother, and he was adopted. Second, he was smart and had a unique personality, which is proven by the story that he dropped out of college, and he was fond of counterculture, or he inherited counterculture in the 1960s. Third, Steve Jobs started his small business, and it was fairly mundane; for example, most of the reports stress that Steve Jobs started his business in the garage of his parents. Fourth, departure – Steve Jobs left Apple. Fifth,
struggle – he started a new business, such as NeXT and Pixar. Sixth, return – he came back to Apple. And seventh, victory – he led Apple to a big success. The Eighth is the end of the hero; Steve Jobs passed away. This was the typical story of Steve Jobs, covered by China media in the days after his death. The media practice on Steve Jobs’ death clearly had certain routines, and Propp gives us morphology theory as tool to analyze these stories. Through these stories, China media conveyed to audiences that Steve Jobs was a hero and a myth in the computer industry and in the world.

6.3.2 The mythology of Steve Jobs in China media

Media practice on Steve Jobs and his death show the mythology of him. Mythology has been widely used as a critique of cultural and social phenomena after Roland Barthes (1973). Barthes analyzed popular or mass culture in everyday life, and he summarized these analyses theoretically as Mythologies. He argued that mass culture in contemporary society works in a way similar to mythology in traditional society. Mythologies tell people what the social value is and how they should act in traditional society, but movie stars and advertisements replace mythologies nowadays. What Roland Barthes tried to do is to deconstruct modern mythologies. Roland Barthes used the rose to illustrate what mythology is exactly. The rose is one kind of flower. We call this flower “rose”. The flower, as a thing, is a sign, and the name “rose” is a meaning. This is a typical structural analysis. But we use the rose to represent love.
This second-level structure is mythology. These kinds of mythologies are abundant in our society.

The mythology of Steve Jobs in China media includes that: he had a unique personality and was a successor of icons of counterculture; he was genius; he was innovative; and he was a hero in general. Steve Jobs was a star that redefined the definition of innovation, genius and cool or counterculture. Workers Daily, on the second page on October 8, 2011 in the article titled “Steve Jobs’ legacy”, expressed this idea that he brought the world a new life creed that you can be cool; you can go against mainstream; and you can succeed. On the fifth page on October 2011, Changjiang Daily said that three apples changed the world, the first apple seduced Eve; the second one awakened Newton; and the third one was in Steve Jobs’ hand. These three events concerning apples indicate, respectively, that human beings walked out of the age of barbarism, walked into the age of reason and changed the way of life through modern high technology. The title of one biography in Chinese also showed how genius and innovative Steve Jobs was – Living for changing the world: the security code of Steve Jobs for changing the world (活着就是为了改变世界: 乔布斯改变世界的密码). Concerning the icon of counterculture, the China media linked Steve Jobs to the other counterculture icons, like Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, The Beatles, etc. Steve Jobs’ personal life is also used to show how he inherited the spirit of
counterculture in the 1960s in the US. For example, he dropped out of college, used marijuana and went to India for his religious tour. The praises of Steve Jobs from celebrities like Barack Obama and Tim Cook and institutions like Apple always appear in reports concerning Steve Jobs in China media. Generally, what China media wants to convey to audiences is that Steve Jobs was a unique, individual hero, and he always thought differently and innovatively; he presented us with Apple products, which are a combination of science and art, and Steve Jobs was a genius who changed the world.

Among plenty of mythologies of Steve Jobs in China media, we are lucky to have a few articles that discuss these mythologies critically. Cultural scholar Chang Jiang had an article on the sixteenth page on October 21, 2011 in XinHua Daily Telegraph, “Jobs changes the world? This is not true” (说乔布斯“改变世界”,是世界“被代表”). Chang told a story that Chang was interviewed by a journalist in Switzerland, and the journalist asked him if he agreed that Apple products change people’s everyday lives. His answer was he did not agree. Chang provided his critical thinking in the article about the logic of judgement, the relation between human beings and technology, and the boundary of emotion and reason. The death of Steve Jobs is a sad story, but the mythologization of Steve Jobs and the exaggeration of his contributions are irrational. That is why people ignore the contributions of the leaders like Steve Wozniak, Tim
Cook and workers of Apple, even though the technological development was mainly contributed by Steve Wozniak in the early days of Apple, and Apple doubled its income under the lead of Tim Cook. The other article, “Some thinking on the mythologization of Steve Jobs” (对“神化”乔布斯的几重思考), also from XinHua Daily Telegraph, on the third page on October 12, 2011, explored the reasons why people accepted the mythologies of Steve Jobs, even though some facts show that he was not a perfect or was not even a good person. People abused the guy who posted the message in a Sina micro blog that Steve Jobs did not pay alimony for his daughter. What they accept is that the Steve Jobs’ idea was original and innovative; he changed our way of life; and he changed the world. The life motto and the recipe for success from Steve Jobs spread on the Internet. For me, Steve Jobs’ success was not because he was genius and innovative, but rather that he was genius and innovative because he succeeded. The legendry or the mythology of Steve Jobs in China media is an illusion of modern consumption society.

The theory of morphology from Vladimir Propp and mythology from Roland Barthes help us to understand the media practice on Steve Jobs and his death. But the problem with these theories is that both of them are rooted in structure theory. The theory of morphology from Vladimir Propp is the early development of structure theory, and the mythology from Roland Barthes is the later development. The
structuralism is well developed in social science and, specifically, in sociology as structural functionalism. If there is a structure of media practice or media presentation, how can we explain the changes of media practice and media presentation? Probably, we need a theory like agency theory to explain the change of culture and society or, as in this chapter, the change of media practice and media content. This leads to the half-century-long debates in social science between structure and agency.

Vladimir Propp may not be fully aware of the problem with his theory, but he does try to explore the historical roots of the folktale and magic stories. His book is Historical Roots of the Wonder Tale (Propp 2006). Following this phenomenological reading, it is hard and not necessary to find the exact root of a certain wonder tale. What we can do is examine the process of how the wonder tale emerged. This is the genealogy of the wonder tale. Similarly, in this chapter, I want to explore the genealogy of media practice on Steve Jobs and the genealogy of the mythology of Steve Jobs in China media. My concern in this chapter is not what media present about Steve Jobs, but rather, I want to explore how media present Steve Jobs and why. These questions lead us to the next part, which examines media ritualization, how China media presented Steve Jobs from the 1980s to 2015, and explains in a historical meaning context the transformation of social and cultural environment from modernization through marketization to individualism and consumerism, specifically,
the transformation of electronic culture from modernization through marketization to individualism and consumerism.

6.4 Media ritualization: Steve Jobs in China media from the 1980s to 2015

Media ritualization is the genealogy of media practice. As I have examined above, media practice is similar for Steve Jobs and his death. It seems that there are certain routines behind these media practices. But when we examine media practice in the long term, we can find that media practice changes gradually and slightly. Media did not practice in the way they practice today, and media practice is changing all the time. This process is what I call media ritualization. The term ritualization is similar to the term structuration, from Anthony Giddens. Both of them describe the process of social practice. But I want to express that there is no such thing as structure, no matter if it is social structure, cultural structure, economic structure or material structure. In other words, I want to distance my approach from all kinds of structure-oriented and -related theories, including the morphology and mythology I examined above. Ritualization does not necessarily lead to unchanged ritual in the end. Ritual is similar to the terms play, game or practice. These terms describe the way of the existence of human beings in the word ontologically. Ritualization describes the process of practice, ritual, game or play of human beings. In this chapter, media ritualization describes the way of the existence of media, as an institution or a social group.
Specifically, I examine the media reports of Steve Jobs in China from the 1980s to 2015.

There are only 57 articles, from 1980 to 1,999, I found with the key word “Jobs” as the subject in the Chinese database of CNKI (China National Knowledge Infrastructure), which is the largest database of its kind in China. But it increases to 5,394 from 2000 to 2015. I examined these articles, specifically focusing on non-academic articles and trying to show the media ritualization of Steve Jobs in the China media form the 1980s to 2015. More immortally, I try to explain media ritualization from the perspective of genetic phenomenological sociology, which means I examine the media ritualization in the social and cultural meaning context of China from the 1980s to 2015.

6.4.1 The media ritualization of Steve Jobs in the 1980s and the 1990s

While searching article titles with the word “Jobs”, I found no articles in the CNKI for the 1980s. But I found 23 articles that mentioned Steve Jobs while I searched the full text with the word “Jobs” in the Chinese translation. These articles mainly talked about the computer industry and mentioned Steve Jobs as one example. For example, one article from John Naisbitt, translated into Chinese, talked about the transformation from industry society to information society. One author mentioned Jobs as an example in his comments on Alvin Toffler’s The Third Wave. The other
articles that focused on Silicon Valley and the computer industry also mentioned Steve Jobs. In these articles, Steve Jobs had no special personality. He was a common person who was the founder of Apple.

This is no surprise, if we consider the historical meaning context in China in the 1980s. The typical narrative about the 1980s in China is that China started its openness and reform. But the society was not changed overnight. The discourse of modernization from collective socialism China was still the main political and economic propaganda in China. The collectivism ended but did not totally disappear. People talk about business and start their business, but modernization is still the main social discourse. Individuals become the subject of social and economic activity, and individualism emerges, but individualism is not the main social discourse. In this situation, the individual hero is not the typical subject of the reports in the 1980s. Another element is that Chinese people do not really know much about the outside world. They had little knowledge about who Steve Jobs was, and they did not care about it. So Steve Jobs in China media in the 1980s was only a common person, not a genius, not a big hero.

This situation changed in the 1990s. The historical meaning context is that China walked into the era of the socialist market economy. In early 1992, Deng Xiaoping visited southern China and prompted further economic reform. In the Fourteenth
National Congress of the CPC in 1992, the China government set the goal of building the socialist market economy system. This is taken as a symbol of the transformation from industrial capitalism to financial capitalism, in the name of socialism in China’s economic history. In other words, marketization is a key factor of the 1990s in China.

The political slogan “Look forward” (一切向前看) was humorously changed in to “Look at money” only or “Put money above everything else” (一切向钱看). The readings in Chinese of these two sentences are the same.

In this meaning context, China media reports Steve Jobs as a genius and individual hero. In the article “Computer genius Jobs” (Guo & Yong 1991) in Modern Information in 1991, the authors tell us a story that Steve Jobs founded Next Company and led it to success after he left Apple. In this article, Steve Jobs was not discouraged when he faced failure. He paid high attention to technology and the quality of their computers. Steve Jobs showed his legendary Charisma during the building of the new company. The invitations in computer technology always attracted Steve Jobs. In the whole article, Steve Jobs was always the subject of the sentences, and he was not a common person, as an example in the articles appearing in the 1980s.

One interesting article showed the early understanding, or to be exact, misunderstanding of mythologization of Steve Jobs in China media. The article titled
“Steve brothers and Apple Computer” (Tang 1995) appeared in 1995. It said that Apple computers were widely used in schools, and they were invented by the Steve brothers, big brother “Jobs Steve” and little brother “Wozniak Steve” in the US. The Steve brothers were born in a small town in California. They were very poor and could not afford the tuition fee, so they worked at a game company and instrument company. When personal computers were introduced, they joined a self-made (homebrew) computer club, and they made their first computer. This computer cost all of their money. When people heard the news that Steve bothers made a computer, they came and bought the computer from the Steve brothers. Later, the Steve brothers sold all the things they had and founded a microcomputer company. Meanwhile, they purchased batches of computer components on credit. After their constant effort, they invented the microcomputer, which was user-friendly for small companies, families and individuals. “Jobs Steve” used to work at an apple orchard when he lived a hard life, so he named the computer Apple and the company Apple Microcomputer Company.

This is a typical story that follows the morphology from Vladimir Propp. It is also a typical story to prove that China media mythologized Steve Jobs. The article tells us that little people become successful men through their endeavors. But, obviously, some of the information in the article is not true. The name of Steve Jobs is written as
“Jobs Steve”. The two founders of Apple are not brothers. The author took them as brothers, mainly because of his Chinese-style imagination of cooperation and the coincidence that Steve appeared in both of their names. The Chinese proverb goes “The brothers win the battle” (上阵亲兄弟), and the cooperation of brothers is very powerful (兄弟齐心,其利断金). The traditional Chinese thought cherished the cooperation between brothers. It is hard to say whether the name of the computer and company came from an apple tree or from Steve Jobs’ personal work experience in an apple orchard. Even if this is true, it seems that Steve Jobs did not live that kind of hard life, as described in the article. These show the typical ways of the mythologization of Steve Jobs in China media. The meaning context, the marketization and the raising of individualism in the 1990s are the basis for the mythologization of Steve Jobs as an individual hero.

6.4.2 The media ritualization of Steve Jobs after 2000

When it came to 2000, the stories of Steve Jobs were familiar to all of us. They are similar, as I have examined in the media practice regarding the death of Steve Jobs. The meaning context in China is the prevailing of individualism and consumerism. In this meaning context, it is not surprising that Steve Jobs was presented as an individual hero. It is not a coincidence that Apple became successful in China and the world with the release of the individual consumption products like the iPod, iPhone
and iPad. Apple followed the social and cultural trends and became successful. Steve Jobs, as the founder of Apple, became the godfather and the founder of the Apple “religion”.

In the article “The god of Apple Steve Jobs” (Huang 2007), written in 2007, the author tells a life story of Steve Jobs and how genius and innovative he was. This story is similar to the stories I have examined in media practice on the death of Steve Jobs. The key words are successful, innovative and genius. In 2011, the article about Steve Jobs appeared with the same title as “The god of Apple Steve Jobs” (Ye 2011). It tells the same story of Steve Jobs. The bad temper of Steve Jobs is described as, strange enough, the unique personality. The article titled “Godfather Jobs” (教父乔布斯) (Luo 2011) on the first page of Huaxia Times starts from the news of Steve Jobs quitting his job at Apple and then reviews the life story of Steve Jobs. Media keep on telling the same stories. Sometimes it is hard to tell the difference. What we have is the mythologized Steve Jobs nowadays.

The media ritualization of Steve Jobs goes through three stages that meet the transformation of social and cultural meaning context in China very well. Steve Jobs was a common person in the 1980s. He became an individual genius and hero in the 1990s and after 2000. The meaning context, especially the meaning context of electronic culture, in China transforms from modernization in the 1980s to
individualism and consumerism after 2000 through marketization in the 1990s. The genius and hero was not the genius and hero at first, but he became the genius and hero in media practice and in the process of media ritualization.

6.5 Chapter summary

Media did not present Steve Jobs in the same way, since he appeared in China media. It gradually changed its way of presentation. This process of media ritualization shows us the full story of media practice. The theories of media practice and media ritualization from the perspective of genetic phenomenological sociology avoid both the structure-oriented and agency-oriented explanation of media activities. We can use the practice and ritualization theory to examine media as well as other institutions and individuals. Practice and ritualization theory from the perspective of genetic phenomenological sociology can also be applied in all cultural studies and cultural sociology for the reasons of all of the subjects concerning social and cultural meanings. The contribution of practice and ritualization theory from the perspective of genetic phenomenological sociology is that it examines the dynamic, cultural and social phenomenon in the formation of changing meaning context. Practice is not an action but a way of existence of institutions and individuals. The practice of media portrayal of Steve Jobs and Apple links the media institution, media content and audiences, readers and consumers. In the next chapter, I move to Apple consumers,
the cultural reception of Apple in China.
Chapter 7 The encountering of Apple in China: the genetic phenomenological sociology of social imaginary

7.1 Introduction

Practices of Apple Company and the media are two major sources that contributed to the formation of Apple culture in China, as I showed in the last three chapters. In this chapter, I examine individuals and institutions that consume Apple products, which is another major source in the formation of Apple culture. This chapter interprets their practices as the encountering of Apple products.

Current studies of cultural reception emphasize structure (eg. the background of reader, viewer or user), or agency (eg. active interpretation), or both structure and agency on the individual level. Most of these studies presuppose the dichotomy of structure and agency, or division of subject and object. This chapter revisits the phenomenological root of cultural reception and develops a theory of encountering in the social level. Based on genetic phenomenological sociology, this approach aims to overcome the dichotomy of structure and agency in theories of cultural reception. It examines the encountering between individuals, institutions and Apple. It displaces the notion ‘cultural reception’ with culture encountering and adopts that of ‘social imaginary.’

This chapter’s theory section critiques cultural reception theories that adopt a
philosophy of subject. Then, I examine the phenomenological root of cultural reception theory in Hans Robert Jauss and develop a theory of encountering from genetic phenomenological sociology with a non-subject perspective. Encountering generates social imaginary. Social imaginary is discussed from a non-subject perspective, and the relation between social imaginary and individual imagination is clarified.

This chapter’s empirical analysis documents the encountering between consumers and Apple products and analyzes corresponding transformation of social imaginary of Apple in China. It finds three different social imaginaries of Apple in three respective periods. The first period spanned the 1980s, when Apple computers were taken as a symbol of modernization. The second period, which occupied most of the 1990s, witnessed Apple computers joining forces with marketization and commercialization in China. The third period began in the early 2000s. Apple products, including Apple computers, were taken as devices of individual consumption and entertainment.

These empirical findings put into relief two theoretical characteristics of my theory of encountering. First, the genesis of encountering between consumers and Apple products in the three periods’ meaning context leads to the formation of social imaginary of Apple in China. There is no subject or object in this encountering. Second, my analysis does not rely on a dichotomy between structure and agency, or
subject and object. It proposes that social imaginary is prior to individual imagination. Social imaginary enables the practices of individuals and institutions consuming Apple products in China.

7.2 Genetic phenomenological sociology of encountering and social imaginary

7.2.1 Cultural reception in the philosophy of subject

Theorization on cultural reception is found in the field of literary theory and it is usually developed from the perspective of subject philosophy. Scholars examine author and text and their relation. Communication scholars adopt and then develop this framework. Accordingly, they divide the communication research field into three parts, namely, production, textual analysis and audience or reception studies. Sociology and especially cultural sociology develop in a similar way. Cultural sociologists study the production of culture or meaning, cultural products and the cultural reception of the products (Bourdieu 1984; DiMaggio 1987; Griswold 1987, 2003; Peterson 1997, 1999, 2000; Long 2003). These approaches lead literary theory, communication studies and cultural sociology to the triangle of author-text-reader, or production-text-audience, or production-product-consumer. The tripartite division is problematic in my view. All three aspects function together in cultural encountering. It is impossible to examine one aspect without the consideration of the other two aspects. These triangles indicate that the relevant fields have fallen into the trap of the
philosophy of subject.

The philosophy of subject constitutes a good summary of modern philosophy after Descartes. The rise of rationalism is a key feature in the past 300 to 500 years of human history. God is dead and traditional philosophy has terminated. The place of subject, which used to belong by God, is replaced by human beings. In religious philosophy, God is the subject who creates everything including human beings in the world and human being is an object created by God. But in the modern era, after the Enlightenment, human being bravely uses their reason. The result is that human beings take the role of subject in all kind of activities. This leads to the rapid development of science and technology, through which human being benefit a lot. The logic of modern science and technology is rooted in the philosophy of subject. But an unintended yet very problematic consequence is that this logic comes to be widely adopted in research on society and humanity. The problem is that it is difficult to envision an equal and democratic polity when some in society are designated as subjects and others play the role of objects. The subject and the object are obviously at an unequal status. A problem of adopting a subject philosophy for the natural sciences is that human beings become subject and nature is assigned the role of the object. This is a root of contemporary environment problems. The founder fathers of sociology were aware of problems caused by philosophy of subject and they call them
modernity problems, even though they probably do not literally see ‘philosophy of subject’ as the root of modern problems in society, for example, the philosophy of subject causes what Marx calls alienation, Weber rationalization and the iron cage of modernity, and Simmel stranger in modern society.

The philosophy of subject influences all modern social sciences and humanities, for example, literary theory, communication studies and sociology. The triangles of author-text-reader, or production-text-audience, or production-product-consumer are developed under the perspective of the philosophy of subject and the dichotomy of subject and object. Subject philosophy has much more influence in the social sciences. For example, social scientists use the term research object which indicates the researcher is the subject.

The literary theories that examine author, text, or reader adopt the philosophy of subject. This division among author, text and reader indicates that author is the subject who write the text (which is object) and the reader receive the text. The presupposition of theories focusing on the author is that the author is the subject and they reveal subjective meanings. Theories focusing on texts try to find objective meanings from text. Theories focusing on the reader emphasize how the reader receives the text. Similarly, media and communication study examines producers, texts and audience or listeners. Cultural sociology examines the producer, production
and the consumer. Thus the field develops theories such as those on culture production, symbolic meaning of things, and subcultures of certain groups.

In the theories focusing on the receiver, the reader, and the audience, there is one problem that it is unclear: does the receiver get subjective meanings from the sender, or from objective meanings in texts, or she has created their own subjective understanding? The problem emerges because we have two subjects in the process. The first one is the author or producer, the second one is the receiver. Alternatively, this problem can be understood as that of intersubjectivity. This is a fundamental problem of the philosophy of subject. I will attempt to construct a solution for this question based on the phenomenology of reception of Jauss and other phenomenologists in the next section.

Before I do that, I would like to clarify the two problems in traditional cultural reception theory in the philosophy of subject. Conventional cultural reception theories focus on either structure (the text as structure, the background of reader as structure) or agency (the agency of the reader). On the one hand, the structure determines the receiver’s reception. For example, the consumers in US take Apple as a symbol of counterculture, because they have the cultural background of counterculture movement in 1960s in US. But consumers in China believed that Apple computers are a tool of modernization because they have the background information of
modernization in China since 1950s to 1980s. Workers tried to use Apple computers in mining work and doctors imagined the usage of Apple computers in hospital. Their personal background enabled these views. On the other, that the worker and doctor have different imagination of Apple computers shows that their agency is functioning in the process of cultural encountering. Both structure and agency work together in the process of cultural encountering. The dichotomy of structure and agency fails in the philosophy of subject. The term cultural reception implies the dichotomy of subject and object.

This chapter tries to show an alternative interpretation of cultural reception from the perspective of genetic phenomenological sociology, which is cultural encountering. It explores how author-text-reader, or production-text-audience, or production-product-consumer, are connected in the encountering. I will use Apple in China as an example to illustrate this.

7.2.2 Encountering from genetic phenomenological sociology

Hans Robert Jauss (1982) is well known to the field of cultural reception theory for his reception aesthetics. He emphasizes that cultural reception is not a passive act of acceptance but an active act of interpretation. Following the development of literary theory from the examination of author and text to the examination of reader, Jauss focuses on the cultural reception of readers. He thinks that aesthetical practice
includes the production of the literary, the circulation of the literary and the reception of the literary. The literary work does not complete before the reading or reception of the reader. The starting point or the key concern of reception aesthetics from Jauss is the reader. There are several elements which influence the cultural reception of the reader. First, the key element is the reader. The literary work exists in the reading of the reader, or the ontological existence of literary work is the reading of the reader. The background of the reader influences the cultural reception. This is the key feature of Jauss’ theory. But this does not mean the reader can interpret the literary work in whatever way they want. The meaning of the literary work is historical and social. This is the second element in cultural reception. The cultural reception of literary work is different in different societies and in different times. Meanwhile, the literary work itself influences cultural reception. Generally, Jauss tries to consider author, text, and reader holistically and interactively in his theory though he pays relatively heavier attention on the reader.

An examination of Jauss’ theory has to be complemented by a consideration of the philosophical root of his theory. Jauss is deeply influence by phenomenology, especially the phenomenological hermeneutics from Gadamer and Heidegger. The discussion of ontological existence of the literary work is a clue for this philosophical origin. The work exists in the reading of the reader, as well as the writing of the author.
But when the writing is completed, it only exists in the reading. If there is nobody read it, it does not exist as literature any more. The book exists even if nobody reads it, though it exists only as material or paper with ink and not as literature. This discussion on the ontological existence of literary work obviously shares phenomenological roots with Gadamer and Heidegger. The social and historical background of cultural reception and the background of reader remind us of Gadamer’s fore structure in understanding of interpretation. This is other proof that Jauss’ theory roots in phenomenological hermeneutics.

A problem is that the term ‘cultural reception’ is misleading. It gives us the impression that the reader receives a literary work from author like receiving a thing. Cultural reception implicitly constructs a relation between a subject and an object. The author does not send a literary work to the reader and the reader does not accept it. I suggest a much less problematic metaphor of cultural reception: cultural encountering. In cultural encountering, the reader encounters a literary work. This work is written by an author. Hence, the relation between reader and author is built through literary work, the book. The existence of literary work is in the relation between reader, author, and the book. There is not subject or object in this relation. The term encountering helps to avoid the philosophy of subject.

Adopting Heidegger conception of encountering, I use cultural encountering to
refer to the place where meaning emerges. The practices of human beings are the way of encountering with the other. The model of encountering can be divided into present at hand and ready to hand. In Heidegger’s care structure, the care of the other people and other thing is the encountering. In his later development of four-fold ontology, the heaven, the earth, the divinities and the mortals encounter in the world. In the subject philosophy since Descartes, the dichotomy of subject and object prevails. The theory of encountering offers an alternative theory beyond subject philosophy through re-uniting the subject and object. Coincidently, this thought was shared by Chinese traditional philosophy’s conception of unity of heaven and man. According these theories, cultural reception is cultural encountering.

Reception and writing are practices of the author and reader. These practices are the ontological way of existence for the reader and author, as well as literary work. The reader becomes a reader only when he or she reads. The author becomes an author only when he or she writes. The literary work becomes a literary work only when an author writes it and a reader reads it. Examining cultural encountering from phenomenological hermeneutics and from a non-subject philosophy is the approach of this chapter.

A theory of cultural encountering includes the social ontology or relational ontology of cultural encountering as I discussed above. This is the phenomenological
side of cultural encountering. Cultural encountering is also genetic. Here the genetic side focuses on the social and historical genesis, not the genesis of individual consciousness or cognition. Cultural encountering is not about the individual consciousness. Rather it is about social and historical genesis. This historical background, or meaning context, of cultural encountering emphasizes the social and historical elements in encountering. The reader interprets a literary work according his or her meaning context. That is why a young woman may have different understanding on one literary work with elder woman. Here the meaning context of the young woman is social and historical. The understanding is influenced by not only an individual imagination, but also social imaginary. For example, in the medieval ages, most people believed that Earth was the center of the world. This is the social imaginary. In that social environment, it was difficult for individuals to image that the sun or another star is the center of the world. Social imaginary and individual imagination are very different.

7.2.3 Social imaginary and individual imagination

Genetic phenomenological sociology focuses on social imaginary rather than individual imagination. Social imaginary emerges and transforms in the genesis of encountering. All social sciences and humanities are genetic because they aim to interpret social phenomena, which are processual and genetic. In this sense, society is
naturally genetic.

Traditional phenomenologists did pay high attention on individual imagination and consciousness. Influenced by the traditional metaphysics, philosophers always try to find a solid foundation for philosophy. The solid foundation they search for basically is a static thing, an idea, or a similar entity. These phenomenologists focus on consciousness, transcendent consciousness, individual imagination, memory, and individual perception in mind or consciousness. Husserl takes transcendent consciousness as solid foundation of his phenomenology. What is transcendent consciousness? We do not know but we have it, otherwise we cannot have consciousness. That is why transcendent consciousness can be the solid foundation for his phenomenology. A genetic phenomenology examines the process of the consciousness, not transcendent consciousness in a static mode. This point from Husserlian phenomenology is influenced by Brentano’s psychology and Bergeson’s duration.

Later phenomenologists like Merleau-Ponty (2012), Sartre (2004) examine individual imagination and perception from the perspective of phenomenology. They are the two representatives in genetic phenomenology. Following Raymond Aron’s suggestion, both Merleau-Ponty and Sartre study phenomenology and apply it into their works. Aron tells them phenomenologist can tell the world from the cup on the
The cup for Merleau-Ponty and Sartre is a body, a piece of paper, the image of a friend etc. Merleau-Ponty is famous for his works on individual perception. Meanwhile, Sartre says he read Husserl’s Idea for four years. Sartre writes two books on imagination, in which he focuses on individual imagination.

Memory is bridge between individual imagination and social imaginary. Social researchers do not ask the question why human beings can imagine and memorize. We leave this question to philosophers and scientists in philosophy of mind, biology, and psychology. Social researchers take it for granted that human beings have the ability to imagine and memorize. Individual imagination is stored in the mind and it becomes the memory. People share their memory with the others. And then this memory, the stored individual imagination, becomes social. Meanwhile, this individual imagination clearly has a social background. It is social. One may say there is no such thing as individual imagination.

There are two important scholars examining social imaginary. They are not phenomenologists but ideas from them fit phenomenological sociology very well, because these scholars and phenomenological sociology examine the same social fact. For Cornelius Castoriadis (1987), the imaginary institution in traditional society is myths and the imaginary institution in modern society basically is rationality. The modern imaginaries appear as societies together with their laws and legalizations and
other institutions. What Castoriadis tries to do is to criticize Marxism for it fails to notice that communism and capitalism share the same root, which is rationalism. Here I focus on the imaginary institution in modern society rather than his critique of Marxism. Charles Taylor makes social imaginary even clearer in his two works, Modern Social Imaginaries and A Secular Age. The social imaginary is not a set of idea; rather, it is what enables, through make sense of, the practices if a society (Taylor 2004: 4). For Taylor, social imaginary includes religious, laws, society etc. The social imaginary is that common understandings that makes possible common practices and a widely shared sense of legitimacy (Taylor 2004: 23).

From these two scholars, we may find that social imaginary precedes individual imagination, even though social imaginary functions through the individual. One should not dichotomize between social imaginary and individual imaginary because they are always united. A genetic phenomenological sociology shows social imaginary make individual imagination possible while individual is the physical foundation of imagination. This division of individual imagination and individual physical body is rooted in the philosophy of subject, the dichotomy of subject and object, and the dichotomy of structure and agency.

7.3 The encountering and social imaginary of Apple in China

7.3.1 The encountering and social imaginary of Apple and modernization in the
1980s

In the 1980s, Apple computers were introduced into China. The way Chinese people encountered Apple computers in that time was in fields such as production in agriculture and industry, educational application, weather forecast, and health care.

The social imaginary of Apple computers did not greatly differ with any other computer. It was imagined as a tool for production.

The first way that Chinese people encountered Apple computers is in production, for example, using Apple computers in mining, producing aluminum and fodder, controlling electricity and temperature in factory. In the Journal of Metal Mine, Sun Xiuhua (1985) writes about how to use Apple computers into production scheduling in the factory of Angang Qidashan iron mine. The title of this article is ‘Qidashan iron mine use microcomputer in production scheduling.’ There are no words in the article showing that Apple computers are different from other computers. They are just common micro computers used in production. In the article titled ‘The application of microcomputer in aluminum electrolyzing production in Lanzhou aluminum factory’ in the Journal of Light Metal in 1987, the authors report how their factory using Apple computers in the production of aluminum. Similarly, there are other articles show that Chinese people use Apple computers in fodder production or controlling electricity and temperature in the process of production. Apple computers had no different
meaning than other microcomputers.

Using Apple computers for educational purpose is the second way that Chinese people encountered Apple computers in the 1980s. In the third issue of the Journal of Computing Technology and Automation, the authors (Sun Lingren et al. 1984) introduce how to use Apple II in developing the software of computer-assisted education. In the end of the article, the authors predict that computers will be popular in educational field. Meanwhile, they also mention the famous sentence on computer form Deng Xiaoping that popularization computer should start from kid. Other similar articles appear in the 1980s show how Chinese people use Apple computers in education.

The third kind of cultural encountering of Apple computers in China in the 1980s was in meteorology, which serves the production mainly in agriculture. Many Articles appeared in the 1980s focused on the application of Apple computers in hydrology, agricultural hydrology, meteorological expert system, weather forecast, and earthquake location. For example, Apple computers were used in agricultural meteorology (Tang Changben 1986), meteorological expert system (Li Zhenhai 1987) and earthquake localization (Meng Xiansen 1988).

Meanwhile, Apple computers were also used in hospitals and tax administration. Hospitals used Apple computers in medical reporting, medical test analysis,
epidemiological survey and analysis, human resource and finance administration. Other fields including tax administration also used Apple computers. These tasks can be achieved by any other computers.

Deng Xiaoping’s encountering with Apple computers is informative. In 1984, Deng Xiaoping visited Shanghai and he saw two students playing Apple computers during his visit. The top leader delivered his famous instruction on the development of computer that the popularization of computer should start from kids. This instruction influences the computer industry in China. People working at different fields use this sentence as an evidence of the importance of computer. Subsequently, the Chinese learning Machine was produced and it was compatible with the software used on Apple computers.

Apple computers were taken as a computer among other computers in the 1980s in China. The social imaginary of Apple computers was modernization. Deng Xiaoping advocated the popularization of computer for modernization of China. The computer education for kids was to generate human capital for modernization of China. Modernization was the single most important task for the whole nation in China at that time. This was the meaning context of China in the 1980s, as I examined in chapter 2. In the meaning context of the 1980s, it is not surprising that the social imaginary of Apple computers was modernization and that the Chinese mainly
encountered Apple computers in fields such as weather forecast, health care, production in agriculture and industry. Apple computers were mostly used in production and the production related fields in the 1980s.

7.3.2 The encountering and social imaginary of Apple and marketization in the 1990s

With rapid marketization in the 1990s, the cultural encountering of Apple computers changed. The Chinese came to use Apple computers in fields such as design, publishing, publishing and office work. In the 1990s, Chinese people started to take Apple computers as a unique computer for its outstanding performance in color and design. This made Apple computers different form other computers. Meanwhile, the special characteristic of Apple company and leaders of Apple company also began to constitute a part of cultural encountering of Apple in China in the 1990s.

Marketization led to the flourishing of advertisement. Apple computers were widely used in advertisement design in the 1990s. The so called 4A advertisement companies, companies listed in American Association of Advertising Agencies, developed their international branches in China. They introduced Apple computers into advertisement design in China. Because of these foreign-owned companies normally offer higher salary to their employees compared with local China companies, Chinese people, mainly jobs seekers, view these company as dream companies. The
social imaginary of advertisement products of these 4A companies was that they were very professional. Under this meaning context, Apple computers used for advertising design in these companies were taken as a symbol of high tech and professionalism. Meanwhile, design is a professional work. It requires professional training. This fact generated an additional aura for Apple computers as design tools.

Similarly, Apple computers were also used in publishing and printing. Publishing and printing were strongly linked with advertisement. The role of Apple computers in publishing and printing was similar to that of Apple computers in advertisement. Even though there were fewer foreign-owned companies in publishing and printing fields than the advertisement field, workers in the publishing and printing field shared the social imaginary of Apple computers in advertisement field. They expected that Apple computers can change the whole field of publishing and printing. They dreamt that one day all publishing in paper can be replaced by desktop publishing. Apple played a key role in promoting desktop publishing for it offered special software for publishing and printing in the early stage.

The third field in which the Chinese encountered Apple computers in the 1990s was professional schools and art schools. Designers and other graphic workers had to be trained before they can find a job in relevant fields. Many professional schools and art schools were set up for training students in design. In order to attract students and
parents, these schools built labs packed with Apple computers. School that had such Apple computer labs would flaunt this information in their advertisement to show their professionalism. They meant to tell potential students that these schools supplied training in design on Apple computers. Students who had this training had better chances than others to get a design job. This is because design jobs in advertisement companies and publishing and printing companies highly evaluated Apple computer skills. There are special articles which focus on the relationship between Apple computers and design and publishing. Apple computers linked design, art, professional and high salary.

Apple computers were also encountered in general office and enterprise settings. Because of the new social imaginary that Apple computers earned from advertisement, publishing and printing influenced people in other business fields. Apple computers’ unique abilities were emphasized in advertisements. For example, Apple computers’ color presentation and computing speed were mentioned in an Apple advertisement in the 1990s.

The Chinese started to learn the information about the unique character of Apple company and its leader in the 1990s. In the 1980s, Apple company and its leaders were not encountered in China. In the 1990s, the Chinese became curious of Apple company and its leaders, partly because the new social imaginary of Apple became
more attractive. For example, there were articles that introduced how innovative is Apple’s founder and how successfully Apple company developed. A reason that the Chinese paid attention on this information was that they wanted to make their own business as successful as Apple.

The cultural encountering of Apple computers in the 1990s shows the special symbolic meanings of Apple computers. These meanings reflected social imaginaries emerging in the meaning context of marketization and commercialization. During the 1990s, China’s electronic culture was shaped by the meaning context of marketization and commercialization. In 1992, Communist Party of China made it clear that China was going to build its socialist market economy system. This was the result of openness and reform on the one hand. This led to further rise of individualism and consumerism on the other. The social imaginary and cultural encountering of Apple computers was strongly shaped by the meaning context in the 1990s.

The multimedia function of Apple computers was also introduced in the 1990s. A minority of Chinese started to use Apple computers for entertainment. The Chinese did not strictly use Apple computers for work or design in the 1990s. The main social imaginary and cultural encountering did not restrict individuals who happened to use Apple computers in other ways. Cultural encountering can contain pluralistic elements.
7.3.3 The encountering and social imaginary of Apple and individualism and consumerism after 2000

After 2000, the Chinese increasingly used Apple products for entertainment with the release of Apple iPod, iPhone, iPad and iWatch. It is difficult to say whether the market led Apple company to develop individualist entertainment tools, or individualist entertainment tools such as iPod, iPhone, iPad and iWatch brought about the consumption of Apple products for individualist entertainment. From the perspective of genetic phenomenological sociology, they are the same process. The symbolic meanings of Apple products become more and more significant in this period. Apple products represent fashion, cool, innovation, and wealth after 2000 in China.

Participants use the words cool (酷) and fashion (潮) to explain why they want to buy or buy Apple products in the early 2000s. One participant recalled his dream gift was one iPod during his undergraduate time from 2002 to 2006. iPod represented cool for him. He could not afford an iPod when he was a student but he bought it after he graduated. Other participant, who says he bought many Apple products released after 2000, tells me that Apple product is the symbol of fashion in the early days. He has bought iPhone 4, 4s, 5, 5s and iPhone 6, as well as iPod and iMac. The participant says that iMac was not easy to use in the 2000s. The reason was that most of the
software he regularly used could not be installed in Apple iMac. This was true and this was why many Chinese iMac users install a Microsoft system in their Apple computers. Now the problem solved and Apple computers can run most software. This participant also tells me that Apple products are not special any more now days. So many people use Apple products and the iPhone becomes street phone. One can find a lot people in the streets who own iPhones. There are even some Apple users give up Apple products and buy electronic products from the brands like Xiaomi, Samsung and Huawei.

The participants, especially those who have computer science background, like to point out Apple products are user friendly because of their special system. This is the innovation of Apple Company and its products. For example, a participant says Apple iPhone will not slow down even you install nearly one hundred Apps and use it for months. Other cell phones cannot compare with iPhone in this aspect. But the special system causes problem in the early stage of the encountering of Apple computers, as I have shown in the last paragraph. Some participants complain that upgrading of the iPhone system causes their Apple products to run slowly and they guess this is the marketing strategy of Apple Company. While Apple Company releases the upgrade system, they also release new products. If the new system make the old products work slowly, then the consumers are more likely to buy new products which work fast.
Having this information in mind, participants say they would not upgrade their old Apple products with new system.

A widespread social imaginary of Apple is wealth. This is true especially after the release of Apple golden color iPhone. In China, people use the term ‘tuhao gold’ (new rich gold) to describe this color of iPhone. The original and literal meaning of tuhao is persons who own much land. Obviously, this indicates the person is very rich. But in the collectivist era of China, tuhao was the object of class struggle. The new meaning of the term tuhao refers to describe the new rich who like to show off through conspicuous consumption. The participants do not agree that Apple products indicate the owners are rich now days. Apple products were powerful symbols of wealth in the 2000s, but now they have less and less meaning of wealth. Using the words from one participant, using Apple iPhone was ostentation (装) in the early days, but now, it is not any more (装不起来了).

We still can get the sense that tuhao indicates the conspicuous consumption of Apple products. This links with the price of Apple products. Usually, Apple products are very expensive, comparing with competitive commodities. That is why the people who use expensive products are tuhao. Beside the tuhao golden color iPhone, Chinese people also have other term to describe iPhone, specifically for iPhone 6. This term is Kidney 6. The origin of this term is a cruel story which spreads widely in internet that
one boy sells his kidney at black market and buys an iPhone 6. Netizens therefore satirically rename iPhone 6 as Kidney 6. The term Kidney 6 vividly reveals the coolness of capitalism, which is both fashionable and cruel. Coincidentally, both fashionable and cruel mean cool (酷) in Chinese and can be translated into the same word.

The cultural encountering of Apple from China media is a little bit different from the cultural encountering of individuals I interviewed. The participants are not so enthusiastic for Apple. They praise Apple products as cool, fashion and innovative, meanwhile they also point out some problems or dark side of Apple. But the media seems more enthusiastic about the character of Apple products like cool, fashion and innovation. The reports concerning Apple in China media after 2000 mainly show that how innovative and fashionable are Apple products. The sentence ‘Apple products are the crystallization of science and art’ is widely spread in media. Media present us the stories like how good Apple products perform in individual entertainment applications, how innovative Steve Jobs is, and how successful Apple company is.

The main characteristics of cultural encountering of Apple after 2000 in China are individualism and consumerism. Both my participants and the Chinese media talk much about the individual consumption of Apple products, regardless of whether they like it or not. My participants and netizens think negatively of the story of Kidney 6.
and they criticize the high price of Apple products. They use the term Kidney 6 to critique Apple company. But the fact is that Apple products are mainly individual consumption product in the consumption society. The social imaginary of Apple is in the way of individualism and consumerism. This is exactly the meaning context after 2000 in China.

7.4 Chapter summary

The idea of cultural encountering helps us avoid the tripartite division among users, products, and producers and the philosophy of subject. All three aspects are integrated in the process of cultural encountering. This is the relational ontology of cultural encountering made possible by a genetic phenomenological sociology. The cultural encountering of Apple in China underwent three periods. In the first period, Apple computers were taken as a tool of modernization and it did not differ from other computers. In the second stage commercialization and marketization transformed Apple computers social imaginary into a symbolic of professionalism, commercial success, and design. In the third stage, social imaginary of Apple products shifted to individualism and consumerism. Meanwhile, the division of three stages does not mean that there is no overlap from three stages. For example, Apple computer still used in the production fields after 1990 and it is still used in training school and hospital. But the social imaginary of Apple changed and the meaning context changed.
So we have different cultural encounterings of Apple in three stages. Each stage has its main cultural encountering and social imaginary of Apple and people encounter Apple products various in three stages.

The study of cultural encountering from the perspective of genetic phenomenological sociology helps us move out from the narrow view either from the perspective of producer, products or from the perspective of users. All of these three aspects united in one process of cultural encountering. This is the relational ontology of cultural encountering from the genetic phenomenological sociology. This relational ontology is a tool to examine the cultural encountering beyond the debate of structure and agency, out of philosophy of subject. Social imaginary enables the practices and cultural encountering of users of Apple in China in three stages. The social imaginary of Apple leads the way of encountering between China people and Apple. Generally, cultural encountering of Apple in China is a genetic, social and historical process and genetic phenomenological sociology enables cultural encountering theory out of philosophy of subject and overcoming the dichotomy of structure and agency.
Chapter 8 Potentiality, intentionality and embodiment: the genetic phenomenological sociology of Apple technology

8.1 Introduction

Technology is the social relationship and mediation between human beings and between human beings and things or reality. In this chapter, I examine the relationship between human beings and Apple technology and the role of it in the emergence of Apple culture. Apple culture emerges within the relationships or care structures between one human being and another and between human beings and things. The emergence of Apple culture is accompanied by the emergence of Apple technology.

The theoretical aim of this chapter is to overcome the dichotomies of structure and agency and of subject and object, or the philosophy of subject in general, in the study of technology through genetic phenomenological sociology. Specifically, from the perspective of genetic phenomenological sociology, the theory of embodiment overcomes the dichotomy of structure and agency, or the philosophy of subject, in the study of the relationship between human beings and things. In this chapter, ‘structure’ refers to technology as material and ‘agency’ refers to social construction.

Whenever a new technology emerges, including Apple technology, ordinary people and theorists have various opinions about it, both negative and positive. Some people worry about the negative effect of the new technology. For example, some worry that
audiences will become couch potatoes in front of the TV set, while others worry that users will become addicted to Internet games or their iPhones. Other people and theorists welcome the new technology and anticipate positive effects from it, such as the empowerment of ordinary people through the Internet, or economic benefits from the computer industry and electronic commerce. Still others believe that technology is neutral. Whether technology has negative or positive effects depends on how people use it. The first two opinions reflect an object-oriented analysis, which examines technology from the perspective of the object, as material. The third opinion reflects a subject-oriented analysis of technology, which examines technology from the perspective of the subject, the users. Put another way, we could say that the first two relate to how technology influences society, whereas the third relates to how society influences technology.

All of these points are profound but also partial. If we go beyond the philosophy of subject or the dichotomy of subject and object – in this case, technology and society – it shows partiality to ask either how technology influences society or how society influences technology. The second part of this chapter tries to illustrate that the former two views of technology represent a misinterpretation of technological materialism, which I call technological determinism, while the third point represents an exaggeration of the social construction of technology, which I call technological
constructionism. Both technological determinism and technological constructionism are two ideal types. Nobody absolutely believes in technological determinism or technological constructionism. The common foundations of both are the presupposition of the dichotomy of technology and society, or ultimately the dichotomy of subject and object. The social consequence of the dichotomy of subject and object is the unlimited expansion of instrumental rationality. Both subject-oriented technological constructionism and object-oriented technological determinism are problematic. They are partial either to the perspective of subject or the perspective of object. The theory of the dialectical relationship between technology and society tries to solve this problem by developing a dialectical theory between subject and object, technology and society. However, this endeavour still falls into the presupposition of the dichotomy of subject and object. Meanwhile, all of these theories fail to tell us how technology emerges and diffuses. Genetic phenomenological sociology tries to solve these problems. For one thing, it tries to examine technology beyond the dichotomy of subject and object. This is one contribution of phenomenology. For another, it focuses on the empirical study of the process of technology’s emergence and diffusion. This is another contribution of genealogy. The philosophical root of genealogy is phenomenology.

The third part of this chapter examines the social process of the emergence of
Apple technology. It is an empirical study of the emergence and diffusion of Apple technology, which echoes the empirical turn in technological philosophy (Achterhuis 2001). An understanding of what technology is and how it emerges and diffuses (the practical theory of technology) is the foundation for understanding the social consequences of the technology (the critique theory and effect theory of technology) and how it should be developed and used (normative theory and the ethics of technology). This is why it is important to examine the emergence and diffusion of technology. Taking the emergence and diffusion of Apple as an example, technological conditions such as material and hardware and social conditions such as computer knowledge existed before the emergence of the Macintosh, iPod, iPhone, iPad and iWatch. The diffusion of these technologies is also based on mature social conditions.

The last section of third part in this chapter further examines what technology is in the relationship between human beings and technology. Key concepts such as potentiality, intentionality, embodiment and mediation are examined from the perspective of genetic phenomenological sociology. Technology mediates between human beings and reality. Overemphasising the potentiality of technology in this relationship leads to technological determinism. Meanwhile, overemphasising the intentionality of human beings leads to technological constructionism. The theory of
embodiment, as a theory of the relationship between human beings and technology, can identify the right place for both the potentiality of technology and the intentionality of human beings in this relationship, and thus overcome the dichotomy of technology and society.

8.2 Towards a genetic phenomenological sociology of technology

The genetic phenomenological sociology of technology aims to answer the question of what technology is in the process of its emergence and diffusion. However, first I examine the current scholarship on technology. This encompasses both technological materialism and its misinterpretation, including technological determinism, and the social construction of technology and its exaggeration, including technological constructionism.

8.2.1 Technological materialism and its misinterpretation

Technological materialism, which is strongly connected with both historical and cultural materialism, is rooted in materialism. Technological materialism emphasises the material element of technology. This is what is commonly meant by the term ‘technology’. However, the meaning of this common usage is not that obvious, especially when we consider technology’s historical and cultural factors. Technology emerges or grows through encounters with human beings. When human beings encounter material things, historical and cultural factors become added to these things,
which then become technology. In this sense, technology is neither purely material nor purely historical and cultural; it is the material in combination with historical and cultural factors from human beings. The term ‘technological materialism’ emphasises the material side of technology while the statement that technology is culture emphasises the historical and cultural side of technology. Both of these views are correct in stressing one aspect of technology, but neither is right if one refutes the other.

When Karl Marx said that the hand mill gave us society under a feudal lord, and the steam-mill gave us industrial capitalist society, he focused on the material aspect of technology and the historical and social relationship in two different kinds of society. This does not mean the hand mill leads to feudal society and the steam mill to capitalist society. Instead, the hand mill is found in feudal society while the steam mill is found in industrial capitalist society. There is, or should be, no implied time order between the hand mill or steam mill and society. The condition for technology to be technology is that the human being encounters it. There were materials or things in this world before human beings existed, and the philosophers (Meillassoux 2008; Harman 2002, 2010) advocating object-oriented ontology have been right on this point. However, there was no technology before the existence of human beings. Technology has both material and historical and cultural aspects, and the historical
and cultural aspects of technology emerged through the encounter between human beings and things.

A misinterpretation of technological materialism leads to technological determinism. The root of this misinterpretation, material determinism, is the misinterpretation of materialism, including historical materialism and cultural materialism. Technological materialism and technological determinism share the same philosophical root, which is the philosophy of subject or the dichotomy of subject and object. This is why it is common to take technological materialism as a kind of technological determinism. Typical questions concerning technology and society ask how technology influences society or how society influences technology. Similar questions include how technology influences human beings and how human beings influence technology. These questions share a presupposition in the framing of the philosophy of subject, the dichotomy of technology and society or the dichotomy of technology and human beings. This presupposition leads either to technological determinism – as discussed here – which puts too much weight on material factors and material structure, or to social constructionism – discussed next – which emphasizes the agency of social actors exclusively.

The way to overcome this misunderstanding of materialism is to develop a non-subject philosophy. This is what phenomenologists have tried to do since 1900,
when Husserl published his fundamental work on phenomenology. Marx had the opportunity to develop a non-subject philosophy when he argued that practice links subject and object, but he did not pay attention to it. Marx was deeply influenced by German idealism from Kant to Hegel in framing the philosophy of subject. The historical background for the philosophy of subject since the Enlightenment was that God was dead and human beings had become the master, the subject of nature that included themselves. In other words, the philosophy of subject is the result, whether expected or unexpected, of the Enlightenment. This is the dialectic of the Enlightenment and of reason, as bravely using your reason was the slogan of the Enlightenment. Non-subject philosophy, specifically genetic phenomenological sociology in this case, tries to solve this problem and show that technological materialism is not technological determinism. Similarly, it shows that historical and cultural materialism are not material determinism. A material is the structure of technology and has the potentiality to become technology. When human beings encounter a material and use it, it functions as technology.

8.2.2 The social construction of technology and its exaggeration

To clearly state the role of the human being in the relationship between human beings and things, scholars propose that technology is socially constructed. This statement emphasises the agency and intentionality of human beings, in the form of individuals
or society, in the emergence of technology. The theoretical root of this statement is the theory of social construction of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1966), who were students and followers of the phenomenologist Alfred Schutz. Berger and Luckmann argued that our knowledge and social reality are socially constructed. Knowledge and social reality here include culture, science and technology. It is widely accepted that culture and social reality are socially constructed, but strong disagreement arises when it comes to science and technology.

A group of scholars, including David Bloor, Barry Barnes and their colleagues, known as the Edinburgh school, who studied the sociology of scientific knowledge, proposed a strong program for the study of science and technology that included four components: causality, impartiality, symmetry and reflexivity (Bloor 1976). Basically, they argued that science was knowledge and that scientific knowledge was socially constructed. Although scientists accept that science is knowledge, to some it sounds ridiculous that science and technology are socially constructed. The disagreement concerns the relationship between science, truth and knowledge. Knowledge is the human understanding of the world at different stages. Science is knowledge and the human understanding of the world. The problem is that scientists believe scientific knowledge is truth. The sociology of science and technology states that scientific knowledge is not truth. For example, scientists once believed that Pluto was one of the
nine planets in the solar system, but later some scientists argued that Pluto was much smaller than people once believed, and too small to be a planet. Even worse, some scientists have argued that Pluto is growing incrementally smaller and has already disappeared. Here, we have at least three versions of scientific knowledge concerning Pluto: that Pluto is a planet, that Pluto is too small to be a planet and that Pluto has disappeared. However, we have only one truth about Pluto. This proves that our scientific knowledge is knowledge, which is common sense, and that scientific knowledge is our understanding of the world at different stages. Another aspect of common sense that is not widely accepted is that scientific knowledge is expected to be close to the truth but not the actual truth, and that it is socially constructed.

The exaggeration of the social construction of technology is the exaggeration of the agency and intentionality of human beings, which leads to technological constructionism. Obviously, we cannot construct our knowledge and science in whatever way we want. In this sense, the term ‘social construction’ is misleading. Materials and truth are the structure and foundation of our knowledge. Thus, it is correct to say that human beings have limited agency and intentionality in the social construction of science and technology.

Michel Callon, Bruno Latour and other followers of the Edinburgh school proposed the actor-network theory as a new development of the social construction of science
and technology. Instead of the limited agency of human beings, they proposed the agency of things. The actor-network theory makes two great contributions. The first, following the Edinburgh school and empirical sociological studies, is the empirical laboratory investigation of science. The second, ontological and even greater, is its attempt to overcome the dichotomy of subject and object or the philosophy of subject. Unfortunately, they went too far on this point and wrongly argued that things have agency in the way human beings do. This is a misunderstanding of the intentionality of human beings and the potentiality of things.

There is a crucial difference between the intentionality of humans and the potentiality of things. The intentionality of humans embodies creativity, whereas the potentiality of things does not. Things do not have agency and intentionality as human beings do. At most, we could say that things have passive intentionality or passive agency. Latour would agree with me on this point, even though he is famous for the slogan that nonhumans have agency (Latour 2005). This distinction is the foundation of the study of science and technology concerning the relationship between human beings and things. The intentionality of human beings exists, regardless of whether things exist, but the passive intentionality of things exists only if human beings exist. In other words, the intentionality of human beings is a priori and the passive intentionality of things is a posteriori. This means that things outside of the world or
things in themselves have no passive intentionality, as they do not have the chance to encounter human beings until human beings bring them into the human world. Although making this distinction was not Latour’s aim, the distinction between actor and actant (Latour 2005) implies a difference between the intentionality of humans and the passive intentionality of things. Actants include both human and non-human actors. Here, Latour’s problem was that he overstates the passive agency and passive intentionality of things. He stated that nonhumans had agency. He would not say that things or technology have similar intentionality to that of human beings, as the passive intentionality of non-human actors is possible only if humans exist. To make it clear and not misleading, I use the term ‘potentiality of things’ instead of ‘passive intentionality of things’. ‘Potentiality’ is a good term and implies that things have to be encountered by human beings to function. This leads us to the phenomenological foundation of Latour’s theory and the study of science and technology, the genetic phenomenological sociology of technology and the theory of intentionality, potentiality and embodiment.

8.2.3 The genetic phenomenological sociology of technology

Technological materialism focuses on the potentiality or structure of materials and things while the social construction of technology focuses on the intentionality or agency of human beings and society. Neither fully explains the essence of technology
and the relationship between things and human beings. Even worse, they may lead to misinterpretations such as technological determinism and technological constructionism. The theory of a dialectical relationship between things and human beings is proposed to solve this dilemma. However, dialectical theory still falls into the dichotomy of subject and object, specifically the dichotomy of things and human beings or of technology and society. Generally, dialectical theory falls into the philosophy of subject. The other problem with dialectical theory is that it does not tell us exactly what the relationship is. This requires an empirical study of science and technology. The genetic phenomenological sociology of technology is proposed as a way out of the dilemma between technological materialism, technological determinism, the social construction of technology and social constructionism and a way out of the philosophy of subject. It also tries to examine how technology emerges and diffuses.

The classical phenomenology of technology and the post-phenomenology of technology are the two theoretical resources that inspired genetic phenomenological sociology of technology. Heidegger (1962, 1975) is an important scholar of the classical phenomenology of technology. Heidegger’s thoughts about technology appear in his works such as Being and Time, ‘The Question Concerning Technology’, ‘The Origin of the Work of Art’, ‘The Thing’ and ‘Building, Dwelling, Thinking’. The
last two articles can be seen as Heidegger’s interpretation of two sentences in Article 11 of *Dao De Jing* (Gu 1995) about vessels and building. The classical phenomenology of technology distinguishes itself from other philosophies of technology by its non-subject ontology. For Heidegger, technology is a mediator between human beings and the world. It frames our thinking and behaviour and our way of interpreting and engaging with the world. This point is inherited by actor-network theory, which proposes the agency of things. The second key feature of the classical phenomenology of technology is that Heidegger, along with other scholars of his time such as Karl Jaspers and the Frankfurt school scholars, evaluated modern technology negatively. They blamed modern technology for the rootlessness and homelessness of human beings. This negative evaluation of technology was a response to the modern condition of human beings. This is not surprising if we consider their negative evaluation as a response to the dark side of modernity and modern technology, and if we examine it from the perspective of the development of social thought. After the Enlightenment, human reasoning became more highly valued than ever before in human history. Science and technology have become the symbol of modern society and the result of the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment overcame theology, and as a result human beings became the subject of the world. The dialectic of Enlightenment is that it tried to destroy the myth of the medieval period but
became a myth in itself. Science has replaced theology as the new myth of modern society. The critique of technology is the critique of the dark side of the Enlightenment and reason, and the critique of modern society.

The post-phenomenology of technology, both the term and theory, was advocated and developed by Don Ihde (1990, 1993). Basing it on phenomenological ontology, Ihde mainly examined the role of technology in the living world and the relationship between human beings and technology. He tried to answer the question of how technology influences our human understanding of the world and everyday human life. The experience of human beings with technology was the key concern of Ihde’s post-phenomenology of technology. This concern with experience led to an empirical turn in the philosophy of technology (Achterhuis 2001). This was followed and developed by a group of Dutch scholars, of whom Peter-Paul Verbeek was a representative. Verbeek (2005) also used the term ‘post-phenomenology of technology’ to describe his philosophy of technology and the slogan ‘to the things themselves’ as the focus of his theory. He examined how material things function in everyday life. For example, what is the relationship between the microwave oven, washing machine, Google glasses and human beings? The subtitle of his book What Things Do, a philosophical reflection on technology, agency and design, shows that he was deeply influenced by actor-network theory regarding the agency of things.
There are a couple of problems with both the classical phenomenology and post-phenomenology of technology. Both discuss the relationship between technology and human after technology was invented. They treat technology as an unchanging object or thing. Both theories set the goal of overcoming the dichotomy of subject and object, the philosophy of subject, yet still fall into the realm of the philosophy of subject because they depend on the experience of human beings in the study of technology, how people use technology and the morality of technology (Verbeek 2011).

The genetic phenomenological sociology of technology tries to examine the emergence of technology and its change and diffusion, or the social genesis of technology, on the one hand and the social image of technology rather than the individual experience on the other. Both the classical phenomenology and post-phenomenology of technology focus on technology and its relationship with human beings. The genetic phenomenological sociology of technology focuses on the emergence and diffusion of technology and its transformation in the process. The genetic phenomenological sociology of technology is a non-experiential immanence philosophy, which is totally different from either the transcendental philosophy of technology or the experience-based immanent philosophy of technology, such as the post-phenomenology of technology.
The three key characteristics of the genetic phenomenological sociology of technology are that it is phenomenological, social and genetic. The first, its phenomenological ontology, overcomes the dichotomy of subject and object. All phenomenological studies of technology promise to overcome the dichotomy of subject and object, but the classical phenomenology of technology does not show how to incorporate this into empirical study, while the post-phenomenology of technology undertakes an empirical study of technology but falls into the trap of the dichotomy of subject and object. The genetic phenomenological sociology of technology tries to overcome this dichotomy through embodiment theory. The second and third characteristics of the genetic phenomenological sociology of technology involve the empirical study of the social and historical genesis of technology. The genealogy of technology examines technology in the process of its formation and diffusion. It treats technology as a changing rather than an unchanging object. The empirical study of technology has its origin in the social construction of technology, including actor-network theory and the post-phenomenology of technology. In what follows, I use Apple technology as an example to illustrate the genetic phenomenological sociology of technology and clarify the relationship between human beings and technology through the theory of potentiality, intentionality and embodiment from the perspective of genetic phenomenological sociology.
8.3 The genealogy of Apple technology

Genealogy is not about origins; rather, it is about descent and emergence, as Foucault clearly stated in his article ‘Nietzsche, Genealogy and History’. The undeveloped phenomenological root of genealogy can be traced to Husserl and Heidegger. Husserl’s article ‘Origin of Geometry’ is one of the most important philosophical sources for the theory of genealogy after Nietzsche’s ‘On the Genealogy of Morals’ and Henri Bergson’s *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*. The ‘Origin of Geometry’ shows that technology predates science. The technology of geometry was developed long before the emergence of geometry as a science. For example, before we had the science of geometry, the Egyptians used geometric methods to measure their land after the flooding of the Nile. Husserl is not concerned who the first geometrician was; he is not concerned about geometers at all, but rather about the establishment of geometry at the social and historical levels and at the level of inner consciousness. Derrida (1989) and Merleau-Ponty (2012) developed the inner consciousness aspect very well, whereas I focus on the social and historical genealogy. I attempt to show that the social and historical genealogies are fundamental. Heidegger, who led Foucault to Nietzsche, also presented an argument on genealogy, which he termed ‘origin’, in his article ‘The Origin of the Work of Art’. Here, the term ‘origin’ does not mean the start point or the beginning, but the encounter between
human beings and things.

The genealogy of Apple technology is not about the origin of Apple technology, but rather about the descent, emergence and diffusion of Apple technology, which are discussed in this section by examining the social process of the emergence of the Apple computer, iMac, iPod, iPhone, iPad and iWatch and their diffusion in China.

8.3.1 The emergence of Apple technology

The emergence of Apple technology is the encountering of Apple inventors Steve Jobs, his colleagues and different hardware and software in certain meaning context. This encountering is the embodiment between material (potentiality) and human (intentionality). There are different versions of the myth of how Apple products were invented. Generally, these myths tell consumers that Apple products represent great innovation. The biography of Steve Jobs by Walter Isaacson (2011), not surprisingly, propagated such myths about each Apple product and how it was invented. Here, I focus on the social and material conditions for Apple products, the counterculture and technological revolution in western America. The growth of the military industry created the opportunity for contractors to develop the electronics and computer industry. Various forms of computer hardware and software were available in electronics, microchip and computer companies. The counterculture led young rebels to develop computer technology for individual use rather than only for the
bureaucratic control of industry and big companies. Against this background, Steve Wozniak and Steve Jobs started to assemble their Apple I. They put together a microprocessor, keyboard and screen as a unified terminal and wrote code for this microcomputer using the computer language BASIC. All of the hardware already existed in different forms, and BASIC was developed early on. This is why I use the term ‘assemble’ rather ‘invent’. The intentionality from Steve Wozniak and Steve Jobs encounters the potentiality of existing hardware and software for Apple computer. This process is embodiment. The first people to do this kind of assembly are now hailed as geniuses and inventors, and the later ones are regarded as Foxconn workers. Human makes the potentiality of material to be actuality of Apple products through the intentionality and the process of embodiment. One thing worth noting is that Wozniak, the engineer who shared the hacker spirit, wanted to share his ideas and codes with other amateurs for free, whereas Jobs, a business genius like Bill Gates, wanted to sell Apple I to make money. Jobs succeeded, and Apple I was on the market by 1976. All of the social and material elements were ready, and Apple computers emerged through the endeavours of Wozniak, Jobs and the Apple company.

The emergence of the Apple iPod, iPhone, iPad and iWatch was similar to that of Apple I. Apple products designers, workers encounter materials and software. Before the introduction of the iPod, Apple bought the patent for a 1.8-inch 5-Gb hard
disk for Toshiba and the Walkman, and later other MP3 devices became popular.

Under these conditions, Apple released the iPod. Long before the release of the
iPhone, we already had many kinds of cell phone. These were the material conditions
for the iPhone. When Jobs introduced the iPhone to consumers and Apple fans at
Apple’s annual conference, he said that the iPhone was a widescreen iPod with touch
controls, a revolutionary mobile and a breakthrough Internet communication device.

Jobs repeated the words ‘an iPod, a phone and an Internet communicator’. This
indicates that the iPhone developed from early devices like the iPod or its earlier
versions, the MP3, the Walkman, the phone and the computer. When Apple released
its iPad, Jobs showed a picture of a smart phone and a laptop with a big question mark
between them to introduce the iPad as a device with the functions of both. Even if the
iPad was not another version of Netbook as Jobs said, it still had similarities to PDAs
and the Apple PDA, Apple Newton. The same was true for the iWatch. We had many
categories of watch, both electronic and mechanical, long before the iWatch, not to
mention all of the other timekeeping devices used throughout history.

The genealogy of Apple technology is the story of encountering and embodiment
between Apple founders, workers and hardware and software. The genealogy of
Apple technology and all other technology, shows that no technology emerges from
nothing. We can tell a similar story for Apple’s gyroscope function, camera, map and
search engine; the apps on the iPhone; the iPad; and other Apple technology. Apple and its founders and the workers who produce Apple products at Foxconn or other companies have made their own contributions to Apple technology. The myth of Apple and Jobs is that they changed the personal computer, music and the smartphone industry. Yes, they did, but these changes had their social and material conditions. The myth told by Apple and Jobs does not fit the definition of innovation: Apple’s version of innovation is closer to imitation. As Plato tells us, God creates the first thing, such as a bed, and all other beds are imitations. Throughout the emergence of Apple technology, the potentiality of things and the intentionality of human beings functioned together. I return to this point later.

8.3.2 The diffusion of Apple technology in China

Apple technology diffused throughout the US, China and the rest of the world after its release. Here, I focus on the diffusion of Apple technology in China. However, I should first clarify the term ‘diffusion’. From the perspective of phenomenological sociology, and as a social fact, the diffusion of culture and technology does not mean that culture and technology do not continually change during the process of diffusion. From the perspective of genetic phenomenological sociology, the term ‘diffusion’ incorporates change in addition to sending and receiving. The diffusion of Apple products in China is the encountering and embodiment between Chinese people and
Apple products. In 1980, people got to know the Apple computer through Apple agents. Apple computers emerged in China as early as 1984, when Apple salesmen brought them to China and left them in Shanghai. In the late 1980s, an Apple agent in Hong Kong exhibited Apple computers on the mainland. Later, the Little Sparrow office computer was on the market, an Apple computer with a Chinese office system.

The Apple computer in China differs from the Apple computer in the US in its system and office applications. In the years before Apple finally set up its own stores in China, companies such as Founder and Lenovo were Apple’s agents who sold and promoted Apple technology in China. Apple computers were taken as a symbol of modernity and high tech, and were popular in design companies and art colleges.

The social and technical policy along with the company’s marketing strategy shaped Apple technology and its diffusion. For example, the first generation of iPhone was released as early as 2007, but the third generation was the first made available in the Chinese market in late 2009, through cooperation between Apple and China Unicom. Due to the difference in communication systems and marketing strategies between Apple and China Mobile, an iPhone that could be used with China’s mobile communication system came to market later. Meanwhile, Apple’s own marketing strategy also influenced the diffusion of Apple technology in China. For example, Apple sold its products at different prices in different places, and the same product
reached the market at different time in different countries.

Although we live in a globalised world, Apple technology is localised. The Chinese people use apps both from China and from elsewhere in the world. They use Alipay, WeChat and different SNS and on-line shopping sites. To meet the requirements of its Chinese customers, Apple supplies apps developed by Chinese firms for Chinese users. Interestingly, many Apple computer users install a Microsoft Windows system on their Apple computers. Windows is widely used in China. Local economic and social conditions also influence the diffusion and reception of Apple technology. The success of Apple in China is not a coincidence. The release of the iPod, iPhone, iPad and iWatch can be successful only in conditions where consumerism is on the rise, as it is in China. The growth of Apple products is a part of the growth of consumerism in China.

8.3.3 Embodiment: potentiality, intentionality and mediation

The genetic phenomenological sociology of technology includes the theories of potentiality, intentionality, embodiment and mediation. In this section, I focus on how the theories illustrate the emergence and diffusion of Apple technology and how these empirical studies support the theories. Potentiality describes the functions of materials and things, while intentionality describes the role of human beings in their relationship with technology. Embodiment theory holds that technology and human
beings are linked through embodiment. Mediation theory presents technology as a bridge between human beings and reality, and is thus not about the relationship between human beings and technology, but rather about the relationship between human beings and reality through technology.

Potentiality is an immanent characteristic of Apple technology, of all forms of technology and of materials in general. The potentiality of Apple technology includes the potentiality of the materials that made Apple technology possible before Apple technology was formed, and also the potentiality of Apple technology after it was formed through the way we can make use of it. The laws of physics and electronics and the different kinds of material used to produce electronic components also make Apple technology possible. Heidegger described the potentiality of technology as ‘enflaming’, but he considered only the relationship between human beings and technology after the technology is formed. Alternatively, we could say that, for Heidegger, all of the things used by human beings are technology. Apple technology frames its usage so that people can only use Apple products in certain ways. Apple computers and phones, like other computers or phones, make on-line shopping and chatting possible. These potentialities have shaped our behaviour, and we are now more likely to shop on-line and chat with our friends and family members on-line. A funny video helps us to understand the meaning of potentiality by showing an elderly
man using the iPad sent as a gift by his daughter as a cutting board. This shows that the iPad has the potentiality to be used as a cutting board. Potentiality is not socially shaped but socially developed. That is why Apple products were used in design, printing and publishing in the 1990s in China, and to take photos, listen to music and chat after the 2000s. The intentionality of human beings makes the potentiality of things become actuality or not.

Intentionality reveals the role of human beings in the process of technology formation. The intentionality of Apple, the Foxconn workers, Apple agents and all of the people involved in the production and consumption of Apple products shapes Apple technology in the emergence and diffusion of the technology. The intentionality includes both individual and social intentionality. Following Wozniak’s wish, Apple I would have been a free tool for amateurs, but Jobs made it a commodity. Consumers use Apple technology in different ways; for example, the elderly man used it as cutting board. These are examples of individual intentionality. The strategy of Apple and the policy of China Uniform and China Mobile have also influenced the emergence and diffusion of Apple technology. These are examples of social intentionality. The earlier adopters of Apple computers took to it as a high-tech tool of modernisation, while later adopters took to it as simply an entertainment tool. These two groups of people showed a different intentionality when faced with similar, if not
the same, Apple computers. In the 1990s, Apple computers were used in fields such as education, health care and transportation. The intentionality of those users was quite different from that of Apple users nowadays. Intentionality is thus obviously shaped by social practice. One thing we should be clear about here is that intentionality is not intention, although it can include intention. If we intend to do homework but take out our iPod instead, the intention is to do homework, but the intentionality is to listen to music and not do the homework. We cannot use Apple technology in whatever way we want. If we intend to use Apple technology as a microwave oven, we will fail. This distinguishes the theory of intentionality from the social construction of technology.

Embodiment is the bridge between the potentiality of things and the intentionality of human beings. The relationship between human beings and technology is embodiment. Embodiment overcomes the dichotomy of subject and object, the subject philosophy. For example, when we use Apple technology, we embody it as a part of ourselves. This means that Apple technology is not an object out there anymore, and we, meanwhile, are not the subject as the opposite of the objective Apple technology. Readers should be familiar with this idea if they have read Marshall McLuhan, who says that media are extensions of our body. I have not established whether McLuhan was influenced by the phenomenologists, especially Merleau-Ponty, but this statement
is exactly what we can develop from phenomenology. If we adopt this view in the examination of technology, we will not ask questions about how technology influences human beings or society, or how society or human beings influence technology, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. These questions share the presumption of the dichotomy of subject and object guided by the subject philosophy. There is no such dichotomy between technology and society or human beings and technology. Once we use an iPhone, it becomes an extension of our body. In other words, technology is a social relationship. The technology we do not use or that is out of the relationship with us is just a thing, not a technology. We still call it technology because it has a social relationship with the people who produce it. That is why we refer to a stone tool once used by a human ancestor as technology, but do not refer to another stone which was never used or shaped by humans as technology.

Any technology, including Apple technology, mediates between human beings and between human beings and reality. This mediation is the destiny of human beings because we use technology all the time. The theories of potentiality, intentionality and embodiment focus on the relationship between human beings and technology, while the theory of mediation focuses on the relationship between human beings and between human beings and reality, and on the role of technology in this relationship. People use iPhones to chat with their friends and family, iMacs to shop on-line and
apps on Apple technology to check the weather and sports results. The role of Apple technology in all of these situations is mediation. Latour identified two categories of mediation according to the influence of technology in the relationship: technology has no clear influence on the relationship in one kind of mediation, while it influences the relationship in the second. In fact, however, technology always influences our relationship with the other whenever we use it. Mediation indicates social relationships that are both historical and contemporary. It indicates the relationships between people in Apple and social and cultural history during the emergence of Apple technology, and between Apple producers, suppliers and users in the present.

8.4 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I focus on the relationship between human beings and Apple technology. The social relationship indicated by Apple technology is not fully examined, but deserves serious attention in relation to Apple technology and to technology in general. This topic is not at all new in the philosophy of technology; it has been extensively discussed in studies of the ethics and politics of technology. Apple technology and its emergence and diffusion always involve social, power and political relationships. No technology is ever neutral, and technology as a distinct thing in itself does not exist. As long as technology emerges and diffuses, it becomes the technology of human beings. The encounters between human beings and
technology build social relationships. This is why the ethics and politics of technology are important for everyone, regardless of whether they are producing or using the technology. Technology, including Apple technology, involves politics and morality.

The genetic phenomenological sociology of technology does not examine the ethics and politics of technology, but this does not mean that genetic phenomenological sociology has nothing to do with such matters. The opposite is true. Both the genealogical and the phenomenological aspects, in other words, both the historical and the ontological perspective of genetic phenomenological sociology, can contribute to the study of the ethics and politics of technology. First, we should examine the ethics and politics of technology during the process of the emergence and diffusion of a technology and also during the process of its adoption and usage, as the power relationships and politics of technology show themselves through these processes. Second, genetic phenomenological sociology makes an ontological contribution to the study of technology by opening a new perspective on technological study. Both object- and structure-oriented theories and subject- and construction-oriented theories of technology are profound to an extent. However, they are based on a non-existent dichotomy of human beings and technology, or society and technology. There are no such divisions. The genetic phenomenological sociology tells us that technology is embodied in human beings and is a part of society.
In conclusion, the genetic phenomenological sociology of technology examines technology in the process of its emergence and diffusion from the perspective of non-subject philosophy. It overcomes the dichotomy of subject and object in its examination of the relationship between human beings and technology. This distinguishes the genetic phenomenological sociology of technology from the current scholarship, such as studies of technological materialism and its misinterpretation and technological determinism and its exaggeration. In general, the genetic phenomenological sociology of technology ontologically explores the phenomenological root of the study of technology, and also empirically examines the genealogy of technology in the social and historical process. The relationship between human beings and technology is clear from the perspective of genetic phenomenological sociology. The genetic phenomenological sociology of technology inherits, reconciles and improves the theories of technological materialism and technological social construction, and avoids both technological determinism, which is a misinterpretation of technological materialism, and technological constructionism, which is an exaggeration of the social construction of technology. Meanwhile, genetic phenomenological sociology of technology further develop ANT by refusing that material has agency and adopting its endeavor of overcoming the dichotomy of subject and object. The empirical study of technology from the perspective of genetic
phenomenological sociology, that is, the empirical study of the emergence and diffusion of technology, forms the foundation of critique theory, the effect theory of technology, normative theory and technological ethics.
Chapter 9 Conclusion: culture in practice: the genealogy of Apple in China

This thesis examines the practices of Apple Company, media, consumers and the role of Apple technology in the emergence and transformation, or genealogy, of Apple culture in China from the perspective of a genetic phenomenological sociology. Genetic phenomenological sociology is developed in each chapter in the form of sub-theories including meaning context, social ontology, genealogy, media practice, cultural encountering, and embodiment while I examine electronic culture in China, Apple store, Apple advertisement, media coverage on Steve Jobs, consumers, and Apple technology respectively. Genealogy or genetic phenomenological sociology supplies an alternative interpretation of Apple culture beyond structure oriented theory and construction oriented theory. The sub-theories and the empirical studies in each chapter are intertextual, which means that the sub-theory in one chapter can be applied into the empirical analysis in the other chapter. In this way, we have a completed genetic phenomenological sociology and the emergence and transformation of Apple culture in China.

The sub-theories constitute a full-range genetic phenomenological sociology and all the empirical studies constitute the whole process of the emergence and transformation of Apple in China. In this conclusion, I first show how the sub-theories
can be applied into the empirical data in each chapter. Then I summarize the theories of meaning context, practice, genealogy and the ontological meaning of practice and genealogy in the study of Apple, and discuss the implications of genetic phenomenological sociology in the study of culture, media and technology.

The meaning context of the Apple culture in China is the transformation of electronic culture from modernization to individualism and consumerism from the 1950s to 2015. This meaning context, examined in Chapter 3, is the meaning context for the rest of the thesis. The meaning context of Apple store, the transformation of the meaning of Apple advertisements, the transformation of media coverages on Steve Jobs, the transformation of the social imaginary of Apple, the emergence and diffusion of Apple technology are all in this meaning context. The transformation of this meaning context enables as well as includes the transformation of Apple culture, the news coverages, the social imaginary and the diffusion of Apple technology.

The social ontology and social epistemology of genetic phenomenological sociology developed in the Apple store Chapter are also the social ontology and social epistemology of the studies of Apple advertisements, media coverage of Steve Jobs and Apple technology. Social space represents social relation, so does Apple advertisements, media coverage and Apple technology. This social relation is not subject-object relation. The meaning of Apple store, advertisement, media coverage
and Apple technology emerges in these social relations.

Practice theory and genealogy as social ontology is the further developments of the social ontology and social epistemology of genetic phenomenological sociology. I examined the practice of Apple company, media, consumer in the formation of Apple culture in China, meanwhile, the genealogy as social ontology is applied in each chapter, which includes the genealogy of electronic culture, the genealogy of advertisements, the genealogy of media coverage and the genealogy of Apple technology. The intertextuality of the sub-theories and empirical studies constitutes a completed genetic phenomenological sociology of Apple in China. Practice is always the practice in genesis. It is not a subject to object activity, but a way of the existence of human.

A full-range genetic phenomenological sociology includes social ontology and epistemology, meaning context and the theories of practice, encountering, genealogy and embodiment. Encountering describes the social relation between human and thing, and among humans. The specifically relation between human and thing is embodiment. Meaning emerges in the encountering and embodiment. Practice is the genealogy of encountering and the genealogy of meaning is culture. It is worth noting that sub-theories of encountering and embodiment avoid the dichotomy of subject and object. The genetic phenomenological sociology emphasizes the genesis of culture,
media and technology. It studies Apple culture in the transforming meaning context, in media ritualization, in the genealogy of Apple advertisements, in transforming social imaginary and consumers’ imagination, in the emergence and diffusion of Apple technology and in the social ontology of genealogy.

Apple culture is a system of symbols, meanings and practices. Symbols in this thesis include Apple products, Apple advertisements etc. Meanings emerge in the encountering between Chinese people and Apple. Encountering is the basic element of practice and genealogy. Practice and genealogy are the ontological roots of Apple culture. Ontologically, practice and genealogy from genetic phenomenological sociology root in the non-subject philosophy. The practices concerning Apple are part of Apple culture. Apple culture is in practice in the meaning context of reform era in China. The anchoring practices of Apple Company, media and individuals and the role of Apple technology in the genealogy of Apple culture in China show not only how culture (historical culture or meaning context) works but also how new culture (Apple culture) emerges and transforms.

This thesis is not about what is Apple culture. Rather it is about the genealogy of Apple culture in China. The question what is Apple culture is misleading in the sense that it presupposes that we can find a certain essence of Apple culture, the being. The genealogy of Apple culture in China asks the question how Apple culture emerges and
transforms in China from 1980s to 2015 and the question focuses on genesis, or being in time, Apple culture in the dynamic social and historical process. All the beings should be examined in time and genesis. Without the time or genesis, we cannot really capture the meaning of Apple culture. This is indicated by the title of Heidegger’s book *Being and Time* and his later works *Contribution to Philosophy*. In this thesis, I do not try to find the origin of Apple culture. What I try to explore is the genealogy of Apple culture, the emergence and transformation of Apple in China from 1980s to 2015. The process of the emergence and transformation of Apple culture is the focus in this thesis and it is the nature of Apple culture.

Meaning context enables the practices of Apple Company, media and consumers through making sense of these practices. The thesis examines the genealogy of Apple in the meaning context of China from the 1980s to 2015. This meaning context transforms from modernization to individualism and consumerism through marketization. It makes sense of all the practices of Apple Company, media and consumers. We have different Apple advertisements from the 1980s to 2015 in China, different media presentation of Steve Jobs in this period, and the various cultural encountering of Apple technology, changing from modernization to individualism and consumerism. The people in the 1980s, in the 1990s and after 2000 are not surprise at all that they have different Apple advertisements, media reports on Apple and Steve
Jobs and social imaginaries of Apple technology. The meaning context influence the emergence and transformation of Apple culture in China, meanwhile Apple culture becomes part of the meaning context.

Apple culture is in practice. Practice is the mode of existence. There are as least two advantages of practice theory, from the perspective of genetic phenomenological sociology, for social and cultural studies. First, the process of practice and the result of practice can be observed. This makes the empirical study possible in practice theory. Second, practice theory has a profound philosophical root from phenomenology and other theories which concern on similar social fact, for example, Dasein and ereignis form Heidegger, play from Huizinga, game from both Wittgenstein and Gadamer, practice from Bourdieu, and Giddens etc. All these theories share the same ontological meaning, which is relational ontology and genealogy as social ontology. This social ontology makes it possible to be a way out of philosophy of subject.

Genetic phenomenological sociology of practice distinguishes itself from traditional practice theory from Aristotle to Marx for it starts from the perspective of non-subject philosophy. Most part of this thesis explores the result of the practices of Apple Company, media and consumers. The results of practice in this thesis include Apple advertisements, media coverage and Apple technology. For example, this thesis
examines the practice of Apple Company and consumers in Apple store. The participant observation in Apple store examines Apple store as a practice of Apple Company and the practices of consumers in Apple store. The practice and the result of practice connect Apple Company, media, consumers and apple products.

Genealogy is continuous practice in the meaning context. The genealogy of Apple in China reveals not only the transformation of social and cultural history of electronic technology and society in reform era in China, but also the mechanism of cultural emergence and transformation. Genealogy is method, critique and social ontology. As method, it examines the historical transformation of Apple in China. As critique, it reveals the power relationship in the process of the emergence and the diffusion of Apple in China. The genealogy as critique builds the foundation for the further exploration of political and economic relationship in the process. As social ontology, genealogy is the nature of Apple culture and any other social and cultural phenomenon. Genealogy means both emergence and transformation. It implies the ‘life’ of social and cultural phenomena. Apple culture is changing all the time and new elements of Apple culture are emerging all the time.

Genealogy is always phenomenological in the sense that it shares the ontology of phenomenology which is the relational ontology and genetic ontology, or put them into one term, social ontology. This social ontology is the philosophical foundation of
genetic phenomenological sociology. Relational ontology means that all the things are linked together and meaning emerges in the encountering between people and thing, between people. This encountering is the way of practice. Relation is built in this encountering or practice. The building of relation is genesis as well as the lasting of relation. The lasting of relation does not mean that it remains unchanged. The genetic side of relation reveals the relation is genetic both when it is built and when it is lasting. Relational ontology is genetic and social, and genealogy is social ontology.

Genealogy as social ontology lays the foundation of a way out of the philosophy of subject and out of the dichotomy of structure and agency in cultural and social theory, in the study of culture, media and technology. In the relation, there is no subject and object. In the genealogy, there is no structure and agency. This is the social ontology of genetic phenomenological sociology, the theoretical meaning of practice and genealogy as social ontology in this thesis.

Based on a genetic phenomenological sociology, we have an alternative interpretation of Apple in China. The practices of Apple Company, media and individuals and the role of Apple technology work together in the genealogy of Apple culture in China. Steve Jobs used to be taken as a key figure and symbol of Apple in this process. The last gift that Steve Jobs left for Apple is his biography, wrote by Walter Isaacson. Now, it is the time to end the individual heroism of Steve Jobs and
the mythology of Apple. All culture and technology emerge and transform in the process of social practice. In this process, genealogy is social ontology.
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