

RESEARCH ON MARX'S THEORY OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMAN AND NATURE

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ABSTRACT. *The relationship between human being and nature has long been an important problem, which has drawn a lot of attention. Currently, with the rampancy of the capital and the rapid development of economics, contradiction between human being and nature has risen to a prominent position. Absorbing the essence of Aristotle's teleological Naturalism, Hegel's objective idealist view of nature and Feuerbach's humanist view of nature, Marx systematically discussed his theory of the relationship between human being and nature in German ideology and Manuscript of Economics and Philosophy in 1844. In Marx's theory, nature, as an inorganic body of human being, is unified with human's practice. However, in capitalist society, alienation has alienated the harmony relationship. This is an undeniable fact, which has been testified by environmental reality and ecological practice. Marx believes that communism and a way of existence that follows aesthetic law could be the solution to the problems mentioned above. Nevertheless, facing with the quickly changing social reality, we cannot solve the urgent problem of environment by the design of regime. Thus, post-modern thinkers add critique of modernity to Marx's theory and emphasize that organic agriculture and education can serve as a new way to solve the problem. Therefore, this research focuses on the relationship between human being and its development in current society. The present author believes it has necessity and significance.*

KEYWORDS: *Marx; Human Being and Nature; Organic, Organic philosophy, Marxism*

Contents

1. Theoretical Resource of Marx's theory of Relationship between Human and Nature
2. Human and Nature Are Unified
3. Alienation between Human and Nature
4. Return to the Harmonious Relationship between Human and Nature
5. Contemporary Significance of Re-thinking the Relationship between Human and Nature

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1. THEORETICAL RESOURCE OF MARX'S THEORY OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMAN AND NATURE

Marx's theory of nature is an important part of Marx's philosophy. Its formation is not only the production of practice of proletarians, but also the achievement of human culture. Marx critically inherits teleological naturalism of Aristotle and German ideology. He rectified the reversed relationship between human, nature and reality in Hegel's philosophy. Thus a philosophical revolution happened on the view of nature.

1.1. Teleological Naturalism of Aristotle

Aristotle's influence on Marx's view of nature is very profound. But it is seldom mentioned in the study of Marx's theory. Ancient Greek culture occupies an indisputably important position of German humanism in the 18th century. Mewes says, "As the key ingredient preserved in Marx's theory, there are reasons to do further research on the relationship between Marx and the Greeks."² Marx admires Aristotle most among numerous ancient Greek philosophers. In the very beginning of his doctoral dissertation, Marx honored Aristotle as "King Alexander in Greek philosophy". Meanwhile, he wrote to Lassalle in a letter in 1857: "thanks to your *Heraclitus*, I have a long interest in this philosopher, and I think he is second only to Aristotle in terms of importance"³ Thus, we can speculate that the formation of Marx's thought is deeply influenced by Aristotle.

Specifically, Marx's theory of nature mainly benefits from Aristotle in two aspects. One is his adherence to Aristotelian inductive-deductive methodology by following Grosseteste. Professor Mike Neary discussed it in his article *Student as Producer*. He quoted McEvoy's words: "Following Aristotle, the basis of Grosseteste's method is in making a connection between the powers of observation-induction to discover the real substance of things in response to practical matters and the deductive powers of metaphysics: imagination and intuition."⁴ It makes Marx form an integralism ontology, which gives Marx's conception of nature both in metaphysics and practice. Professor Konstantin Khroutski believes that Marx equally takes the means from both Plato's pole and Aristotle's for his 'uniting the opposites' in realizing specific conceptual constructions. Two basic conceptions of Marx can directly prove the conclusion. Matter is a metaphysical conception, which is reduced to Plato's pole of rationality. However, when it comes to reality, confronting with human, it changes to humanized nature in Marx's conception system. Thus, Matter in metaphysical dimension is given a practical dimension, which relies mainly on the methodology of Aristotle.

The other one is teleological naturalism of Aristotle. Aristotle views nature, which drives the internal changes in natural substance, as the origin of natural

² George McCarthy. *Marx and Aristotle: Nineteenth-century German Social Theory and Classical Antiquity*. Ecnu press.2015. p. 25.

³ Marx, Engels, *Collected Works* vol.29, People press.1972, p. 527.

⁴ Mike Neary. *Student as producer: an intuition of the common? Enhance learning in the Social Science*, Higher Education Academy, 2012, p. 11.

substance. In a bio-cosmological perspective, it can also be viewed as a burgeoning seed inside of the nature. In Aristotle's view of nature, there are four causes: material cause, formal cause, efficient cause and purpose cause which make nature exist and transform. This theory also influenced Marx greatly. He regards nature as inorganic body of human. That is to say, nature is not only the material, which can be used to benefit human practice, but also the inorganic form of human, and the intention of our existence. Moreover, nature definitely promotes the development of human being. This topic will be discussed in the following section of this paper.

1.2. Hegel's Objective Idealist view of nature

Marx critically inherits Hegel's view of nature. Hegel is the synthesizer of classical German philosophy. He points out in *Philosophy of Nature*:

*Nature has presented itself as the idea in the form of otherness. Since in nature the idea is as the negative of itself or is external to itself, nature is not merely external in relation to this idea, but the externality constitutes the determination in which nature as nature exists.*⁵

Marx acutely criticized the essence of Hegel's philosophy and his idealist view of nature. He thinks that Hegel views nature as the externalization of transcendent spirit. Marx argues in *Manuscript of Economics and Philosophy in 1844*: "As for him, the whole natural world is just the abstraction of logic under the appearance of perception."⁶ In Marx's perspective, Hegel only unified human and nature in conceptual system. He points out it would lead to a degradation that realistic human and nature behave as the predicate and symbol of unrealistic human and nature. Although Marx criticized Hegel's view of nature, he absorbed positive factors from it. The reasonable core of Hegel's view of nature is that he regards nature as an organic entity, which changes continuously. Marx follows the dialectics of Hegel but starts with material world and human practice, overcoming the top-heavy drawbacks of Hegel's philosophy.

1.3. Feuerbach's humanist view of nature

Feuerbach admitted the existence of nature and its objectivity. He thinks that nature can exist without any spirit. Human being is the production of nature. They live on nature with perceptive practice. It breaks the hedge of German Idealism, and provides a humanistic base to Marx's theory. Marx's conception of unrestrained nature and humanized nature directly derives from Feuerbach. He highly praised Feuerbach's work. According to Marx, "Feuerbach creates practical humanism and natural critique. The fewer response his works get, the deeper he influences us."⁷

However, Marx criticized that Feuerbach separated social history with nature. In

⁵ Hegel. *Philosophy of Nature*. Commercial Press.1980, p. 19.

⁶ Marx, Engels. *Collected Works*. Vol.3. People Press.2002, p. 336.

⁷ Marx, Engels. *Collected Works*. Vol.3. People Press.2002, p. 220.

Feuerbach's theory, nature only has its biological significance and lost its historical meaning. He said, "As a materialist, Feuerbach throws history out of his vision. When he discusses history, he is not a materialist. In his theory, materialism and history separate with each other."⁸

2. HUMAN AND NATURE ARE UNIFIED

2.1. Human and Nature Are Unified Essentially

Marx first elaborates his theory of relationship between human and nature in his *Manuscript of Economics and Philosophy in 1844*. In his opinion, since nature comes into being before human being, human being is born in the nature. He states:

*"Nature, which is not human's organic body, is the inorganic body of human. People depend on nature. That is to say, nature is the body of human that maintains his existence. It also contains the interaction between human and nature."*⁹

Marx views the organic body of human as the sublimation of inorganic body. This process is gradually completed in the interaction between human and nature, which is also an organic one that human and nature coexist in ecological community. Among them, nature as human's inorganic body is the material basis of human's reproduction. On the other hand, human beings develop and perfect themselves in the process mentioned above. From a metaphysical point of view, nature is a process of organic connection in essence; both human and nature occupy a certain period of time and a square of space, whether human history or natural history is a four-dimensional manifold,¹⁰ because the abstract nature is nothingness. From the perspective of human practice, the history of evolution from Australopithecus to Homo sapiens is a process starting from scratch, developing into junior and senior stage gradually. Additionally, with the growth of human capacity and ever increasing productivity, small settlement in early centuries of human being has developed into a large society with numerous villages, cities and metropolises in it. However, human's achievements are not the results of the natural evolution of human being itself. Its life, culture, technology and art are imitation of the natural phenomena or other species. Ancient Greek philosopher Democritus also said:

*"Human learned weaving from spider, studied singing from swan and the nightingale, emulated building house from swallow. We are the students of other species, and this is a very important fact."*¹¹

Therefore, in the interaction with the myriad kinds of plants and animals, human beings formed their own body shape, thinking mode and cultural direction, all of

⁸ Marx, Engels. *Collected Works*. Vol. 3, People Press, 2002, p.78.

⁹ Marx, *Manuscript of Economics and Philosophy in 1844*. People Press, 2010, p. 56.

¹⁰ Whitehead, A.N. *The Concept of Nature*. Yilin Press, 2011, p. 72.

¹¹ Philip Wheelwright. *The Pre-Socratics*. Odyssey Press, 1966, p. 184.

which are characteristics distinct from other animals. This is what Marx called the inorganic body: nature has a generative effect on human being. In other words, through practical activities with other animals and plants, it formed a harmonious ecosystem and ecological relationship. Marx believes that without nature and emotional world, workers cannot create anything. It is the material that workers use to achieve their own labor. In the nature, workers work out their own product.¹² As a result, human beings have constructed a historical connection with the production of consumption goods, and the nature appears to have added the meaning of the human practice. In Marx's theory, the basis of the unity and contradiction between human and nature is practice. But human and nature are not directly the same. The existence of human is different from that of animal in that it is the intrinsic power of human being with an aim of human itself. Since the nature is a flawed existence, it cannot recommend itself to people. Human's survival and development can only depend on the productive practice.¹³ Therefore, the relationship between human and nature in Marx's theory is unified and harmonious. Human and nature share the same breath. They have a common destiny, which is included in a developing community. Besides, only for the commonwealth of human and nature can we create a harmonious ecological system and environment by human practice.

2.2. Human and Humanized Nature Are Unified since Human Was Born

Marx develops the theory of the relationship between human and nature in another important book “*German Ideology*”. And he examined the relationship between human and nature from the perspective of historical materialism and practical theory. He takes the human's emergence as the boundary and human practice as the standard, and divides the nature into unrestraint nature and humanized nature. Marx thinks that humanized nature is occupying an absolute position in the current world.

“The perceptual world around us is not a consistent thing existing since dawn, but a production of industrial and social condition, a production of history and a result of generations of industrial activities.”¹⁴

At the same time, he does not deny that unrestraint nature exists, because the nature prior to the human history is not the nature, which Feuerbach experienced. Except for new coral island in Australia, we can no longer find any unrestraint nature in the world. Thus, to Feuerbach, there is no nature.¹⁵ Therefore, the humanized nature is regarded as all practical activities and the whole world and the whole history which human creates. It is the actual state since human being emerges. Meanwhile, Marx also admits the existence of unrestraint nature though people in current world

¹² Marx, *Manuscript of Economics and Philosophy in 1844*. People Press.2010. p. 53.

¹³ Yang Weijun. Marx's view of nature and its contemporary significance. Huazhong University of Science and Technology.2009, p. 54.

¹⁴ Marx, Engels. *German Ideology*. People Press.2003, p. 20.

¹⁵ Marx, Engels. *German Ideology*. People Press.2003, p. 21.

cannot experience it.

Marx does not simply separate nature into the two disjunctive stages, but regards the development of nature as an organic conjunctive process, which is brunched by human and its practical activity. In *Form*, it is emphasized that human being comes from nature:

“The first thing needs to be confirmed is the fact that these individuals' physical organization and the relations between individual and other nature... (it) not only determines the initial structure of the body that developed naturally, especially the racial difference between them, but also decides whether the whole body should further develop or not.”¹⁶

At the same time, Marx also points out that under the basis of human knowledge and practice, unrestraint nature can transfer into humanized nature. That is to say, nature is the material basis of human knowledge and Practice. In *Form*, Marx stresses the importance of human practice and the practical significance of humanized nature. He considers the real nature as humanized nature. It is the nature that generated in the history of human society. Without the relationship which has rendered human activity as an intermediary between human and nature, nature will lose its meaning of existence under the value of human life. “The first historical activity of the human being is material production itself.”¹⁷ Material production is the basis of all history, and it is also a symbol of human being, “human begins to distinguish himself from animals as he begins to produce his own material, which is determined by their physical body.”¹⁸ With the deepening of the process of human history and the development of human material production, nature is increasingly penetrated by the factor of human being, imprinted with human activities and becomes associated with human being. Therefore, the relationship between human and nature has its sociality and historicity, human and nature are united in the mutual restriction between human's natural relations and social relations. These two kinds of relations also contain each other. If one leaves, the other will no longer exist.

3. ALIENATION BETWEEN HUMAN AND NATURE

3.1. Alienation in Capitalism Broke the Unity of Human and Nature

Marx thinks that alienated labor makes the body of human, the nature, the spiritual essence and the human nature alienated with human itself.¹⁹ Labor is a confirmation of the objectification of human nature. He points out:

“It is in the transformation human beings prove that they are kind of existence. This kind of production is a kind of human activity.”²⁰

¹⁶ Marx, Engels. *German Ideology*. People Press. 2003, p. 11.

¹⁷ Marx, Engels. *German Ideology*. People Press. 2003, p. 23.

¹⁸ Marx, Engels. *German Ideology*. People Press. 2003, p. 11.

¹⁹ Marx. *Manuscript of Economics and Philosophy in 1844*. People Press, 2010, p. 58.

²⁰ Marx. *Manuscript of Economics and Philosophy in 1844*. People Press, 2010, p. 58.

However, under the condition of capitalism, the expression of human nature is alienated labor, which is out of human's control and in turn controls him. When human activities and work products have become the alienated nature of human, it shows that when human alienate from his human nature, he has been alienated from nature. Therefore, alienated labor is the source of disharmony between human and nature.²¹ Thus, alienated labor seized the production of workers and captured their kind of life. A person who lost his kind of life cannot be called a real person. Originally, laborer as human is an important composition of nature. However, the emergence of alienated labor separated human from his production. As a result, the relationship between human and nature is also alienated. In this case, the more human changes the nature through his power, the more he will be restraint by the nature.

“The direct result of the human's alienation with his production, his living activities and his kind of nature is that human alienates with human.”²² Therefore, under the condition of capitalism, the alienation among humans interacts with the alienation between human and nature. As professor Zhang Shuguang pointed out:

“Alienation of private ownership society appears to the alienation of labor and alienation between the laborer and the capitalist. It also reflects the alienation of society and civilization. In a society based on the natural formed specialization of labor, society divides itself. Human is hostile to each other. Nature is regarded as a useful objection which has no sense of beauty given by aesthetic activities of human. It also reflects the fundamental defect of the 'culture' of the private ownership.”²³

3.2. Example

When Marx was still alive, the environmental problem had been severe. London is a typical example. New energy like coal and gas provided a large portion of power to Industrial Revolution in Victoria ages. According to statistics, in the 19th century, London held the largest number of workers who were working in productive industry. GDP doubled during that period. Average growth rate reached a record high at 2.5%.²⁴ However, behind the flourishing of economics, it was companied by the deterioration of relationship between human and nature. Ecological system was severely destroyed. This can be viewed as a counterattack of destructive human practice. London suffered a lot from the frog at that time because the city is constructed at the downstream of river. It was the smog and chemistry, which discharged by the factories in London, polluted the air in the city. As a result, the stinking yellow smog shrouded the city. According to another statistic, it emerged a 4 days' frog in January 1880. The frog led to the death of 700 people.²⁵ Engels

²¹ Yang Weijun. Marx's view of nature and its contemporary significance. Huazhong University of Science and Technology. 2009, p. 54.

²² Marx. *Manuscript of Economics and Philosophy in 1844*. People Press, 2010, p. 59.

²³ Zhang Shuguang. *Survival Philosophy-Towards real existence*. People Press in Yunnan, p. 107.

²⁴ Francois Crouzet. *The Victorian Economy*. Columbia University Press, 1982, p. 33.

²⁵ Stephen Inwood. *A History of London*. Carroll&Graff, 1998, p. 411.

described the miserable living standard after Industrial Revolution in his early work, *The Condition of Working Class in England*. He said that there was a lot of rubbish in the street.

*“Without drains, polluted water converged at the pit on the street. Even worse, disorderly buildings without reasonable planning hindered the flow of wind. Thus the living condition in worker’s region could be imagined.”*²⁶

Meanwhile, alienation between human and the nature appeared more obvious, which can be seen clearly from the shortage of nature resources. The rampancy of capital expanded human’s ambition. Numerous forest and animal were forced to devote their lives to the development of capitalism. Owing to the great demand from the industries, such as furniture and architecture, three blocks of forest were cut down in the first two decades of the 20th century. Besides, local timber resources could not support the growth of British economics. Capitalists of England started to invade into other economic entities. Take India as an example, until 1866 coastal region of India were set up hundreds of plantations while local forest had almost disappeared. A lot of species died out in these areas.

4. RETURN TO THE HARMONIOUS RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMAN AND NATURE

4.1. Utopia of Marx

a. Communism

Marx believes that the contradiction between human and nature cannot be solved in the era of private ownership. From the perspective of capitalism, in order to make profit, capitalists took all the advantages of industrial and technical elements to exploit and occupy the nature. In this historical condition, relationship between human and nature was destructed in a considerable degree.

How to deal with the problem of alienation? Marx shifts his hope to the communism. What is the communism? Marx believes that communism is to sublimate private property, which represents the alienation of human. Once the private property and alienated labor are discarded, the unity of human and nature could be more likely to achieve. He further explains that this type of communism is the unity of completed naturalism and humanism. This is the utmost solution to the contradiction between human and nature.²⁷ Engels also certified this opinion in *Dialectics of Nature*. He said that relying on knowledge is far from enough; we need to change our mode of production as well as the whole social system.²⁸ Marx and Engels aim at revolutionizing the capitalism society. They believe the above-mentioned way is the fundamental method to promote the compromise of human and nature.

²⁶ Marx, Engels. *Collected works, vol.2*. People Press. 1957, p. 307.

²⁷ Marx. *Manuscript of Economics and Philosophy in 1844*. People Press, 2010, p. 81.

²⁸ Marx, Engels. *Selected Works, vol.4*. People Press. 1995, p. 85.

b. A Way of Existence, Forming Objects in Accordance with The Laws of Beauty

Marx points out in *Manuscript* that admittedly animals also are capable of producing things. They build nests, dwellings for themselves, like the bees, beavers, ants, etc. But animals only produce what they need immediately for themselves or their offspring. They produce one-sidedly, whilst human produce universally. Animal produce only out of immediate physical need, whilst human produce even when he is free from physical need and only truly produces in freedom therefrom. An animal produces only for itself, whilst human can reproduce the whole of nature. An animal's product belongs directly to its physical body, whilst human confronts his product freely. The form an animal produces only in accordance with the standard and the need of the species to which it belongs, whilst human knows how to produce in accordance with the standard of every species, and knows how to apply the inherent standard to the object at its will. Human, however, can design objects in accordance with the laws of beauty.²⁹ Professor Zhang Xiuhua believes that forming objects in accordance with the law of beauty is a way of existence, which calls on the construction of ecological civilization. It also provides a basis to the construction of ecological civilization under the perspective of survivalism. Professor Zhang views the activity of forming objects as engineering.³⁰ She believes that engineering is an existing way, which promotes the transforming from unrestraint nature to humanized nature. Therefore, engineering, nature and human being can reinforce each other and make the construction of ecological civilization possible. Hence ecological construction is an important way of solving the alienation between human and nature. In other words, forming objects in accordance with the law of beauty can promote the harmonious development of human, engineering and nature.

4.2. New Solution to Current Circumstance-Organic Marxism

Organic Marxism can also be referred to as Process Marxism. Considering current environmental problems presented in newly developing non-capitalism country such as China and India cannot be solved only by the explanation of alienated labor in the capitalism condition, contemporary post-modern thinkers combined Marx's theory and organic philosophy, made a new interpretation of Marx's theory of nature. The author holds the opinion that Organic Marxism has a far-reaching meaning on reshaping the harmonious relationship between human and nature.

A. Fundamental Theory

a. Critique of Capitalism

Organic Marxism believes that what divided capitalism society are not only the unjust treatment to laborer, but also the widening gap between the rich and poor. Moreover, it also endangered the existence of the earth. Philip Clayton, the executive

²⁹ Marx. *Manuscript of Economics and Philosophy in 1844*. People Press. 2010, p. 58.

³⁰ Zhang Xiuhua. *Forming Objects in Accordance with the Law of Beauty-Existential Basis of Ecological Civilization*. Theoretical Arguments. 2009(4).

president of process study center in America, thought that capitalism, as a social economic institution produced a lot of unfairness and injustice. It also destroyed the environment of the earth.³¹ According to Marx's theory, the development of capitalism economy embodies the huge accumulation of commodity, which has a cost of sacrificing the environment. More significantly, developed countries usually plunder the natural resources in southern countries other than that of theirs, it just like the situation India faced as mentioned above.

b. Critique of Modernity

Organic Marxism's critique of modernity has inherited the critical tradition of Marx. It is argued that only the criticism of capitalism system cannot explain the new situation, which is the also the fundamental reason for the crisis of modern civilization and the alienation between human and nature. David Griffin, a famous American scholar, regarded technology as the core of modernity.

“Technology has produced tens of thousands of nuclear warheads that can destroy the earth. The distribution of wealth and the billions of poverty population are in danger.”

He stressed that we must abandon the modernity; otherwise most lives on the earth will not be able to escape the fate of destruction.³² What worth mentioning is that most livings Griffin mentioned here, not only confines to human beings, it also includes all other living forms on the earth. The purpose of Organic Marx is to achieve the common wealth of human. They emphasize the organic connection between all livings and care about the development of all individuals in the community.

c. Advocate the Organic Holism

Anthropocentrism and environmentalism are two opposite theories, which discussing the relationship between human and nature. Organic Marxism reckons universe as an organic entirety, which is undergoing dynamically development. Human and nature mutually rely on each other. Only when human starts to cooperate with other species, is it possible to develop a harmonious relationship between human and nature.³³ At the same time, the organic holism emphasizes the equality, which takes the value of each species into account. This equality is not absolute, but the equality is shared in terms of status. The author believes this theory can promote the compromising between unrestraint nature and humanized nature, and dispel the alienation between human and nature from capitalism and modernity. Moreover, it can provide an ideological basis to the construction of a new relationship between human and nature.

³¹ Philip Clayton. *Organic Marxism and Organic Education*. Marxism and Reality, 2015(1), p. 76.

³² David Griffin. *Post-modern Science*. Chinese Translating Press.2004, p. 19.

³³ Wang Zhihe, Yang Tao. *Organic Marxism and Its Contemporary Significance*. Marxism and Reality. 2015(1)

d. Emphasize Organic Education and Agriculture

Organic Marxism thinks highly of agricultural civilization. They regard countryside as a fertile soil, which can cultivate the ecological civilization. John Cobb, a famous American thinker, thought that ecological civilization is connected by the sustainability of environment. It can protect the residents living in the society from suffering from hazards. Nevertheless, the basic factor of security is food safety. Therefore, civilization should be built on the basis of the development of agriculture.³⁴ That is to say concerning agricultural society first. Specifically, Organic Marxism puts forward some feasible methods. They call on implementing Eco-Agriculture in small community and construct several organic family farms with high efficiency and diversity³⁵. Finally, a post-modern New Countryside, which is environment-friendly and resources saving could be constructed. Traditional Chinese philosophy is also taken into account. Learning from Mencius, they stressed that one should follow the rule of nature. Mencius once said that if farmers do things according to the change of nature, a harvest would come in the end. When fishing, if one can put away his greed and use a relatively sparse fishing net, fishes cannot be killed out.

Besides, the organic education is another key point of Organic Marxism. Professor Philip Clayton believes that only education can make a perfect fusion of personal and public interests. The function of education must be taken into consideration, namely the students should set up a value that all life is symbiotic. They share the distribution of resources and opportunities collectively and equally. He said,

*“The idea of ecological civilization must be rooted in teenage, otherwise, this idea will not be possible to establish and develop in the future, or cultivate profound value reflection and positive spirit of education reform which will help to shape the common values of future citizens”.*³⁶

Therefore, the author believes that organic education can establish the concept of harmony between human and nature and correct the inherent ideology of Binary Opposition of human and nature. Only by opening our mind, can we save the nature from the extreme value of Anthropocentrism and mechanism.

B. Advantages and Disadvantages

In conclusion, Organic Marxism inherited Marx's critique of capitalism. It absorbed the basic ideas of contemporary ecologic theories such as Gaia doctrine, doctrine of a new era and theory of rich corner, transferred the object of criticism to modernity which opens up a new way for understanding the nature under the perspective of process. In addition, it also has made outstanding contribution to

³⁴ John Cobb. “New Realism and China.” *Contemporary Study of Marx’s Philosophy*, No 1, 2012.

³⁵ Wang, Zhihe and Yang, Tao. *Organic Marxism and Its Contemporary Significance*. Marxism and Reality. 2015(1).

³⁶ Philip Clayton. “Organic Marxism and Organic Education.” *Marxism and Reality*, No. 1, 2015.

Marxism. In practice, ecological agriculture and organic education have been built in Claremont, a post-modern ecological agricultural town, which provides experience and lesson to the subsequent construction of ecological civilization.

However, it is still too early to apply Organic Marx to the construction of ecological civilization in China.

First of all, Organic Marxism is idealism. Its critique of modernity is based on the criticism of modern technology. The rebellion of science and technology will subject to strong resistance from many aspects, such as politics, economy, culture, etc. At the same time, Organic Marxism emphasizes poetic dwelling, however, driven by the individual value and life style, social reform will encounter failure in face of the problems put forward by the strong enterprise controlled by the government and capitalists. It is decided by the present stage of the complex social environment, also it stands at the contrary of the famous words of Marx, “science and technology are the first productivity.” Therefore, whether in China, the United States or other developed capitalist countries, the goal is difficult to be achieved in a short term.

Secondly, China has a large territory. Its terrain is rather complicated. The agricultural model differs from village to village. Large-scale mechanized agriculture in Northeast China Plain and North China Plain is obviously different from the small-scale family farming in southwest mountainous area. Agriculture in the oasis in Xinjiang Autonomous Region is also distinct from coastal aquaculture industry. What's more, crop farming in mainland area differs from animal husbandry in minority concentrated region. Obviously, there is a huge difference between these areas. The ecological agriculture, which is advocated by Organic Marxism scholars, is based on the experience of the agricultural practices of small communities in the United States. It is not generally feasible to a wide variety of agricultural models in China.

Finally, the economic development situation of China is not the same as that of the U.S., China is still growing rapidly, the value orientation of people affected by the capital and market has been changing towards consumerism and materialism. The changing of the state of mind of people would not finish in a short period of time. Whether organic education can make the Chinese people understand the harmonious relationship between human and nature also need to be further examined. Therefore, although Organic Marxism is a new theory advocated to solve the alienation between human and nature, it has incomparable advantages. But there are still many problems and limitations, which still need to be developed through continuing practice.

5. CONTEMPORARY SIGNIFICANCE OF RE-THINKING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMAN AND NATURE

a. Help to Deal with Environmental Problems and Ecological Destruction

Re-thinking the relationship between human and nature is helpful for people to return nature. Recognizing the value of nature is the premise of protecting nature. Dealing with the environmental problems is closely linked with the interests of human being, which is one of the major causes of environmental problems. Marx clearly points out the harmonious unity between human and nature in Manuscript. He

emphasizes that human is a part of the nature. Therefore, it is necessary to realize the necessity of environmental protection, and then follow the laws of nature to protect the natural environment for human being to survive. Natural protection can not only conserve soil and water, but also provide habitats to wildlife. Besides, it has a very high practical significance in maintaining ecological balance and species diversity. What should be noticed is that the relationship between human and nature advocated by Marx is not to deny the right of human beings. Protecting the environment not only can make people receive the aesthetic enjoyment, but also can improve the production efficiency.

b. Benefit to the Solving of the Problems Caused by Urbanization

City is one of the main forms of human settlement. The development of human settlement has experienced the process from nature to the countryside, then to the city. In primitive society, human and nature enjoy a close relationship. Hunting and fishing did not cause damage to the environment where ecological balance was well maintained. However, with the development of productivity, human settlements become much more complex. Air pollution, wasting of resources and tension of housing conditions, as well as the deterioration of human living conditions, are all closely linked to the process of urbanization. Therefore, a rational understanding of the relationship between human and nature and the recognition of the value of nature, are conducive to the prevention of the nature, which would consequently not be totally occupied by cities.

c. Provide Theoretical Basis for the Construction of Ecological Civilization

Differing from the value of traditional industrial civilization, ecological civilization is based on the harmonious relationship between human and nature. Harmony is the fundamental principle of the civilization, which advocates moderate consumption and spiritual enjoyment. It has a prime principle of transforming people's values and modes of thought. It requires human beings to form objects in accordance with the law of beauty, which is a reasonable lifestyle of connecting human, nature and engineering. Therefore, it can be said that Marx's theory of relationship between human and nature provides a solid theoretical foundation for the construction of ecological civilization.

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