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Defender of Human Value: Reviving a Real Marx

By Yan Chen
China University of Political Science and Law, China

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Defender of Human Value: Reviving a Real Marx

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I. Introduction

Actually, the interpretation of the book Why Marx Was Right is never something fresh, and the research of Marxism towards human value is far from novelty, however, the author creatively downs the ten seemingly irrelevant points of refutation to the root of Eagleton's theory towards Marxism in this book, defending of human value. Because of the originality, some points are personal-constrained and not that convincing, which deserves readers' understanding.

II. The Critical Analysis of the Critical Logic Reasoning of Eagleton

The book *why Marx was right,* as an analysis-of-argument essay, is imbued with the wisdom of the critical logic reasoning of Eagleton. The book lists ten chapters in which the author reveals ten common prejudices towards Marx as well as Marxism, and reputes them respectively in his logical reasoning, which is not that perfect and needs introspection. Thus, it is meaningful to have a critical analysis towards his critical logic reasoning.

In brief, all theses can be simply divided into two parts—premise and statement. Premise is the background of statement; and statement is the conclusion of premise. And there is the logic bridge linking these two elements (Killoran, 2006: 8). This seemingly simple reasoning is actually the originator of almost all various derivative forms of inference, including the famous syllogism.

The valid argument towards the inference statement is divided into three methods: first, to question the validity of premise, such as the adequacy of date collection or the source of evidence; second, to question the suitability of statement, such as applying for exaggeration; third, to cut off the logic bridge providing the possibility of linking the two parts. Besides, there are lots of forms of seemingly correct invalid argument include shifting the topic, attacking the rival's other opinions, questioning the validity of rival's position, etc. Eagleton's critical logic throughout the book is confined to that as well.

Marxism is criticized to have created material deprivation when put in practice, and Eagleton refutes that capitalism has also led to no less famines than Marxism in reality; Marxism is criticized to have given rise to riots and upheavals when carried out, and Eagleton rebut that capitalism has also generated social turbulence as well. Such refutation is actually invalid in the strict sense. However, Eagleton never satisfied by resting on such refutation. It is obvious in the first example that premise refers to the fact that almost all the nations that choose Marxism inclined to break out the famines, and statement is judgment that Marxism is imbued with the defects of material deprivation. To start with, Eagleton question the validity of premise by stating that it is never Marx's intetion to implement Marxism in the nations lacking in material foundation, thus it is not the Marxism itself to blame. Then, he cut off the logic bridge by stating that those so-called Marxism enforced in many socialist countries is not the real one in reality. He explained that in the whole book by clarifying the misreading of Marxism. "We have to admit that the critical logic of Eagleton lacks coherence despite of its profound social meaning in it."(Fang Yu, 2006: 5) That is to say, the refutation is not that obvious, even some obscure in some way in that the whole underlying critical logic process is revealed to readers gradually throughout the whole book.

III. Reviving a Real Marx: Defender of Human Value

We can clearly sense the theoretical foundation of Eagleton as human-value-oriented Marxism towards the ten misreads. Starting from this starting point, he progressed further argument in terms of politics, humanity and economics, which clarifies a real Marx and the real Marxism.

a) In Political section

In terms of political section in this book, Eagleton mainly refutes two mainstream fallacies on Marxism. The first is of its obsession with class struggle;

Author: School of Foreign Languages, China University of Political Science and Law. e-mail: susan_banban_923@hotmail.com

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the second concerns advocating violent political action. On these two issues, Eagleton argues in details respectively. However, be his argument unassailable as appears, there is still some underlying ambiguity or contradiction, which is never that convincing.

i. *Debate over class struggle of Marxism*

Some people hold that social mobility nowadays has eliminated the cliche of class struggle. What is more, "the working class which they fondly imagine will usher in socialism has disappeared almost without trace."(Eagleton, 2011: 174). That is to say, the archaic theory of class struggle by Marx is only a thing to the past.

Eagleton refutes the opinions as follows. To start with, he clarifies the value assessment of class position, having nothing to do with discrimination, which gives the support that the theory of eliminating a class or another by Marxism is only sheer nonsense. What is more, the doctrine that working class has perished lacks solid evidence, considering the structure of class has evolved all the time. Actually, the working class, the concept of which has greater extension including salesmen and intellectuals, and nowadays is stronger than ever with the booming of the third world. However, the extension of the concept of working class is maybe Eagleton's own opinion which deserves further demonstration. Marx did not object to capitalism blindly just like drugs or smoking, but point out the merits of it as well, one of which capitalism bestowed to the world is the working class, stepping to the historical stage in accordance with the interests of bourgeois but growing to an awesome social power competent enough of replacing the status of bourgeois, which is also imbued with ironic colors in the conception of history from Marxism. Marx shed great light on working class not because of the unique merits they share that enable them to shoulder the history responsibility, but the particular position they stand of the whole productivity model providing them a clear picture of the whole mechanism as well as the technical and political visions towards getting rid of the existent yoke for implementing the actual interests to individuals, as the humankind liberation transmitter. ,

By analyzing the underlying critical logic beneath words, it is possible to clarify the thoughts of Eagleton on Marxism. To start with, he soothed the discrimination hue towards class position as well as class struggle. However, he also emphasized that class struggle does not equalize eliminating bourgeois. Eagleton applied his dialectical thinking to viewing Capitalism, providing history a lot of precious fruits, one of which is the working class, growing to shoulder the historical responsibility gradually. And last, Eagleton explained the suitability of practical situation for working class to finish its historical mission.

ii. *Fallacy of violent revolution imbued with Marxism*

Some anti-Marxists hold that Marxists "reject a sensible course of moderate, piecemeal reform and opt instead for the bloodstained chaos of revolution" (Eagleton, 2011: 193), and what is more "this is one of several senses in which Marxism and democracy are at daggers drawn" (Eagleton, 2011: 193)\\

On that point, Eagleton gave the refutation that it may be common to acknowledge revolutions as a brutal thing glutted with violence, whereas see to social reform as a civilized cause brimming with holy hue, however, it is not the real case all the time in reality. The United States civil rights movement, for example, named as social reform, yet involves death, riot and brutal repression. Actually, "in the colonial-dominated Latin America of the 18th and 19th centuries, every attempt at liberal reform sparked off violent social conflict" (Eagleton, 2011: 193). Some revolution, by contrast, has been relatively peaceful, just like velvet. "Not many people died in the Dublin uprising of 1916, which was to result in partial independence for Ireland. Surprisingly little blood was split in the Bolshevik revolution of 1917" (P194). Whereas, it is no doubting the fact that right after the Bolshevik wrested political power, brutal civil war ensued, however the real reason is never the defects imbued with Marxism itself but the brutal attack by national right-wing forces and foreign invaders towards the new order of Communism as the White Movement. "It is no clarifying the exact reason leading to bloody revolution of Marxism (Huang Shiquan, 2011: 71)". Marx only regards revolution as a method instead of the so-called ultimate end. What is more, even Marx himself admit that some revolutions have to last even hundreds of years which can never be solved simply by brutal turmoil.

The unique logic specialty Eagleton applied in this section is the giving the counter-examples, getting rid of the inherent thinking yoke about revolution and social reform. What is more, the author listed other important elements which may divert the masses' ability in touching the nucleus of true causes contributing to the brutal revolution around Marxism.

b) Defending Human value in Humanity

In this dimension, Eagleton divides humanity into two sectors, spiritual world and human nature, towards which exist fallacies respectively.

i. *Misreading spiritual world views of Marxism*

In terms of spiritual world, many people hold that Marx believed that nothing exists but matter. And "he had no interest in the spiritual aspects of humanity, and saw human consciousness as just a reflex of the material world." What is more, "he was brutally dismissive of religion, and regarded morality simply as a question of the end justifying the means." And "there is an obvious route from this dreary, soulless vision of

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humanity to the atrocities of Stalin and other disciples of Marx."(Eagleton, 2011: 142)

What the world is made of, material? Or spirit? Discussions like that never draw Marx's attention, considering ignorant of which, he is more of a romantic thinker than a cold theorist. In contrast, the fallacies folks hold towards Marx above is just what the materialism philosophers advocate in Enlightenment Movement of 18th century, placing human beings into a passive state, which are regarded as the pure ideology form by Marx. And Marx never agreed with that kind of things, instead, he put great emphasis on the autonomy of humanity, imbued with democratic hue. In that sense, Marx is more of an anti-philosopher than a philosopher in that he question ideas in this own ideas, and although he managed to maintain rational himself, he never looked upon reason as the ultimate end the world developed towards. What is more, Marx holds that our thinking is formed with the transformation of our world, which is the requirement of our body needs. It is the phenomena Marx described as dissimilation that if theorists only regard reality as a thing of nature, unexplainable quality and independence of self-movement, and are totally unaware of the fact that reality is the results of the hands of human beings. Thus, Marx hold that our ideal thinking is closely related to the material life, in contrast to which some idealism philosophers are ignorant, the relationship between material and spiritual world, totally compatible with Marx's belief. That is why, when thinker like Locke and Hume research from our senses, Marx probe towards where our senses themselves are from. Only if probing into the actual action form, can it be avoided trapped into dualism in philosophy? In some sense, human beings are the object of material world, partly belonging to nature and partly belonging to history, and meantime they are the reflection of human's consciousness.

In this section, what the author applied most is the comparison, through which the author gave a clearer picture about the theory of Marxism to readers. By comparing Marx with the materialism philosophers in Enlightenment Movement of 18th century, the author clarifies which the targets the masses hold about Marxism aim at in reality. By comparing Marx with philosophers like Locke and Hume, Eagleton put the emphasis that actually Marx never separated material from spiritual world.

ii. *Two misunderstandings towards human nature opinions of Marxism*

The book lists two main fallacies of Marxism towards human nature, the first is about overlooking human nature and the second is about dreaming of a kind of perfect human nature, which can never be realized in reality. The author has a detailed argument against these two fallacies respectively.

In terms of the first misreading, Marx gave the background information at first and moved towards the targeted points gradually, like peeling the onions. To start with, the author accentuate that the greatness of Marx never lies in those brand-new concepts he created, such as communism and social class. Moreover, the essence of the theory of Marxism, the determination of economic basis towards superclass and the development of production mode, are not invented by Marx as well. Then the author have a clarification that class struggle, as a vital factor in the theory of Marxism, does not necessarily means that all the social history is made of class struggle, but class struggle plays a fundamental role in the whole social history. The unique feature of Marxism is the combination of class struggle and production mode, contributing to a brand-new view of history. In the view of Marx, the production power will develop, but may not be necessarily booming all the time, sometimes may stagger as well. Only if the productivity forces of the former class boomed to a certain level, can it be possible for a new social class to take over the relay baton in the history stage. Even though Marx held that material treasures may corrode our morality, he does not split material with morality. Because in his view, it is a part in developing production forces to bring the human creativity into full play, which is the exact reflection of human value.

In terms of the second fallacy, some people may believe that "Marxism is a dream of utopia. It believes in the possibility of a perfect society, without hardship, suffering, violence or conflict. Under communism there will be no rivalry, selfishness, possessiveness, competition or inequality." And obviously, "this astonishingly naive vision springs from a credulous faith in human nature. Human viciousness is simply set aside (P78)". In a word, can the communism society be realized in the future?

The nucleus of this topic lies in the understanding of Marx's view towards future. To start with, Eagleton demonstrates that actually "he does not show much interest in the future at all, and it is a notorious fact about his work that he has very little to say in detail about what a socialist or communist society would look like"(Eagleton, 2011: 79). Just as the Jews were traditionally forbidden to foretell the future, which can be seen in the Bible where the great saints never tries to foresee the future but criticize folks' degradation, greed for fortunes or lust for power and warn them, so Marx the secular Jew is mostly silent on what might lie ahead. Marx realized that it is the real action instead of the dreamy blueprint that benefits the realization of political tasks. "The point for Marx is not to dream of an ideal future, but to resolve the contradictions in the present which prevent a better future from coming about. When this has been achieved, there will be no more need for people like himself" and "The future, then,

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is not just to be tacked on to the present, any more than adolescence is just tacked on to childhood."(Eagleton, 2011: 86) That demonstrates the importance for us to make a step in changing the world for a certain purpose instead of waiting negatively, if not trying to predict the future. And that is why, Marx regarded socialism as a decisive break with the present.

"A Utopian thinker might exhort us to rise above these conflicts in the name of love and fellowship, Marx himself takes a very different line. He does indeed believe in love and fellowship, but he does not think they will be achieved by some phony harmony."(Eagleton, 2011: 92)

Thus, in a word, Marx is skeptical of high-minded moralism and wary of idealism, which provides a further proof that the argument masses hold in the beginning is the pseudo-proposition. What is more, the assertions that Marxism dreams foolishly of a future in which everyone will be comradely and cooperatively all lack the solid support from Marx's works.

However, on the other hand, Marx did notice some virtues in humanity, which makes it possible to realize Marxism with the concerted effort from global cooperation, the just way of achieving Marxism in his opinion.

c) In Economy dimension

Many people hold the belief that "Marxism reduces everything to economics. It is a form of economic determinism"(Eagleton, 2011: 121). That is to say, "the true complexity of human affairs is passed over for a monochrome vision of history. In his obsession with economics, Marx was simply an inverted image of the capitalist system he opposed. His thought is at odds with the pluralist outlook of modern societies, conscious as they are that the varied range of historical experience cannot be crammed into a single rigid framework" (Eagleton, 2011: 121).

There is no doubting the fact that almost all phenomena in history have some associations with economy, which Marx certainly agrees with. Without material production, there could never be the civilization. However, it is never Marx's real meaning to ignore other elements in determining the flowing of history, but the absolute resolution in realizing the fundamental role of economy plays in human history. There exist the amazing underlying laws beneath human history all the time, such as exploitation, riots etc, based on which Marx regard history as a not-that-colorful pattern masses may not realize, which is also the essence of Marxism theory in economy-determination theory.

In addition to Marxist economics, there is another famous economical doctrine, principles of western economics, which received excellent reviews. Thus, it is really meaningful to compare these two famous economics doctrines. The essence of western economics theory is the ten principles of economics, among which inset the three dimensions: individuals in decision-making, mutual dealing of each other's and the proper operation of the whole economy.(Mankiw, 2010: 2) In the first dimension, it demonstrates about all kinds of costs and possible reasons and incentives that may prompt people to make different decisions. The core in this section, for my money, is the subjective initiative of individuals, the rational men. However, the emphasis of subjective initiative among individuals by Marx is never insufficient enough but always misread by the masses just as discussed above. Although Marx's theory about individuals pales immediately compared with the ones like Benthamism imbued with the maximum utilities among individuals, it shed great light on the creative initiative of masses, which is of vital importance to the booming of the whole economy. "Marxism's role is also digging out the utmost potential from individuals" (Guo Taihui, 2009: 16), which, in my opinion, certainly involves the business talents. In terms of the second section, mutual dealing, actually, there are two sub-dimensions -- free market and government regulation, which are in the parallel structure. However, it is so likely for us to concentrate inclusively on the "invisible hand" put forward by Adams when talking about economics essentials in western world. That is to say, the government regulations and controls emphasized by Marxism are not compatible with the roots of western economics essentials in reality. What is more, when reviewing the results, free market has transformed the Great Britain into a powerful industrialized nation, so do regulations and controls to the Soviet Union. Moreover, as the introduction of welfare system in western world, people gradually begin to realize the limit of free-market-dominated system and voice for macro-regulations for economy nowadays is getting clearer than ever. Thus, the statement that Marxism economics should be placed to the museum lacks solid evidence. In terms of the third dimension, the whole operation of economy, the ten principles put emphasize on the fiscal and monetary policies of the government and the proper distribution of labor power, including the dealing with inflation, unemployment rate and proper balancing the distribution of labor power. In Marxism economics, there are even more words than the ten principles in terms of labor power. However, in terms of solid policies, the two theories are in the different angles: economics essentials laid its foundation on the solid contemporary economical figures, whereas Marxism shed more light on the deduction of economical regular patterns in history, but it is no judging which one is superior to the other, because they are totally bred on different values.

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IV. Marxism: a System Vibrant with Energy in Guarding Human Value Forever

"All the most interesting radical movements of the past four decades have sprung up from outside Marxism, such as Feminism, environmentalism, gay and ethnic politics, animal rights, anti-globalization, the peace movement: these have now taken over from an antiquated commitment to class struggle, and represent new forms of political activism which have left Marxism well behind."(Eagleton, 2011: 225)

To start with, Eagleton states the fact that Capitalism is no way to die out in a short period, and meantime, the trend of anticapitalism shows no signs in ebbing away. And that is why, Marxism, as one of the famous anticapitalism theories is no way to go into the museum in no time. Marx neglected the gender differences, in other words gender-blind, in almost all his works, giving a strong support to Feminism Movement. Besides Feminism, Marxism provided the indispensable starting point for most of the great first-generation theorists of the anticolonial wars. "In the 1920s and 1930s, practically the only men and women to be found preaching racial equality were communists. Most African nationalism after the Second World War, from Nkrumah and Fanon onwards, relied on some version of Marxism or socialism. Most communist parties in Asia incorporated nationalism into their agendas."(Wang Jie, 2008: 82) what needs to be stressed is that Marx's personal standing on the issue of colonialization is not that clear, which may incur some critics from masses. However, the real reason is never because of Marx's attempt to compromise with Capitalism and being eager to view the brutal scene of colonialization, but the consideration that through colonialization modernized factors can be spread to those uncivilized areas which provides the material foundation for Marxism realization.

There is another factor of Marxism Eagleton fails to mention in this book about the applicability of Marxism in the long term that the theory of Marxism is never static but vibrant with energy. "Society has involved to a certain period in which traditional Marxism has also involved correspondingly, making it a golden rule."(Yi Xingxia, 2001: 61) It is no doubting the fact there is never a forever-correct physics law not only because of the development of technology but the stability of almost all the physical laws themselves. However, it is never the case with the theory of Marxism, which, as Ernest Mandel remarked, is always open, always critical, and always self-critical. Throughout the history since the appearance of Marxism, it has sprung into various manifestations in different places and different time from their original matrix, classical Marxism, which denotes the collection of social and economical and political theories expounded by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. However, to the classical Marxism, some Marxists have criticised the academic institutionalization of Marxism for being too shallow and detached from political action. For instance, Zimbabwean Trotskyist Alex Callinicos, himself a professional academic, stated that "Its practitioners remind one of Narcissus, who in the Greek legend fell in love with his own reflection... Sometimes it is necessary to devote time to clarifying and developing the concepts that we use, but indeed for Western Marxists this has become an end in itself. The result is a body of writings incomprehensible to all but a tiny minority of highly qualified scholars" (Alex, 2010: 68). Actually, Marxism has various forms afterwards, such as Marxism-Leninism, Post-Stalin Moscow-aligned communism, Eurocommunism, anti-revisionism, Maoism etc. All of those Marxism has been revised for certain historical features, which fully reflects the vibrant energy fitting the historical trends.

Nowadays, a new branch of Marxism, known as Ecological Marxism, is growing prevalent in the arena of academics around the global, catering to the actual awkward situation of natural resources. However, it is never a brand-new concept totally divorced from classical Marxism created by Marx. In the works such as Capital, Marx discussed the natural ecological environment is the natural basis of human material production activity from the angle of economics. The first point Marx made of nature is that nature is a natural basis and precondition for the labor of human being. Just as pointed in his work that "on the one hand, nature provides living materials for labor in such a scene, namely, there is no labor without labor objects; on the other hand, nature provides means of subsistence in a narrower sense, namely meet workers' body demand for existence". This is because "workers realize their labor, and spread their productivity, and produce output and produce themselves" in nature. Engels also pointed out: "nature provides material to physical labor, while works turns material into wealth". It is obviously that both Marx and Engels affirmed firstly nature is the fundamental premise and precondition of human being's survival and material production activity. What is more, Marx also held that division of society and cooperation in the social production and economic development, even the life style of human being existence, rely on nature, and different nature bases shape different economic structures. "If not the foresight imbued with Marxism towards ecological issues, how can it survive the changeable world nowadays."(Zhao When, 2011: 55)

And thus, based on the ecological indicators of the classical theories of Marxism, the modern Ecological Marxism emerged as the time requires. When human beings encountered with survival crisis including environmental and ecological issues, it is really beneficial to take the exploration by combining ecology with Marxism, imbued with the actual practical meaning.

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Ecological Marxism, as a branch of Marxism in the US, is put forward by social ecologist and racial plutonomist James O'Connor in his recent masterpiece *natural reason -- ecology Marxism research*. In the view of Ecological Marxists, Capitalists regard nature as a water faucet and sewage pool at the same time, which is never compatible with the sustainable development idea nowadays? Thus, just as O'Connor pointed out, the rhythm of nature itself and the cycle is fundamentally different from the rhythm of the capital operation and cycle. And they realized the anti-ecological essence of Capitalism, which enable them to bestow a new ecological rule into Ecological Marxism, which enables the theory to fit well with current world. And just as discussed above, Marxism will still be vibrant with energy with its proponents' renewal constantly and be a charming doctrine for the scholars around the globe forever.

V. Conclusion

In a word, Marxism, seemingly a piece of cliche in some way will never perish, considering its strong vitality. And the book *Why Marx was Right* will give out its forever charming for Marxism researchers as well as us college students.

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人类价值的捍卫者：还原一个真实的马克思

闫琛

内容摘要：马克思主义长久以来一直被认为藐视人的价值，但是事实真的如此吗？作为西方知名的马克思主义文学批判理论家伊克尔顿在其著作《为什么马克思是对的》一书中，针对当今甚嚣尘上的十个关于马克思主义的悖论进行了批驳。不难发现，虽然十个悖论之间的逻辑联系性有限，但是伊格尔顿教授以马克思主义对人的价值的捍卫为根本出发点，并在政治、人文以及经济领域对悖论进行一一回驳。而且，笔者认为，即便是在后资本主义时代，马克思主义以其强大的生命力不断焕发着新的活力，成为人类价值更坚实的捍卫者，为全世界不断注入正能量。

关键词：马克思主义；伊格尔顿；人的价值；未来适用性

作者简介：闫琛，中国政法大学讲师。研究方向：西方文化、伊格尔顿文化理论研究

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