

Defender of Human Value: Reviving a Real Marx

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Abstract

Marxism was unfairly treated as a piece of cliché and a social system with contempt of human value. However, is it really the case? Terry Eagleton, one of the leading figures of western Marxist literary critique of all time, clarifies ten prevailing misreading towards Marxism in his book *Why Marx Was Right*. Various are the fallacies, we can clearly sense the theoretical foundation of Eagleton as human-value-oriented Marxism towards the ten misreads. Starting from this, he progressed further argument in terms of politics, humanity and economics, which clarifies a real Marx and the real Marxism. What is more, is nowadays full of changes, Marxism, a system vibrant with energy, is bound to nurture a positive mind, a positive society and a positive world.

Index terms— marxism, eagleton, human value, future applicability.

1 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.

2 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 repudiate 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 data 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

43 as well. Such refutation is actually invalid in the strict sense. However, Eagleton never satisfied by resting on
44 such refutation. It is obvious in the first example that premise refers to the fact that almost all the nations that
45 choose Marxism inclined to break out the famines, and statement is judgment that Marxism is imbued with the
46 defects of material deprivation. To start with, Eagleton question the validity of premise by stating that it is never
47 Marx's intetion to implement Marxism in the nations lacking in material foundation, thus it is not the Marxism
48 itself to blame. Then, he cut off the logic bridge by stating that those so-called Marxism enforced in many
49 socialist countries is not the real one in reality. He explained that in the whole book by clarifying the misreading
50 of Marxism. "We have to admit that the critical logic of Eagleton lacks coherence despite of its profound social
51 meaning in it." ??Fang Yu, 2006: 5) That is to say, the refutation is not that obvious, even some obscure in some
52 way in that the whole underlying critical logic process is revealed to readers gradually throughout the whole
53 book.

54 3 III. Reviving a Real Marx: Defender of Human Value

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

58 4 a) In Political section

59 In terms of political section in this book, Eagleton mainly refutes two mainstream fallacies on Marxism. The
60 first is of its obsession with class struggle; the second concerns advocating violent political action. On these two
61 issues, Eagleton argues in details respectively. However, be his argument unassailable as appears, there is still
62 some underlying ambiguity or contradiction, which is never that convincing.

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

67 Eagleton refutes the opinions as follows. To start with, he clarifies the value assessment of class position,
68 having nothing to do with discrimination, which gives the support that the theory of eliminating a class or
69 another by Marxism is only sheer nonsense. What is more, the doctrine that working class has perished lacks
70 solid evidence, considering the structure of class has evolved all the time. Actually, the working class, the concept
71 of which has greater extension including salesmen and intellectuals, and nowadays is stronger than ever with the
72 booming of the third world. However, the extension of the concept of working class is maybe Eagleton's own
73 opinion which deserves further demonstration. Marx did not object to capitalism blindly just like drugs or
74 smoking, but point out the merits of it as well, one of which capitalism bestowed to the world is the working
75 class, stepping to the historical stage in accordance with the interests of bourgeois but growing to an awesome
76 social power competent enough of replacing the status of bourgeois, which is also imbued with ironic colors in
77 the conception of history from Marxism. Marx shed great light on working class not because of the unique merits
78 they share that enable them to shoulder the history responsibility, but the particular position they stand of the
79 whole productivity model providing them a clear picture of the whole mechanism as well as the technical and
80 political visions towards getting rid of the existent yoke for implementing the actual interests to individuals, as
81 the humankind liberation transmitter. , By analyzing the underlying critical logic beneath words, it is possible
82 to clarify the thoughts of Eagleton on Marxism. To start with, he soothed the discrimination hue towards class
83 position as well as class struggle. However, he also emphasized that class struggle does not equalize eliminating
84 bourgeois. Eagleton applied his dialectical thinking to viewing Capitalism, providing history a lot of precious
85 fruits, one of which is the working class, growing to shoulder the historical responsibility gradually. And last,
86 Eagleton explained the suitability of practical situation for working class to finish its historical mission.

87 ii. Fallacy of violent revolution imbued with Marxism Some anti-Marxists hold that Marxists "reject a sensible
88 course of moderate, piecemeal reform and opt instead for the bloodstained chaos of revolution" ??Eagleton, 2011:
89 193), and what is more "this is one of several senses in which Marxism and democracy are at daggers drawn"
90 ??Eagleton, 2011: 193)\\On that point, Eagleton gave the refutation that it may be common to acknowledge
91 revolutions as a brutal thing glutted with violence, whereas see to social reform as a civilized cause brimming
92 with holy hue, however, it is not the real case all the time in reality. The United States civil rights movement,
93 for example, named as social reform, yet involves death, riot and brutal repression. Actually, "in the colonial-
94 dominated Latin America of the 18th and 19th centuries, every attempt at liberal reform sparked off violent
95 social conflict" ??Eagleton, 2011: 193). Some revolution, by contrast, has been relatively peaceful, just like
96 velvet. "Not many people died in the Dublin uprising of 1916, which was to result in partial independence for
97 Ireland. Surprisingly little blood was split in the Bolshevik revolution of 1917" (P194). Whereas, it is no doubting
98 the fact that right after the Bolshevik wrested political power, brutal civil war ensued, however the real reason
99 is never the defects imbued with Marxism itself but the brutal attack by national right-wing forces and foreign
100 invaders towards the new order of Communism as the White Movement. "It is no clarifying the exact reason
101 leading to bloody revolution of Marxism (Huang Shiquan, 2011: 71)". Marx only regards revolution as a method

102 instead of the so-called ultimate end. What is more, even Marx himself admit that some revolutions have to last
103 even hundreds of years which can never be solved simply by brutal turmoil.

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

108 5 b) Defending Human value in Humanity

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

111 6 i. Misreading spiritual world views of Marxism

112 In terms of spiritual world, many people hold that Marx believed that nothing exists but matter. And "he had
113 no interest in the spiritual aspects of humanity, and saw human consciousness as just a reflex of the material
114 world." What is more, "he was brutally dismissive of religion, and regarded morality simply as a question of the
115 end justifying the means." And "there is an obvious route from this dreary, soulless vision of humanity to the
116 atrocities of Stalin and other disciples of Marx." (Eagleton, 2011: 142) What the world is made of, material? Or
117 spirit? Discussions like that never draw Marx's attention, considering ignorant of which, he is more of a romantic
118 thinker than a cold theorist. In contrast, the fallacies folks hold towards Marx above is just what the materialism
119 philosophers advocate in Enlightenment Movement of 18th century, placing human beings into a passive state,
120 which are regarded as the pure ideology form by Marx. And Marx never agreed with that kind of things, instead,
121 he put great emphasis on the autonomy of humanity, imbued with democratic hue. In that sense, Marx is more
122 of an anti-philosopher than a philosopher in that he question ideas in this own ideas, and although he managed to
123 maintain rational himself, he never looked upon reason as the ultimate end the world developed towards. What
124 is more, Marx holds that our thinking is formed with the transformation of our world, which is the requirement
125 of our body needs. It is the phenomena Marx described as dissimilation that if theorists only regard reality
126 as a thing of nature, unexplainable quality and independence of selfmovement, and are totally unaware of the
127 fact that reality is the results of the hands of human beings. Thus, Marx hold that our ideal thinking is closely
128 related to the material life, in contrast to which some idealism philosophers are ignorant, the relationship between
129 material and spiritual world, totally compatible with Marx's belief. That is why, when thinker like Locke and
130 Hume research from our senses, Marx probe towards where our senses themselves are from. Only if probing into
131 the actual action form, can it be avoided trapped into dualism in philosophy? In some sense, human beings are
132 the object of material world, partly belonging to nature and partly belonging to history, and meantime they are
133 the reflection of human's consciousness.

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

139 ii. Two misunderstandings towards human nature opinions of Marxism

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

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

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

162 The nucleus of this topic lies in the understanding of Marx's view towards future. To start with, Eagleton
163 demonstrates that actually "he does not show much interest in the future at all, and it is a notorious fact about
164 his work that he has very little to say in detail about what a socialist or communist society would look like"
165 ??Eagleton, 2011: 79). Just as the Jews were traditionally forbidden to foretell the future, which can be seen
166 in the Bible where the great saints never tries to foresee the future but criticize folks' degradation, greed for
167 fortunes or lust for power and warn them, so Marx the secular Jew is mostly silent on what might lie ahead.
168 Marx realized that it is the real action instead of the dreamy blueprint that benefits the realization of political
169 tasks. "The point for Marx is not to dream of an ideal future, but to resolve the contradictions in the present
170 which prevent a better future from coming about. When this has been achieved, there will be no more need for
171 people like himself" and "The future, then, is not just to be tacked on to the present, any more than adolescence
172 is just tacked on to childhood." (Eagleton, 2011: 86) That demonstrates the importance for us to make a step in
173 changing the world for a certain purpose instead of waiting negatively, if not trying to predict the future. And
174 that is why, Marx regarded socialism as a decisive break with the present.

175 "A Utopian thinker might exhort us to rise above these conflicts in the name of love and fellowship, Marx
176 himself takes a very different line. He does indeed believe in love and fellowship, but he does not think they will
177 be achieved by some phony harmony." ??Eagleton, 2011: 92) Thus, in a word, Marx is skeptical of highminded
178 moralism and wary of idealism, which provides a further proof that the argument masses hold in the beginning
179 is the pseudo-proposition. What is more, the assertions that Marxism dreams foolishly of a future in which
180 everyone will be comrades and cooperatively all lack the solid support from Marx's works.

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

183 7 c) In Economy dimension

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

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

197 In addition to Marxist economics, there is another famous economical doctrine, principles of western economics,
198 which received excellent reviews. Thus, it is really meaningful to compare these two famous economics doctrines.
199 The essence of western economics theory is the ten principles of economics, among which inset the three
200 dimensions: individuals in decision-making, mutual dealing of each other's and the proper operation of the
201 whole economy.(Mankiw, 2010: 2) In the first dimension, it demonstrates about all kinds of costs and possible
202 reasons and incentives that may prompt people to make different decisions. The core in this section, for my
203 money, is the subjective initiative of individuals, the rational men. However, the emphasis of subjective initiative
204 among individuals by Marx is never insufficient enough but always misread by the masses just as discussed
205 above. Although Marx's theory about individuals pales immediately compared with the ones like Benthamism
206 imbued with the maximum utilities among individuals, it shed great light on the creative initiative of masses,
207 which is of vital importance to the booming of the whole economy. "Marxism's role is also digging out the
208 utmost potential from individuals" (Guo Taihui, 2009: 16), which, in my opinion, certainly involves the business
209 talents. In terms of the second section, mutual dealing, actually, there are two sub-dimensions –free market
210 and government regulation, which are in the parallel structure. However, it is so likely for us to concentrate
211 inclusively on the "invisible hand" put forward by Adams when talking about economics essentials in western
212 world. That is to say, the government regulations and controls emphasized by Marxism are not compatible with
213 the roots of western economics essentials in reality. What is more, when reviewing the results, free market has
214 transformed the Great Britain into a powerful industrialized nation, so do regulations and controls to the Soviet
215 Union. Moreover, as the introduction of welfare system in western world, people gradually begin to realize the
216 limit of free-market-dominated system and voice for macro-regulations for economy nowadays is getting clearer
217 than ever. Thus, the statement that Marxism economics should be placed to the museum lacks solid evidence.
218 In terms of the third dimension, the whole operation of economy, the ten principles put emphasize on the fiscal
219 and monetary policies of the government and the proper distribution of labor power, including the dealing with
220 inflation, unemployment rate and proper balancing the distribution of labor power. In Marxism economics, there
221 are even more words than the ten principles in terms of labor power. However, in terms of solid policies, the two
222 theories are in the different angles: economics essentials laid its foundation on the solid contemporary economical

223 figures, whereas Marxism shed more light on the deduction of economical regular patterns in history, but it is no
224 judging which one is superior to the other, because they are totally bred on different values.

225 8 IV. Marxism: a System Vibrant with

226 Energy in Guarding Human Value Forever "All the most interesting radical movements of the past four decades
227 have sprung up from outside Marxism, such as Feminism, environmentalism, gay and ethnic politics, animal
228 rights, anti-globalization, the peace movement: these have now taken over from an antiquated commitment to
229 class struggle, and represent new forms of political activism which have left Marxism well behind." ??Eagleton,
230 2011: 225) To start with, Eagleton states the fact that Capitalism is no way to die out in a short period, and
231 meantime, the trend of anticapitalism shows no signs in ebbing away. And that is why, Marxism, as one of the
232 famous anticapitalism theories is no way to go into the museum in no time. Marx neglected the gender differences,
233 in other words gender-blind, in almost all his works, giving a strong support to Feminism Movement. Besides
234 Feminism, Marxism provided the indispensable starting point for most of the great first-generation theorists of
235 the anticolonial wars. "In the 1920s and 1930s, practically the only men and women to be found preaching
236 racial equality were communists. Most African nationalism after the Second World War, from Nkrumah and
237 Fanon onwards, relied on some version of Marxism or socialism. Most communist parties in Asia incorporated
238 nationalism into their agendas." ??Wang Jie, 2008: 82) what needs to be stressed is that Marx's personal standing
239 on the issue of colonialization is not that clear, which may incur some critics from masses. However, the real
240 reason is never because of Marx's attempt to compromise with Capitalism and being eager to view the brutal
241 scene of colonialization, but the consideration that through colonialization modernized factors can be spread to
242 those uncivilized areas which provides the material foundation for Marxism realization. There is another factor
243 of Marxism Eagleton fails to mention in this book about the applicability of Marxism in the long term that the
244 theory of Marxism is never static but vibrant with energy. "Society has involved to a certain period in which
245 traditional Marxism has also involved correspondingly, making it a golden rule."(Yi Xingxia, 2001: 61) It is no
246 doubting the fact there is never a forever-correct physics law not only because of the development of technology
247 but the stability of almost all the physical laws themselves. However, it is never the case with the theory of
248 Marxism, which, as Ernest Mandel remarked, is always open, always critical, and always self-critical. Throughout
249 the history since the appearance of Marxism, it has sprung into various manifestations in different places and
250 different time from their original matrix, classical Marxism, which denotes the collection of social and economical
251 and political theories expounded by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. However, to the classical Marxism, some
252 Marxists have criticised the academic institutionalization of Marxism for being too shallow and detached from
253 political action. For instance, Zimbabwean Trotskyist Alex Callinicos, himself a professional academic, stated
254 that "Its practitioners remind one of Narcissus, who in the Greek legend fell in love with his own reflection...
255 Sometimes it is necessary to devote time to clarifying and developing the concepts that we use, but indeed for
256 Western Marxists this has become an end in itself. The result is a body of writings incomprehensible to all but
257 a tiny minority of highly qualified scholars" (Alex, 2010: 68). Actually, Marxism has various forms afterwards,
258 such as Marxism-Leninism, Post-Stalin Moscow-aligned communism, Eurocommunism, anti-revisionism, Maoism
259 etc. All of those Marxism has been revised for certain historical features, which fully reflects the vibrant energy
260 fitting the historical trends.

261 Nowadays, a new branch of Marxism, known as Ecological Marxism, is growing prevalent in the arena of
262 academics around the global, catering to the actual awkward situation of natural resources. However, it is never
263 a brand-new concept totally divorced from classical Marxism created by ??arx. In the works such as Capital,
264 Marx discussed the natural ecological environment is the natural basis of human material production activity from
265 the angle of economics. The first point Marx made of nature is that nature is a natural basis and precondition for
266 the labor of human being. Just as pointed in his work that "on the one hand, nature provides living materials for
267 labor in such a scene, namely, there is no labor without labor objects; on the other hand, nature provides means
268 of subsistence in a narrower sense, namely meet workers' body demand for existence". This is because "workers
269 realize their labor, and spread their productivity, and produce output and produce themselves" in nature. Engels
270 also pointed out: "nature provides material to physical labor, while works turns material into wealth". It is
271 obviously that both Marx and Engels affirmed firstly nature is the fundamental premise and precondition of
272 human being's survival and material production activity. What is more, Marx also held that division of society
273 and cooperation in the social production and economic development, even the life style of human being existence,
274 rely on nature, and different nature bases shape different economic structures. "If not the foresight imbued with
275 Marxism towards ecological issues, how can it survive the changeable world nowadays." ??Zhao When, 2011: 55)
276 And thus, based on the ecological indicators of the classical theories of Marxism, the modern Ecological Marxism
277 emerged as the time requires. When human beings encountered with survival crisis including environmental and
278 ecological issues, it is really beneficial to take the exploration by combining ecology with Marxism, imbued with
279 the actual practical meaning. is put forward by social ecologist and racial plutonomist James O'Connor in his
280 recent masterpiece natural reason –ecology Marxism research. In the view of Ecological Marxists, Capitalists
281 regard nature as a water faucet and sewage pool at the same time, which is never compatible with the sustainable
282 development idea nowadays? Thus, just as O'Connor pointed out, the rhythm of nature itself and the cycle is
283 fundamentally different from the rhythm of the capital operation and cycle. And they realized the anti-ecological
284 essence of Capitalism, which enable them to bestow a new ecological rule into Ecological Marxism, which enables

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285 the theory to fit well with current world. And just as discussed above, Marxism will still be vibrant with energy
286 with its proponents' renewal constantly and be a charming doctrine for the scholars around the globe forever.
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Figure 1:

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