

James O 'Connor's Ecological Thought and its Practical Enlightenment

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Abstract: James O 'Connor's ecological thought was born in the middle and late 20th century. By using the unique theory of double contradiction and double crisis of capitalism, James O 'Connor revealed the global ecological crisis caused by the development of capitalism, outlined a new model of ecological socialism, and tried to find a feasible path to solve the global ecological crisis. To mitigate the adverse effects of the ecological crisis on the capitalist world. James O 'Connor's ecological thought has been widely discussed by the academic community since it was put forward. Subsequently, many scholars in the field of ecology have analyzed and studied James O 'Connor's thought. Through the organic combination with the current actual situation and practical experience, they began to apply James O 'Connor's ecological thought to the management of ecological problems. The construction of ecological civilization in our country is also developing continuously, and O 'Connor's ecological thought has a very positive enlightening and instructive significance to the construction of ecological civilization in our country.

Keywords: Ecological Socialism; Ecological Crisis; Ecological Civilization Construction.

1. Introduction

With the continuous development of China's economy, the consumption of natural resources is gradually aggravated, and the accompanying pollution is increasingly serious, ecological problems and environmental problems have gradually become the important factors affecting the sustainable green development of our country. How to improve the ecological environment has become an important research topic for China's sustainable development at present. James O 'Connor's ecological thought was born at the end of the last century. By using the unique theory of double contradiction and double crisis of capitalism, he revealed the global ecological crisis caused by the development of capitalism and outlined the model of ecological socialism. It also seeks to change the impact of ecological crisis and hopes to realize the concept of ecological socialism through the green movement. After the initiation of O 'Connor's ecological thought, through the practice of Europe and America in the early 21st century, O 'Connor finally denied the idea that the green movement could transform the capitalist society. Later, many scholars in the field of ecology also studied and learned from O 'Connor's ecological thought, and applied O 'Connor's ecological thought to the management of ecological problems through the combination of the series with the current actual situation and practical experience. It can be used for reference in the construction of ecological civilization and beautiful new China.

2. The Background of James O 'Connor's Ecological Thought

In the middle and late 20th century, the rapid development of science and technology made capitalist countries gain more wealth, and the vast overseas market and cheap natural resources seemed to let capitalists peek into the unlimited development opportunities. Capitalists endlessly plunder resources from nature, and the ecological environment has become more and more fragile in such massive development. The global ecological environment has suffered varying

degrees of destruction, and the survival of human beings has also begun to be threatened.

Whether the relationship between man and nature is harmonious has a non-negligible impact on the long-term sustainable development of human society. However, with the high development of human civilization and the accelerating process of human society modernization, the phenomenon of only pursuing high-speed development while ignoring environmental protection has gradually become normal. By blindly demanding from nature, human beings have broken the delicate balance between human and nature. The emergence of ecological imbalance will inevitably lead to nature's revenge on human beings. The increasingly serious ecological crisis in today's world is the best proof. Human beings gradually woke up in ecological retaliation and gradually began to save themselves. Since the 1950s, the green movement led by western capitalism has been rising. James O 'Connor, as a leading figure in the field of ecological research after the 1990s, carefully studied the ecological thoughts of predecessors, systematically analyzed these thoughts, and deeply studied the emergence and development of environmental problems at that time. Put forward his own ecological thought. James O 'Connor found that the development of the green movement so far, but still failed to stop the development trend of capitalist globalization, nor failed to solve the increasingly serious ecological problems, more ridiculous is that James O 'Connor after analysis concluded: The participants of these movements have not found the root cause of the problem, in the final analysis, the capitalist system itself has caused this series of ecological problems, "if we do not know the essence of this system, we cannot understand why this system has harmed the environmental system to such a degree that it has threatened our continued development." [1]

3. The Main Content of James O 'Connor's Ecological Thought

James O 'Connor agrees with the dialectical unity of man and nature. He believes that man is a part of nature, and in the

process of utilizing and transforming nature, man should actively seek ways of harmonious symbiosis between man and nature. James O 'Connor believed that the essential problems of the capitalist system itself led to the ecological crisis, and at the same time believed that the predecessors' criticism of capitalism had certain limitations. While deeply studying and discussing the contradictions between capitalist productive forces and production relations, he creatively added the factor of production conditions and put forward his "second contradiction theory of capitalism". The double contradiction of capitalism will inevitably lead to the double crisis of capitalism, and then how to resolve this double crisis, James O 'Connor tries to solve the problem by constructing ecological socialism.

In James O 'Connor's research on the problem of production distribution in capitalist society, the relationship between natural resources and people in capitalist society is the first to be studied. James O 'Connor's ecological thought holds that the best relationship between man and nature should be mutual promotion and cooperation, and at the same time, human labor production and cultural cohesion in nature are regarded as an organic whole. After studying the ecological view of James O 'Connor, it is not difficult to find that man is only one of the elements of the ecosystem and belongs to a part of nature. In the process of human reproduction and development, he is also affected by natural environmental factors. Therefore, even if human beings have the ability to transform nature through their own practical activities, since human beings are also a part of nature, in the process of transforming nature, human beings should uphold the objective development law of caring for and respecting nature, that is, learn to live in harmony with nature, which can not only maintain a good ecological environment, but also enable human society to achieve rapid development. Only this mutually beneficial and win-win relationship is what man and nature should have. Human beings have strong subjective initiative, so they have the motivation and ability to transform nature. In the process of the evolution of human civilization, human beings rely on and use their own subjective initiative to sustainably overcome nature and create a large number of miracles. In order to realize the ultimate goal of harmonious coexistence between man and nature, we must make use of the subjective initiative and creativity of good people, and carry out reasonable transformation of man and the external world within a reasonable range. Only after solving the interests and contradictions between good people, nature and society can we finally realize harmonious coexistence between man and nature.

In the process of analyzing the capitalist economic crisis, James O 'Connor believes that there are two prominent contradictions in the capitalist system: "productive forces and production relations", "capitalist productive forces, production relations and the finiteness of capitalist production conditions". The former is the first type of contradiction, while the latter is defined as the second type of contradiction. The first type of contradiction is the economic crisis caused by insufficient consumption, which leads to overproduction, while the second type of contradiction is the economic crisis caused by the plundering of natural resources caused by insufficient production, so the ecological crisis and economic crisis of capitalism coexist in capitalist society. According to James O 'Connor, the first crisis of capitalism can be simply summarized as: "The first crisis lies within the capitalist system, because the connotation of capitalist production is the

production of surplus productive forces, that is, the process of exploitation of labor." [2] This contradiction has nothing to do with the conditions of production in the production process, but a more comprehensive and professional analysis is needed of the second contradiction of capitalism, which is rooted in the ruthless plunder of nature for the greater good. Plundering natural resources just to meet their own infrastructure needs. It is impossible to solve the ecological problem by considering only the crisis caused by the first contradiction, because it does not touch on the ultimate malpractice of the capitalist system. The second crisis reveals all the self-destructive power of the capitalist system itself, so only by combining the second contradiction can capitalism be analyzed most thoroughly and comprehensively, and then the final way to solve the ecological problem can be found.

In combination with the above research results, James O 'Connor pointed out in his book *The Reasons for Nature* that socialism and ecology should be combined to design a development model of ecological socialism and solve the ecological crisis completely. James O 'Connor believes that ecological socialism, as the ultimate way to solve ecological problems, is not a utopian fantasy, but has a strong theoretical basis and practical basis, and is a new social system that integrates ecological thoughts into social management concepts. First of all, James O 'Connor advocated democratic autonomy, allowing the grassroots to participate extensively in social management, so that various resources can get rid of the status quo controlled by the upper class to achieve true democracy. Secondly, in terms of culture, ecological culture should be established, and a set of ecological civilization system should be constructed to reverse various kinds of alienation phenomena caused by capitalism. In addition, James O 'Connor believes that technology should not exist independently of the social environment, but should be subject to constraints from all aspects of society and serve as a force to solve alienation. Finally, ecological socialism opposes power doctrine, advocates friendly exchanges and cooperation among countries, and finally realizes social harmony through equal exchanges between countries.

4. The Practical Enlightenment of James O 'Connor's Ecological Thought

James O 'Connor's ecological thought is the ecological value of the new era, which mainly reflects the problem of how to realize the harmonious development of man and nature. The sustainable and healthy development of socialism in China cannot be achieved without the support of a sound ecological environment. At the same time, as a socialist country, the core essence of development is to put the interests of the people first. The fundamental task of China is to liberate and develop the productive forces, completely eliminate exploitation and polarization, and ultimately achieve common prosperity. James O 'Connor's conception of ecological socialism is conducive to combining ecological development with socialist cause, comprehensively implementing the concept of people-oriented and natural environmental protection, and promoting the development and progress of ecological civilization construction in our country.

4.1. Cultivate Ecological Thinking that Respects Nature

In the course of his research, James O 'Connor gradually understood that in order to solve the ecological crisis in today's world, the first thing to be done is to restore the natural standard, restore the essential attributes of nature, and restore the independent operation and ultimate purpose of nature. James O 'Connor emphasizes that in the process of human transformation of nature, nature itself is also changing and reconstructing, that is, nature is not a passive existence in the dualistic vision, on the contrary, nature has its own operating laws, and for human beings, nature is a dynamic partner. In addition, James O 'Connor also stressed that in addition to the purpose and significance of human beings, natural existence has its own purpose and significance. It is precisely because of the lack of the thinking concept of "the autonomy and ultimate purpose of nature" that traditional historical materialism regards nature as a resource and the object of domestication that can be obtained at will by human production and life, so that the purpose of natural existence is always defined from human itself, and it is precisely because of this that the unprecedented critical ecological crisis that the world is facing today. Therefore, this requires us to establish an ecological concept of respecting nature, which is also the thinking mode of learning to respect nature and live in harmony with nature advocated by James O 'Connor. This kind of ecological thinking emphasizes the protection and respect of nature, and takes the harmony between human and nature as the core value. This kind of thinking mode sees the value of both human and nature. Both human beings as subjects and nature as subjects; Concerned with both human beings and nature; It not only protects the interests of human beings, but also protects the interests of nature. James O 'Connor's new way of thinking about the relationship between man and nature and society is of great reference significance to the construction of ecological civilization in our country. It also suggests that we should pay attention to cultivating people's ecological thinking and use ecological thinking to guide the construction of ecological civilization in the future.

4.2. Actively Advocate Green Consumption

James O 'Connor sees the critical significance of use value and consumption in the relationship between man and nature, and he points out that use value and concrete labor in capitalist society are subordinate to exchange value and abstract labor under the drive of profit. The use value is increasingly included in the exchange value, which will inevitably lead to the alienation of labor and consumption of workers. In James O 'Connor's view, in order to build a green ecological society, we must fundamentally reverse this situation, not only pay attention to use value, make exchange value subordinate to use value, but also strive to realize the transformation from "distributive justice" to "productive justice". In short, people realize themselves in labor rather than consumption, feel happy and satisfied in the pursuit of qualitative improvement rather than quantitative accumulation, so as to minimize needs and minimize the consumption of natural resources. James O 'Connor believes that it is necessary to cultivate and establish a healthy consumption concept.

Since the reform and opening up, China has made remarkable achievements, especially the miraculous speed of development that amazes the world. However, with the in-depth development of reform and opening up and the

unprecedented improvement of consumption level, some consumption concepts that have existed for a long time in Western countries and are being gradually abandoned have been wildly sought after in China, among which the most obvious is the respect for luxury goods. This kind of large and irrational consumption needs to rely on the great consumption of material materials to complete, which makes a lot of products that still have the use value are abandoned and wasted, which makes social wealth and resources are greatly wasted at the same time, unnecessary garbage generated due to waste also seriously polluted the ecological environment, at this time, it is necessary to establish a green and rational consumption concept. Follow the fundamental principle of people-oriented, abandon the traditional consumption concept, based on the world situation, national conditions, from the actual situation, explore and construct ecological consumption concept conducive to human, social and natural development, in order to pursue the further improvement and development of harmonious coexistence between man and nature.

4.3. Strengthen Friendly International Exchanges and Cooperation

James O 'Connor believes that the development of capitalist countries is not sustainable, capitalists are always immersed in the pursuit of one-sided interests and ignore the protection of the ecological environment, and the economic crisis and ecological crisis suffered by capitalist countries today are the consequences of their own eating. China's own per capita resource share is low, in the process of seeking its own development should pay more attention to the sustainability of development, take the road of circular economy, in order to avoid pollution and waste caused by more serious resource shortage. From the concept of ecological socialism put forward by James O 'Connor, we can see that he advocates the combination of social economy and ecological environment protection in order to seek a more stable social development, which has important enlightening significance for our country to adhere to the path of sustainable development.

The ecological environment problem is not only a national problem, but an international problem. Although the status quo of the ecological environment varies from country to country, each country has its own uniqueness. Strengthening international friendly exchanges and cooperation will help mankind better cope with ecological problems. In his works, James O 'Connor has repeatedly emphasized the importance of cooperation in improving ecology. In his view, it is far from enough to rely only on small-scale forces for most ecological problems, and the fundamental way to completely solve ecological problems is to cooperate within and among countries. James O 'Connor's ecological thought argues that social movements need democratic forces formed by organic combination, and then form ecological protection forces on a global scale. Taking this as a reference, China should more actively participate in international conferences on ecological protection, strengthen exchanges and cooperation with other countries, learn from the operational ecological protection measures of other countries while protecting its own ecological environment, take the initiative to shoulder the responsibility of a major country, and work together with other countries to protect the ecological environment. In the future, China still needs to strengthen cooperation with other countries on ecological protection, learn from each other's

experience, and explore new development models of circular economy to achieve sustainable and healthy development of our society.

5. Summary

James O'Connor's ecological thought provides reference value for solving the global ecological crisis. However, after careful analysis of his main research results, it can be found that James O'Connor did not see the importance of nature and culture in the process of studying productivity and production relations, but focused on industrial technology and division of labor, forming a kind of "technological determinism". Therefore, O'Connor's criticism of capitalism is more from the ecological point of view, but ignores the essence of capitalism, which leads to the utopian color of his ecological socialism.

As a developing country, there have been many ecological problems in the process of development, such as: air pollution, water pollution, soil erosion and so on. James O'Connor's ecological thought has been used for reference to the construction of ecological civilization in our country to some extent, so in the process of studying O'Connor's ecological thought, we should study from an objective point of view, and positively inherit the essence of his theory, mainly including the concept of ecological improvement and protection of nature. For China's socialist system, it can consider referring to its theory of focusing on the development of a harmonious society, fairness and justice, combined with the current comprehensive implementation of the rule of law in our country, and further seek the ecological reform measures of the rule of law, so as to further play the advantages of our socialist system. Through scientific and reasonable

development, we can solve the current problems of land resources such as soil erosion and soil erosion, improve air pollution, and maintain the purity of water resources. At the same time, we should enhance the enthusiasm of the people for improving the ecological environment and strengthen the awareness of the people for environmental protection, so as to better build a beautiful new China and jointly realize the Chinese dream eagerly awaited by the Chinese people.

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