

# Research on The Theory of Ecological Reform in The Context of Marxism

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**Abstract:** This paper puts the ecological reform into the coordinate system of theory and practice, and expounds the three “Inevitability” of ecological reform in the context of Marxism: “Materialism” dimension: ecological reform is the inevitable internal harmony of the ecosystem; “History” dimension: Ecological reform is the inevitable development of socialist movement law; “Epistemology” dimension: ecological reform is the inevitable development of human cognition and practice. to solve the dilemma of ecological reform of the theoretical basis of farming.

**Keywords:** Marxism; Ecological Philosophy; Ecological Reform.

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## 1. The Theoretical Status of Ecological Reform

At present, the problems of environmental pollution and ecological crisis are becoming more and more serious all over the world, which directly affect the production and life of human beings. Protecting ecological environment and carrying out ecological reform have become the consensus of all countries. In the struggle between man and nature, human beings have been searching for the reasons, and scholars in various countries have been studying and exploring the solutions and directions of ecological problems from various perspectives, find a reasonable way out for human ecological reform.

In the 1970s, ecological reform was put forward as a scientific problem of the new social movement. Since then, it has gone through a process of reflection from science, economics, politics to philosophy. In general, there are several different voices in the world today. First, in the 1970s, the West launched a green movement to promote ecological reform, mainly at the level of ecological ethics and scientific research, they advocate the use of science and technology to solve the ecological crisis facing humanity. Before 1987, most discussions on ecological reform were at the level of scientific understanding. The core issue was whether to solve environmental pollution such as smog and lack of oil resources through ecological reform. The second is in the 1990s in the field of economics for the path of ecological reform and economic costs of the discussion has become a hot spot. Lester R. Brown (1989) first proposed the “eco-economic” revolution. Eco-economists advocate developing an “eco-economy” to replace planned economy and market economy, and adjusting the traditional GDP model to green GDP (GGDP) or ecological GDP (EGDP), thus promoting ecological reform. From 1997 until Kyoto Protocol came into effect in 2005, the international debate turned mainly to the game of geopolitical powers, issues such as the timetable for ecological reform have increasingly become the subject of interest in political science and law. Then there is the rise of “eco-marxism” and “eco-socialism” in the 1980s and 1990s, which argued against the mode of production of capitalism, and criticized the former Soviet Socialist mode of production in the form of exhaustion. They emphasized that we should take ecological revolution to realize social change from the

standpoint of classical Marxism against capital and from the view of value and production. At the same time, the western capitalist world has also proposed green capitalism and new capitalism and other reform programs to deal with the ecological crisis. Finally, after the dismal conclusion of the Copenhagen conference in 2009, the philosophical community also began to confront ecological reform. Marxism was an early critic and reviewer of the environmental crisis in capitalist societies, revealing the “Metabolism” of natural systems under the capitalist system, two monographs, ecology-from deep ecology to socialism by David Pepper (2006) and capitalism and Socialism’s response to ecological crisis by Victor Wallis (2008), have been published, marks the official start of the study of Marxist ecological reform. Generally speaking, in the international academic circles, ecological reform involves many factors, such as politics, economy and culture, and is always at the core of research.

The understanding of ecological reform in international academic circles mainly revolves around China’s ecological policy. Gordon G. Chang (2002) and David Shambaugh (2015) put forward the theory of China’s collapse and the theory of China’s decline, in contrast to Joseph Eugene Stiglitz (2014), who insisted on the theory of the Chinese century. Cobb (2015) argues for China’s leadership. On the exact path, Lester R. Solutions such as Brown’s low-carbon development theory (2009) and Joel Kovel’s eco-socialism (2014) are mired in lingering disagreements. In terms of time, less international attention has been paid to China’s ecological reform before the reform and opening up, and the economic growth miracle has prompted foreign research, China’s move to build an ecological civilization has given a boost to foreign interest in China’s ecological reform. John B. According to Cobb (2017), the ecological civilization advocated in the context of Marxism has a high ecological morality, a strategic vision of sustainable development and a historical vision, but the difficulty of reform is beyond imagination, but he still sees China leading the world in ecological civilization.

## 2. The Practical Dilemma of Ecological Reform

For a long time, human beings have been treating nature as an object. In the process of ecological reform and economic

development, the solutions to ecological problems fall into three categories.

The first is the hope that the development of technology. Rhys, in his work the "control of nature", argues that man's attempt to control nature is a paradox in itself, in the process of which both its progressive and its regressive meanings exist and become apparent. It is precisely because of the current development of technology and the application of technology, so that people in the face of nature more leisurely more unscrupulous. When people enjoy the development brought by this technology, they also have a stronger dependence on science and technology, and try to rely on the power of science and technology to eliminate the destruction of nature. But the reality is that when humans encounter difficulties in their relationship with nature that they can not solve, they turn to nature itself, for example, to dispose of the waste in a landfill. Human fantasy can use nature uncontrollably to surpass nature and dominate the universe. But nature always seems to have some sort of magical response to disaster. Sometimes we cry out for the victory of man over heaven, and sometimes we sigh for the constancy of heaven. In fact, for human beings, to do ecological reform, to oppose technological determinism, to go back to nature itself, to repair and improve the ecological environment, this requires a long and arduous process.

The second is the development of morality. Some Western eco-conservationists advocate the love of nature in the form of "Religion of love", regarding the mountains, flowers, forests and rivers in the ecological environment as moral partners with people on an equal footing, as well as the ecological connections between nations beyond race, class and state with equity as the moral starting point, can not really see the root of ecological problems. In fact, in the process of the development of capitalist society, there is no force to undertake this task. On the contrary, there are signs that they have finally given up morality and allowed ecological destruction to the point of "Letting them eat the pollution". From the withdrawal of the US from the Paris Climate Agreement in 2017 to the 2023 Japanese dumping of nuclear-contaminated water into the sea, the process of global ecological reform has been affected. Obviously, to curb this trend of ecological deterioration, relying solely on moral is not possible. It is the fruit of capitalist mode of production, not pure morality. We need to build new, progressive relationships with nature, and the ship and the course of life on it must be radically altered. Let Go of moral illusions and start with the real mode of production. Thus, the struggle for ecology can not be separated from the struggle for capitalist mode of production, and human beings must learn to re-inhabit the earth, which is the key to ecological reform.

The third category is economic development, the Economist, Britain's leading business magazine, once reported: "Many people hope that economic growth will lead to environmental improvements. In a real sense, this will never happen. Most economic activity uses up resources and materials, which in turn produce the waste that the earth must absorb. So Green growth is a pipe dream." Incredibly, China has made the transition. But it is not an ethical reform. In the process of China's ecological reform, ecology has been upgraded from the object of material production to the object of spiritual enjoyment. The ecological idea of "Green Water and green mountains are mountains of gold and silver" makes the human ecological reform go through the process from human developing himself by consuming resources to human

developing himself by protecting resources. In the final analysis, in the field of ecology, nature is the objective force of man, and the relationship between man and nature is the core of Marxism. The discussion of ecological reform can only be based on the discussion of the relationship between man and nature, only to regard man and nature as historical man and historical nature. To achieve the "Two" reconciliation—the liberation of man and the liberation of nature.

The prominence of ecological problems, the growing loss of ecological security is not the advocacy of ecological protectionism. Theoretically, the recognition of ecological reform will be restricted by social and historical conditions. In reality, the lack of a sense of ecological security and the mode of production of environmental abuses continue to influence the direction of ecological reform. Any discussion of global ecological issues must focus on the excesses of the developed countries and their impact on the surrounding economies. It is at the institutional heart of the capitalist world that the most acute problems of unsustainable development exist, which is the core of ecological reform. The sustainability of human civilization and life on Earth depends not on a slowdown in industrial production but on the reversal of that situation.

### 3. The Three "Inevitabilities" of Ecological Reform

China has always emphasized the community of shared future between man and nature, promoting a community of shared future for mankind and creating a new form of human civilization. In order to lead the world in ecological reform with Chinese ecological civilization, the coupling between the ecological reform thought and the ecological civilization thought of Marxism and Friedrich Engels must be seen from the logic level of theoretical development.

From the perspective of "Materialism", ecological reform is the necessity of internal harmony of ecological system. Ecological reform is inevitable for the internal harmony of ecosystem. In capital, Marx uses the term "Metabolism" to explain that the process of human labor is the process of the struggle between man and nature. In the *Dialectics of Nature*, Friedrich Engels explains the ecological damage caused by human activities, such as deforestation, resource depletion, regional climate change, water scarcity, soil poverty, desertification, and natural disasters. In *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, he exposes ecological problems such as urban-rural segregation, industrial pollution, toxins, declining worker health, and malnutrition. What is certain is that the earth had been running for thousands of years before the emergence of human society, and the natural chain constituted the diversity of life and the symbiosis of life. The existence of nature is not based on the existence of human beings. In the process of the development of human society, nature itself is constantly adjusting itself according to the law of spontaneous movement. In the process of using nature on a large scale, the adjustment progress of nature itself has lagged behind the speed of human development and utilization. Therefore, in the process of ecological reform, we should follow the law of internal harmony of the ecosystem and make nature run according to the law of natural development, instead of relying solely on the victory of science and technology over nature.

From the perspective of "History", ecological reform is the

inevitable development of socialist movement law. It is pointed out clearly in Marxism theory that the natural geographical environment is one of the elements of social existence and an eternal and necessary condition for the existence and development of human society, is the source of material production of human beings and the basis for survival. The advantages and disadvantages of the ecological environment play an important role in promoting or delaying the development of the balance of Nature Society. The ecological environment problem in the present society is not only the internal balance of natural system destroyed, but also the imbalance of the relationship between human and nature. According to Marx, the transformation between man and nature should be regulated reasonably, the subjective initiative of man should be brought into play, and the material transformation should be carried out under the conditions most worthy of and most suitable for human nature. Therefore, we must choose a solution which has never been touched by human beings: to transform socialist productive forces and Relations of production along the lines of social needs, and to carry out ecological reform. The dominant power of this society is dynamic, it is not the pursuit of profit-oriented reform but to meet the real needs of the people and the requirements of sustainable social and ecological development of reform. Engels raised the issue of nature's "Revenge on man" and "Reconciliation between man and nature," in which man is not passive and powerless but active and positive. But People's initiative can never be out of the orbit of the laws of nature to blindly play. Otherwise, it is bound to be retaliated and punished by nature.

From the perspective of epistemology, ecological reform is the inevitable development of human cognition and practice. In Hegel's view, nature can only be man-made, abstract, something that can not be known or understood without man-made effort. Ludwig Feuerbach developed Hegel's view of nature and understood it from a materialism point of view. On the basis of it, Marx and Engels connected man and nature through "Practice", insisting on the primacy of nature and holding that the relationship between man and nature is dialectical unity. The relationship between man and nature, in Marx's view, was from the very beginning a relationship of "Practice," a view that was at the heart of Marxism's dialectical materialism, it is also the main ideological basis for the development of Marxist ecological philosophy. From the point of view of practice, the world we live in is not the intuitive world of perception, nor the pure physical world, but the dynamic world of change and organic. We have to understand the form of one thing from the form and associated with the movement of another thing form and law. That is to say, man and nature are a kind of relationship established through realistic activities. He tells us that we should change the relationship between man and nature through action, that is, through material practice, so as to create a unique relationship between man and nature that meets the needs of human survival and development. In the long-term practice of mankind, it has been shown that the relationship between ecological environment protection and economic development is dialectical unity.

In the context of Marxism, ecological reform is a process of humanization of nature, and a two-way process of subject-objectification and object-subjectification in human practice. The struggle between man and nature has already begun when man is separated from the pure nature attribute, constructs the human society, affects the nature with his own consciousness,

and produces the active function to the nature. Human beings grasp the objective laws of nature with the subjective initiative of self-consciousness, transform the nature and form the opposite relationship between man and nature. The more human beings transcend the original development process of nature, the more they need the ecological signs of nature. In the process of the development of human practice, the process of cognition is of social historicity. Human's existence and life can never get rid of the nature, both develop in the contradiction and struggle. As the largest developing country, China has adopted an ecological policy in the course of the development of socialism with Chinese characteristics, insisting on the community of fate between man and nature, and building an ecological civilization, the concept of "Green Water and Green Mountains is the idea of mountains of gold and silver" has broken through the epistemological dilemma between economic development and ecological protection. It tells us that we should protect the ecological environment well, but protecting the ecological environment does not mean building fences to surround nature and separate the environment from people, but taking measures on our own initiative, make the ecological environment to the direction of human needs. Only in the context of Marxism, the process of ecological reform can reach the inevitable realm of reconciliation between man and nature.

## 4. Conclusion

Human beings always believe in the power of nature and respect nature. We should protect nature as we protect our eyes. Marx called nature "Man's inorganic body", that is to say, the natural world is the object that human beings must constantly interact with in their existence. He wrote: A humane, sustainable system should be socialist. And it should be based on solid ecological principles. It would link itself to sustainable land as "The living and productive conditions that generations of human beings cannot relinquish." China proposes the idea of a "Community of shared future for mankind." He called on people to live in harmony with nature, saying that "Green Water and Green Mountains is the idea of mountains of gold and silver, and it is better to have green mountains and clear water than Golden and Silver.", create economic value with ecology. In other words, ecological issues should be taken into account in the country's development. However, in the process of coordinated economic and environmental development, ecological protection should be addressed. When Green Waters and Green Mountains can not be transformed into gold and silver, how can we resolve the conflict between production and ecological protection? How to fight for ecological justice? Doing well the construction of ecological civilization is a problem that we should constantly consider in the process of ecological reform. We still have a long way to go in building a new relationship between man and nature and actively promoting global ecological reform.

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