

Research on Marx's Theory of Natural Productivity: From Perspective of Practice

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Abstract

Marxist theory of productivity from traditional Marxist philosophy textbook and those past explanation on Marx's natural productivity didn't grasp its true meaning. From the view of this paper, only by adopting Marx's philosophical thinking "from practice" can we realize essence of Marx's theory of natural productivity. The paper interprets the theory from three perspectives respectively from "why", "how" and its "significant".

Key word: Marx; Natural productivity; Understanding from practice

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INTRODUCTION

The reason why previous scholars cannot grasp true meaning of Marx's theory of natural productivity is because they didn't start from new materialism's philosophizing "understanding from practice" in methodology but still try to realize and describe the theory by old materialism's "understanding from object (or entity)". The paper holds the opinion that only by

adopting Marx's philosophical thinking "from practice" can we realize essence of Marx's theory of natural productivity.

1. WHY WE SHOULD REALIZE MARX'S THEORY OF NATURAL PRODUCTIVITY "FROM PRACTICE"

"Understanding the problem from practice" is the fundamental characteristic for new materialism (practical materialism) created by Marx to stipulate itself and distinguish from other philosophy. Marx has clearly pointed out the major defects of old materialism (including Feuerbach's materialism) in *Outline of Feuerbach* they have wrong "comprehension ways" towards "object, reality and sensibility" and "just realize problems from objective or intuitive form" rather than take them (namely relevant philosophical questions) as "emotional human activity or practice" (*Selections of K. Marx and F. Engels [Volume 4]*, 1995, p.54), which is "understand relevant philosophical questions from practice" (in short: "understand from practice"). It is because in the view of Marx's new materialism, "existence" required in human philosophical thinking should be existence of the "real world" instead of "non-realistic world", so it is existence in human world stipulated by practice—also can be called "existence of the practice" which developed from practice (practical existence for short). Therefore, any interpretation for existence in human world should start from practice (or realize them from perspective of practice).

"Understand problems from practice" is the mysterious thing for Marx's new materialism to deal with old philosophy (including the old materialism and idealism) and guide theory into mysticism and essential for creating correlation theory of Marx's new materialism. According to Marx in *Outline of Feuerbach*, "all the mysterious things which lead theory into mysticism will

be solved rationally during practice and its realization process.” (Marx, 1961, p.17) Depend on his opinion, it's easy for us to find the secret of such inference: regarding the issue of truthfulness of human thought, it cannot be solved by single theory but must start from “practice”; regarding whether human nature is individual inherent abstraction, on its reality, it is the issue of overall social relations; in terms of social relations, it is not the “abstract human relationship” according to Feuerbach but relationship real person in social activities and interaction, which is issue of practice in fact; regarding the consistency on environmental change and human activity or self-change, it only can be considered as revolutionary and practical issue; all the old philosophy are explaining of the world through different ways but all lack of practical understanding towards philosophic function—the issue of “problem is changing the world”, etc..

“Understand problems from practice” is the basis of Marx's new materialism (practical materialism). Different theory sources will lead to different philosophizing beginnings and endings as well as different understandings, realizations and evaluations against philosophical problems. The basis for Marx's new materialism is human who are double objectified as naturalization and socialization in certain historical practice, they are in the practice of changing nature and reform society meanwhile stipulated by nature and social's essence and law rather than human out of practice, intuitional and abstract according to Feuerbach. Because of that, we are capable to realize “human” problem which is essence of Marx's new materialism as well as “productivity” issue (including social productivity and natural productivity) worked by human in “human practice” especially in “understanding from practice”.

2. HOW TO “REALIZE FROM PRACTICE” ON MARX'S NATURAL PRODUCTIVITY THEORY

We consider that the following parts in methodology have to be grasped for better understanding of “realize from practice” on Marx's natural productivity theory.

First of all, “realize from practice” on Marx's natural productive theory requires us to change the former way of thinking on Marxist “productivity”, to realize productivity of Marx's new materialism from practice. Whether to grasp Marx's natural productivity theory from object (abstraction) or practice (reality) is the fundamental difference for Marx's new materialism (marxist philosophy) and old philosophy (including old materialism and idealism) regarding comprehension way on natural productivity. Therefore, basic defect on productivity theory from traditional textbooks or former translation on Marx's natural productivity theory is that they do not realize Marx's ideas which regarding “social productivity and

natural productivity” from practice. All those interpretations in terms of Marx's productivity theory are adopted metaphysical or formal logical way of thinking, try to seize its connotation in abstraction and conclude it as some “natural force and productivity in nature” have nothing to do with human being and separate from social relations, in hence, they have common problem which is following old philosophy thinking and deviating from Marx's new materialism on the way of philosophizing.

Secondly, “realize from practice” on Marx's natural productive theory requires us to realize natural productivity (including social productivity) of Marx's new materialism based on rules and constraints to productivity by fixed social relations (productive relations). According to Marx in *The German Ideology* and *Preface Critique of Political Economy*, he states dialectical relation between social productivity and productive relations, reveals their contradiction and objectivity. Also, objective contradiction is existed on natural productivity and productive relations, said from Marx, natural productivity found by labour is shown as productivity of capital under the capitalist mode of production just like social productivity; condition of certain productivity level (including natural productivity and social productivity) is decided by “social form” (productive relations) which conducts and organizes such social production. As a famous American scholar John Bellamy Foster said in *The Ecological Crisis and the Capitalism*, irreconcilable contradiction is there between capitalism and ecological environment, under the capitalist production relations, environment somehow becomes victim capital pursuing surplus value, the development of natural productivity has contradiction with capitalist production relations.

Thirdly, “realize from practice” on Marx's natural productive theory requires us to realize natural productivity (including social productivity) of Marx's new materialism from mutual restriction and coordination among “human- nature- society”. On the one hand, development of natural productivity will facilitate “coordination of human and society” and such kind of coordination shall take natural productivity as premise. Among the complex relation “human- nature- society”, society can be seen as a complex composed by human relying on natural productivity and relation on human and nature. If we way the nature belonging to human didn't appear as “natural productivity” form but as natural force which destroying social productivity instead, then the relation between human and nature, human and society will not coordinate mutually, it will cause that development of natural productivity cannot be found by labour, bad coordination and interaction on “human and society” in the “society” complex. On the other hand, development of social productivity will facilitate “coordination of human and nature”, during the complex relation of “human- nature-society”, if we say those social productivity generated by practice cannot promote

harmonious interaction on human and nature but in a way worsen the conflict and disharmony, then "relation of human and nature" will not develop into benign interaction. Such kind of situation will reveal in the complex of "society". In hence, "realize from practice" on Marx's natural productive theory asks us to realize natural productivity (including social productivity) of Marx's new materialism from mutual restriction and coordination among "human- nature- society".

Fourthly, "realize from practice" on Marx's natural productive theory requires us to realize natural productivity (including social productivity) of Marx's new materialism from man's subjectivity and practical initiative. It can be realized in terms of following three aspects: (a) Natural productivity cannot exist alone without human practice. According to Marx ' practical materialism, no natural productivity exists alone without human practice, it not only concerns closely with human practice but also stipulated by human practice. From this point of view, natural productivity is man's natural existence, it differs from nature itself (nature which exclude human practice), is a productive force in humanized nature (nature which influenced by human practice). (b) Natural productivity cannot be developed itself by deviation from human practice. The development of natural productivity reveals the enhancement of natural productibility force included into human practice as practice condition. It has to guarantee and stimulative effects on enhancement of social productivity. The guarantee and stimulative effects of natural productivity on social productivity depend on natural introduction of productibility force and exploitation effect, and are restricted by certain social restriction of practice. Therefore, Marx said, "The consistency of environment change and human activity or self-change can only be deemed as or reasonably explained as revolutionary practice"(*Selections of K. Marx and F. Engels[Vlolume 1]*, 2012, p.138). (c) Human practice can achieve organic unification of natural productivity and social productivity. The guarantee and stimulative effects of natural productivity on social productivity cannot be separated from practice, the basis and intermediary agent; social productivity also will exploit and promote natural productivity through this basis and intermediary agent. Hence, practice is the basis and intermediary agent that natural productivity and social productivity can coordinate and promote each other, and also is the fundamental power of promoting the development of natural productivity and social productivity.

3. UNDERSTANDING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MARX'S NATURAL PRODUCTIVITY THEORY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF "PRACTICE"

We shall try to understand Marx's natural productivity thought from practice, and his practical materialistic

thought reveals Marx's thought real implication regarding natural productivity, which provides Marxist thought guiding and behavioral guiding for us to correctly understand relevant thought of Marx's natural productivity thought and reasonably carry out ecological civilization construction practice. Thus, it is of great theoretical and practical significance:

Firstly, to understand Marx's natural productivity thought from "practice" can help us to correctly understand the real implication of Marx's thought about natural productivity (also including his social productivity thought). In the previous interpretation of Marx's natural productivity thought by people, they were accustomed to separat his natural productivity thought from human practice for further research, so that they could not correctly master the real implication of Marx's thought about natural productivity. In terms of Marx's practical materialism, his real implication regarding natural productivity cannot be separated from human practice, and only this way is available. This is because his so-called "natural productivity" is exactly discovered by human laboring (practice), and only the natural productibility force included with human practice directly or indirectly can constitute realistic natural productivity. This requires us to transfer previous comprehension way about Marx's "natural productivity problem" by people from the root—to understand Marx's natural productivity thought from the perspective of practice.

Secondly, to understand Marx's natural productivity thought from "practice" can help us to clearly clarify the thought of relations between natural productivity and social productivity. In the past, people failed to understand Marx's natural productivity thought from practice, so that they misunderstood Marx's thoughts about the relations between natural productivity and social productivity. Because of the productivity theory of Marx practical materialism, natural productivity and social productivity is a pair of contradiction, and their basis of opposite unity is human practice. As the discovery of human laboring, natural productivity—directly or indirectly introduces "productive natural force" of human practice, including various productive natural force and natural ability included with practice; social productive forces are the practical force for people to solve "the contradictory relations between human and nature, human and society, human and themselves"; definite social productivity development level and state also stipulate and restrict definite natural productivity development level and state, while definite natural productivity development level and state also stipulate and restrict definite social productivity development level and state; the both statuses of definite natural productivity and social productivity also depend on the social forms (productive relations) of social production practice and organization in human history.

Thirdly, to understand Marx's natural productivity thought from "practice" can help to reasonably carry

out ecological civilization construction for our country. Before 1990s, traditional textbook of “Marxist Philosophy” defined the “productivity” category of Marxism as the power that people conquered and remolded the natural world to adapt to the demands of human society. This “Conquest Theory” regarding productivity of Marxist philosophy uniaxially explains the mutual relations of “human and nature” as people’s conquest, remolding and utilization relation towards nature, which ignores natural productivity, and mutual restrictive relations of natural productivity and social productivity.

Afterwards, the educational circle realized the one-sidedness and boundedness of Marxist traditional productivity concept. People tried to excavate and attach more importance to Marx’s natural productivity thought on a basis of inheriting the so-called rationality of such traditional productivity concept. They have ever proposed some concepts like environmental productivity and ecological productivity, but they failed to understand them from practice like philosophizing of Marx new materialism. Nowadays, in terms of whatever various countries or our national physical truth, as the conditionality of natural productivity on

social productivity becomes more prominent, our party successively proposes a series of thoughts about natural productivity, formulates and practices a series of relevant policies and guidelines to promote development of ecological civilization construction.

CONCLUSION

Through above analysis, this thesis concludes that only to understand Marx’s natural productivity thought from the philosophizing of “understanding problems from practice” of Marx new materialism can help to correctly master the theory nature of Marx’s “natural productivity thought”, so as to further effectively guide our national ecological civilization construction.

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