

The Inheritance and Development of Xi Jinping's Ecological Civilization Thought to Marx's Concept of "Ecological Man"

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Abstract—The relationship between man and nature is the eternal theme of mankind. The construction of ecological civilization is the inevitable choice for human society to achieve sustainable development. The destruction of today's ecosystems, the deterioration of the environment, and a series of global ecological problems require people to re-examine and reflect on the relationship between man and nature, and return to Marx's discussion of the relationship between man and nature. From the perspective of Marx's thought, from "natural man" to "subject man" to "ecological man", this is the three survival paradigms of the relationship between man and nature. In the context of today's era, Xi Jinping put forward the concept that "man and nature are a community of life", emphasizing the organic connection and integrity of man and nature. From the inheritance of Marx's view of nature, the concept of "life community" emphasizes the dialectical unity between man and nature on the basis of practice, embodies the dialectical unity of the whole and part, and is an ecological coexistence of development and realm. The concept of nature has important epochal significance and practical value.

Keywords—"natural man"; "economic man"; "ecological man"; "life community"

I. INTRODUCTION

Xi Jinping pointed out in his "Talking about Governing the Country": "Ecological environmental protection is a career that is conducive to the present and benefits." Building an ecological civilization is related to the well-being of the people and to the future of the nation.¹ China is heading towards a new era of socialist ecological civilization. Towards a new era of ecological civilization and building a beautiful China is an important part of the Chinese dream of realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. It is also a theoretical requirement for inheriting and developing Marx's ecological concept, and it is also the general trend of social and historical development.

II. THE EVOLUTION FROM "NATURAL MAN" TO "ECOLOGICAL MAN"

In the "Manuscript of Economics and Philosophy in 1844" (hereinafter referred to as "Manuscript"), Marx showed the development of human beings as the evolutionary logic of the negation of the positive-negative-integrated negative negation from "natural person" to "economic person" to "ecological person". The unification of the essence of man and nature must contain the historical development trend from "natural person" to "economic person" to "ecological person".

A. "Natural Man": the Subject and the Object Are Not Divided and Human Is Obedient to the Nature

The so-called "natural man" refers to the subject that can only survive. The "nature" here mainly focuses on the "pre-developmental state" and refers to the natural state before the establishment of civil society or the state, and also includes the "natural-based" living state after the establishment of civil society or the state. In the traditional mode of thinking, the investigation of the evolution of human civilization requires finding reference objects and setting coordinate systems. This "reference object" can be either "thing" or "human." As the creator and pioneer of the development of human civilization, when the attention of the research returns to people, it will grasp the core of human ecological civilization to achieve leap and development.

"Natural man" is the primitive state in the construction of ecological civilization, that is, the person who exists purely naturalized is the person who completely disappears from nature.² "Natural man" follows the laws of nature. Rousseau once said: "I believe that I have found two rules that existed on natural person earlier than reason. The first rule stems from the deep concern of human beings for their own happiness and survival. The second one sees other perceptions in human beings. The creature, especially of his kind, is naturally unpleasant when he suffers from pain and

¹ Xi Jinping, Xi Jinping Talks About Governing the Country (Vol. 1) [M] Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2018: 208.

² Guo Zhongyi, Hou Yanan, Ecological Man Concept and Ecological Survival: Reinterpretation of Marx's Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts in 1844. [J] Philosophical Trends, 2014 (07): 36.

death.³ That is to say, "natural person" follows the life of survival and simple sympathy that only seeks survival and does not seek development. The era in which "natural man" live is the childhood of human development. People's understanding of nature is still in a state of chaos where the subject and the guest are not divided. The relationship between man and nature is mainly the unconsciously primordial harmony. Nature is mysterious, it is the viewer and the determinant, and the person is in a dominant position of obedience. Although the subject also has the subjective intention to transform nature, it is more awe and obedience to the natural heaven. From the perspective of oneself, natural people do not have any lofty ideals. The thoughts in the uncivilized period cannot provide a strong basis for their actions, and they do not really reflect on the value and significance of their own lives. Although "natural man" has obvious defects such as lack of subject consciousness and passive adaptation to nature, it objectively provides the initial premise for the arrival of "ecological man".

B. "Economic Man": the Subject and the Object Are Divided, and the Interests Are the Supreme

The main driving force for the development of human society is the basic contradiction of society. When the productivity level of agricultural society is insufficient to meet people's growing material and cultural needs, the actual contradictions force human society to change, and the production tools are transformed from iron plowing cattle to steam engines and electric motors. People have entered the large-scale production of machinery from manual production, and entered the industrial age from the agricultural era. The subjective consciousness of human beings is activated, and the demand and diversity of resources are rapidly rising. At this point, the relationship between man and nature has undergone a qualitative change: from relying on nature to conquering nature.

The term "economic man" comes from the "self-interested man" in Adam Smith's "The Wealth of Nations", which refers to the subject of exchange for the greatest economic benefit with the least economic cost. The essence of "economic man" is people-centered, driven by interests, and follows the basic logic of the subject-object divided as two. The subject dominates nature and enslaves nature through technical rationality, while the object is the object of subject's understanding and transformation, and is the material and tool for the subject to complete its expectations. Unlike the natural laws followed by "natural man", "economic man" follows the pursuit of private interests. Marx once said: "Once there is proper profit, the capital will be bold... With 50% of profits, it will take risks; for 100% of profits, it will dare to trample on all human laws; if it has 300% of profits, it will be dared to commit any crime, or even risk the twist."⁴ The accumulation of capital and the driving of interests have made industrial civilization crazy and let human-being fatuous. Although the "economic man"

has jumped out of the chaotic initial state of "natural man", the urgent immediate interests drive is the alienation of labor, science and technology, and the development of human beings. The conquest and the endless plunder of human to nature will eventually lead to natural revenge, destruction of the ecosystem and destruction of human-being himself. Engels once said: "We should not be too fascinated by our human victory in nature. For every such victory, the natural world will retaliate against us. Every victory, at first, did achieve the results we expected, but in the future and then there would be a completely different and unexpected impact, often eliminating the initial results."⁵ In the game with nature, human beings think they have won, but they will never and will definitely not be the final winners. All this promotes the relationship between man and nature into the third stage of harmonious justice, that is, the emergence of "ecological human."

C. "Ecological Man": Overall System, Justice and Fairness

"Ecological man" is the transcendence of "natural man" and "economic man". It is the process of ecological integration between man and nature. It is mainly reflected in the people who are following the law of ecological development, attaching importance to the intrinsic value of nature, and adhering to the guidelines of intra-generational equity and intergenerational equity. Marx believes that nature has a preconceived effect on human beings. In the book "Die Deutsche Ideologie", Marx and Engels fully affirmed that the natural and material world is the basis and premise of the existence and development of human society. In the "Manuscript", Marx used "the natural world, as far as it is not the human body, it is the inorganic body of human beings." Human lives by nature. That is to say, nature is the human body in which people must be in constant interaction with them in order not to die. The so-called human physical life and spiritual life are related to the natural world, but it is said that the natural world is connected with itself, because human beings are part of nature⁶ to show that people and nature are dependent on each other, commonly symbiotic and prosperous. Compared with the "natural man" due to the serious shortage of knowledge ability which leading to the insufficient cognition and use of the objective law, the relationship between man and nature are increasingly tenacious caused by the maximization of the "economic man's" self-interest, "Ecological man" pays more attention to human value and the harmonious balance of natural values, refusing to blindly pursue the materialization of people and the alienation of human beings. The balance of the ecosystem pursued by "ecological people" is neither the natural dependence of human beings on nature and obedience, nor the struggle for disregard of social interests and ecological interests. It is a rational dialogue, a harmonious relationship, and the unification of the essence of nature and human beings.

³ Rousseau, On the Origin of Human Inequality [M] Shanghai: Joint Publishing, 2011: 15.

⁴ Marx, Engels. The Complete Works of Marx and Engels (30) [M] Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2001: 871.

⁵ Marx, Engels. The Complete Works of Marx and Engels (9) [M] Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2001: 559, 560.

⁶ Marx, Engels. Manuscript of Economics and Philosophy in 1844 [M] Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2018: 52.

The concept of "ecological man" stems from Marx's dialectical thinking on the relationship between man and nature. From "natural man" to "economic man" to "ecological man", this is an evolutionary process that conforms to the laws governing the historical development of human society. In the "Critique of Political Economy Criticism (1857-1858)," Marx put forward the "Theory of Three Forms" of social development: human dependence (the first social form), people based on the dependence of things Independence (second social form), human development and free personality (third social form). Obviously, "natural man", "economic man" and "ecological man" are consistent with Marx's social three-form theory, which is the true embodiment of ecological development in accordance with the law, and is the true expression of the historical development of human society. In the "Outline of Economic Criticism", Marx had such a statement that "capital created the universal possession of members of society and the relationship between nature and society." This has led to a social phase that relies on capital production. Compared with this social stage, all social stages in the past are at best human development and worship of nature. ... Capital in accordance with this trend of its own, overcomes the myth of the natural world to progress rapidly. At the same time, it also overcomes the various boundaries and prejudices of the nation, overcoming the self-sufficiency of closing within a certain limit to meet existing needs and ample self-sufficiency, and overcoming the repetition of the old way of life."⁷ This expression reflects Marx's affirmative attitude towards "capital", that is, relative to "natural man", "economic man" is a historical progress, which provides a premise for the arrival of "natural man".

III. THE IMPLICATION OF MARX'S ECOLOGICAL PHILOSOPHY OF XI JINPING'S CONCEPT OF "LIFE COMMUNITY"

General Secretary Xi Jinping stated in the report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China: "Man and nature are life communities, and human beings must respect nature, conform to nature, and protect nature. The modernization wanted to build is the modernization of harmony between man and nature. "Life Community" is the core concept of Xi Jinping's theory of ecological civilization. It mainly emphasizes that man and nature are an organic whole, a symbiotic relationship that interconnects, interacts and influences each other. Its reality is the commonly prosperous "ecological survive" of man and nature. "Ecological survival" reproduces the "ecological man" concept in "Manuscript" and establishes a new survival paradigm for human, which has both theoretical and practical significance.

A. *Dialectical Unity of Natural View and Historical View*

On the issue of the relationship between man and nature, Marx advocates dialectical unity based on human practice.

⁷ (Japan) Uemura Kunihiko, What Is "Civil Society" — The History of the Change of Basic Concepts [M] Nanjing: Nanjing University Press, 2014: 103, 104.

Communism is not only a true reconciliation of contradictions with nature, but also an ecological society that rationally coordinates the material transformation of human society and nature. The "life community" aims to emphasize that human beings should not abuse the ability to transform nature. The interaction with nature should return to rationality. Its essence is the harmony and symbiosis between man and nature. This is not only the inheritance of Marx's "ecological man" concept, but also the modern transformation of the concept of "harmony between man and nature" in Chinese traditional philosophy. Marx and Engels repeatedly emphasized that in the process of utilizing and transforming nature; human beings must respect the objective laws of nature, realize the common evolution of human development and nature, and always adhere to the dialectical unity of the concept of nature and history. The concept of nature and the view of history are inseparable. It is one-sided and incorrect to use only the view of nature or history to talk about the harmony between man and nature. Man is a product of nature, a part of nature, and nature is the source of human life. Without nature, there is no such thing as human beings. In the process of discussing the relationship between man and nature, Xi Jinping repeatedly emphasized the law of adapting to nature and respecting nature, and repeatedly quoted Engels's exposition on "people who violate the laws of nature will inevitably suffer the punishment of natural laws" and used the "life community" concept to express the symbiotic relationship between human and nature, which also reflects Xi Jinping's ecological civilization thought throughout the historical view of materialism.

B. *Dialectical Unity of the Whole and Part*

With the development of science and technology, the wide application of machines, machinery plays an increasingly important role in people's lives, which makes people more convinced of established experiences and facts. As a result, the natural view of machinery has gradually become the core of Western natural science. The natural view of machinery compares nature to a machine that operates in precision. In this view, nature no longer has reason and rationality, life and vitality, and even cannot move and change autonomously, just like a machine that is artificial. Human beings do not regard themselves as part of nature, but above nature and become the masters of nature, which leads to the abuse of natural resources and the destruction of the ecological environment. Marx and Engels jumped out of the influence of the mechanical view of nature. On the basis of the scientific concept of practice, they created the dialectical materialist view of nature, that is, treating people and nature as a systematic whole, transforming nature through practice while transforming human-beings themselves. In November 2013, Xi Jinping clearly put forward the view of "life community" at the Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee: "We must realize that the mountains, water, forests, fields and lakes are a life community; the lifeblood of human beings is in the field, and the lifeblood of field is in the water. The lifeblood of water is in the mountains, the lifeblood of the mountains is in the earth, and the lifeblood of the earth is in

the trees."⁸ That is to say, the natural world is not only interconnected by internal systems, but also closely related to human beings. It is an inseparable whole of the system. The view of "life community" is undoubtedly the inheritance and development of Marx's systematic view of nature.

C. Dialectical Unity of Development View and Realm Theory

The development view and the realm theory have different value orientations and focuses as two different ecological civilization theories. Xi Jinping's concept of ecological governance based on the concept of "life community" is a dialectical and unified concept of ecological civilization governance. It overcomes the moral self-consciousness and realm of elevation that is only pinned on people, lacking the theory of ecological civilization that regulates the realm of human practice, and emphasizing the establishment of a reasonable system to coordinate the contradiction between people in the allocation and use of natural resources to achieve the fair distribution and use of natural resources, so that it can safeguard the right to development and the environment of the nation-state." The so-called right to development here means that the nation-state has its own path and development model of choice. The so-called environmental rights refer to the right of the nation-state to control and utilize its natural resources. It reflects the demands of developing countries for environmental justice."⁹ When discussing the relationship between the rule of virtue and the rule of law, Xi Jinping pointed out that "it is necessary to use morality to nourish the spirit of the rule of law and strengthen morality to support the rule of law culture. No matter how good the law is, it must be transformed into people's inner consciousness to truly follow people's actions. ... without moral nourishment, the rule of law culture will lack the source of living water, and the law implementation will lack a solid social foundation."¹⁰ It not only emphasizes the establishment of a strict environmental system to protect ecological resources, but also emphasizes the strengthening of the construction of ecological culture and ecological moral values, so that the protection of ecological resources becomes a moral consciousness. Xi Jinping's emphasis on the dialectical unity of development and boundary theory and the ecological governance concept with both morality and law provide a theoretical guide for the construction of ecological civilization in the new era of China.

IV. CONCLUSION

The essence of ecological civilization is to explore the relationship between man and nature, and the goal is to achieve the harmonious coexistence of man and nature. From "natural man" to "economic man" to "ecological person", this

is an evolution process that conforms to the laws of human development, conforms to the laws governing the development of human thinking, and conforms to the laws of ecological development. Xi Jinping's ecological civilization thought is in line with Marx's ecological philosophy. It is the latest theoretical achievement of Marxism in China based on contemporary and solving the basic contradiction between man and nature in contemporary society. However, human transformation is not only a change of ideas, but also material support and institutional guarantee. Therefore, ecological civilization construction has a long way to go. On the basis of human transformation, it is necessary to synchronize construction and research of ecological economy, ecological politics, ecological system and so on.

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⁸ Xi Jinping, Explanation of the Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China to Comprehensively Deepen the Reform of Some Major Issues. [N] People's Daily, 2013: 11 - 16.

⁹ Wang Yuchen, Study on Ecological Marxism and Ecological Civilization [M] Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2015: 386.

¹⁰ Xi Jinping, Xi Jinping Talks About Governing the Country (Vol. 2) [M] Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2018: 117.