

Review of: "Introduction to George's paper Labour, Instrumental Action and the Ways of Human Existence: Towards an "Ecological" Reconstruction of Historical Materialism"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

It was with great interest that I started reading the submitted article, expecting that it would present an original attempt at new interpretations of Marxism, that is, at adapting its assumptions to contemporary conditions. My anti-resonance was aroused by the very title of György Márkus's work *Labour, Instrumental Action and the Ways of Human Existence: Towards an "Ecological" Reconstruction of Historical Materialism*. Unfortunately, the reading of the paper was disappointing.

Even the title of the article, which in full repeats the title of Márkus's paper, evokes objections, as a scholarly article should not present just a summary of someone else's work.

Especially the difficulty in distinguishing the views of the author of the article from those of Márkus himself raises reservations. The narrative of the article is carried out as if its particular theses had the same author.

I am skeptical about the thesis of the anti-ecological heritage of the Enlightenment. In my opinion, in this period it was not so much about opposing nature to man as about connections between man and nature. Thus, in this epoch, the foundations were laid for later ecological interpretations of our civilisational development. After all, the Enlightenment did not initiate any revolution in man's approach to the natural environment surrounding him, because it has always been an area of human research and technical exploration.

Methodological objections:

1. The author treats Marx as a historian, not noticing his significance for philosophy and sociology at all.
2. An academic paper should not contain statements such as "Most agricultural historians" (p. 3). The specific names of authors and their works should be quoted.
3. There are also reservations concerning the lack of explanation of what the author means by the key terms 'ecological fragility' or 'human ecology'. It is also difficult to understand what the author means by using phrases such as 'de-anthropomorphizing-objectifying tendency of technical development' (p. 7).
4. We also learn from the article that Márkus 'offers a richer new paradigm of human livelihood', but we do not learn what this paradigm is supposed to be about.

5. Nor can we ignore the fact that the last paragraph on page 10 is repeated in the same wording at the end of page 11.
6. The language of the entire article raises several objections, which makes the article difficult to read, and the reader is often forced to guess what the author actually means.
7. In his article, the author raises a number of undirected accusations about the non-ecological direction of development of our civilization. Unlike Marx, he does not direct them towards the bourgeoisie or capitalists, but towards unindicated impersonal factors. If the author wanted to contribute with his article to the improvement of the existing state of affairs, I do not think he succeed.
8. The overall impression of the article is not encouraging. The author monologues with himself, he does not quote arguments taken from the scholarly literature, let alone those contradicting the position expressed by himself. Many of his theses are simply illegible, because it is not entirely clear what he is aiming at in his argument.

The author uses argumentation borrowed from the so-called deep ecology and ecofeminism, based on which he could create a much more interesting article.[1]

The references to French post-structuralism quoted at the end of the article are illegible to me, as their contribution to enriching the ecological component of historical materialism is doubtful. In general, it must be admitted that the author did not succeed in achieving his goal, which was to reform historical materialism in the spirit of contemporary needs.

One can also express surprise that the author of the reviewed paper formulated his theses on the basis of reading only one work by Márkus.

However, it is not the task of the reviewer to discourage the authors from seeking solutions that can be useful to mankind. Undoubtedly, the very direction of research towards enriching historical materialism with an ecological component should be considered as promising for finding an attractive solution in the future[2]. For this type of consideration, I recommend reading Karl Marx's *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*[3] as a starting point for building one's own position. Above all, a scholarly paper must contain a message addressed to the reader, either in the form of a new concept or a challenge to an existing one. Unfortunately, this was missing in the article.

[1] B. Devil, G. Session, *Deep Ecology: Living as if Nature Mattered*, Gibbs Smith, 2001; J. Oksala, *Feminism, Capitalism, and Ecology*, "Hypatia" 2018, Vol. 33, Issue 2, Spring 2018, pp. 216 – 234.

[2] Cf. J.B. Foster, *Marx's Ecology. Materialism and Nature*, Monthly Review Press, 2000.

[3] K. Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Prometheus Books, 1988.

