

Re: [OPE-L] book review of Kliman's book

From: Paul Cockshott (wpc@DCS.GLA.AC.UK)

Date: Thu Nov 22 2007 - 17:09:21 EST

- **Next message:** [Jurriaan Bendien: "\[OPE-L\] Stocks and flows in Marx's theory"](#)
- **Previous message:** [Philip Dunn: "Re: \[OPE-L\] book review of Kliman's book"](#)
- **In reply to:** [Philip Dunn: "Re: \[OPE-L\] book review of Kliman's book"](#)
- **Next in thread:** [Anders Ekeland: "Re: \[OPE-L\] book review of Kliman's book"](#)
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Andrew Kliman has asked me to forward the following email in response to Phils posting:

Hi Phil,

I much appreciate your critiques

(<http://ricardo.ecn.wfu.edu/~cottrell/OPE/archive/0711/0214.html>,
<http://ricardo.ecn.wfu.edu/~cottrell/OPE/archive/0711/0215.html>)

of Ajit Sinha's "review" of my book

(<http://ricardo.ecn.wfu.edu/~cottrell/OPE/archive/0711/0205.html>).

I also much appreciated your critiques of Mohun and Veneziani's alleged demonstration of the "Incoherence of the TSSI."

Concerning your response to this supposedly "devastating" argument of Sinha's:

"Let us suppose that the commodity-capital worth \$100 in terms of gold was used as inputs (including wages) in time 0, which produces 100 units of X in the beginning of period 1. Let us suppose that in period 0 the price of X was \$1.2/X. However, since the capitalists have introduced more productive technology in period 0, the price of X falls to \$1/X in the beginning of period 1. Kliman argues that this means that capitalists in the sector X have made zero profits. But this is simply not true. Since in period 1 the capitalists would need only 80% of the inputs that they used in period 0 to produce the same 100 units of X, they can continue their business as usual at the same level and pocket \$20 as profit. In his examples of continuous technical changes, Kliman forgets that even if prices of inputs remain the same and the price of output is falling, it does not imply that the rate of profit must fall; because the quantity of inputs needed to produce the same amount of output must also continuously shrink due to rise in labor productivity."

let me mention that my book anticipates and responds to this argument somewhat in the manner to which you respond to it (though my book refrains from claiming that any economic theory's definitions or concepts are right or wrong):

"the replacement-cost defense maintains that the value rate of profit is a healthy 20%, even though the capitalist farmers actually invested a value of 150 at the start of Year 2 and the value of their output is 150 at the end. The farmers, on the other hand, are a wee bit disappointed. They think that they made no profit at all. Some readers may wish to explain to the farmers that they have been taken in by a metaphysical value theory: 'You have actually done quite well. You've ended up with 20% more corn than you invested initially, and your potential rate of accumulation is therefore 20% as well--you can expand your operations by up to 20%.'

"Such readers are advised to think twice. If the farmers borrowed the 150 start-up capital from their bankers, then they end up with nothing, indeed less than nothing. They must sell off their entire corn output, and use their sales revenue of 150 to repay the principal on the bank loans. They have nothing left over to expand their operations. Even in physical terms, they are unable to accumulate. Moreover, they have not yet paid, and cannot pay, the interest that they owe the bankers. (fn 9) [fn 9: Nothing is really different if the farmers are able to finance their own operations. Their books may not show that they owe interest to themselves, but if they continually extend zero-interest loans to themselves, they continually forego the interest that they could acquire by investing their money capital externally.] The same situation occurs year after year, and soon the farmers are drowning in debt." [Reclaiming Marx's "Capital": A Refutation of the Myth of Inconsistency, pp. 86-87, emphasis in original]

So Sinha's charge that "Kliman forgets" is **false**. Equally bad, if not worse, Sinha fails to inform his readers that his supposedly "devastating" argument has **already** been responded to, and in the very book he is reviewing! Why?! Is this an oversight, or is it intentional? Or is it BOTH?--is the "oversight" a result of his all-consuming intention (to trash me, the book, the TSSI, and Marx), such that he finds what he is looking for, and doesn't find what he isn't looking for?

Sinha also wrongly portrays this "devastating" argument as a knock-down clincher that no one has ever answered. But it has indeed been answered before--for instance in the Kliman and Freeman "Rejoinder to Duncan Foley and David Laibman" (Research in Political Economy, vol. 18, 2000, pp. 285-93):

"Imagine that our computer firm borrowed \$1000 a year ago, and used it to buy one computer in order to produce two computers, completed today. If the new computers are worth \$500 each, the firm's net worth has increased not a whit. (Since interest is due, its net worth has in fact declined.) Its earnings are zero, not only in money terms, but also in real, physical, terms: it has no resources with which to expand its production."

Sinha had a responsibility to the reading public to inform them that his "devastating" argument was indeed answered long ago, and in the book he is

supposedly reviewing.

I don't have time at the moment to respond to some of Sinha's other "devastating" critiques, but I cannot ignore the false and *defamatory* charge with which he begins his "review." According to Sinha,

"the reader is told that there exists a group of 'scholars' who claim that no such internal inconsistency exists. And therefore, according to Andrew Kliman, the author of this book, the conclusion follows: 'The very existence of the TSSI [a name given to the interpretation of Marx's theory of value by this group of 'scholars'] carries with it two important consequences. First, the allegations of inconsistency are unproved. Second, they are implausible.' Thus the reader has been strongly forewarned of the quality of reasoning s/he is expected to encounter in this book."

... "When I started to read this book, I thought this must be a minor slip on the author's part. But to my great surprise, I found that this is the general norm of his method of reasoning--he simply shows no truck with the basic tenets of logic."

Sinha (correctly) compares the above argument--"there exists a group of 'scholars' ... and therefore ..."--to an argument that, "there exists a group of 'scholars' who argue that ... creationism is consistent with empirical evidence," and therefore "the claims of evolutionism are unproved and they are implausible!"

Ha ha ha ha. Completely devastating. Kliman is quite the bombastic and illogical buffoon. So there's no need to take seriously the claim that the allegations of inconsistency are mythical, no need for Marx's erstwhile critics to do the right thing by doing their part to set the record straight, no need for reparations.

However, the premise of the above argument--"there exists a group of 'scholars' who claim that no such internal inconsistency exists"--is a complete fabrication. It is purely Sinha's invention. It is not the actual premise from which I drew the "consequences" that "the allegations of inconsistency are unproved ... [and] implausible." Note that although Sinha QUOTES almost the whole of my argument, he "PARAPHRASES" the premise. So it *looks* like Sinha is quoting me, it *looks* like he's dealing with my actual argument, when in fact he has subtly replaced the actual premise of my argument with his own version--in order to make it appear that the author "simply shows no truck with the basic tenets of logic."

Had Sinha quoted my whole argument, here is what the reader would have found:

"An alternative interpretation developed during the last quarter-century--the temporal single-system interpretation (TSSI)--eliminates all of the apparent inconsistencies. The very existence of the TSSI carries with it two important consequences. First, the allegations of inconsistency are unproved. Second, they are implausible. When one interpretation makes the text make sense, while others fail to do so because they create avoidable inconsistencies within the text, it is not plausible that the latter interpretations are correct. Thus the charges of inconsistency, founded on these interpretations, are implausible as well."

[_Reclaiming Marx's "Capital"_, p. xiii].

So instead of arguing the logical equivalent of

"there exists a group of 'scholars' who argue that ... creationism is consistent with empirical evidence," therefore "the claims of evolutionism are unproved and they are implausible!"

my *actual* argument is the logical equivalent of

"creationism is consistent with the empirical evidence, and creationism makes the empirical evidence make sense while the theory of natural selection does not, therefore the claims of evolutionism are unproved and they are implausible!"

(I of course do not agree with the premises of this last argument; the point is that the logical fallacy that's present in Sinha's version of the argument is absent from the original one.)

Was it intentional that Sinha quoted the conclusion of my argument but "paraphrased" my premises? How could this decision have been unintentional? The Corn Fairy made him do it? Did she threaten to take away his maximum eigenvalue?

Was his misrepresentation of the argument's premises "unintentional"? How can anyone unintentionally confuse "An alternative interpretation ... eliminates all of the apparent inconsistencies" with "there exists a group of 'scholars' who claim that no such internal inconsistency exists"?-- especially since "An alternative interpretation ... eliminates all of the apparent inconsistencies" is the sentence that *immediately* precedes what Sinha chose to quote.

(It is of course irrelevant to the *logical coherence* of my argument, which is what Sinha is impugning, whether the premises are true or false. If Sinha did not know this beforehand, he should have learned it from my book, which emphasizes this point throughout.)

Again, I don't have time right now (it's a holiday in the U.S. and I've been ill for 7 weeks) to respond to Sinha's other "devastating" critiques. And I refuse to fall into the trap of responding to some of the review, because some of it is diversionary. The book is purely about the allegations of inconsistency, not about whether Marx's theory as interpreted by the TSSI is correct or not, fruitful or not. But a good deal of Sinha's review is about these latter issues and wrongly implies that my book is also about these latter issues. As I note in the "Preface,"

"In recent years, Marx's critics have found it increasingly difficult to defend the allegations of inconsistency against the TSSI critique. Thus they generally try to avoid this issue altogether. Instead, they now prefer to debate the pros and cons of Marx's work and of alternative approaches to Marxian economic analysis. In other contexts, these are of course important and interesting topics, but to discuss them here and now is to fall into a diversionary trap, at the very moment when correction of the record has become a real possibility. I will be glad to discuss these topics

with Marx's critics once the record has been set straight and they have done their part to help set it straight. This book, however, purposely refrains from offering a positive case for Marx's ideas or for Marxian economic analysis informed by the TSSI. [_Reclaiming Marx's "Capital"_, pp. xiii-xiv].

So let me just leave you with the following thought, which I originally wrote last year in my response to Roberto Veneziani's critique of Marx and the TSSI ("Veneziani's Critique of Marx and the TSSI," presented at 2006 AHE conference, July; emphasis in original):

"In an effort to avoid conceding that their interpretations of his theories of value, profit and the falling rate of profit are incorrect, Marx's Marxian and Sraffian critics again and again put forth false, baseless, irrelevant and other diversionary critiques of the TSSI. As soon as one set of false allegations and 'proofs' by one author is refuted, another critic comes out with another set, etc., etc. And thus the suppression of Marx's critique of political economy, in its original form, continues.

"There seems to be no sign that the critics have any intention of stopping this stratagem. Indeed, they have no interest in stopping it as long as the benefits of the stratagem outweigh the costs. And at the moment, the stratagem carries no costs at all, because - after proponents of the TSSI have refuted a set of false allegations - there is nothing that compels Marx's critics to concede error, much less to set the record straight regarding their claims of inconsistency, claims that serve suppressive functions. The critics can (and do) put forth new false claims, and/or divert the discussion, and/or simply remain silent and wait for the next prize-fighter to step in the ring against Marx.

... "Why answer false and diversionary critiques one more time, if doing so is a pointless, Sisyphean task? It takes up time and energy and wears one out, especially because one knows that this set of false and diversionary critiques will be followed by yet another set, or by silence - not by forthright concessions that the critic has erred, much less a renunciation of false allegations of internal inconsistency, much less any proactive effort by Marx's critics to help set the record straight.

"I'm not sure that there is any point to this. But if we fail to answer the critics, observers might think that we have no answer, so that the allegations of inconsistency might be correct after all.

"The only way to negotiate this situation, it seems to me, is to take the offensive. The main thing that is needed is an organized campaign to establish new rules, rules that punish people for making false and baseless allegations, either knowingly or because of reckless disregard. In other words, something analogous to laws against defamation is needed."

I invite all those who care about honesty and intellectual integrity to help establish rules that punish people for making false and baseless allegations, either knowingly or because of reckless disregard.

I'm am copying this message to Paul Cockshott, who has kindly offered to forward it to what he calls "the ope-list," an offer I accept.

For pluralism, for justice, against defamation --

Andrew Kliman

Paul Cockshott
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+44 141 330 3125
www.dcs.gla.ac.uk/~wpc/reports/

-----Original Message-----

From: OPE-L on behalf of Philip Dunn

Sent: Thu 22/11/2007 12:40 AM

To: OPE-L@SUS.CSUCHICO.EDU

Subject: Re: [OPE-L] book review of Kliman's book

On Tue, 2007-11-20 at 11:34 +0000, Paul Cockshott wrote:

> I am posting I review of Kliman's book to the list, that was
> sent to me by an old friend. I post it with his permission.

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p. 5

"Let us suppose that we are in n-good world and there is a sector X which produces a non-basic good and does not use itself as an input. Let us also suppose that there is continuous increase in labor productivity in this sector; whereas in all other sectors (including gold sector) the labor productivity remains constant. In this case the price of the commodity X would continuously fall. Let us suppose that the commodity-capital worth \$100 in terms of gold was used as inputs (including wages) in time 0, which produces 100 units of X in the beginning of period 1. Let us suppose that in period 0 the price of X was \$1.2/X. However, since the capitalists have introduced more productive technology in period 0, the price of X falls to \$1/X in the beginning of period 1. Kliman argues that this means that capitalists in the sector X have made zero profits. But this is simply not true. Since in period 1 the capitalists would need only 80% of the inputs that they used in period 0 to produce the same 100 units of X, they can continue their business as usual at the same level and pocket \$20 as profit. In his examples of continuous technical changes, Kliman forgets that even if prices of inputs remain the same and the price of output is falling, it does not imply that the rate of profit must fall; because the quantity of inputs needed to produce the same amount of output must also continuously shrink due to rise in labor productivity. If the sector X was a basic sector, then a continuous rise in labor productivity in this sector would have a complicated effect on all prices. Okishio (1961) showed that in this case the prices must change in such a way that the uniform rate of profits in the system rises. Kliman, on the other hand,

has no theory of prices. He simply takes arbitrary prices at two different periods and concludes: Voila! 'I proved Okishio wrong!' But Kliman has a problem, which Okishio does not. As I show in our example above, Kliman's reasoning suggests that the capitalists in sector X are making zero profit but still we find that they can run their business as usual at the same level and yet pocket \$20 for their enjoyment. Where from do they get this \$20?"

Magic. The \$20 was part of the original capital advanced. To recover this is not to make a profit, even if it released as cash. They can, indeed, pocket \$20 for their enjoyment but this is known as consuming capital (unproductively).

Schoolboy howler after schoolboy howler.

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- **Next message:** [Jurriaan Bendien: "\[OPE-L\] Stocks and flows in Marx's theory"](#)
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This archive was generated by [hypermail 2.1.5](#): Fri Nov 30 2007 - 00:00:04 EST

Re: [OPE-L] book review of Kliman's book

From: Paul Cockshott (wpc@DCS.GLA.AC.UK)

Date: Mon Nov 26 2007 - 04:42:31 EST

- **Next message:** [GERALD LEVY: "\[OPE-L\] Historical Materialism Issue 15.3"](#)
- **Previous message:** [Dave Zachariah: "Re: \[OPE-L\] Stocks and flows in Marx's theory"](#)
- **In reply to:** [Philip Dunn: "Re: \[OPE-L\] book review of Kliman's book"](#)
- **Next in thread:** [Dave Zachariah: "Re: \[OPE-L\] book review of Kliman's book"](#)
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I have been asked to forward another posting on this which I enclose. After this I want to call a halt to being a postal intermediary. If the participants want to go on debating via the list I think they should rejoin it.

-----Original Message-----

From: OPE-L [mailto:OPE-L@SUS.CSUCHICO.EDU] On Behalf Of Philip Dunn
Sent: 22 November 2007 19:42
To: OPE-L@SUS.CSUCHICO.EDU
Subject: Re: [OPE-L] book review of Kliman's book

On Thu, 2007-11-22 at 10:58 +0000, Paul Cockshott wrote:

> Philip
>
> However, the writer gives no indication that he understands the TSSI or
> SSSI or Marx even.
>
> p.10
> "The illogicality of his argument becomes apparent when we look at his
> MELT from the other side. Let us assume with Kliman that \$1 = 1/3 hours
> of labor. Then it must imply that 1 hour of labor = \$3. Let us call it
> labor equivalent of money (LEM). If we apply our LEM to Kliman's example
> of the two sectors above, the \$ price of commodity 1 must be
> \$200 + (8x3) = \$224 and the \$ price of commodity 2 must be
> \$40 + (16x3) = \$88. But his output prices are different. Therefore, MELT
> is an irrational measure of conversion from labor to \$ or \$ to labor."
>
> The confusion between price and value! Neither TSSI nor SSSI nor Marx
> calculates *prices* as the constant capital transferred in dollars plus
> labour converted to dollars. What is calculated here is the *value* of
> output expressed in dollars.
>
> (I take that the writer is assuming a constant MELT/LEM here.)

> -----
> If there are only two sectors then the total value of output expressed
> In dollars will be the same as the total price, so Ajit's assumption
> Seems sound
>
> Cheers

Hi Paul,

I am puzzled. Ajit was calculating sectoral prices, not total price. Besides, in TSSI, however many sectors there are, the total value of output expressed in dollars will be the same as the total price, since the MELT is defined as total price over total value.

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- application/msword attachment: [Response to Kliman.doc](#)

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- **Next message:** [GERALD LEVY: "\[OPE-L\] _Historical Materialism_ Issue 15.3"](#)
 - **Previous message:** [Dave Zachariah: "Re: \[OPE-L\] Stocks and flows in Marx's theory"](#)
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The following is the text of the attachment that is entitled 'Response to Kliman.doc' in the OPE-L post dated November 26, 2007, given in full above:

=====

Paul, Thanks for forwarding this to me. Here is my response to Kliman.

Kliman:

Concerning your response to this supposedly "devastating" argument of Sinha's: "Let us suppose that the commodity-capital worth \$100 in terms of gold was used as inputs (including wages) in time 0, which produces 100 units of X in the beginning of period 1. Let us suppose that in period 0 the price of X was $\$1.2/X$. However, since the capitalists have introduced more productive technology in period 0, the price of X falls to $\$1/X$ in the beginning of period 1. Kliman argues that this means that capitalists in the sector X have made zero profits. But this is simply not true. Since in period 1 the capitalists would need only 80% of the inputs that they used in period 0 to produce the same 100 units of X, they can continue their business as usual at the same level and pocket \$20 as profit. In his examples of continuous technical changes, Kliman forgets that even if prices of inputs remain the same and the price of output is falling, it does not imply that the rate of profit must fall; because the quantity of inputs needed to produce the same amount of output must also continuously shrink due to rise in labor productivity."

let me mention that my book anticipates and responds to this argument somewhat in the manner to which you respond to it(though my book refrains from claiming that any economic theory's definitions or concepts are right or wrong):

"the replacement-cost defense maintains that the value rate of profit is a healthy 20%, even though the capitalist farmers actually invested a value of 150 at the start of Year 2 and the value of their output is 150 at the end. The farmers, on the other hand, are a wee bit disappointed. They think that they made no profit at all. Some readers may wish to explain to the farmers that they have been taken in by a metaphysical value theory: 'You have actually done quite well. You've ended up with 20% more corn than you invested initially, and your potential rate of accumulation is therefore 20% as well--you can expand your operations by up to 20%.' "Such readers are advised to think twice. If the farmers borrowed the 150 start-up capital from their bankers, then they end up with nothing, indeed less than nothing. They must sell off their entire corn output, and use their sales revenue of 150 to

repay the principal on the bank loans. They have nothing left over to expand their operations. Even in physical terms, they are unable to accumulate. Moreover, they have not yet paid, and cannot pay, the interest that they owe the bankers. (fn 9) [fn 9: Nothing is really different if the farmers are able to finance their own operations. Their books may not show that they owe interest to themselves, but if they continually extend zero-interest loans to themselves, they continually forego the interest that they could acquire by investing their money capital externally.] The same situation occurs year after year, and soon the farmers are drowning in debt." [Reclaiming Marx's "Capital": A Refutation of the Myth of Inconsistency, pp. 86-87, emphasis in original] So Sinha's charge that "Kliman forgets" is *false*. Equally bad, if not worse, Sinha fails to inform his readers that his supposedly "devastating" argument has *already* been responded to, and in the very book he is reviewing!

Sinha's response:

As I say at the end of the review, I wonder how a book with so many elementary errors got published. Of course, there are silly mistakes throughout the book such as the example Kliman puts up there. But you cannot mention all the silly mistakes of the book in one review. As it is, the editors are complaining that it is too long. First of all, Kliman does not understand that if you borrow capital from a bank, the bank will not ask you to pay back the whole capital after one production cycle. If that was the case, then the rate of profits (physical or monetary) will have to be at least 100% for the business to continue in period 1. Otherwise all the businesses must close down including banking! So if in our example the rate of profits is 20% then the rate of interest cannot be more than 20%, if it was so then the economy is dead in water already. So let's say that in my example the rate of interest is 5%, so the capitalist could easily pay \$5 as rate of interest and say \$5 against principal and still pocket \$10 dollars for their enjoyment and carry on with their business at the same level and repay the whole principal in 20 years. How does he explain this? The point to be noted here is that the rate of interest must have a relation with the rate of profits and the rate of profits are related to the prices of production. You cannot arbitrarily assume whatever prices and the rate of interest and the rate of profits you want. When techniques change then if the commodity is a basic-good then it will have very complicated affect on prices of all the goods. What would be the resultant rate of profits can only be known when you solve for all the prices. I have purposely taken an example of non-basic to assume a simple affect on prices of a change in technique.

Kliman:

Sinha also wrongly portrays this "devastating" argument as a knock-down clincher that no one has ever answered. But it has indeed been answered before--for instance in the Kliman and Freeman "Rejoinder to Duncan Foley and David Laibman" (Research in Political Economy, vol. 18, 2000, pp. 285-93):

"Imagine that our computer firm borrowed \$1000 a year ago, and used it to buy one computer in order to produce two computers, completed today. If the new computers are worth \$500 each, the firm's net worth has increased not a whit. (Since interest is due, its net worth has in fact declined.) Its earnings are zero, not only in money terms, but also in real, physical, terms: it has no resources with which to expand its production."

Sinha had a responsibility to the reading public to inform them that his "devastating" argument was indeed answered long ago, and in the book he is supposedly reviewing.

I don't have time at the moment to respond to some of Sinha's other "devastating" critiques, but I cannot ignore the false and *defamatory* charge with which he begins his "review." According to Sinha,

"the reader is told that there exists a group of 'scholars' who claim that no such internal inconsistency exists. And therefore, according to Andrew Kliman, the author of this book, the conclusion follows: 'The very existence of the TSSI [a name given to the interpretation of Marx's theory of value by this group of 'scholars'] carries with it two important consequences. First, the allegations of inconsistency are unproved. Second, they are implausible.' Thus the reader has been strongly forewarned of the quality of reasoning s/he is expected to encounter in this book."

... "When I started to read this book, I thought this must be a minor slip on the author's part. But to my great surprise, I found that this is the general norm of his method of reasoning--he simply shows no truck with the basic tenets of logic."

Sinha (correctly) compares the above argument--"there exists a group of 'scholars' ... and therefore ..."--to an argument that, "there exists a group of 'scholars' who argue that ... creationism is consistent with empirical evidence," and therefore "the claims of evolutionism are unproved and they are implausible!"

Ha ha ha ha. Completely devastating. Kliman is quite the bombastic and illogical buffoon. So there's no need to take seriously the claim that the allegations of inconsistency are mythical, no need for Marx's erstwhile

critics to do the right thing by doing their part to set the record straight, no need for reparations.

However, the premise of the above argument--"there exists a group of 'scholars' who claim that no such internal inconsistency exists"--is a complete fabrication. It is purely Sinha's invention. It is not the actual premise from which I drew the "consequences" that "the allegations of inconsistency are unproved ... [and] implausible." Note that although Sinha QUOTES almost the whole of my argument, he "PARAPHRASES" the premise. So it *looks* like Sinha is quoting me, it *looks* like he's dealing with my actual argument, when in fact he has subtly replaced the actual premise of my argument with his own version--in order to make it appear that the author "simply shows no truck with the basic tenets of logic."

Had Sinha quoted my whole argument, here is what the reader would have found:

"An alternative interpretation developed during the last quarter-century--the temporal single-system interpretation (TSSI)--eliminates all of the apparent inconsistencies. The very existence of the TSSI carries with it two important consequences. First, the allegations of inconsistency are unproved. Second, they are implausible. When one interpretation makes the text make sense, while others fail to do so because they create avoidable inconsistencies within the text, it is not plausible that the latter interpretations are correct. Thus the charges of inconsistency, founded on these interpretations, are implausible as well." [_Reclaiming Marx's "Capital"_, p. xiii].

So instead of arguing the logical equivalent of

"there exists a group of 'scholars' who argue that ... creationism is consistent with empirical evidence," therefore "the claims of evolutionism are unproved and they are implausible!"

my *actual* argument is the logical equivalent of

"creationism is consistent with the empirical evidence, and creationism makes the empirical evidence make sense while the theory of natural selection does not, therefore the claims of evolutionism are unproved and they are implausible!"

Sinha's response:

So what is the fuss about? Kliman says, "An alternative interpretation developed during the last quarter-century--the temporal single-system interpretation (TSSI)--eliminates all of the apparent inconsistencies" and Sinha PARAPHRASES it as "there exists a group of 'scholars' who claim that no

such inconsistency exists." The first statement is a claim by Kliman, who is a member of this group of 'scholars'. But Kliman wants you to accept that Kliman is God, if he claims that there exists an interpretation that ELIMINATES ALL THE APPARENT INCONSISTENCIES, you better accept it to be true otherwise it is *defamatory* to God. It cannot be put just as a claim made by a group of 'scholars'. It is the truth--the word of God. As he goes on to show the so-called logical difference between his claim and the claims of the creationists, he says: "my *actual* argument is the logical equivalent of "creationism is consistent with the empirical evidence, and creationism makes the empirical evidence make sense while the theory of natural selection does not, therefore the claims of evolutionism are unproved and they are implausible!" Exactly! Creationists claim that creationism is consistent with the empirical evidence and they claim that it makes sense while the theory of natural selection does not. There is no logical difference here. Kliman's argument boils down to saying to his critics that you must accept that my claims are right and then argue with me. As I said, his reasoning shows no truck with logic! _____
Kliman:

(I of course do not agree with the premises of this last argument; the point is that the logical fallacy that's present in Sinha's version of the argument is absent from the original one.)

Was it intentional that Sinha quoted the conclusion of my argument but "paraphrased" my premises? How could this decision have been unintentional? The Corn Fairy made him do it? Did she threaten to take away his maximum eigenvalue?

Was his misrepresentation of the argument's premises "unintentional"? How can anyone unintentionally confuse "An alternative interpretation ... eliminates all of the apparent inconsistencies" with "there exists a group of 'scholars' who claim that no such internal inconsistency exists"?-- especially since "An alternative interpretation ... eliminates all of the apparent inconsistencies" is the sentence that *immediately* precedes what Sinha chose to quote.

(It is of course irrelevant to the *logical coherence* of my argument, which is what Sinha is impugning, whether the premises are true or false. If Sinha did not know this beforehand, he should have learned it from my book, which emphasizes this point throughout.)

Again, I don't have time right now (it's a holiday in the U.S. and I've been ill for 7 weeks) to respond to Sinha's other "devastating" critiques. And I refuse to fall into the trap of responding to some of the review, because some of it is diversionary. The book is purely about the allegations of

inconsistency, not about whether Marx's theory as interpreted by the TSSI is correct or not, fruitful or not. But a good deal of Sinha's review is about these latter issues and wrongly implies that my book is also about these latter issues. As I note in the "Preface,"

"In recent years, Marx's critics have found it increasingly difficult to defend the allegations of inconsistency against the TSSI critique. Thus they generally try to avoid this issue altogether. Instead, they now prefer to debate the pros and cons of Marx's work and of alternative approaches to Marxian economic analysis. In other contexts, these are of course important and interesting topics, but to discuss them here and now is to fall into a diversionary trap, at the very moment when correction of the record has become a real possibility. I will be glad to discuss these topics with Marx's critics once the record has been set straight and they have done their part to help set it straight. This book, however, purposely refrains from offering a positive case for Marx's ideas or for Marxian economic analysis informed by the TSSI. [Reclaiming Marx's "Capital", pp. xiii-xiv].

So let me just leave you with the following thought, which I originally wrote last year in my response to Roberto Veneziani's critique of Marx and the TSSI ("Veneziani's Critique of Marx and the TSSI," presented at 2006 AHE conference, July; emphasis in original):

"In an effort to avoid conceding that their interpretations of his theories of value, profit and the falling rate of profit are incorrect, Marx's Marxian and Sraffian critics again and again put forth false, baseless, irrelevant and other diversionary critiques of the TSSI. As soon as one set of false allegations and 'proofs' by one author is refuted, another critic comes out with another set, etc., etc. And thus the suppression of Marx's critique of political economy, in its original form, continues.

"There seems to be no sign that the critics have any intention of stopping this stratagem. Indeed, they have no interest in stopping it as long as the benefits of the stratagem outweigh the costs. And at the moment, the stratagem carries no costs at all, because - after proponents of the TSSI have refuted a set of false allegations - there is nothing that compels Marx's critics to concede error, much less to set the record straight regarding their claims of inconsistency, claims that serve suppressive functions. The critics can (and do) put forth new false claims, and/or divert the discussion, and/or simply remain silent and wait for the next prize-fighter to step in the ring against Marx.

... "Why answer false and diversionary critiques one more time, if doing so is a pointless, Sisyphean task? It takes up time and energy and wears one out, especially because one knows that this set of false and diversionary

critiques will be followed by yet another set, or by silence - not by forthright concessions that the critic has erred, much less a renunciation of false allegations of internal inconsistency, much less any proactive effort by Marx's critics to help set the record straight.

"I'm not sure that there is any point to this. But if we fail to answer the critics, observers might think that we have no answer, so that the allegations of inconsistency might be correct after all.

"The only way to negotiate this situation, it seems to me, is to take the offensive. The main thing that is needed is an organized campaign to establish new rules, rules that punish people for making false and baseless allegations, either knowingly or because of reckless disregard. In other words, something analogous to laws against defamation is needed."

I invite all those who care about honesty and intellectual integrity to help establish rules that punish people for making false and baseless allegations, either knowingly or because of reckless disregard.

I'm am copying this message to Paul Cockshott, who has kindly offered to forward it to what he calls "the ope-list," an offer I accept.

For pluralism, for justice, against defamation --
Andrew Kliman

Sinha's response:

For someone who repeatedly claims to not having time to respond to theoretical critique, he seems to have a lot of time for writing garbage! Now, what other people make of this is their business. As far as I'm concerned, it is an example of his buffoonary he was talking about above in the post. The fact of the matter is that there is no short-cut to good quality scholarship. No one can get there by intimidation and raving and ranting. You need to do hard work. And that begins with trying to get your basics right.

Cheers,
ajit sinha

