

Dialektik von Arbeit und Freiheit: Die Philosophische Revolution von Marxens Geschichtsauffassung

Überstieg und Entwicklung der “Grundrisse” durch das “Kapital”

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Abstract: The basis of Marx’s theory of the liberation of labor is neither the alienation logic in “Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte aus dem Jahre 1844” nor the theory of the division of labor in “Die Deutsche Ideologie”, but the capitalist machine mass production. Divorced from this point, the dialectic of labor and freedom cannot be accurately understood. However, in the positioning of machine mass production, there are important differences between the “Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie” and “Capital”. In the previous work, Marx did not establish the scientific theory of the duality of labor [Theorie der Zwieschlächtigkeit der Arbeit], but rather expounded the philosophical effects of machine mass production based on immediate labor, and thus demonstrated the possibility of the collapse of capitalism [Zusammenbruch des Kapitalismus] and the liberation of labor, whose whole logic still contained important flaws. “Capital” comprehensively overcame the flaws of “Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie” and established the scientific theory of machine mass production. On this basis, Marx also interprets the dual connotation of the liberation of labor, not only revealing the real basis [wirkliche Grundlage] for the liberation of labor from the capital relationship [Kapitalverhältnis], but also interpreting the possibility of labor shifting from means to end, clarifying the dialectical relationship of the realm of necessity and the realm of freedom [Reich der Notwendigkeit-Reich der Freiheit], and subverting the Western philosophy-economics tradition that demeans labor [Demütigung der Arbeit] or simply understand labor as a means.

Keywords: liberation of labor, freedom, machine production, “Capital”, “Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie”

The question of the relationship between labor and freedom is not only a topic of concern for Western philosophers and classical economists, but also a core question of the study of Marx’s philosophy. It is with this question as a breakthrough that contemporary Western scholars have set off an upsurge of the reconstruction or critique of Marx. Concretely, it is mainly embodied in three representative viewpoints: The first is the utopianism of the liberation of labor. Arendt pointed out that labor is entirely an instrumental activity, at any time, it is impossible to cast off the compulsion of necessity and turn it into an end itself. However, Marx took his course and naively thought that labor can be liberated from necessity and become a free and conscious activity, which was a typical utopianism.¹ The second is the

¹ See Arendt, p. 45. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40971551?seq=1#page>.

empiricist view of immanent causality or the autonomist philosophy of antagonism. The American scholar Gould believes that Marx created a brand-new view of causality in “Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie” (hereinafter referred to as “Grundrisse”), i.e., the view of immanent causality grounded on labor. “Labour not only provides the ground for the concepts of cause, but more fundamentally constitutes the ontological domain of causality itself insofar as one is concerned with human affairs.”² In this regard, the shift from labor to freedom is neither the product of the promotion of external causes nor the result of the self-movement of the idea, but rather the internal product of the self-development of labour.³ Similarly, in the “Lessons on the ‘Grundrisse’: Marx beyond Marx”, Negri also believes that the shift from labor to freedom is neither the result of the internal contradictory movement of capitalism nor the historical crystallization of the proletarian revolution, but the necessary product of the labor autonomy.⁴ Freedom is entailed in labor. Allowing the self-development of the latter, it can spontaneously grow free. It is precisely based on this logic that Negri regards the “Grundrisse” as the culmination of Marx’s thought development, and regards “Capital” as a historical retrogression of this work, and then the two are strictly opposed.⁵ The third is the romanticist aesthetic salvation. Marcuse pointed out that, in the realm of necessity, labor is only a necessary means to meet needs, a kind of compulsion and misery; but in the realm of freedom, the essence of labor will undergo a major change, becoming a non-utilitarian play or amusement that transcends the limitation of the object [gegenständliche Schranken].⁶ And this is exactly the basis of Baudrillard’s critique of Marx’s theory of the liberation of labor.⁷ Around these interpretations, the domestic academic community has already made a positive critical response, but there are always some core issues that have not been effectively clarified. For example, what is the realistic basis of Marx’s theory of the liberation of labor? How to understand the inner relationship between machine mass production theory and the liberation of labor? In terms of the elaboration of this issue, what are the differences between “Grundrisse” and “Capital”? Can “Grundrisse” be regarded as the culmination of Marx’s thought development as Negri did? Clarifying these issues not only helps us to fully grasp the scientific connotation of Marx’s theory of the liberation of labor, but also clarifies the spiritual essence of the revolution of Marx’s view of history, and it can also provide us important inspiration inaccurately positioning the historical position and philosophical thoughts of “Grundrisse” and “Capital”.

To actively respond to the criticism or reconstruction of Marx's theory of the liberation of labor by contemporary western scholars, we must first return to Marx's text, original sources, and clarify the original context [Urkontext] and scientific connotation of Marx's raising this issue [Stellung dieser Frage].

Looking at the development process of Marx's thoughts, we can see that in different periods, Marx's understanding of the relationship between labor and freedom is obviously different. In the “Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844”, he started from the logic of humanism, presupposing free and conscious labor as the essence of man, in order to criticize the capitalist alienated labor, believing that as long as the latter is abandoned, the leap of labor from means to end can be realized, transforming it into a free activity that highlights the essential powers of man. This interpretation, both in terms of form and content, remains in the speculative alienation view of history.

² Gould, p. 76.

³ See Gould, p. 98.

⁴ See Negri, p. 229.

⁵ *ibid.*, p. 38.

⁶ See Marcuse, pp. 216-218.

⁷ See Baudrillard, pp. 16-17.

In “German Ideology”, Marx made an important advancement on this issue. The formation of historical materialism provided an important methodological support for his analysis of this issue. But objectively speaking, at that time he did not really understand the dialectic of material production, labor and freedom. Marx and Engels pointed out: „Die Arbeit hat bei ihnen allen Schein der Selbstbetätigung verloren und erhält ihr Leben nur, indem sie es verkümmert.... dass überhaupt das materielle Leben als Zweck, die Erzeugung dieses materiellen Lebens, die Arbeit (welche die jetzt einzig mögliche, aber wie wir sehn, negative Form der Selbstbetätigung ist), als Mittel erscheint.“⁸ At this time, Marx and Engels did not strictly distinguish between labor and material production, but directly equated the two. On the surface, there seems to be nothing wrong with this point of view, but once it reaches the stage of large-scale machine production, its flaws are clearly manifested. Labor is the main part of the material production process. Before the machine production, as a main activity, labor covers the entire material production process; from this perspective, the two are the same process. However, once they enter the stage of large-scale machine production, the two are strictly delimited. At this time, the role of labor in the entire production process will gradually decline, becoming a secondary link in the production, which is a qualitative change.

However, it is regrettable that although Marx and Engels have already talked about the large-scale machine production, they did not realize this point. Why? The main reason is that they did not really understand the essence of the large-scale machine production, but like Babbage and Schultz, they use Smith's logic of division of labor to understand the large-scale machine production. This has led them to not be clearly aware of the importance of distinguishing labor from production. Under the guidance of this logic, they will inevitably believe that the capitalist material production, i.e., labor, had become a slavery activity in contrast to Selbstbetätigung and verkümmert das Leben. This will inevitably lead to the inherent contradiction of capitalism, namely, contradiction between productive forces and form of communication [Verkehrsform], leading capitalism towards end. At this time, labor and material production will be liberated from this slavery form, becoming the "einzig mögliche Form der Selbstbetätigung" and realizing the transformation from means to end.

Then, what is worth thinking is whether material production can get rid of the limitations of natural necessity [Schranke der Naturnotwendigkeit] and become true free activity? Or, in the field of material production, what is the essential difference between the freedom that labor can achieve and the freedom that can be achieved by the labor of the end itself? This involves the issue of the relationship between the realm of necessity and the realm of freedom. At that time, Marx and Engels apparently did not have the ability to answer these questions.

In “Grundrisse”, Marx made an important breakthrough on these issues. First of all, can labor become a free activity? Here, Marx gives a clear answer. He pointed out that in the capitalist and pre-capitalist societies, the reason why labor is reduced to a means is entirely caused by social conditions. This does not mean that labor can only exist as a means, but shows that “Arbeit, die sich noch nicht die Bedingungen, subjektive und objektive, geschaffen hat... Arbeit travail attractif, Selbstverwirklichung des Individuums”⁹. As long as these external limitations [äußere Schranke] are overcome, labor can be freed from compulsion and become a free activity. "Daß aber diese Überwindung von Hindernissen an sich Betätigung der Freiheit – und daß ferner die äußeren Zwecke den Schein bloß äußerer Naturnotwendigkeit abgestreift erhalten und als Zwecke, die das Individuum selbst erst setzt, gesetzt werden – also als Selbstverwirklichung, Vergegenständlichung des Subjekts, daher reale Freiheit, deren

⁸ Selected Works of Marx and Engels, Vol. 1, p. 128.

⁹ Complete Works of Marx and Engels, Vol. 30, pp. 615-616.

Aktion eben die Arbeit“¹⁰. In this regard, Marx once again affirmed the possibility that labor will rise from means to end. So, how does it transform? Or, what is the wirkliche Grundlage of this transformation? At that time, Marx no longer resorts to the alienation logic of humanism as in “Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844” and does not appeal to the division of labor as in “German Ideology”, but analyzes this problem all along in the context of large-scale machine production.

In this work, Marx pointed out that with the formation of Capital fixe, especially the introduction of the machinery, the capitalist production process has undergone major changes: if labor was the dominant process of production, now labor has become a secondary link of the production process.¹¹ At this time, the distinction between labor and production is no longer nominal or formal, but has substantial meaning. "Dies wird der emanzipierten Arbeit zugute kommen und ist die Bedingung ihrer Emanzipation."¹²

Marx pointed out that the decline of the role of labor in the production process will directly lead to the collapse of capitalist labor theory of value. The “Voraussetzung [der kapitalistischen Produktion] ist und bleibt – die Masse unmittelbarer Arbeitszeit, das Quantum angewandter Arbeit als der entscheidende Faktor der Produktion des Reichtums”¹³. This means that as long as production is capitalist in nature, immediate labor time is always the only measure of wealth; however, the decline in the role of labor in the production process means the real wealth of capitalism. Creation does not depend more on immediate labor time, but on the level of science and technology and its application in production, which will directly jeopardize the foundation of capitalist wealth production. “Das Kapital ist selbst der Widerspruch, daß es die notwendige Arbeitszeit (und dies ist zugleich die Reduktion des Arbeiters auf ein Minimum, i.e. seine Existenz als bloßes lebendiges Arbeitsvermögen) beständig aufzuheben sucht.”¹⁴ With this contradiction development, capitalism will encounter its insurmountable boundary [unüberwindbare Grenze], and eventually tend to disintegrate. "Sobald die Arbeit in unmittelbarer Form aufgehört hat, die große Quelle des Reichtums zu sein, hört und muß aufhören, die Arbeitszeit sein Maß zu sein und daher der Tauschwert [das Maß] des Gebrauchswerts.... Damit bricht die auf dem Tauschwert ruhende Produktion zusammen, und der unmittelbare materielle Produktionsprozeß erhält selbst die Form der Notdürftigkeit und Gegensätzlichkeit abgestreift."¹⁵ Labor will also be liberated from the capitalist slavery form and transformed into a new form.

So, does this mean that as long as you get rid of the compulsion of the capital relationship, labor can be automatically transformed into a free activity? The answer is no. To achieve this means that labor is no longer a tool for surplus value production, but a return to the general level, i.e., use value production to meet the development needs of the entire society. This is what Marx later called the feature of the socialist stage of labor. Here, labor is still a means, and it has not really translated into the end itself. To achieve this transformation, certain social conditions are needed.

Marx pointed out: "Die Arbeit der materiellen Produktion kann diesen Charakter nur erhalten, dadurch, daß 1. ihr gesellschaftlicher Charakter gesetzt ist, 2. daß sie wissenschaftlichen Charakters, zugleich allgemeine Arbeit ist, nicht Anstrengung des Menschen als bestimmt dressierter Naturkraft, sondern als Subjekt, das in dem

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 615.

¹¹ Complete Works of Marx and Engels, Vol. 31, pp. 91-92.

¹² *ibid.*, p. 97.

¹³ *ibid.*, p. 100.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 101.

¹⁵ *ibid.*

Produktionsprozeß nicht in bloß natürlicher, naturwüchsiger Form, sondern als alle Naturkräfte regelnde Tätigkeit erscheint"¹⁶ and the large-scale machine production precisely provides objective conditions for this transformation of labor. Marx pointed out that the machinery and the capitalist application of the machinery are completely different. "Daraus, daß die Maschinerie die entsprechendste Form des Gebrauchswerts des Capital fixe, folgt keineswegs, daß die Subsumtion unter das gesellschaftliche Verhältnis des Kapitals das entsprechendste und beste gesellschaftliche Produktionsverhältnis für die Anwendung der Maschinerie."¹⁷ In other words, the abolition of capitalist relations of production simply means that the machinery is freed from the capitalist form of application and does not mean that the machinery itself is abolished. In the post-capitalist social form, this machinery will be liberated from the capital relationship and become the new foundation of social production. At this point, the separation of labor and production will have a deeper meaning, i.e., provide an objective basis for the true transformation of labor from means to end itself. In the primary post-capitalist stage, the use value production is still the main purpose of labor activities. However, the decline in the role of labor means that it takes less labor time to meet the production needs of the entire society. "Gemeinschaftliche Produktion vorausgesetzt, bleibt die Zeitbestimmung natürlich wesentlich. Je weniger Zeit die Gesellschaft bedarf, um Weizen, Vieh etc. zu produzieren, desto mehr Zeit gewinnt sie zu anderer Produktion, materieller oder geistiger. Wie bei einem einzelnen Individuum hängt die Allseitigkeit ihrer Entwicklung, ihres Genusses und ihrer Tätigkeit von Zeitersparung ab. Ökonomie der Zeit, darin löst sich schließlich alle Ökonomie auf. Ebenso muß die Gesellschaft ihre Zeit zweckmäßig einteilen, um eine ihren Gesamtbedürfnissen gemäße Produktion zu erzielen; wieder einzelne seine Zeit richtig einteilen muß, um sich Kenntnisse in angemessenen Proportionen zu erwerben oder um den verschiedenen Anforderungen an seine Tätigkeit Genüge zu leisten. Ökonomie der Zeit sowohl wie planmäßige Verteilung der Arbeitszeit auf die verschiedenen Zweige der Produktion bleibt also erstes ökonomisches Gesetz auf Grundlage der gemeinschaftlichen Produktion. Es wird sogar in viel höherem Grade Gesetz."¹⁸ This saving on labor time "bedeutet Erweiterung der Freizeit, gestattet jedem Mitglied der Gesellschaft die vollständige Entfaltung."¹⁹ Once the latter becomes the dominant measure of society as a whole, the form and meaning of labor will also undergo a major transformation: it will no longer be manifested in pure material production activities. It is transformed into a high-level activity that everyone engages in free time; its purpose is no longer to produce means of living, to produce surplus value, but to achieve self-realization for everyone. At this time, labor will also be liberated from the field of material production, realizing the real transformation from means to end, and becoming the internal scale for everyone's free and all-round development.

So, does this mean that Marx's analysis has completely matured? It is not difficult to find out through careful analysis that at that time, Marx's entire argument logic still has important flaws.

First, in his view, immediate labor is "einziges wertbestimmendes Element"²⁰ der kapitalistischen Produktion des Reichtums, while immediate labor time is the only measure of capitalist wealth. This view is clearly problematic. From the point of view of use value, immediate labor is by no means the only source of wealth. Without the natural world, labor will be useless. "Es ist falsch zu sagen, dass die Arbeit die einzige Quelle des von ihr hervorgebrachten, nämlich des stofflichen Reichtums sei."²¹ "Die *Natur* ist ebensosehr die

¹⁶ Complete Works of Marx and Engels, Vol. 30, p. 616.

¹⁷ Complete Works of Marx and Engels, Vol. 31, p. 94.

¹⁸ Collected Works of Marx and Engels, Vol. 30, p. 123.

¹⁹ Complete Works of Marx and Engels, Vol. 31, pp. 107-108.

²⁰ *ibid.*, p. 94.

²¹ Complete Works of Marx and Engels, Vol. 44, p. 56.

Quelle der Gebrauchswerte (und aus solchen besteht doch wohl der sachliche Reichtum!)“²². From the perspective of value production, immediate labor or immediate labor time is by no means the decisive factor in the production of capitalist wealth, but abstract labor or abstract labor time. This shows that at that time, Marx did not truly overcome the inherent flaws of Ricardo's labor theory of value—i.e., value determined by immediate labor time—and had not established the scientific theory of labor duality [Theorie der Zwieschlächtigkeit der Arbeit]. This also determines that his analysis of the collapse logic of capitalism must have major flaws. He pointed out that the decisive factor of capitalist wealth production is immediate labor, while the development of big industry reduces labor to a minimum, so that the creation of wealth does not depend more on immediate labor. This contradiction constitutes the insurmountable inner limit of capitalism and will directly lead to the collapse of capitalism. This view is obviously untenable. Because the foundation of capitalist wealth production is by no means immediate labor, but abstract labor, even if the former is compressed to the lowest point, as long as the latter still exists, the capitalist production mechanism will still operate as usual. In this regard, at this time, Marx regarded the big industry as the critical point of the collapse of capitalism based on the "contradiction" caused by the separation of immediate labor and production process. This view is also wrong.

Moreover, his explanation of the "machine paradox" under the conditions of capitalism is also problematic. Since Marx always regards immediate labor as the basis of capitalist wealth production, he naturally thinks that the saving of immediate labor time is equal to the increase of free time, but why is the latter not transformed into the wealth of workers? For example, those relative surplus populations that are excluded from the production process by the machinery, their labor time has been reduced to zero, but why do they not enjoy freedom? Marx's answer is: This is caused by the capitalist application of machinery. So, what kind of production mechanism is it? Marx is obviously unable to answer. To solve this problem, it is still necessary to form the theory of duality of labor. Only by starting with abstract labor can we uncover the secrets of the capitalist production mechanism and solve the inherent roots of the "machine paradox". These problems are solved in later works.

In "Kritik der politischen Ökonomie, Band I" (1859), Marx overcame the inherent flaws of "Grundrisse". At this time, he no longer regards immediate labor as the source of capitalist wealth production, and is no longer based on the dialectic of quality and quantity of immediate labor to distinguish between material wealth and value wealth, but on the basis of the duality of commodities, the scientific theory of labor duality [Theorie der Zwieschlächtigkeit der Arbeit] is established. At this time, he clearly realized that the foundation of capitalist wealth production is by no means specific labor or immediate labor, but abstract labor. Therefore, in order to achieve the liberation of labor, we must first break the production mechanism of abstract labor. Then, can the decline of the role of immediate labor proposed by him in "Grundrisse" directly lead to the collapse of abstract labor or capitalist exchange value production system? To answer this question, we must first understand the dialectical relationship between productive forces, concrete labor and abstract labor.

In "Capital", Marx pointed out: "Produktivkraft ist natürlich stets Produktivkraft nützlicher, konkreter Arbeit und bestimmt in der Tat nur den Wirkungsgrad zweckmäßiger produktiver Tätigkeit in gegebenem Zeitraum. Die nützliche Arbeit wird daher reichere oder dürftigere Produktenquelle im direkten Verhältnis zum Steigen oder Fallen ihrer Produktivkraft. Dagegen trifft ein Wechsel der Produktivkraft die im Wert dargestellte Arbeit an und für sich gar nicht. Da die Produktivkraft der konkreten nützlichen Form der Arbeit

²² Complete Works of Marx and Engels, Vol. 19, p. 15.

angehört, kann sie natürlich die Arbeit nicht mehr berühren, sobald von ihrer konkreten nützlichen Form abstrahiert wird."²³ The development of productive forces or general intellect will directly affect concrete labor and is directly proportional to the latter; but there is no direct Zusammenhang between it and the value-producing abstract labor. The former must undergo a certain intermediary to indirectly affect the capitalist surplus value production. In terms of use value, the increase in productive forces means that concrete labor is able to produce more products in the same time; but this does not mean that the increase of the former can immediately affect the value of the commodity itself, which requires certain conditions. Only when it is widely adopted by the whole society will it affect the socially necessary labor time of commodity production, thereby reducing the value of goods. In the case of consumer goods, once the value of the commodity is reduced, it means that the variable capital portion used to maintain labor reproduction, namely wages is reduced, and the necessary labor time for producing wages also decreases, the result of which is by no means the collapse of the capitalist exchange value system, but a further perfection of the surplus value production. In other words, the development of productive forces has led to a double result: on the one hand, shortening "die zur Produktion einer Ware überhaupt gesellschaftlich notwendige Arbeitszeit"; on the other hand, reducing "den Wert der Arbeitskraft, also der zur Reproduktion oder Erhaltung der Arbeitskraft notwendige Teil des Arbeitstags"²⁴, to increase the surplus value.

At this point, Marx truly realized that in "Grundrisse", the analysis that argues for the collapse of capitalism based merely on the decline of the role of the immediate labor caused by the development of productive forces is precisely untenable. The big industry has indeed promoted the separation of general intellect and labor, compressed the existence space of immediate labor, making the role of the latter in the production process decline, but it cannot be assumed from that that the capitalist exchange value system will collapse because the separation of immediate labor and production process cannot fundamentally subvert the foundation of the capitalist value production (abstract labor), and it will not directly lead to the collapse of the capitalist production system; on the contrary, it will further strengthen this mechanism and open a mode of relative surplus value production that is completely different from collaboration and workshop industry. It is also at this time that Marx truly realizes that the decline of the role of immediate labor in the production process is by no means the basis for the collapse of capitalism, but the necessary result of the production of relative surplus value; while, on the other hand, capital tries to reduce labor time, on the other hand measures the wealth it creates with labor time, is by no means the internal contradiction of capitalism either, but the objective mechanism of relative surplus value production; similarly, the large-scale machine production is not even more the critical point of the collapse of capitalism, but the perfect form of relative surplus value production. On this basis, Marx fundamentally reveals the internal roots of the machine paradox under capitalist conditions. It is precisely because of the compulsion of the capital relationship that the machinery that originally saved labor time became a tool for capitalist surplus value production, which led most workers to be excluded from the production process and become an industrial reserve army and a relative surplus population. For them, although the immediate labor time has been reduced to the lowest point, they have no freedom at all, because the compression of this time is precisely the premise of relative surplus value production. Although they "vermeiden" immediate labor, they did not break away from the rule of abstract labor fundamentally, but "gehört dem Kapital ganz so absolut, als ob es sie auf seine eignen Kosten großgezüchtet hätte."²⁵ This shows that under capitalist conditions, it is precisely problematic to completely abandon

²³ Complete Works of Marx and Engels, Vol. 44, pp. 59-60.

²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 366.

²⁵ Complete Works of Marx and Engels, Vol. 44, p. 729.

abstract labor and simply demonstrate the collapse of capitalism and the generation of free time from immediate labor.

Then, what is the philosophical effect caused by the large-scale machine production? At this time, Marx no longer analyzes based on immediate labor, but makes a systematic proof from the organic composition of capital and abstract labor. On the one hand, from the perspective of object, the contradiction caused by the capitalist large-scale machine production is not the contradiction between immediate labor and labor theory of value, but the crisis of capital accumulation caused by the law of the continuous fall of the general rate of profit.²⁶ Marx pointed out that the development of capitalist machine production means that the proportion of constant capital will increase day by day, and "diese erzeugt mit der fortschreitenden relativen Abnahme des variablen Kapitals gegen das konstante eine steigend höhere organische Zusammensetzung des Gesamtkapitals, deren unmittelbare Folge ist, daß die Rate des Mehrwerts bei gleichbleibendem und selbst bei steigendem Exploitationsgrad der Arbeit sich in einer beständig sinkenden allgemeinen Profitrate ausdrückt."²⁷ This law is neither a simple empirical induction nor a theoretical fiction, but "aus dem Wesen der kapitalistischen Produktionsweise als eine selbstverständliche Notwendigkeit bewiesen,"²⁸ showing that capitalist production can never be free from the absolute limits of productive forces. As this law continues to develop, capitalism will eventually encounter insurmountable internal boundary [unüberwindbare innere Grenzen]. On the other hand, from the perspective of the subject, large-scale machine production can provide the objective condition for the generation of the universalized proletariat. In the division of labor, due to the existence of skilled workers and unskilled workers, the workers are presented in a hierarchical development trend. The big industry thoroughly eliminates the technical basis of the division of labor and homogenizes labor. This provides a precondition for the proletariat to transcend the hierarchy limitation [Schranke der Hierarchie] and transform it into a universalized class for itself. The maturity of these two conditions will eventually lead to the demise of capitalism and provide a fundamental premise for the liberation of labor.

Arriving here, the problem is not over. The liberation of labor from the capital relationship means that labor has been freed from the compulsion of economic necessity. It has not fundamentally surpassed the natural necessity. This involves another important question: how to understand the dialectical relationship between the realm of necessity and the realm of freedom? Marx pointed out that in the primary post-capitalist stage, labor is still a means of personal earning, and the mode of distribution can only be distribution according to work. In essence, it is still „bürgerliches Recht“.²⁹ The greatest „Freiheit in diesem Gebiet kann nur darin bestehn, daß der vergesellschaftete Mensch, die assoziierten Produzenten, diesen ihren Stoffwechsel mit der Natur rationell regeln, unter ihre gemeinschaftliche Kontrolle bringen, statt von ihm als von einer blinden Macht beherrscht zu werden; ihn mit dem geringsten Kraftaufwand und unter den, ihrer menschlichen Natur würdigsten und adäquatesten Bedingungen vollziehn. Aber es bleibt dies immer ein Reich der Notwendigkeit.“³⁰ In other words, labor that stays in the field of material production, regardless of its productive effectivity and form of organization is always unable to get rid of the limitation of natural necessity [Schranke der Naturnotwendigkeit] and become the end itself. To do this, labor must also be liberated from the realm of material production. "Das

²⁶ In fact, in the third part of "Grundrisse", Marx has noticed this point and proposed the law of rate of profit to fall. However, the rate of profit here is not the later general rate of profit formed after the medium through competition, but the immediate rate of profit; more importantly, at that time, he still understood this law from immediate labor.

²⁷ Complete Works of Marx and Engels, Vol. 46, p. 237.

²⁸ *ibid.*

²⁹ Complete Works of Marx and Engels, Vol. 19, p. 23.

³⁰ Complete Works of Marx and Engels, Vol. 46, pp. 928-929.

Reich der Freiheit beginnt in der Tat erst da, wo das Arbeiten, das durch Not und äußere Zweckmäßigkeit bestimmt ist, aufhört; es liegt also der Natur der Sache nach jenseits der Sphäre der eigentlichen materiellen Produktion. Jenseits desselben beginnt die menschliche Kraftentwicklung, die sich als Selbstzweck gilt, das wahre Reich der Freiheit, das aber nur auf jenem Reich der Notwendigkeit als seiner Basis aufblühen kann."³¹

Then, how does labor liberate itself from natural necessity? At this point, Marx inherited the theoretical analysis of "Grundrisse" and affirmed the general anthropological significance of the large-scale machine production. In the post-capitalist social stage, it does not mean that mankind has returned to the original state of production. The material productive forces created by capitalism will be inherited and become the basis of future social production, and the machinery will become the true weapon to save labor time, and then provide a material basis for labor to get rid of the limitations of natural necessity [Schranke der Naturnotwendigkeit]. Once the labor time is saved to a certain extent, labor will be liberated from the natural necessity, and those labors that are required by "Not und äußere Zweckmäßigkeit" will be truly terminated. Then, the meaning and form of labor will also fundamentally change and transformed into the "das erste Lebensbedürfnis" for human beings.³² At this time, the true realm of freedom has come.

Based on the above analysis, we can draw the following conclusions:

First, in Marx's view, the liberation of labor includes two progressive processes. In primitive society, labor is all along restricted by natural necessity; in slave society and feudal society, the purpose of labor is still to satisfy people's survival needs, but in addition to being restricted by natural necessity, it is also subject to political dependency relations; although the capitalist society has abandoned the "Naturnotwendigkeit in ihrer unmittelbaren Form"³³ and the political dependency relationship, it has formed an economic necessity that is not transferred by human will, resulting in making labor completely a tool for the production of surplus value. Therefore, in order to realize the liberation of labor, the first step must fundamentally eliminate the capitalist production relations, liberate labor from surplus production, and return it to general human activities. Then, on the basis of gemeinschaftliche Produktion, the labor time is continuously saved, and the latter is liberated from the field of material production and transformed into a higher-level free activity, so that it truly rises to the end itself, leaps from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom. From this point of view, Marx's theory of the liberation of labor has always been based on the premise of the transformation of social relations. In the absence of this premise, it is absolutely impossible to grow freedom by the self-development of labor alone. In this regard, Marx's view of history is by no means Gould's empiricist view of immanent causality, nor the autonomist philosophy of antagonism identified by Negri, nor the technical determinism accused by Habermas, but the historical dialectic based on the contradictory movement between productive forces and relations of production. This is also an important reason why Marx has devoted himself to dissecting the inherent contradictions of capitalism in different periods. Only based on this view of history can the path to realize the liberation of labor be fundamentally found.

Second, based on the large-scale machine production, Marx fully revealed the dialectic of labor and freedom, completely subverting the Western philosophy-economic tradition that demeans labor or merely understood labor as a means. In the history of philosophy, Aristotle pioneered the Western tradition of demeaning labor. In his view, labor is always a low-lying

³¹ *ibid.*

³² Complete Works of Marx and Engels, Vol. 19, p. 23.

³³ Complete Works of Marx and Engels, Vol. 30, p. 286.

slave activity, and it is impossible to become freedom itself. Although Smith founded the labor theory of value, he always believed that labor is a kind of misfortune and sacrifice, and that Nicht-Arbeit is a kind of "Freiheit und Glück", which in turn abstractly opposes labor and freedom. Similarly, Kant has always solidified labor and freedom in two different fields, denying that there is an immanent Zusammenhang between labor and freedom. Although Hegel affirmed the historical role of labor in modern society and for the first time subverted the Western tradition of demeaning labor, he always understood labor as an intermediary link of the self-development of absolute spirit, and did not recognize that labor itself could be an end. In this regard, he did not truly transcend Western traditions. Marx, proceeding from the theory of machine production, has scientifically interpreted the dual connotation of the liberation of labor, not only reveals the wirkliche Grundlage der liberation of labor from the capital relationship, but also explains the possibility that labor changes from means to end, completely subverting the entire Western philosophy-economic tradition. In this regard, Marx's theory of the liberation of labor is by no means a speculative result derived from humanistic logic, nor is it a utopia, but a scientific conclusion based on historical materialist analysis of machine production. Therefore, when Arendt only understands the dialectic of labor and freedom based on pre-modern manual labor or slave labor, she has just ignored the realistic basis of Marx's theory of the liberation of labor.

Third, in "Grundrisse" and "Capital", Marx has important differences in the understanding of machine production and its philosophical effects. In the previous work, Marx was based on immediate labor rather than the theory of labor duality [Theorie der Zwieschlächtigkeit der Arbeit] to demonstrate the immanent contradictions caused by the large-scale machine production. This led to the following result: There are important flaws in his then analysis of relative surplus value and the logic of collapse of capitalism. "Capital" has completely overcome the theoretical flaws of the "Grundrisse" and achieved a comprehensive transcendence and development of the latter. Therefore, when Gould and Negri simply interpret Marx's theory of the liberation of labor according to "Grundrisse", they did not see the theoretical flaws of this work; while the latter regarded the "Grundrisse" as the culmination of Marx's thought development, they just obliterated the historical contribution of "Capital". Taking a step back, their reading of the relationship between labor and freedom is built on the misinterpretation of "Grundrisse". Although this work still has certain theoretical flaws, it also embodies the view of history. It is by no means an empiricist view causality or an autonomist philosophy of antagonism that they understand.

Finally, is labor as an end, really like Marcuse said, a play or amusement that goes beyond any limitations [Schranken]? The answer is also negative. In the realm of freedom, labor is free from the dual compulsion of economic necessity and natural necessity. "Was keineswegs meint, daß sie bloßer Spaß sei, bloßes amusement, wie Fourier es sehr grisettenmäßig naiv auffaßt. Wirklich freie Arbeiten, z.B. Komponieren, ist grade zugleich verdammtester Ernst, intensivste Anstrengung."³⁴ In this regard, Marcuse's interpretation of labor in the realm of freedom as a play or amusement is completely wrong. In fact, this is a distortion of Marx's theory of the liberation of labor based on "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844". However, it is worth pondering that in "Mirror of Production", Baudrillard just regarded Marcuse's interpretation as Marx's own thought and launched an attack on the latter's theory of the liberation of labor, believing it was the true embodiment of bourgeois ideology. "This realm beyond political economy called play, non-work, or non-alienated labor, is defined as the reign of a finality without end. In this sense it is and remains an *aesthetic*, in the extremely Kantian sense, with all the bourgeois ideological connotations which that implies. Although Marx's thought settled accounts with bourgeois morality, it

³⁴ Complete Works of Marx and Engels, Vol. 30, p. 616.

remains defenseless before its esthetic... Marxist thought inherits the esthetic and humanistic virus of bourgeois thought."³⁵ As far as Marcuse is concerned, this criticism is undoubtedly a hit where it hurts; but if you put this hat on Marx's head, it's ridiculous because Marx never understood labor in the realm of freedom as a play or amusement. From this point of view, Baudrillard did not understand the opening context of Marx's theory of the liberation of labor, and did not clearly determine the essential difference between Marcuse and Marx's thought. In this regard, his criticism of Marx is completely unfair.

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³⁵ Baudrillard, p. 39.