

Original Paper

The Connotation and Realization Conditions of the All-round Development of Human Freedom: An Investigation Based on Marx's Classic Texts

Renyin Li¹

¹ School of Marxism, Sichuan Normal University, Chengdu, Sichuan Province 610066, China

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Abstract

Human freedom is the ultimate goal of Marxism, Marx started from the perspective of social production, social division of labor and private ownership, scientifically revealed the inevitability of the all-round development of human beings, and systematically and scientifically expounded the freedom and liberation of human beings from the "slave-like division of labor", the formation of the "association of free people", and the real realization of the leap from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom. An in-depth analysis of the rich connotation of Marx's free and all-round development and excavation of its contemporary value are of great guiding significance for comprehensively promoting Chinese-style modernization and realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation in the new era.

Keywords

full development of human freedom, basic connotation, Implementation conditions

From the "1844 Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts" to "Capital", "<Critique of Political Economy > Introduction" and the "Critique of Political Economy (1857-1858 Manuscripts)", the focus of Marx's research gradually shifted to the field of political economy, especially the establishment of the labor theory of value and the theory of surplus value, which provided political economy arguments for exploring and solving the one-sided development of human beings under the capitalist mode of

production, and made the theory of the comprehensive development of human freedom increasingly mature and perfect.

1. The Connotation of the All-Round Development of Human Freedom

The all-round development of human freedom mainly refers to the process and realm of coordinated development and general improvement in the communist society, in which every individual completely gets rid of internal and external shackles and restrictions, and achieves coordinated development and general improvement in human labor, human personality, and human social relations. Man becomes a whole, free man, a harmoniously developed man, that is, the essential power of man as an end in itself, fully developed, That is, Marx said: "Man takes possession of his own comprehensive essence in a comprehensive way, that is to say, as a complete person". (Note 1)

1.1 The Free Development of Human Labor

Marx considered labor to be "a public demonstration of the essential power of man". (Note 2) It is a free, conscious material practice activity. In capitalist society, due to the old social division of labor and the existence of private ownership, labor has become a means for capitalists to enslave workers, and workers can only endure cruel exploitation in order to maintain their physical survival, so labor has become an unfree and unconscious activity. Under what circumstances, then, can man regain the free, conscious nature of labor? In this regard, Marx pointed out: "Labor of material production acquires this character only if: (1) labor is of a social character; (2) This kind of labor is scientific and at the same time general labor, and this kind of labor is not the nervous activity of man who is rigidly trained by natural forces in a certain way, but the tense activity of man as a subject, which is not purely natural and naturally forms in the process of production, but appears in the process of production as the kind of activity that governs all natural forces." (Note 3) The so-called social nature of labor, that is, people in a free association, jointly use the means of production for labor activities, and the productive capacity is completely under the common control of people. The scientific nature of labor mainly refers to the fact that people, as the main body of labor, completely get rid of the slavery and shackles of nature and freely dispose of their own labor behavior and labor ability in the production activities that transform nature.

1.2 The All-round Development of Human Capacities

From the perspective of the relationship between man's various abilities and man's all-round development, Marx first emphasized man's intelligence and physical strength. Because man is a person who engages in the practical activities of material production, any activity of man is an exhaustion of physical and intellectual strength. Marx repeatedly emphasized that "the worker's own physical and intellectual strength." (Note 4) "The exertion of labor is labor, which consumes a certain amount of muscles, nerves, brains, and so on." (Note 5) He also pointed out: "We understand the labor power or the ability to work as the sum total of the physical and intellectual abilities that exist in the human body, that is, in the living human body, and which are used whenever a person produces some kind of use

value.” (Note 6) In addition to human intelligence and physical strength, it also includes: human natural force, vitality, etc., in this regard, Marx pointed out: human beings are “natural forces, vitality, and active natural beings; These powers exist in man as gifts and talents, as desires”; (Note 7) Human emotion, willpower, knowledge, and so on. In short, the all-round development of human ability contains many contents, but in Marx’s view, the most important thing is human physical strength and intelligence.

1.3 The All-round Development of Human Social Relations

“Social relationships actually determine how far a person can develop.” (Note 8) The enrichment of human social relations is a full demonstration of the all-round development of human beings. It was from the perspective of the development of human social relations that Marx examined the three stages of human development. In the first stage based on human dependence, man’s productive and active capacity is limited to a narrow range, and in the stage of man’s independence based on material dependence, man’s social interaction expands to various fields. Individual activities have broken through the narrow restrictions of countries, regions, and nations, and the exchange of material and spiritual production has been carried out extensively throughout the world; at this stage, the productive forces have developed rapidly, the commodity economy has become increasingly prosperous, and the general exchange of commodities has linked people in various fields and levels, and people’s social relations have also been enriched and developed, but due to the enslavement and bondage of human beings by capitalist production relations, which restricts the free and all-round development of human beings, the vast majority of people in society are increasingly impoverished and deformed. Only by eradicating the roots of capitalist private ownership, “On the premise of the universal development of the productive forces and the general development of the related world exchanges”, (Note 9) in a communist society, the social relations of man are enriched and developed in an all-round way under the common control of the people, and the free and all-round development of man can be realized.

1.4 The Free and All-round Development of the Human Personality

The free and all-round development of personality is the concentrated embodiment of the development of man's essential strength in the individual. In a class society, the development of people's personality is limited by class relations, “their personality is conditioned and determined by very specific class relations”. (Note 10) As members of class society, the individual's freedom of individuality is enjoyed only within the ruling class, and the broad masses of the working people are excluded. Marx once criticized that in bourgeois society, the individuality of the laborer is stifled and he has completely lost himself, he pointed out: “The domination of the individual by the relationship of things and the suppression of individuality by chance have taken the sharpest and most common form” (Note 11) and only in the communist society does the class cease to exist, and the social relationship is no longer an alien force that dominates people, but has become a form of realizing the freedom of human individuality under the common control of people. “It is the individual who acquires the means to develop his faculties in full development, that is to say, it is only in the community that individual

freedom is possible. Under the conditions of a true community, each man acquires his own freedom in and through his own union.” (Note 12)

2. Conditions for the Realization of the Full Development of Human Freedom

In his works such as “German Ideology” and “Capital”, Marx not only comprehensively expounded the historical process of human development and the connotation of man’s free and all-round development, but also explored the conditions for the realization of man’s free and all-round development.

2.1 The Elimination of Private Ownership and the Social Division of Labor

According to Marx, capitalist private ownership is the root cause of human alienation. Under the conditions of private ownership, the ruling class, which accounts for a very small minority of the population, occupies the vast majority of the material wealth and other social resources in society, and the polarization is serious, and the broad masses of laborers are deprived of the conditions and opportunities for development. “Private property makes us stupid and one-sided, so that an object exists only when it is owned by us, that is to say, but it exists as capital to us, or when it is directly appropriated by us, eaten, drank, clothed, housed, etc., in short, is ours when it is used by us, even though private property itself regards all this direct realization of appropriation as mere means of life, and the kind of life for which they serve as means is the life of private property—labor and capitalization.” (Note 12) To achieve the free development of man, it is necessary to eradicate capitalist private ownership. At the same time, the elimination of the old social division of labor is a comprehensive social condition for the realization of human freedom. Marx believed that the social division of labor is the product of the development of the productive forces to a certain stage, which objectively promotes the development of the productive forces and provides a material basis for the all-round development of man, but under the capitalist system, workers are engaged in heavy labor all their lives, and their bodies and minds are greatly damaged, hindering the all-round development of man. Marx pointed out that the big machine industry “turns man into a deformity, it suppresses the various production aspirations and production talents of the workers, artificially cultivates the one-sided skills of the workers”, (Note 13) and “in fact produces the skills of some workers”. (Note 14) Therefore, the elimination of the old social division of labor is a prerequisite for the realization of the free and comprehensive development of human beings.

2.2 The Need for Alienation Is Eliminated

According to Marx, “their needs, that is, their nature, and the way in which they seek satisfaction, bind them.” (Note 14) The needs of the working masses include not only the needs of survival, but also the needs of spiritual and development, and the purpose of social production is to satisfy the needs of the people. Through the investigation of capitalist relations of production and the mode of production, Marx exposed, on the one hand, that the capitalists distorted the needs of the proletariat in order to extract more surplus value, and restricted the multifaceted development of its needs. On the other hand, the fallacy of the national economists defending the bourgeoisie is revealed, Marx noted: “(1) He

reduced the needs of the workers to the maintenance of the most necessary and miserable physical life, and the activities of the workers to the most abstract mechanical movements; Thus it is said that man has no other need for activity or enjoyment; For he even proclaimed such a life as the life and existence of man. (2) he takes living (survival) as far as possible as a criterion of calculation, and it is a universal criterion; I say universal standard because it suits most people. He transforms the worker into a being without feeling and need, just as he transforms the worker's activity into a mere abstraction from which all activity is extracted. Therefore, any extravagance of the worker is unforgivable in his sight, and everything that goes beyond the most abstract need—whether passive enjoyment or active performance—is a luxury in his opinion.” (Note 15) Furthermore, Marx proposed that the elimination of the alienation of needs and the enrichment of human needs are the primary conditions for the realization of the free and comprehensive development of human beings.

2.3 The Realization of a Communist Society

Through the investigation and analysis of the basic laws of the historical development of human society and the capitalist relations of production, Marx believed that replacing the capitalist society and establishing an association of free people, that is, a communist society, is the only way and the fundamental way to realize the free and all-round development of human beings. He pointed out: “In place of the old bourgeois society, in which there were classes and class antagonisms, there will be a union in which the free development of each is the condition for the development of all”. (Note 16) In a communist society, private ownership and class antagonism disappear, the social division of labor no longer exists, and labor becomes a free and conscious activity of man. The development of equality and freedom of each person, the full display of man's free personality, and the great enrichment of social relations. The free and all-round development of human beings has been truly realized. Marx pointed out that “in a communist society, no one has a special sphere of activity, but can develop in any sector, and society regulates the whole of production, so that it is possible for me to do this today and that tomorrow as I wish, hunting in the morning, fishing in the afternoon, animal husbandry in the evening, and criticism after dinner, so that I will not always be a hunter, fisherman, shepherd, or critic.” (Note 17)

Notes

Note 1. “The Complete Works of Marx and Engels” (Vol. 42) [M]. Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1979, p.123.

Note 2. “The Complete Works of Marx and Engels” (Vol. 42) [M]. Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1979, p. 128.

Note 3. “The Complete Works of Marx and Engels” (Vol. 30) [M]. Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1979, p. 123.

Note 4. “Selected Works of Marx and Engels” (Vol. 1) [M]. Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1995, p. 44.

- Note 5. "The Complete Works of Marx and Engels" (Vol. 23) [M]. Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1972, p. 194.
- Note 6. "The Complete Works of Marx and Engels" (Vol. 30) [M]. Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1979, p. 190.
- Note 7. "The Complete Works of Marx and Engels" (Vol. 42) [M]. Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1979, p. 167.
- Note 8. "The Complete Works of Marx and Engels" (Vol. 3) [M]. Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1960, p. 295.
- Note 9. "The Complete Works of Marx and Engels" (Vol. 3) [M]. Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1960, p. 39.
- Note 10. "The Complete Works of Marx and Engels" (Vol. 3) [M]. Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1960, p. 515.
- Note 11. "The Complete Works of Marx and Engels" (Vol. 3) [M]. Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1960, p. 515.
- Note 12. "Selected Works of Marx and Engels" (Vol. 1) [M]. Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1995, p. 119.
- Note 13. "The Complete Works of Marx and Engels" (Vol. 47) [M]. Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1979, p. 216.
- Note 14. "Capital" (Vol. 1) [M]. Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1975, p. 339.
- Note 15. "Capital" (Vol. 1) [M]. Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1975, p. 337.
- Note 16. "The Complete Works of Marx and Engels" (Vol. 3) [M]. Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1960, p. 514.
- Note 17. "The Collected Works of Marx and Engels" (Vol. 2) [M]. Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2009, p. 226.
- Note 18. "Selected Works of Marx and Engels" (Vol. 1) [M]. Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1995, p. 294.
- Note 19. "Selected Works of Marx and Engels" (Vol. 1) [M]. Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1995, p. 85.