

# *A Probe into the View of Freedom in "Manuscript of Economics and Philosophy in 1844"*

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**Abstract:** Karl Marx's thought of freedom originates from Manuscript of Economics and Philosophy in 1844, in which the thought of freedom occupies an important position in his theoretical system. In Manuscript, Karl Marx takes the freedom of labor as the main logic line, pointing out that human nature is the basis of freedom. Karl Marx analyzes in depth the fact that alienated manual labour is one of the segments of free development and he further states briefly that transcendence of alienation is the necessity to freedom. In the alienation of human beings, the essence of human beings exists in the form of being concealed. Therefore, freedom should be the comprehensive reversion of the essence of human beings. The actualization of human freedom is the completion and actualization of human beings, whereas the actualization of freedom must be the positive transcendence of private property.

## 1. Introduction

Freedom is an old topic. People have different opinions on freedom in different times. Amartya Sen believes that freedom is the ability of people to control themselves and to have fun from it. Rousseau believed that human beings are inherently free, but the day after tomorrow has left human beings deeply restrained. So, what do people generally think is the definition of freedom? In order to explore the true connotation of freedom, we must return to the origin—the origin of Marx's freedom thought, so as to explore the true connotation of freedom. "Manuscript of Economics and Philosophy in 1844" (hereinafter referred to as "Manuscript") occupies an important position in the theoretical system of Marxism, and its free thought originated from this work. In-depth study of his freedom thought is conducive to a comprehensive grasp of Marx's view of freedom.

In the "Manuscript", Marx did not define the concept of "freedom", but the all-round development of human freedom has always run through his philosophical system. Real people are liberated from shackles, this is the original meaning of freedom. Here, freedom and liberation are synonymous. Freedom is the inevitable result of liberation. If you want to get the maximum of freedom, you must get rid of shackles. In Marx's view, communism is a key condition for the proletariat to realize its own liberation. From this point of view, freedom and liberation are consistent, but liberation is not simply the liberation of slavery, so freedom is not the same as liberation. Freedom is first expressed as freedom of will, which is a kind of freedom of will in thought and spiritual activity. The main content of Marx's freedom thought includes: the human nature is the prerequisite and foundation of

freedom; freedom is the inevitable development of human society; alienated labor is the link of free development; the sublation of alienation is the inevitable realization of freedom; the highest state of freedom is human The free and comprehensive development of the country and so on. Marx's view of freedom is based on the materialist view of freedom. He starts from the category of materialism. His view of freedom is a positive sublation of rational freedom represented by Kant, and analyzes capitalist society in depth, gradually forming a logical system based on labor freedom. Freedom. On the whole, this is a transcendence of the previous concept of freedom in German classical philosophy. Therefore, the study of the concept of freedom in the "Manuscript" takes labor freedom as the main line of logic, and discusses in depth the three aspects of freedom, the link of freedom development, and the necessity of freedom, so as to promote the study of this issue.

## **2. The foundation of freedom: human nature**

In the "Manuscript", Marx regards people as real people. In Marx's view, human beings, as a kind of natural existence, are actually a kind of "objective and perceptual existence", a living natural existence, manifested in the dual unity of active and affected. Realistic people have this kind of activity characteristics because they are the subject of self-consciousness. In labor practice, they can freely and consciously grasp their own life activities and use them as the object of self-will and self-activity. At this time, people have a plan. , Purposefully engaging in certain activities, fully embodies the free and conscious will of the human subject. Marx believed that human beings are conscious life activities, which is a direct sign that humans are different from animals, and it is also an important manifestation of human nature. The proposition of "human nature" is Marx's initial understanding of freedom. He believes that human beings are a kind of "objective and perceptual existence". In the practice of labor, real people produce a series of emotions, such as enthusiasm and passion. Under the impetus of these emotions, the human brain produces consciousness. This kind of emotion is the source of human consciousness, and the genus nature of human "objective and perceptual existence" is the basis of consciousness. Based on this, Marx uses the labor practice of "sensibility and objectivity" to explain the reality of human beings, and further explain the nature of human beings.

### **2.1 The nature of "objective existence" of human beings**

In the "Manuscript", Marx pointed out that "objective existence" includes two meanings: the first meaning is the objectivity between man and nature. As an "objective existence", human beings take nature as an object, through labor practice, in the process of transforming the objective world, creating an object world through labor. At this time, human beings are connected with the natural world and are no longer an isolated existence. Things. Therefore, the human nature is an object existence, not the abstract "self-consciousness" as Hegel refers to it. The second meaning is "the objectivity of man and his own life or man and society". Marx and Feuerbach are fundamentally different on issues such as people and people, people and society: Feuerbach starts from the standpoint of an idealistic view of history. He believes that real people are conceived and abstract. A person who is transformed and a person who transcends reality. From the perspective of historical materialism, Marx believes that a realistic person cannot be separated from society, and society cannot be separated from human beings. Society and human beings have a dialectical and unified relationship: on the one hand, reality Only in society can people develop, gain freedom in labor practice, gain a sense of belonging and honor, and achieve their own free and comprehensive development. At this time, people are essentially free and consciously active. ; On the other hand, society is produced by people. If there are no people, then society will not exist. It can be said that man has produced society. In Marx's view, the object of man is the product of the transformation of human practice, and the process of man's transformation of the natural world is the objectification of the power of human nature. Human objects are manifested

in the process of human activities, such as the process of human cognition of nature, human cognition of history, etc. This process can be said to be the true natural history of man.

Human beings are "objective beings". In social practice, humans' true freedom can be realized. People are people in society, and their status in society appears to be more prominent. Social practice is the basis for the unity of man and nature. However, in a capitalist society, human freedom is severely constrained. Compared with the natural world, society's constraints on human freedom are more complicated. To realize human freedom, we must base on labor freedom and deeply analyze the root causes of human freedom in capitalist society.

## **2.2 The nature of human beings "perceptual existence"**

On the basis of social practice, Marx further explained human feelings and perceptual nature. He overcomes Feuerbach's analogy of human nature as an abstract person and a person who is divorced from reality, and brings people into labor practice. From a social point of view, he points out that human nature is a free and conscious activity. The existence of. Human perception is the unity of the subject and the object, and is the subjective reflection of people's thinking on the objective world in the human mind. Since people's "objective existence" has two meanings, corresponding to this, the nature of human "perceptual existence" also has two meanings: The first meaning is that people's feelings undergo their own social practice activities. It gradually becomes a human feeling. In the process of understanding the world and transforming the natural world, human beings imprint the natural world with human activities through social practice activities. Human feelings are produced through "humanizing nature"; the second meaning is that human feelings are social beings. In the process of transforming nature, people's sensory abilities are gradually increasing. It can be seen that people's sensory ability is also social, and it gradually increases with practical activities. In Marx's view, humans are human beings in society and human beings are social beings. Human beings are born with instinctive activities such as eating and sleeping. If they are separated from the realm of social practice, there is no essential difference between humans and animals. These instinctive activities of humans can only be regarded as the functions of animals. So far, from the perspective of human "perceptual existence", Marx pointed out that labor is a kind of production and life, a means to maintain the survival of the flesh, and it is a kind of material survival labor. This kind of material production labor is a sensible, free, and comfortable activity of human beings. Through conscious and purposeful production, innovative ideas are generated in the human brain to improve production efficiency. This kind of production is carried out by people according to labor goals and labor plans, with a strong subjective purpose.

It can be seen that through labor practice, human beings create their own object products, that is, humanizing nature. Humanized nature has become a bridge between man and nature, and the interaction between humanized nature and human society promotes the formation of the "perceptual world". Human consciousness is produced by the nature of "perceptual existence", and the realization of labor freedom must be based on the nature of human "perceptual existence". So far, labor is connected with freedom. Marx proposed the concept of "free and conscious" productive labor as a symbol of an ideal society. As a practical human activity, "free and conscious" productive labor is also one of the nature of human beings.

## **3. The link of free development: alienated labor**

Realizing human freedom and liberation is Marx's life's work. However, Marx saw a major gap between the real society and his ideal society. In the "Manuscript", he began to find why the real society is so cruel, why the workers are not free, and how to realize the freedom of the workers. Marx's thinking on these issues is based on the logic of labor freedom. Through an in-depth

investigation of capitalist society and the mode of production, he discovered that workers' labor under the domination of capitalists is not free, and proposed the term "alienated labor". Concept.

Marx pointed out: Due to the existence of private property, alienated labor has appeared in capitalist society. This is an inevitable link of free development and a necessary stage of human social development. In the process of large-scale machine production in capitalist society, the labor products produced by workers in turn become tools for enslaving the workers themselves. The concrete manifestation is: the more labor products that workers create for capitalists, the more surplus value that workers are squeezed out, the poorer workers are, and the more they are bound by capitalists. It can be seen that workers are not free. All this stems from "alienated labor." Under the dominance of alienated labor, workers cannot get rid of the shackles of capitalists, and have to sell their own labor and earn money to make ends meet. At this time, money is also alienated. Workers cannot control themselves freely, and neither spiritual nor physical freedom can be realized. This kind of work is forced and unhappy. Therefore, alienated labor is a denial of human freedom, and the alienation of currency hinders the realization of human freedom.

### **3.1 The denial of human freedom by alienated labor**

Marx believes that the appreciation of things is directly proportional to the depreciation of people's own value. In capitalist production relations, the production scale of factories is positively related to the amount of capital held by capitalists. Under certain conditions, the more capital the capitalist invests in the factory, the larger the scale of production, and the greater the impact of production activities. At the same time, the more capital the capitalist holds, the cheaper the value of the workers themselves, and the more The poorer you get. In Marx's view, workers' food and clothing are the material basis for supporting freedom. However, in a capitalist society, capitalists seize workers' labor and labor products, and workers become capitalists' private property, which is a tool for capitalists to make money. In such a situation, workers do not work voluntarily, and the product of labor at this time is not the result of free labor. In order to survive, workers have nothing to sell, only labor. Workers have deviated from their essence in forced and helpless labor. At this time, human nature exists in a concealed form, and human labor is alienated. Freedom of labor cannot be achieved.

In the "Manuscript", Marx uses the theory of alienated labor to illustrate the problem of labor freedom of workers. Labor is an object activity, and objectification is the premise of alienation. In the theory of alienated labor, when Marx analyzed the alienation of labor products, he pointed out the concept of objectification: "The product of labor, in fact, is a kind of materialized labor, that is, the objectification of labor." In Marx's view, people It itself is an object existence, in addition to its own object, it is also an object other than itself. However, objectification and alienation have their similarities and differences. They are not two aspects of the same process. For example, objectification is not all alienation, and alienation is only a special form of objectification. Under the conditions of alienation, workers' labor is only for survival, and the freedom of labor has not been realized. At this time, human beings are alienated from human nature, and human nature exists in a concealed form. As a result, human and labor are alienated, People are alienated from the labor products they produce, and the nature of people is alienated from them. Under the alienated labor of capitalist society, people's original free and autonomous activities are alienated into a means of earning a living. At this time, people are enslaved and deny human freedom. For this reason, if you want to obtain labor freedom, you must abandon alienated labor and realize your own freedom.

### **3.2 The alienation of currency hinders the realization of full freedom**

In the "Manuscript", Marx pointed out that the labor paid by workers is seriously inconsistent with the remuneration obtained, such as wages, capital, and land rent. These fully prove that currency has

the characteristics of enslaving people, and currency has become alienated at this time. Marx believes that currency has a special attribute. It can perform certain functions and act as a general equivalent. The more currency people have, the more social wealth people have. "The amount of currency becomes the true yardstick of people's pursuit and becomes currency. Powerful attributes." The more money you have, the more social wealth you have. Capitalists continue to extend the remaining working time of workers in order to maximize their benefits. In order to maintain physical survival, workers have to engage in work that they do not like in order to earn money for their livelihood. Marx pointed out: The process of labor is a process in which people give full play to their own subjective initiative, happily carry out production activities, and create the process of maximizing their own value. However, in a capitalist society, workers are in a state of being forced in the process of labor, and capitalists continue to enslave workers. At this time, workers cannot exert their own subjective initiative, and they are not working out of voluntary labor. Workers feel compelled. And helpless, this kind of labor severely restrains the workers themselves, and this kind of labor is not free. At this point, the freedom of workers has been alienated by currency, and currency alienation has become the biggest obstacle to workers' freedom of labor.

In Marx's view, the emergence of currency makes exchanges more free, and exchanges at this time are not restricted by external conditions. Currency has a promoting role in the process of human history. Therefore, it is not that currency itself hinders the realization of workers' freedom of labor, but that capitalists take currency as a manifestation of private property, use currency to purchase labor, expand the scale of production, and thereby squeeze and enslave workers. Marx pointed out: "If people are people, then between people, we can only exchange trust for trust." In his view, to realize the freedom of human labor, the alienation of currency must be eliminated. On the road of future development, the problem of currency alienation will inevitably disappear.

#### **4. The inevitability of freedom: the sublation of alienation**

In the process of exploring how humans realize freedom, Marx took labor freedom as the logical main line and discovered that the existence of private property is the limitation of realizing human freedom. The existence of private property makes people alienated in the process of labor. Essence exists in a concealed form. For this reason, Marx believes that the sublation of alienation is the necessity of freedom, and the harmony between man and man, man and nature, and man and society can be realized through the sublation of alienation. He called this social state communism. In the "Manuscript", Marx described communism as: "The return of man to himself, that is to the society, that is to humanity... It is the real solution of the contradiction between man and nature, between man and man, It is the real solution to the struggle between existence and essence, objectification and self-confirmation, freedom and necessity, individual and kind."

In the "Manuscript", Marx uses the method of inverse deduction to point out that the reason why people are not free in reality lies in the existence of alienation. Then, to realize the return of the essence of man and realize the full and free development of man, we must actively sublimate private property. The establishment of communism.

##### **4.1 Active sublation of private property**

Marx's attitude towards private property can be summarized as the term "sublate", that is to say, it is necessary to affirm the positive aspects of private property, such as the establishment of subject self-awareness, the existence of private property inspires people's enthusiasm and creativity, etc. To overcome the negativity of private property. For example, the existence of private property makes people lose themselves, and private property as a tool becomes the goal of life, that is, the control and alienation of human nature, the dependence on things, and so on. "Private property is externalized



labor, the product of workers and nature itself, and the result of the external relationship between workers and nature itself." For this reason, only by sublating private property can we achieve the return of human nature. Early communism regarded labor as the essence of private property. Marx thought this statement was one-sided and crude. Labor is a kind of conscious life activity that can meet the basic needs of human life and solve the problem of its survival. This is the difference between humans and animals. The human nature of "objective and perceptual existence" can generate the dialectical relationship between subject and object in the process of labor practice, and condense the results of labor in private property. However, only from the object point of view, labor is the fundamental difference between humans and animals, and it is reasonable to regard it as the essence of private property. But from the subjective point of view, labor is the process of exerting subjective consciousness. In this process, individual subjective consciousness is formed. This is the essence of private property, and it is also the essence of Marx's "Manuscript". However, under the conditions of alienated labor, private property has alienated the human nature, and people have become alien and inhuman objects. This is the result of the alienation of the nature of private property. In Marx's view, private property is the product of alienated labor and the root of its existence. In a capitalist society, private property belongs only to capitalists. "Alienated labor robs man of the object of his production, and it also robs him of his kind life from man." For this reason, to eliminate alienation is to return all human relationships to the human. The liberation of freedom not only includes the return of human nature and the realization of the free and all-round development of human beings, but also the real settlement of the contradictions between man and man, man and nature, and man and society, and the realization of man and nature, man and man, and man and society. The harmony among the people truly realizes the liberation of people themselves.

In the "Manuscript", Marx's sublation of private property is based on the "objective and perceptual existence" of man as the starting point, which he believes is the basis of freedom. Although Marx believed that private property led to alienation, he also affirmed its positive aspects. Private property played an indispensable role in the process of social history. Marx understands sublation from an essential level. Communism is an active sublation of private property, and man truly realizes the possession of man's essence.

## 4.2 Establishing Communism

Communism is a necessity to realize human freedom. In a communist society, highly developed productive forces give everyone free time at their disposal. "The sum of personally developed productivity is the real social wealth. In communist society, the measure of wealth is free time, not labor time." At that time, people used free time to work, and labor became their talent. , An important means for the display of specialties, working time becomes the free time for human beings to develop themselves. At this time, the wealth of society is determined by free time. In Marx's view, communism is an active sublation of private property, which is the result of sublation of all alienation. In a communist society, people's material and spiritual lives are rich and colorful, and productive forces are highly developed. People work for their own production. At this time, people are the purpose of production; what people produce is social relations, that is, between people and people. Social connection with nature. The real person is the sum of social relations, a kind of perceptual object social existence.

## 5. Conclusions and Discussion

In a communist society, human body and spirit are liberated, human beings become free and comprehensively developed, and human nature returns to human beings. At this time, talents are free humans, and only then can they gain freedom of labor. In labor practice, people can get rid of all

constraints, can give full play to individual initiative and creativity, can realize their own value, and thus obtain full freedom. In the "Manuscript", Marx pointed out: "Communism is an ideal social state in the future, an inevitable form and an effective principle." Communism, as the most effective form of human society, is the inevitable result of social development, the fundamental way out for the free and comprehensive development of human beings, and an inevitable trend in history.

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