

A Study on Marxist Thought of Division and Three Forms of Human Development

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Abstract

According to Marxism, labor division reflects development of productive force and development of production relation, which is closely related to social changes and human survival and development. The correspondence between labor division and human development is determined by the development of productivity, demonstrating a process of negation of negation during which human have developed from historical shape to realistic shape and future shape.

Key words: Division; Human development; Historical shape; Realistic shape; Future shape

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INTRODUCTION

In the process of theorization of historical materialism, Marx and Engels took “division” as an important starting point to analyze the historical process of society. From the perspective of “realistic people”, they have combined division, social evolution with human survival and development. Division reflects the realistic development of productive force and production relation, and serves

as a tie between productive force and production relation, while “realistic people” develop in certain social relations, which are determined by the development of productive force. Therefore, we need to take “realistic people” as the foundation to analyze the triple dimensions of human development which directs to division.

1. DIVISION AND HISTORICAL SHAPE OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Natural division based on historical shape of human development had a prominent integration ability to human society, which promoted human development from historical shape into realistic shape.

1.1 Human Development Shows a Certain Form and Developmental Pattern

Distinguished from animals, people’s practical activities are able to unify reality and possibility, unify emotional nature and rational spirit, and have created social relations and human survival and development during the evolution of human history. Marx believes that the mode of production determines the state of human survival and development. Therefore, human survival and development based on labor practice has two fundamental dimensions—society and history which are unified in the evolution of three forms of human development. The so-called human development refers to the existence form and developmental state of the social historical subject of human in a particular historical period. It is a concept of time, referring to a unique regularity and developmental state of human in a certain historical stage, and is also a spatial concept, referring to a unity of multiple developmental states of “social people” with a variety of regularities in a particular historical time and space, having a characteristics of multidirectional synchronism.

1.2 Emergence of Labor Division and Its Features

Labor division deals with the relationship between individual labor and social total labor, and is not directly related to the possession of individual labor. Therefore, a study on the historical term of labor division requires to effectively explore the specific economic form and to examine the developmental form of the subject to depict the interactions between history of labor division and history of human development. Development of productive force, progress of production tool, promotion of population growth and concentration and emergence of relative surplus labor...these factors have contributed to the emergence and development of natural division of labor. Natural division of labor was generated inside primitive communes and primitive communities. Due to the differences of gender, age, etc., labor division was generated based on pure physiology. By summing up Morgan's study of ancient societies, Engels points out that men were engaged in fighting, hunting, fishing, scrambling for raw materials of food and producing necessary tools, and women were housekeepers, responsible for cooking, weaving and sewing, etc. In primitive communities, labor division was generated based on the difference of local resources and diversity of natural products due to different labors caused by natural environment.

Instead of absolute fertility of soil, it is the difference and diversity of natural products which has formed the natural basis for social division of labor, and has promoted human needs, abilities, labor materials and labor means to diversify according to the changes of natural environment. (*Collected Works of Marx and Engels [Vol. 5]*, 2009, p. 587)

The two forms of natural division of labor have the following characteristics. First of all, from a technical point of view, underdeveloped production division is mainly manifested in social basic division. Social production in natural economic forms was carried out within narrow ranges and isolated locations. Production division was limited to regional social organizations, and has not yet generally appeared in various economic communities. In addition, enterprise internal division did not become a major form of production, even in the medieval handicraft industry where the division of production process was difficult to develop due to limited market demand and strict limitation of practitioners. Secondly, from the perspective of social form, natural division of labor is organized and well planned. Marx points out, "In a patriarchal system, caste system, feudal system or guild system, social division is implemented in accordance with certain rules as a whole", and "presents a picture of planned and authoritatively organized social labors." (*Collected Works of Marx and Engels [Vol. 1]*, 2009, p.624; *Collected Works of Marx and Engels [Vol.5]*, 2009, p.413).

1.3 Division Has a Prominent "Integration" Capacity

The historical shape of human development is determined by the essence of natural economy, and is expressed as the relationship of "human's mutual reliance". It is reflected in labor subjects' direct possession of pure nature and reflected in human self-identity status. This historical shape of human development reflected as labor subject's direct possession of nature not only embodies the partial regularity that labor subject's development is a natural economic form, but also integrates labor subject's development into the subject's direct possession of nature, and renders the significance of the historical shape of human development from three perspectives of human and nature, human and society, human and themselves during human developmental process. Seeing from the history of labor division, natural division just draws an approximate labor range for people of different genders and different regions, and does not reach labor differentiation and independence, or consolidate the functions of different individuals. This is related to natural economy based on which historical shape of human development has formed. Natural economy determines that people can only work in a narrow range of spaces, so natural division is not developed at this time. In the planned labor division of a natural economy, underdeveloped productivity determines that labor distribution and size are subject to the time consumed by labors and effectiveness provided by the labors. Labor represents a "primitive richness", reflecting the direct social relations between people. However, due to underdeveloped production division, people must collaborate with each other to survive and develop, and individuals must attach to a certain community to complete a comprehensive labor. Social relations are performed as certain "natural kinships" and "direct subordination and domination", under which circumstances people live in various communities have not much independent personalities. Thus, in the historical shape of human development, division has formed a prominent "integration" capacity as an overall force, which is the affiliation of social relations characterized by historical shape of human development. "Natural primitiveness" of human activity is relevant to its "primitive richness".

Labor's developmental process is performed as the gradual replacement of comprehensive labor by specialized labor. This is due to the objective difficulties encountered by production on the one hand, because comprehensive labor can no longer meet the needs of production. On the other hand, the development of production provides material conditions for labor division. This is mainly due to the basic contradiction between social relation's limitation on productivity and realistic labor process's promotion to productivity. With its impetus, the division of social production has gradually developed from simple collaboration and natural division to massive

division of machine and spontaneous division, which disintegrated self-sufficient economies and promoted human development from historical shape to realistic shape.

2. DIVISION AND HISTORICAL SHAPE OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Spontaneous division of labor has dual functions to human development. On the one hand it makes human have certain independence and freedom, on the other hand it makes human development become unprecedentedly one-sided and malformed.

2.1 Realistic Shape and Characteristics of Human Development

Realistic shape of human development is labor subjects' development determined by the nature of commodity economy, and is expressed as "human's reliance on materials". It is manifested as labor subjects' indirect and socialized possession of humanized nature, and generates alienation between human and their self-identity due to alienate labor. Marx has made the following analysis on labor subject's development determined by the nature of commodity economy. Firstly, labor subject expresses his social relations by working on materials in the process of production. Labor subject and labor object can only form general exchanges by virtue of materialized labors and products. Secondly, labor subject has two forms of possession of labor object. One is that labor subject does not directly possess labor object, namely products belong to non-laborers. The other is that labor subject directly possesses labor object. This circumstance has gradually reduced with the development of large-scale industry. Thirdly, social relationship between labor subjects is manifested as the social relationship between materials. In other words, labor subject has to transform his labor into products with direct values in order to realize exchanges between private labor and social labor, and realize his own value. Human realistic shape has three features—materialization of social relation, limitation of human labor and relative independence of personality. In realistic shape of human development, individuals can get rid of a variety of naturally occurring and traditional social ties, get out of the affiliation to direct communities and achieve formal independence. However, human is still in the process of creating social relations, and cannot yet control the production process and living process. He is still subject to the domination of materialized social relation and is under the absolute authority of currency. Marx fully evaluates the historical progress and practical inevitability of labor subject in realistic shape of human development,

There is no doubt that this material contact is better than no link between individuals, or better than local contacts based on natural kinships and subordination relations. Similarly, before individuals create their own social contacts they won't put this kind of social contact under their domination. (*Collected Works of Marx and Engels [Vol. 8]*, 2009, p.56)

At the same time, Marx also affirms that realistic shape of human development is only a temporary form, and is a historical stage toward human future shape in the realm of freedom. This stage lays the foundation for the realm of freedom.

2.2 Production Division's Dual Functions to Realistic Shape of Human Development

Le Monteil says in *Moral Influences of Division*,

We are very surprised that, in ancient times, a person can be an outstanding philosopher, and also an excellent poet, orator, historian, priest, ruler and strategist. So many activities make us surprised. Today everyone builds a fence to confine himself inside. I do not know whether his activity area will be expanded after this division, but I clearly know that himself will be reduced in this way. (*Quoted from Collected Works of Marx and Engels [Vol. 1]*, 2009, p.630)

Originally, labor division stemmed from the needs of practice, and was an optimal combination of human labor capacities according to human talents. Meanwhile, labor division has proven its disintegration function to self-sufficient natural economies during its development process, and has opened up a new era that value is made for production and human can have a universal competence system and comprehensive needs. However, the reality is that capitalistic social division of labor has caused human's reduction. "Realistic people is no longer a people". (Marx). Marx examined the dual influences of the division of capitalist society (especially the division of large-scale industry of machine) to human development. Capitalist production liberated most people from feudal hierarchy to become "free flowing" workers and gain relative independence. Capitalist division integrated limited individual abilities to be an overall ability through collaboration, which greatly improved social productive force and laid a material foundation for human development. However, "handicraft workshop also deformed workers. It suppressed a variety of production inclinations and production abilities, and artificially cultivated one-sided skills." (*Collected Works of Marx and Engels [Vol. 5]*, 2009, p. 417) Labor division led to laborer's division, and led to their unilateralism and deformity. The deformity of body and soul is even inseparable from the division of whole society. Capitalist large-scale industry also reproduced the old labor division based on capitalism. "The internal division of modern society is characterized by specialty and expertise, as well as dementia of career." (*Collected Works of Marx and Engels [Vol. 1]*, 2009, p.629) In general, capitalist division of labor completely divided mental labor and physical labor into two separate processes, put the labors applicable to rational thinking to business owners and management departments, and tried to reduce workers to be pure mechanical work bearers. A part of people developed at the expense of another part of people's development, presenting a one-sided and malformed human development. This developed labor division is

highly fitted with the capitalist mode of production, where the consequences of divided labor and divided production process are that social relations need to be established through commodity exchanges, and human development is characterized by reliance on materials.

The dual functions of developed capitalist production division promoted human to develop from realistic shape to the future shape. The extensive development of the capitalist division is the internal requirement of capitalist mode of production, and is the result of capitalist private ownership. Labor division is the “synonym” of private ownership, both of which are intrinsically linked and deeply matched with each other. Capitalist private ownership separated direct laborer from production material, making human development have characteristics of materialization and unilateralism. However, the contradiction between developed capitalist production division, social division and capitalist private ownership has been gradually exacerbated with the refinement of division, and will eventually lead to inadaptation of productive force to productive relation. For human development, developed productivity owing to refine division will also create a comprehensive material foundation and a multifaceted ability system for abandoning realistic shape of human development.

3. DIVISION AND FUTURE SHAPE OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

In order to achieve future shape of human development, we need to eradicate the old labor division and make people have complete and free personalities.

3.1 Future Shape and Characteristics of Human Development

Marx never intended to dogmatically anticipate future society or use the fantasy picture of future society as the way of salvation. He just hoped to find a new world while criticizing the old world, and makes a scientific prediction on the future society which will abandon this production mode. From a developmental perspective, human will develop in the future shape based on the existent material and spiritual conditions of realistic shape. This is a development of subject determined by the nature of product economy, wherein nature will serve for human in the relationship between human and nature, and true, harmonious and free personalities will be achieved in the relationship between human and their self-identities. To be specific, during the process of social production, the combination mode of labor subject and labor object is subject to conscious and planned control, and forms a social labor composed of a number of individuals; From the perspective of labor subject's possession of labor object, because laborer will use “public production means” in production process, society will collectively possess production material for reproduction

of social products, and distribute consumption materials in accordance with working time. From the perspective of social relation, because working time is the direct criterion of production and product distribution, which allows “social relationship between people, their labors and products to be explicit in terms of production and distribution.” (*Collected Works of Marx and Engels [Vol. 5]*, 2009, p. 96.) From the perspective that nature needs to serve as the inorganic body of human, Marx proposed in *1844 Economic and Philosophical Manuscript* that, human's existence is object-oriented, and human survival and development is a unity of inorganic body and the organic body. On the one hand human is a natural existence and organic life form, must carry out material and energy exchanges with nature and is subject to nature. On the other hand, human is a conscious existence, and is able to take conscious and creative activities without the restriction of external environment. In realistic shape and future shape of human development, manpower is the major bearer of production and human labor is the primary means of livelihood. Therefore, material and energy exchange between human and nature, relationship between subject and object are both restricted by externality and form of labor purpose, and cannot maintain consistent with body function. Under the mechanism of capital, negligence of the independent value of nature led to a large number of ecological and environmental problems, and led to one-sidedness and deformity of human survival and development. In the stage of future shape of human development, as labor for livelihood will transform to be free and conscious labor, human's relationship with nature will also undergo fundamental changes. Material exchange will be a human self-creation process, and objectification will become human's self-assurance. Human will create his own image in the transformation of external nature to realize his free will. Human will transform external nature in accordance with his internal requirement as well as the criterion of beauty. In short, in the stage of future shape of human development, nature will truly serve as the inorganic body of human, so that human can eventually achieve the unity of organic body and inorganic body.

3.2 Future Shape of Human Development Requires to Eliminate Division

In the early 1980s when domestic scholars studied the future trend of division, they made a clear distinction between labor division and laborer division compared to classic writers. Labor division is an operating mode of labor, which is a formation of technology in social division and represents a combination relationship between labor functions. Laborer division is a way that society members participate in labor, which is a personification of labor division, and represent the relationship between human and labor function. The so-called “eradication of division” by classic writers refers to the “necessity of eliminating

laborer division". (Liu, 1985, p.127) Therefore, when division develops into the stage of future shape, human will gradually achieve a comprehensive development in terms of actual relationship and ideological relationship, and become a "complete people" who has an independent personality and can "work freely" in a "real community". This necessarily requires to eradicate laborer division. Marx points out in *Capital* that, "individuals who can achieve comprehensive development by serving different social functions as taking alternating activities will replace the workers who just assume a single social function." (*Collected Works of Marx and Engels [Vol. 9]*, 2009, p.312.) Under the circumstance that "society regulates the entire production", "workers can be transferred from one production department to another production department according to social needs or their own interests", so that their talents and inclinations can develop freely and comprehensively. In this regard, Marx also looks into the future society where people can develop freely in any sector, carry out activities with interests, get rid of the shackle of old division, and eliminate solidification and unilateralism of human labor imposed by division. In natural economy and commodity economy, working process mainly depends on manpower. Labor division goes along with laborer division, thus division has the dual roles of promoting production and enslaving people. In the stage of future shape of human development, the development of automated production will gradually replace human force with machine to realize automated and mechanized production, which will shake the foundation of labor division fundamentally. Marx has made a scientific prediction that future laborer division would be eventually eliminated according to the material conditions based on which capitalist society has developed. Capital reduces the overall social labor time to the minimum in the creation of a large number of surplus labors, which create a lot of free working time, and provides time and material conditions for exploring multiple human potentials and cultivate diverse characters. Engels points out that

social production can not only allow all social members to have a plenty of material lives, but also enable their physical strength and intelligence to get full development and application. This possibility is now firstly appearing, and it has truly appeared. (*Collected Works of Marx and Engels [Vol. 3]*, 1960, p.507)

In addition, in the capitalist mode of production, workers' extreme boredom in division was spontaneously reflected in the workers' movements and industrial management activities, and this is one of the inevitabilities to eliminate division. In short, Marx and Engels not only made a conclusion that future shape of human development would eliminate the social division based on private ownership, but also pointed out the premise, method and road to eliminate division and achieve all-round human development, namely, the method and fundamental way to actively develop social productive force, carry out proletarian revolution and dictatorship to establish communist public ownership eventually.

CONCLUSION

Marx has investigated the survival and development of "realistic people" from bilateral interactions between productive force and productive relation. "Realistic people" are always in certain social relations, and develop subject to the development of productive force. According to Marxism, labor division reflects the real development of productive force and productive relation, thus analyzing the developmental pattern of "realistic people" needs to make reference to labor division. The correspondence between labor division and human development is determined by the development of productivity, demonstrating a process of negation of negation during which human have developed from historical shape to realistic shape and future shape.

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