

# The Relationship between Capital Logic and Marx's Spiritual Production

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**Abstract:** *Spiritual production theory is an indispensable part of social production, and its investigation needs to start from the historical background of capitalism. In capitalist society, material production dominates, and capitalists' unlimited access to capital proliferation derives the law of capital production - capital logic. As one of the capital production, spiritual production cannot bypass the logic of capital and has become a means for capital to obtain benefits. Under the influence of capital, the spiritual production is alienated, so that the subject spirit is controlled by the logic of capital, so that the subject itself is lost. However, Marx did not completely deny the logic of capital, but criticized its destruction of spiritual civilization, and also affirmed the creative role of capital in spiritual civilization to a certain extent.*

**Keywords:** *Capital logic, Spiritual production, Marx*

## 1. Introduction

Although in Marx's many works, he did not directly put forward the concept of capital logic, but in the text of the nature of capital, subject, purpose and the development trend of capital and so on, these are the basis of capital logic. On the basis of capital logic, Marx discusses the influence of capitalism on spiritual production. The premise of clarifying this influence is to further reveal the essence of capital logic. Under the foundation of this influence, it is found that spiritual production itself is not a simple abstract production, but rooted in specific material production, which is historic. Therefore, to examine the relationship between capital logic and Marx's spiritual production, it is necessary to analyze it under specific historical conditions of capitalism.

## 2. Capital Logic from the Perspective of Marx

Regarding capital, some bourgeois economists only see the most basic natural attribute of capital, that is, capital is presented in the form of valuable things, and capital is often regarded as a means of production. This ordinary understanding regards capital as a thing in itself, something that has existed since human beings were born. This view holds that capital is only 'a necessary element of all labor' [1], and thus 'takes away certain forms of capital' [1]. Marx is different. He believes that capital also exists as a special way of existence, which is essentially to add value to itself, that is, to obtain a steady stream of value. In the process of obtaining value, capital forms a special production relationship. The purpose of its production is not to produce products that meet people's needs, but to obtain surplus value in production. To realize capital appreciation, it is necessary to purchase labor goods to occupy their surplus value. Moreover, capital must be cyclical movement, from production to money and then to goods, thus forming capital logic. For example: capital purchase labor, in order to obtain more value, and increase labor intensity, depriving workers of working hours. In addition, Marx put forward capital as a 'universal light', which dominates in capitalist society. 'The fundamental condition for the survival and rule of the bourgeoisie is the accumulation of wealth in private hands, the formation and appreciation of capital.' [2] It can see through various economic phenomena and reveal the contradictions existing in capitalist society.

## 3. The Development of Spiritual Production in the Logic of Capital

In the period of the germination and rise of the bourgeoisie, the Renaissance and the Enlightenment pushed human spiritual creation to a new peak. In the 14th and 17th centuries, the core idea of humanism in the European Renaissance advocated the liberation of human nature and the freedom of

thought, criticized the feudal and theological thoughts opposed to the bourgeoisie, and cleaned up the obstacles for the development of the bourgeoisie. In the early 17th-19th century, the Enlightenment advocated the authority of reason, and at this time, people's reason was being imprisoned by the feudal system and religious thought, so that people lived in darkness and suffering, and happy life naturally became people's inner trend. Therefore, during the Enlightenment, people strongly advocated the establishment of a rational kingdom, which is essentially the bourgeoisie want to build the kingdom. Whether it is the Enlightenment thought that is biased towards rationality, philosophy and politics, or the Renaissance movement that mainly produces humanistic spiritual art, the spiritual thoughts formed by both provide the ideological basis for the bourgeois political struggle. At the same time, under the impetus of the ideological movement, the spiritual production activities carried out by the thinkers and artists of this period were relatively free, and the spiritual achievements in many fields of society were rich and varied, pushing the spiritual creation to a new climax.

However, when the bourgeoisie seized power, spiritual production served the capitalist economy and was gradually ruled by the bourgeoisie. In capitalist society, capitalists pursue capital proliferation, and capitalist production derives the internal law of capital operation-capital logic. The spiritual production under the logic of capital is quite different from the spiritual production that was previously attached to the needs of the princes and aristocrats and mainly served the church and the palace. The spiritual production that entered the capital market was gradually liberated from the shackles of these religions and aristocrats, and the spiritual production was gradually capitalized. Moreover, the spiritual production of the bourgeoisie is different from that of other classes. It is not directly dependent on the bourgeoisie, but shows its dependence on the bourgeoisie by selling spiritual labor. It is the power of capital that transfers spiritual labor into material production and provides the basis for material production. Spiritual workers also gradually regard spiritual production as a business to maintain life, thus promoting the free competition of spiritual production and enriching the products of spiritual production.

Spiritual production seems to have gained freedom, but it is not. As Marx pointed out, 'even the highest spiritual production is recognized and forgivable in the eyes of the bourgeoisie only by being portrayed as, wrongly interpreted as, the direct producer of material wealth.' [3] That is to say, only when intellectuals who carry out spiritual production become laborers who create capital value can they be recognized by the bourgeoisie. That is to say, the logic of capital integrates the strong spiritual labor into the capitalist mode of production and changes the law of spiritual labor itself. Only by creating surplus value for capitalists can this spiritual labor be called spiritual production. Capitalists absorb all the means of production that can make profits for them. At this time, the means of production possessed by capitalists not only include material means of production, but also occupy spiritual means of production. Since then, all the spiritual products have been imprinted with the brand of capital proliferation. At the same time, the spiritual production under the capital logic has transferred the 'spirit' itself to the capitalists, making the relationship between people, man and nature, and society become a materialized capital relationship. The influence of this materialized capital relation on mental production has negative aspects: first, the capitalist mode of production restricts the ability of people to carry out mental labor. Capitalist development is the activity of a few capitalists controlling the proliferation of capital. When spiritual production enters capitalized production, it becomes the power of capital, which is always controlled by a few people. Therefore, the spiritual production of universal labor is difficult to achieve in the capital society. Secondly, capital logic is above spiritual production. To some extent, it is people who transfer the 'spirit' to capitalists in spiritual production, which limits the normal operation of spiritual labor under the control of capital power. Third, people's free spiritual labor has become alienated spiritual labor. Capitalized spiritual production makes people's free creation space gradually disappear, even opposite to the spiritual producer itself.

#### **4. The Relationship between Capital Logic and Spiritual Production**

Spiritual production is one of the important modes of production in the operation of capital logic. Although spiritual production is alienated and restricted and enslaved by the law of capital proliferation, capitalist production also promotes the development of social civilization.

##### ***4.1. The Position of Spiritual Production in Capital Logic***

In the feudal society, the status of spiritual production in the overall production was minimal. During this period, the relationship between material production and spiritual production has not yet

formed a unified. Spiritual production is mainly biased towards the production of thinking, but the material conditions at this time are not enough to transform it into spiritual products, so its effect on social production is not obvious.

After entering the capitalist society, the status of spiritual production has improved. In the logic of capital, the dominant position is material production. It is precisely because of the development needs of material production that the subjectivity of the labor subject is fully exerted to create products and enhance the status of the labor subject. Although the spiritual subject in the spiritual production has become a non-subject, but in the pursuit of the interests of capital production, spiritual production naturally into the ranks of commodity production. As a result, the relationship between spiritual production and material production has gradually changed from opposition to close combination, and has gained unprecedented development space. Due to the infinite capital proliferation of capitalists, the development of spiritual production is becoming larger and larger, and then developed into a relatively independent production sector that can be industrialized. As the spiritual production of industry, its operation is similar to material production. Gradually, spiritual products tend to be materialized. They are real commodities that enter the market exchange, obey the law of value of material production, and also serve the political economy. Later, the industrialization of spiritual production increased its proportion in capitalist production and became an indispensable driving force for capital proliferation.

#### ***4.2. The opposition between capital logic and spiritual production***

Capital logic largely deprives the uniqueness of spiritual products. In Marx's view, the alienation of spiritual production is carried out in the whole process of capitalist production, including the alienation of religion, labor, money, capital and so on, as well as the alienation between people in essence. It is the need for capital proliferation. The unlimited expansion of capital improves productivity, but also makes people's spiritual labor enslaved by capital. People's own spiritual labor can not get rid of the value principle of capital, thus falling into the great predicament of capital. In the process of constantly pursuing surplus value, the capitalists have to turn the intangible spiritual culture into tangible spiritual products, and reproduce and mass produce the spiritual products, reducing the original unique spiritual output to a popular product, making it devalued at the spiritual level. From this perspective, spiritual production and capitalism are opposite.

Secondly, capital logic bury the talent of spiritual producers and encroach on the space of their free creation. When capital logic puts spiritual production into its running track, it strengthens the alienation of spiritual production, and spiritual producers become unrealistic people. Spiritual producers can only be employed by capitalists and sell their intelligence to obtain living materials. The innovation of human intelligence-spiritual thought and the creation of spiritual products not only rely on talent, but also need a highly free space and real life experience to obtain the inspiration of creation. However, under the logic of capital, spiritual producers have become a tool of production, which can only be created according to the production instructions of capitalists and the demand direction of the market. So that the spiritual producers lost the spiritual freedom of human nature, also lost the space of free creation, but also buried the original talent. It can be seen that the capital world has a strong control over spiritual producers. The main body of spiritual production is different from capitalists, and its essence is also hostile to capital.

In addition, under the capital operation, in order to meet the needs of the market, the spiritual products created by spiritual producers tend to be entertaining and vulgar, and even shelve the traditional and classic spiritual culture to oblivion. Since the purpose of capitalist production does not stop at production itself, its total process is composed of production and circulation. In the production process, capital only creates surplus value in the concept, surplus value has not become a reality. Capitalists to this surplus value into reality, only to produce their own goods and currency holders in the market exchange can be achieved. The ultimate goal of capitalists is not to obtain conceptual surplus value, so the spiritual products produced must find the consumer market and realize the exchange of value in circulation. Only the spiritual products with large market demand can quickly realize the exchange of value, otherwise, capitalists will not be able to put the existing concept of surplus value into reality. Because of this, spiritual producers can only create content that can achieve capital proliferation, leading to the concentration of spiritual production for the public's entertainment. What the public yearns for at the moment, spiritual workers cater to what they create, and their intentions determine the direction of spiritual production. However, entertainment and popular things are often abandoned and forgotten faster, so the spiritual production under the action of capital has produced a lot of spiritual 'garbage', while the classical traditional spiritual culture has been neglected.

#### ***4.3. The promoting effect of capital on spiritual production***

Marx not only saw the restriction of capital logic on spiritual production, but also affirmed the effect of capital on spiritual civilization to some extent. In the field of spiritual production, the logical operation of capital appreciation pursues surplus value, which needs to shorten the socially necessary labor time and urge capitalists to constantly update the means of production. For example, printing, photography and other technologies that appeared earlier are mainly used for the bearing of art and culture. After that, the invention of network technology is a new technology for the bearing of spiritual civilization. The improvement of technology makes the process from production to consumption shortened, and literary works and classic books are copied, disseminated and inherited. Furthermore, the spiritual civilization of the society is more and more abundant, entering the market in various forms, making such a market more prosperous and diversified. Moreover, the art and high-end culture at this time no longer belong to a few people, but break through the theological position of the spiritual world under the action of capital logic, make it go down the altar and enter the public's vision and life. From this perspective, this is a great spiritual civilization 'innovation', is indeed the charm of capital.

It is also the operation of capital logic that human spiritual communication and the development of cultural undertakings move towards the world. In the stage of feudal society and the budding period of the bourgeoisie, the survival and development of human beings are regional, and the life and communication between people are often limited to a small or isolated space. This kind of mobility is not strong development between people complement each other's behavior is not displayed, is not conducive to close exchanges of spiritual culture. In the capitalist society, the logic of capital has been carried out in depth. Capital has crossed the region and the barrier to connect various markets, making people's cultural exchanges active. The capital market leads people and their spiritual culture in different places to the world. Cultures blend with each other, and capital and culture move from separation to integration. Abandoning the ideology of alienation of spiritual production, capitalist society first provides material security for spiritual production, and then opens up a broad road for spiritual production on the basis of the capital market of material production, which is no longer confined to a certain region. In addition, it also broadens the vision of human spiritual and cultural creation, and innovates and enriches spiritual products to spread to the world.

### **5. Conclusion**

To sum up, Marx dialectically evaluated the spiritual production under the logic of capital. Spiritual production not only brings pain to people, but also promotes the development of this society. It can be seen that Marx expects that in the future society, spiritual products not only meet people's spiritual needs, but also promote the development of social productivity, especially science and technology. Even if the modern and Marx's era has been different, the spiritual production of contemporary society alienation in various forms, such as the lack of human spirit, humanities and social sciences value distortions, but the nature of alienation and freedom will not change. The logic of Marx's spiritual production theory from alienation to freedom can give modern people profound inspiration to break away from the spirit of alienation, make people realize the true essence of spiritual labor, and actively overcome the alienation of spiritual production. In addition, in a developed society towards the footsteps of the spirit of the product-science and technology in the development of modern society has been the dominant force, promoting the development of all aspects of society. Developed material production needs to be based on high-quality spiritual production, and spiritual poverty cannot be made up by material. Nowadays, material production is no longer dominant, nor is it dominated by both. It is confirmed that spiritual production is dominant as social production. The development of material production depends on the development of spiritual production. Most of the problems existing in the former need to be solved through major breakthroughs in spiritual production. This enlightens modern people to pay attention to the cultivation of innovative thinking of spiritual production in order to further promote the development of socialist modernization. Paying attention to the research of Marx's spiritual production is not only the need of its theoretical development, but also the requirement of the development of spiritual production in the new era.

All in all, regardless of the degree and form of social development, spiritual production always occupies an important position, and its construction cannot be ignored in the process of society. Although there are spiritual production dilemmas with the characteristics of this era in every era, Marx's deep analysis of spiritual production alienation and freedom is always the fundamental guiding ideology to solve these dilemmas.

**References**

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