

Realistic Responses to Misconceptions Surrounding Marx's Labor Theory of Value in the Age of Artificial Intelligence and Its Developmental Prospects

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Abstract

The rise of AI-based modes of production has sparked debates over whether “machines create value,” thereby casting doubt upon the contemporary explanatory power of Marx’s labor theory of value. By elucidating the core principles of Marx’s labor theory of value and distinguishing key categories such as use value and value, living labor and objectified labor, this paper demonstrates that viewpoints such as “machines create value” are fundamentally rooted in theoretical confusion. The study finds that the current era of artificial intelligence is still far from realizing a “digital utopia”; behind automated production there remains a new form of complex labor, and the ultimate source of surplus value continues to be living labor. On this basis, the paper further reveals the new developmental landscape of the labor theory of value in the age of AI, namely the exponential expansion of use values and the profound restructuring of value production. Marx’s labor theory of value has not become obsolete; rather, the methodological insights embedded within it remain capable of analyzing contemporary social realities.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, automation, labor theory of value, living labor, use value and value, surplus value

1. Introduction

The rise of AI-based modes of production has accelerated both the digital industrialization of industries and the digital transformation of traditional sectors, leading to an exponential growth of use values. At the same time, questions concerning whether algorithms and robots can independently create value and whether Marx’s labor theory of value has become outdated have become the subject of intense academic debate. On the basis of a systematic exposition of the essential principles of Marx’s labor theory of value, this paper examines the actual development of artificial intelligence, clarifies the theoretical fallacies contained in contemporary critiques, and further analyzes the new developmental landscape of the labor theory of value in the contemporary era as well as the fundamental questions to which it must respond. Such an inquiry not only contributes to the further development of the labor theory of value itself, but also constitutes an inevitable requirement for safeguarding social fairness and justice and for promoting a sound interaction between technological progress and social development.

2. The Core Principles of Marx’s Labor Theory of Value and the Theoretical Misconceptions of the AI Era

2.1 *The Core Principles of Marx’s Labor Theory of Value*

In his early years, Marx was influenced by the supply-demand theory of value. However, through a deeper grasp of historical materialism and a systematic investigation of capitalist social reality, he ultimately became a firm

defender of the labor theory of value. In *Capital*, Marx took the commodity as his logical starting point and revealed the internal laws governing the movement of value under the conditions of capitalist commodity production, thereby laying the scientific foundation of the labor theory of value.

The key to understanding Marx's labor theory of value lies in comprehending the dual character of labor and the dual character of commodities. In *Capital*, Marx pointed out that "all labor is, on the one hand, an expenditure of human labor-power in the physiological sense, and in its character of identical abstract human labor, it creates the value of commodities. On the other hand, all labor is the expenditure of human labor-power in a special form and with a definite purpose, and in this character of concrete useful labor, it produces use values."¹ Accordingly, labor manifests itself both as concrete useful labor, which creates the use value of commodities, and as abstract human labor, which constitutes the value of commodities.

Regarding the determination of value, Marx further stated that commodities "now express merely that human labor-power has been expended in their production, that human labor is accumulated in them. As crystals of this social substance, common to them all, they are values—commodity values."² It is therefore evident that value is undifferentiated human labor congealed in commodities. As for the measure of value, Marx introduced the concept of socially necessary labor time, namely "the labor time required to produce any use value under the conditions of production normal for a given society and with the average degree of skill and intensity prevalent in that society."³

Value possesses both a sphere of production and a sphere of realization. Marx emphasized that the value of commodities can only be socially recognized when commodities are successfully transformed into money through exchange in the sphere of circulation. Only then can private labor acquire social validation. This process constitutes the crucial link through which value moves from abstract determination to concrete realization.

In the sphere of distribution, Marx uncovered the secret of capital accumulation through his analysis of surplus value. He argued that the worker's labor time is divided into socially necessary labor time and surplus labor time: the former reproduces the value of labor-power itself and appears in the form of wages, while the latter is appropriated by capital without compensation and constitutes surplus value. Surplus value is precisely the fundamental source of capital valorization. It is thus evident that Marx's labor theory of value not only explains the origin and determination of commodity value, but also profoundly reveals the essential antagonism between capital and labor under the capitalist mode of production.

It is the labor of the broad working class across all sectors of society that endows commodities with value. In this sense, an object produced without any participation of human labor may possess an exchange price, but it cannot possess value in the Marxian sense. The "living labor" embodied in commodities constitutes the substance of value. Living labor refers specifically to the process by which human beings apply both physical and intellectual capacities in commodity production, thereby transferring old value while simultaneously creating new value. Marx explicitly stated that "value itself has no other 'material' than labor itself," emphasizing that this understanding is a "historical abstraction"⁴ grounded in specific social and historical conditions. Under capitalism, labor-power is subordinated to capital, and labor is carried out entirely for the purpose of exchange, serving both capital accumulation and the reproduction of labor-power itself. At the same time, under the conditions of commodity economy, private labors stands in fundamental opposition to one another. All labor is ultimately directed toward exchange, and only through successful exchange can private labor receive social recognition and realize its value.

From the above analysis of the fundamental principles of Marx's labor theory of value, it is evident that Marx consistently focused on the human beings behind commodities. In *Capital*, Marx vividly portrayed the excessive labor, domination by capital, and alienation of labor. These discussions were not merely humanitarian expressions of sympathy; rather, they aimed to reveal the internal logic of workers' conditions of existence, labor processes, and forms of production organization under the capitalist mode of production. Consequently, Marx's labor theory of value does not simply remain at the superficial proposition that "human labor creates use value and determines exchange value." What truly concerned Marx were the conditions of existence, modes of production, organizational forms, and distributional outcomes of the working class concealed beneath

¹ Marx, Karl. (2009). *Capital: Volume 1*. In *Collected Works of Marx and Engels* (Vol. 5, p. 60). Beijing: People's Publishing House. (In Chinese)

² Marx, Karl. (2009). *Capital: Volume 1*. In *Collected Works of Marx and Engels* (Vol. 5, p. 51). Beijing: People's Publishing House. (In Chinese)

³ Marx, Karl. (2009). *Capital: Volume 1*. In *Collected Works of Marx and Engels* (Vol. 5, p. 52). Beijing: People's Publishing House. (In Chinese)

⁴ Marx, K., & Engels, F. (1972). *Complete Works of Marx and Engels* (Vol. 29, p. 300). Beijing: People's Publishing House. (In Chinese)

commodity production under capitalism. He sought to reveal the disadvantaged position occupied by workers in social distribution, the exploitation they suffer, and the social reality that prevents them from achieving free and all-round development. This is the fundamental reason why the labor theory of value continues to possess enduring vitality.

However, with the arrival of the age of artificial intelligence, the material foundation of the industrial economy upon which Marx's labor theory of value emerged has undergone profound transformation. Emerging technologies represented by artificial intelligence are fundamentally reshaping social production and commodity circulation, thereby restructuring people's modes of life.

2.2 Theoretical Misconceptions Concerning the Labor Theory of Value in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

The most salient characteristics of contemporary social production are the automatic generation capabilities of artificial intelligence, the substantial increase in labor productivity, and the relative withdrawal of concrete labor from the process of producing the use value of commodities. Digital factors have emerged as newly constituted factors of production in the present era. Empowered by algorithms, valuable products can now be generated rapidly and on a massive scale. For instance, systems such as DeepSeek and Google's Gemini are capable of automatically generating texts, images, and videos in response to human instructions. Automated production has also penetrated extensively into various sectors of manufacturing, where procedures such as welding, assembly, and spraying in automobile production are now largely completed by robots. Likewise, the explosive growth of the contemporary new energy industry has been profoundly shaped by automation technologies, which have greatly enhanced labor productivity and reduced error rates in component forging and precision processing. In addition, machines are capable of continuous operation without interruption, thereby transcending the physiological limitations of human beings.

On this basis, some scholars argue that the amount of labor directly expended by human beings in commodity production has significantly declined, while social wealth continues to expand. Consequently, they claim that the labor theory of value has become obsolete, that human labor is no longer the sole source of value, and that commodities produced by artificial intelligence likewise possess value.¹ Furthermore, some contend that AI machines possess the intelligent capacities required for production and are therefore capable of replacing production workers as the bearers of living labor and of independently creating value.²

Such "misconceptions" directed against Marx's labor theory of value profoundly shape contemporary value orientations and modes of judgment regarding current social issues, including platform exploitation, digital labor, algorithmic price discrimination based on big data, unemployment, and social polarization. Within a theoretical atmosphere that proclaims that "artificial intelligence creates value," should these problems still be taken seriously and addressed? Should society move toward technological supremacism? Should the logic underlying systems of distribution accordingly be transformed? All of these questions require a rigorous study and systematic response to Marx's labor theory of value in a manner consistent with the demands of the present era.

3. Realistic Analysis and Theoretical Response to Misconceptions Surrounding the Labor Theory of Value in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

3.1 A Realistic Analysis of Misconceptions Concerning the Labor Theory of Value in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

Both Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels emphasized that scientific inquiry must be grounded in objective facts that are beyond doubt. In order to clarify the misunderstandings and critiques directed at the labor theory of value in the age of artificial intelligence, it is first necessary to develop an objective understanding of the actual level of development reached by contemporary artificial intelligence.

First, contemporary AI-based production has not yet realized a "digital utopia." The vision of a society in which fully automated robots produce all goods required for social life remains merely an idealized aspiration. Human labor has by no means been completely liberated from a condition dominated by wage labor and production for exchange. The fundamental reason why many people perceive that commodities can seemingly be produced without human labor lies in the fact that such commodities essentially represent the transfer of "old value" preserved from humanity's past labor. From the perspective of the value-formation process, human labor creates

¹ Hu, Bin, & He, Yunfeng. (2019). The Labor Value Theory and Labor System in the Era of Weak Artificial Intelligence. *Journal of Zhejiang Gongshang University*, (4), 12-21. (In Chinese)

² Virno, Paolo. (2017). *Grammar of the Multitude: An Analysis of Contemporary Forms of Life*. Translated by Dong Bicheng, Beijing: The Commercial Press, p. 82. (In Chinese)

value in two dimensions: first, through the transfer of old value; and second, through the creation of new value.¹ Commodities that appear to be generated without human labor in contemporary society—such as videos, images, and texts produced by algorithms including OpenAI’s ChatGPT and Google’s Gemini—are, in essence, the transfer and recombination of pre-existing old value. Although artificial intelligence technologies have undoubtedly accelerated the production of similar products, increased labor productivity within relevant sectors, and reduced the socially necessary labor time required in those sectors, they remain incapable of independently creating the video narratives and cultural content genuinely required by human beings, nor can they generate entirely new works never before produced by humanity. Rather, they merely reprocess and reproduce humanity’s existing intellectual achievements.

The much-discussed embodied intelligent robot “Lobster” may serve as an illustrative example. Such a robot does not experience physiological fatigue and can continuously perform labor day and night according to human commands, even formally realizing a situation in which “one person constitutes an entire company,” thereby replacing numerous traditional occupations. Nevertheless, the commodities it produces ultimately consist only in the continuous extraction, organization, and recombination of already existing old value, rather than the creation of genuinely new value.

Second, behind “automation” lies a new form of “complex labor.” At this point, one may encounter the following objection: AI-generated commodities also possess prices, and these prices are evidently not determined by the “undifferentiated human labor congealed in commodities”; therefore, AI-generated commodities must themselves possess value. The example of the “token” may be considered here. As the smallest informational unit processed by large AI models, the token has already become a pricing unit for generative AI services. On the surface, token transactions appear unrelated to labor. In reality, however, they depend upon a series of scheduling technologies and algorithmic optimization processes. The competitiveness of token-based services is fundamentally determined by four dimensions: electricity, computational power, models, and data. The optimization of these dimensions, interface invocation, and data governance all require extensive expenditures of physical labor, intellectual labor, and coordinated cooperation among human beings. The operation of an artificial intelligence enterprise requires not only maintenance engineers responsible for systems, data centers, and IT facilities, but also model and computational architecture engineers. The labor achievements of these new forms of labor engaged in maintenance, development, and system design manifest themselves as service capacities that merely appear to be “automatically generated.” In other words, the use value presented by artificial intelligence as a commodity is sustained precisely by new forms of human labor. In manufacturing industries such as electronics, automobile production, and pharmaceuticals, automated production lines may appear to eliminate repetitive labor on the surface, yet technical workers, quality inspectors, and control operators continue to exist within the production process.

The distinction between new forms of labor and traditional labor in terms of labor methods creates the illusion of the “withdrawal of labor.” As a commodity, “automation technology” has transformed the mode of repetitive labor formerly performed by workers, causing traditional manual laborers to become new forms of laborers who rely more heavily upon intellectual capacities than direct physical exertion. Labor is no longer necessarily carried out through direct manual activity, but instead through control platforms and computers, relying primarily upon mental labor. For this reason, the labor process appears no longer to involve “direct participation,” thereby producing the illusion that labor has withdrawn from production. Furthermore, although artificial intelligence has indeed displaced large numbers of traditional jobs, the workers excluded from these sectors have not ceased laboring altogether. Rather, they have been transferred into other sectors of employment, becoming food-delivery couriers, gig-economy workers, and other forms of digital laborers, as well as entering industries that still require human labor. In this way, they constitute an enormous laboring underclass. Every step taken by digital capitalist intelligent production toward “unmanned production” remains inseparable from the hidden participation of digital laborers behind the scenes.²

Third, the source of surplus value remains living labor. At the level of value production, capital actively employs laborers to engage in artificial intelligence research, continuously iterate algorithms, maintain intelligent machine production systems, and appropriate data generated through human activity as factors of production. This process is fundamentally driven by capital’s intrinsic pursuit of profit maximization. Automated production may compress variable capital, expand surplus value, and generate super-profits. However, in reality, the increases in labor productivity and profit rates brought about by technological development have not been

¹ Marx, Karl. (2009). *Capital: Volume 1*. In *Collected Works of Marx and Engels* (Vol. 5, pp. 242-243). Beijing: People’s Publishing House, 2009. (In Chinese)

² Huang, Zaisheng. (2025). The Value Issues of ‘Fully Automated’ Production in the Age of Intelligence: Presentation and Analysis. *Contemporary Economic Research*, (8), 17-25. (In Chinese)

correspondingly reflected in rising wages for workers. Instead, they have produced, at the level of appearances, the illusion that “machines create surplus value.”

At the level of value realization, improvements in the efficiency of circulation and exchange likewise depend upon labor. In the era of the digital economy, capital possesses the capacity to capture data generated through people’s online behavioral activities, thereby enabling precision targeting, algorithmic price discrimination through big data, and the large-scale dissemination of consumerist ideology through advertising campaigns promoting commodities. These methods enhance the efficiency of exchange and facilitate the growth of profits. At first glance, such developments may appear to confirm that algorithms themselves “create” value. In reality, however, this is not the case. Algorithms are themselves designed by human beings, while the core means of production—namely data—derive from records of human activity within economic and social life. Moreover, the presentation and dissemination of various forms of informational content rely upon the new forms of labor performed by workers within internet enterprises. Consequently, in contemporary AI society, whether in the sphere of production or in the sphere of circulation and exchange, the ultimate source of surplus value remains living labor rather than algorithms or machines themselves.

3.2 Theoretical Responses to the Challenges Directed at the Labor Theory of Value

At present, several representative critiques have been raised against the labor theory of value. However, the common fallacy underlying these critiques stems from a confusion of Marx’s core conceptual categories.

First, some argue that machines have replaced human labor and generated enormous amounts of wealth; therefore, machines themselves must also be capable of creating value. Such critiques confuse Marx’s distinction between use value and value by mistakenly equating the use value of commodities with value itself. At the same time, this viewpoint is shaped by AI production under the domination of capital, which obscures the new forms of labor involved in processes such as data annotation and model development, thereby concealing the laborers behind commodities.

Second, some regard artificial intelligence as a form of “silicon-based human” fundamentally different from previous machines. According to this perspective, artificial intelligence possesses cognitive and laboring capacities equivalent to, or even surpassing, those of human beings, and can therefore completely replace human labor, while capital can continue to realize self-expansion through the exploitation of “silicon-based laborers.”¹ The flaw in this argument lies in the fact that if fully automated production and an immense abundance of material wealth were truly realized, exchange value would lose its foundation, wage labor would disappear, and capitalism itself would cease to exist. Under such conditions, the labor theory of value would naturally disappear as well. Precisely this outcome would represent the endpoint of the logic of capital and the material precondition for communism. Consequently, the notion of “exploiting silicon-based humans” in fact reveals the theoretical limitations of a mode of thinking still trapped within the logic of capital itself.

Third, some contend that contemporary labor involving interaction between human beings and intelligent agents constitutes merely “indirect labor,” which does not create value, while only direct labor produces value; according to this view, machines are therefore the true creators of value. This argument not only misjudges the current stage of technological development, which still requires vast amounts of labor, but also confuses concrete labor with abstract labor. Changes in the concrete form of labor do not alter its essential character as an expenditure of abstract human labor.

The reason why critiques of the labor theory of value fail to withstand scrutiny lies fundamentally in their confusion of use value and value, price and value, concrete labor and abstract labor, as well as profit and surplus value. Artificial intelligence undoubtedly creates enormous quantities of use values, yet use value is not identical with value. The prices of machine-produced commodities derive from the transfer of old value, the input of new forms of labor, and the acquisition of excess profits, rather than from the automatic possession of value by machines themselves. New forms of labor remain expenditures of abstract human labor and should not be denied simply because their concrete forms have changed. The profits generated through machines are, in essence, surplus value created by living labor; once intelligent technologies become universally adopted throughout an industry, excess profits will inevitably disappear. The present age of artificial intelligence remains far from a condition in which labor has been completely replaced. Living labor has merely transformed its concrete forms and entered new spheres of value creation. Therefore, the labor theory of value has not become obsolete; rather, it demonstrates even greater vitality in the digital era.

Contemporary critiques of the labor theory of value also intensify the antagonism between labor and capital. The logic through which capital pursues self-expansion consists in suppressing variable capital (v) while maximizing

¹ Yan, Mengwei. (2025). Living Labor, Artificial Intelligence, and Marx’s Theory of Labor Value. *Seeking Truth*, 52(1), 18-28+187. DOI: 10.19667/j.cnki.cn23-1070/c.2025.01.003. (In Chinese)

the appropriation of surplus value (m), thereby achieving the maximization of exploitation. The claim that “artificial intelligence creates value” in reality serves to assist capital not only in appropriating the immense use values generated through AI technologies, but also in appropriating the surplus value created by the living labor concealed behind them. Ultimately, this tendency leads toward technological supremacism, causing both policy and society to become subordinated to technology itself, rather than adhering to a people-centered orientation.

In reality, commodities produced within a fully automated society entirely divorced from living labor would possess no value. This is because such a society would abolish wage labor and thereby bring capitalism itself to an end. Once the social foundation upon which the labor theory of value depends collapses, the theory itself would naturally withdraw from the historical stage. ¹Conversely, so long as commodity production, private ownership, and wage labor under the dominance of capitalism continue to exist, the labor theory of value cannot be regarded as obsolete. As Karl Marx stated: “If machinery were to annihilate the entire class of wage laborers, this would be a terrible thing for capital, for without wage labor capital ceases to be capital.”²

Within an idealized fully automated society, value itself would likely acquire new connotations. It is possible that only innovative products or purely handcrafted objects would then possess “value,” or perhaps entirely new systems for measuring value would emerge. What can nevertheless be affirmed with certainty is that the formation of value would no longer derive from wage labor or from labor performed for the purpose of exchange, nor would it require compensation for the expenditure of labor-power.

4. The New Developmental Landscape of Marx’s Labor Theory of Value in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

The traditional Marxist labor theory of value profoundly depicted the mode of production characteristic of industrial-era capitalism. In the age of artificial intelligence, however, capitalism continues to dominate the systems of social production, circulation, and distribution. Owing to its scientific methodology, the labor theory of value remains capable of penetrating contemporary social realities and therefore continues to retain vibrant theoretical vitality. The transformation of productive forces brought about by artificial intelligence has given rise to a new theoretical landscape for the labor theory of value, a landscape centrally characterized by the explosive expansion of use values and the profound restructuring of value production.

At the level of the use value of commodities, concrete labor, as the source of use value, has undergone three fundamental transformations in the age of artificial intelligence. Together, these transformations have driven the exponential expansion of use values.

First, automated production and uninterrupted production that transcends human physiological limitations have greatly liberated productive efficiency. Machines are capable of operating continuously day and night without being constrained by cycles of physical recovery, thereby dramatically increasing the scale of use-value production.

Second, intelligent agents such as AI integrate humanity’s accumulated intellectual achievements, enabling the cognitive capacities of individuals to become connected with the total intellectual labor of society, thereby enhancing the comprehensive capacities of individuals themselves. As a result, the fields encompassed by use values have been greatly expanded, while the quality of use values has also been comprehensively elevated. The emergence of new domains such as personalized services and virtual reality has opened entirely new frontiers for the production of use values.

Third, the industrial reserve army has been systematically absorbed into the new structure of the digital economy. Workers displaced by artificial intelligence and related technologies are compelled either to enter low-end service industries or to become part of the “digital proletariat.” At the cost of sacrificing their own development, they provide indispensable foundational “human” supplements and operational fuel for the intelligent economy, thereby constituting the harsh social foundation underlying this apparent prosperity.

At the level of commodity value, a silent transformation is likewise unfolding. Living labor, as the sole source of value, has undergone a profound structural reorganization.

First, there has been a structural transfer in value creation. The production of value has shifted away from the simple labor of large numbers of workers within workshops toward the intensive complex labor performed by scientists, engineers, and systems architects, while simultaneously extending toward new forms of ordinary labor such as data annotators, food-delivery couriers, and ride-hailing drivers. This transformation has rendered value

¹ Lü, Shaode, and Zhang, Shigui. (2022). Production Automation and the Future of Commodity Economy: Also on the Historical Mission of the Labor Theory of Value. *Guangdong Social Sciences*, (5). (In Chinese)

² Marx, Karl. (2012). *Wage Labor and Capital*. In *Selected Works of Marx and Engels* (Vol. 1, p. 331). Beijing: People’s Publishing House. (In Chinese)

creation both highly concentrated and increasingly “invisible” in spatial terms.

Second, the production of surplus value has been intensified to an unprecedented degree. The application of artificial intelligence and related technologies has raised labor productivity and reduced the amount of value embodied within individual commodities, thereby lowering the prices of means of subsistence and reducing the cost of reproducing labor-power. Since neither traditional laborers nor new forms of workers possess meaningful bargaining power within the distribution of value, the value of labor-power—that is, wages—has been further suppressed. Given an unchanged working day, necessary labor time is compressed while surplus labor time correspondingly expands, causing the rate of exploitation to rise to historically unprecedented levels. The intrinsic driving force of capital accumulation has always consisted in appropriating the largest possible share of an ever-expanding mass of value.

Third, there has been a massive transfer of old value accompanied by statistical illusions. Artificial intelligence systems themselves constitute expensive constant capital embodying vast quantities of past labor. Through accelerated depreciation, their value is transferred on a massive scale into the total social product, thereby generating the illusion that the total quantity of value itself is increasing at extraordinary speed.

The contradiction between productive forces and relations of production has likewise assumed a new historical form. From the standpoint of use value, AI technologies contain enormous potential for making material goods and services abundantly available, perhaps even approaching conditions of near gratuity. However, under capitalist relations of production, the realization of value and the self-expansion of capital necessarily depend upon social forms that intensify social polarization and deepen exploitation. Concretely, this process manifests itself in the growing polarization between a small number of high-value creators and a vast marginalized population. Within the sphere of distribution, the power of capital continues to occupy a dominant position, while Marxian principles of distributive justice are subjected to severe erosion.

Under existing relations of production, technological leaps are accompanied by profound reconstructions of the logic of value and by new forms of human existential predicament. The fundamental contradiction of the AI era lies in the tension between the immense potential unleashed by intelligent productive forces and the capitalist social form that constrains this potential from serving the free development of all people.

The labor theory of value is not an eternally fixed and absolute truth. Nevertheless, so long as commodity production and exchange relations continue to exist, it will retain both explanatory power and theoretical vitality. In the age of artificial intelligence, the labor theory of value must confront a series of new historical questions: How should new forms of platform monopoly and digital exploitation be understood? How should the challenges to fairness arising from the participation of data as a factor in distribution be addressed? How can the dignity and rights of living labor be safeguarded amid the accelerated iteration of technology? Ultimately, all of these issues converge upon one fundamental point: the essential significance of the labor theory of value today lies in continuing to focus upon human beings, living labor, and the healthy interaction between technology and society.

More fundamentally, production in the age of artificial intelligence compels humanity to reconsider three essential questions: Is the purpose of production the self-expansion of value or the free development of human beings? Should the fruits of production serve a small number of capital owners or society as a whole? Should production organization follow the vertical control of capital or the equal cooperation of laborers? The answers to these questions ultimately point toward a higher objective: enabling humanity to break free from the domination of capital, advance toward free and all-round development, and move toward what Karl Marx termed the “realm of freedom,” rather than descending into a polarized society characterized by technological domination and the enslavement of human beings by technology itself.

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