

The Inheritance of Hardt and Negri to Marx's Thought: From the Critique of Political Economy to Biopolitical Critique

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In the *Empire Series*, Hardt and Negri attempt to develop biopolitical critique to contemporary capitalist society. Hardt and Negri develop their own biopolitical critique based on their understanding of Foucauldian biopolitics. In the meantime, many arguments of biopolitical critique come precisely from Marx's critique of political economy. Identifying biopolitical production as the hegemonic paradigm of contemporary capitalist production, Hardt and Negri accomplish the transition from the critique of political economy to biopolitical critique. However, such assertion does not mean a major rupture in the relation between the critique of political economy and biopolitical critique. On the contrary, it only implies an intertwined relationship between them. Moreover, if regarding Foucault's discussion about political economy and biopolitics as a medium, then the conclusion can be made: There are overlaps between biopolitical critique and the critique of political economy, and the source of biopolitical critique can also be traced directly back to Marx.

Keywords: biopolitical critique, critique of political economy, Marx, Foucault

Introduction

What Hardt and Negri try to build in the *Empire Series*¹ is a complete system of contemporary capitalist society. In this system, Marx's critique of political economy and historical materialism play important roles. In my opinion, if Marx constructed a critique of political economy centered on *large-scale industrial production*, then what Hardt and Negri build is a critique of biopolitics focusing on *biopolitical production*. A preliminary argument for this judgment is that like Marx, Hardt and Negri try to depict a holistic picture of capital and its exploitation mechanism based on the social production of their times—such depiction regards revolution and political emancipation as both primary and the ultimate goal.

Generally speaking, biopolitical critique borrows many ideas and analyses from Marx. In *Multitude* (2005), Hardt and Negri discuss their understanding of Marx's theoretical methodology and believe that their understanding follows Marx very strictly, in the sense that their development of Marx's theory insists on original Marxian tradition; however, they also depart from Marx, and end up developing their own theories, which is inevitable since "history moves on and the social reality changes" (Hardt & Negri, 2005, p. 140). That is to say, new reality requires new theories, and to follow Marx's thought means that "one must depart from Marx's

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¹ Since 2000, Hardt and Negri have published four books. The first three are *Empire* (2001), *Multitude* (2005), and *Commonwealth* (2009), which are generally regarded as the *Empire Trilogy*. While in 2017, *Assembly* has been published, this book continues the problematic and theoretical logic of the former three, and focuses especially on the hegemony of revolution and the organization of multitude. Therefore, in this article, I prefer to see the four books as a whole theoretical system and will call them the *Empire Series*.

theories to the extent that the object of his critique, capitalist production and capitalist society as a whole, has changed” (p. 140). Moreover, in order to follow or inherit Marx’s theoretical methodology, “one must really walk beyond Marx and develop on the basis of his method a new theoretical apparatus adequate to our present situation” (p. 140), and take the changes from Marx’s time to the present under investigation. Thus, Hardt and Negri think that their theory forms and develops based on the frame of Marx’s critique of political economy and follows Marx’s methodology, and at the same time also has their own creations.

Specifically, they summarize four principles of Marx, based on which they elaborate their own theory: (1) the historical tendency, (2) the real abstraction, (3) antagonism, and (4) the constitution of subjectivity (Hardt & Negri, 2005, p. 141). These four clues compose the main (but not only) basis for Hardt and Negri, following Marx’s path, to explore contemporary globalized capitalist production, mode of production, the relationship of labor and value, exploitation and control, revolution and antagonist relations, and the making of revolutionary subject. In a word, they make their unique biopolitical critique according to these four principles.

In Hardt and Negri’s view, Marx’s critique of political economy grasped the historical tendency of his own time. Marx focused particularly on industrial labor and capitalist production. Although industrial labor in European countries was not the primary pattern during that period, Marx “recognized in capital and industrial a tendency that would act as the motor of future transformation” (Hardt & Negri, 2005, p. 141). For Hardt and Negri, it is an important approach for them to inherit the recognition of historical tendency from Marx: “as numbers are important, but the key is to grasp the direction of the present, to read which seeds will grow and which wither” (p. 142). In other words, Marx captured the developing tendency of industrial labor and capitalist production, and saw its power as a paradigm for the whole society and a powerful driving force for the development of human history. While Hardt and Negri believe that Marx’s approach to grasp the historical tendency is important, they do not see Marx’s conclusions as always valid. It is necessary to admit the differences between the age at stake and the age in which Marx once lived. Contemporary capitalist production is defined by a series of transformations, “from the hegemony of industrial labor to that of immaterial labor, from Fordism to post-Fordism, and from modern to postmodern” (p. 142). Among all of these changes, the most significant one, the one defining the transformation of the current capitalism, resides in the key judgment that industrial labor in large-scale factories is no longer dominant. Biopolitical production—infiltrating in all forms of social life—is now becoming hegemony. For Hardt and Negri, this transformation is crucial. It involves their understanding of contemporary capitalist social relations of power and exploitation, of labor value theory in Marx’s critique of political economy, and of the possibility of revolution and the subject of revolution. Hardt and Negri regard their analysis of these issues as developing *in Marx’s footsteps*. Hence, the system built by Hardt and Negri in the *Empire Series* can be called as the biopolitical critique with a center of biopolitical production. It bears the inheritance from Marx’s critique of political economy, and it also emphasizes that there are some clear differences between biopolitical critique and the critique of political economy.

The Term *Biopolitics*

To understand the relationship between biopolitical critique and the critique of political economy, one should firstly understand the meaning of *biopolitical* critique, and the key word of biopolitical critique is undoubtedly *biopolitics*. *Biopolitics* is the core concept that runs through Hardt and Negri’s theory. Moreover, Hardt and Negri define this word very distinguishingly from other philosophers.

The term *biopolitics* is undoubtedly a popular word among contemporary academics, but it remains difficult

to define it in a concise manner. Literally, *biopolitics* means politics that deals with *life*—but does not all politics deal with life? According to *Biopolitics: An Advanced Introduction* (Lemke, Casper, & Moore, 2011, p. 3), the most traditional understanding of *biopolitics* can be roughly divided into two streams: One regards life as the basis of politics, and the other regards life process as the object of politics. Although superficially these two viewpoints seem contradictory to each other, they actually share some basic assumptions and preconceived notions for that they all recognize the existence of “a stable hierarchy and an external relationship between life and politics” (pp. 3-4). That is to say, they ignore the ambiguity and instability of the “clear” distinction between life and politics. In fact, the so called orthodox Marxism is also compassionate towards such premise. Orthodox Marxism separates *superstructure* from *economic basis*, which also leads to a sharp division between productive life or body (belong to the *economic basis*) and political sphere (belong to the *superstructure*).

In the view of Lemke, it is Foucault who first presented the word *biopolitics* with diachronic feature. Unlike some conventional approaches which separate life from politics, Foucault saw the control, discipline, and governance of life in modern society and believed it is a special kind of power over life, namely, the government of life. As Lemke summarizes, for Foucault, “biopolitics denotes a specific modern form of exercising power” (Lemke et al., 2011, p. 33). However, as Lemke has also pointed out, although Foucault’s analysis of biopolitics was profound, he failed to give the term *biopolitics* a more consistent meaning. Furthermore, Foucault preferred the word *biopower* while discussing the dominance of power over life, and therefore also failed to distinguish *biopolitics* from *biopower*.

Based on Foucault’s discussion on biopolitics, Agamben further develops the theory of *biopolitics* by exploring the relationship between sovereign power and biopolitics. One of Agamben’s critical arguments is that since ancient Greek, the tradition of western politics was based on the separation between *bare life* (natural existence, *zo ē*) and *political existence* (legal existence, *b ós*). On the premise of this argument, Agamben explores the relationship between biopolitics and sovereign logic from the fundamental continuity of biopolitical mechanism. Agamben believes that sovereignty produces and dominates bare life, and

it can even be said that the production of a biopolitical body is the original activity of sovereign power. ...Placing biological life at the center of its calculations, the modern State therefore does nothing other than bring to light the secret tie uniting power and bare life. (Agamben, 1998, p. 6, emphasis in original)

Other than Foucault, who tended to concentrate on normal production, Agamben primarily focuses on the exception of sovereign power and the suspension of rights. To some extent, such approach leads him far away from the Foucauldian discourse of biopolitics.

Different from Agamben, Hardt and Negri further elaborate the discourse on *biopower* and *biopolitics* followed Foucault’s understanding and analysis of biopolitics. Hardt and Negri value Foucault’s analysis of power as relationship and his consideration of *biopower* and *biopolitics*, and they draw a lot from Foucault in the *Empire Series*. Moreover, they take a step forward by regarding biopolitics as a definition of a new ruling order (i.e., Empire). Lemke points out that for Hardt and Negri, “biopolitics does not stand for the overlapping of rule and exception but rather for a new stage of capitalism characterized by the disappearance of the borders between economics and politics, production and reproduction” (Lemke et al., 2011, p. 65). On the one hand, they focus on the use of *biopolitics* to draw attention to the fluid boundaries between different fields of society, which makes biopolitical critique keep a distance to classic or orthodox Marxism; they wish that the word *biopolitics* can define a new stage of capitalist production that is different from large-scale factory production. Concerning Hardt and

Negri's whole theory, such definition aims at revolution both in theoretical and practical aspects. This is mainly related to the production of subjectivity (Negri, 2017a, p. 123) that they find from Foucault and on this basis, biopolitical production they themselves elaborate in the *Empire Series*. Apparently, Hardt and Negri's understanding of biopolitics first and foremost comes from Foucault. However, at the same time, they also make crucial interpretation of this term which cannot be found in Foucault. This is mainly reflected in their distinction between *biopower* and *biopolitics*. In Hardt and Negri's view, when Foucault discussed *biopower* or *biopolitics*, he paid too much attention to power from a top-down perspective, but failed to notice the process of "productive dynamic and creative potential" (Lemke et al., 2011, p. 68) from below. Accordingly, biopower is transcendent and a kind of power over the whole society, as a sovereign authority imposes commands on life. Secondly, biopolitics is immanent to society, and it "creates social relationships and forms through collaborative forms of labor" (Hardt & Negri, 2005, pp. 94-95). Biopolitics and biopower play as the opposite sides of power relationships. What is more, biopolitics is prior to biopower ontologically. While biopolitics is a creative force, biopower is only an external and reactive one. Although biopower constantly seeks to discipline and shape the power of biopolitics, the former cannot eventually completely absorb the latter. This distinction between biopolitics and biopower is of great importance to Hardt and Negri, in the sense that they associate biopolitics with "a new ontology that derives from the body and its forces" (Lemke et al., 2011, p. 72). Foucault's contradictory deliberation of biopolitics supported their views to a certain extent:

If there was no resistance, there would be no power relations. Because it would simply be a matter of obedience. So resistance comes first, and resistance remains superior to the forces of the process; power relations are obliged to change with the resistance. So I think that resistance is the main word, *the key word*, in this dynamic. (Foucault, 1997, p. 167, emphasis in original)

On the basis of Foucault's discourse, Hardt and Negri further define biopolitics at the level of ontology: *Biopower* is derivative, while the power of *biopolitics* is primitive.

Biopolitics is the core of Hardt and Negri's theory. Therefore, to understand and explore biopolitical critique and its connection with Marx's thought, the very first step is to clarify in what sense biopolitics is exercised in the *Empire Series*. Nonetheless, since it is obvious that Hardt and Negri develop the word *biopolitics* based on their comprehension on Foucault, and it therefore leads to an overlapped relationship between life and politics, we may have to recognize that such idea controverts classic Marxism. Consequently, biopolitical critique also seems to be significantly different from the critique of political economy, for the foundation and start point of it, which is the definition of capitalism society by biopolitics, diverges from Marx's critique of political economy. However, such judgement only grasps one side of biopolitical critique. Emphasizing the uniqueness of biopolitical critique does not necessarily mean neglecting its important continuity and inheritance with Marx's critique of political economy. Furthermore, if ignoring the connection between them, then it cannot be possible to truly get to the full scheme of biopolitical critique.

From the Critique of Political Economy to Biopolitical Critique

The connection between biopolitical critique and Marx's thought is essential. Hardt and Negri keep emphasizing the continuity between biopolitical critique and Marx's thought, and specifically express their understanding of Marx's methodology of historical materialism. As they say, "for Marx, of course, everything starts with production", so production can be understood as the kernel and foundation of Marx's critique of political economy (Hardt & Negri, 2005, p. 144). Rather, to understand capitalist production, one must regard

labor—as “the source of all value and wealth”—as an abstract concept of social labor (p. 144). That is what Hardt and Negri call *real abstraction*, which is one of the four principles they learn from Marx. Capitalist production is accomplished in cooperation with countless individuals, and such collective and socialized form of production is organized by capital. Therefore, in Hardt and Negri's view, to understand the capitalist mode of production and therefore to analyze the field of social production in-depth, it is necessary to understand abstract labor, or labor in general: “This abstract labor is the key to understanding the capitalist notion of values. ... abstract labor must be the source of value in general” (p. 144).

Hardt and Negri continue the essence of Marx's critique of political economy, as they follow the critical framework of capitalist mode of production with abstract labor as the foundation. Therefore, production is also the underpinning of biopolitical critique. If we perceive biopolitical critique as a mansion, then Marx's thought undoubtedly constitutes the steel skeleton of this building. At the same time, however, the mansion is actually presented in a different way than how Marx would have presented. To systematically discuss the relationship between biopolitical critique and Marx's critique of political economy, what must be realized is that the continuity of biopolitical critique and Marx's critique of political economy is built on the everchanging social reality. Specifically, the premise basis of biopolitical critique is the change of dominant mode of production.

In *Assembly* (2017), Hardt and Negri define the transformation of capitalist society in detail from the society of the pre-capitalist period to capitalist period of industry, and then to contemporary capitalism of globalization and socialization. Each phase is defined by its dominant mode of production: the phase of primitive accumulation, the phase of manufacturing and large-scale industry, and the phase of social production (i.e., biopolitical production). Such division of phases means that capitalist development based on the original accumulation period is divided into two phases. The first one was from 1848 to 1968, and this was the phase when Marx concentrated on manufacture and large-scale factory industry; and the second phase, according to Hardt and Negri, started from 1968 to now on. Capitalism has entered a new period, in which labor and production “are always more radically conditioned by the automatization of the factories and by the computerization of society” (Negri, 2009, p. 156). Meanwhile, the control of society by capital has also changed. Furthermore, the political composition of the proletariat is social, and it is completely abstract, immaterial, and intellectual from the perspective of labor (p. 156). Hardt and Negri clarify their views on the changes in the reality of capitalist society, and on this basis further identify biopolitical production as the hegemonic mode of production of contemporary capitalism. The foundation of biopolitical critique is the changes occurring in the mode of production, which include three most significant aspects:

First, biopolitical production means the production of life, the production of human beings, the production of all social life. Thus, biopolitical production is no longer just a “by-product” accompanying the production of material, but directly the purpose of production itself.

Secondly and consequently, the strong boundary between production and life is becoming ambiguous, which means that all life is productive.

Thirdly, biopolitical production, as the dominant paradigm and fundamental driving force of society, breaks the boundary between the superstructure and the economic foundation. Therefore, domains of politics, economy, and culture are no longer separated; on the contrary, they exist as a whole consisting of the social conditions.

Hardt and Negri define the dominant mode of production in contemporary capitalist society as biopolitical production, and believe that such biopolitical perspective can already be gleaned in Marxian ontology (Hardt & Negri, 2018b, p. 421). This is because, in their view, Marx's understanding of the relationship between production

and reproduction is exactly biopolitical. Unlike classic economics, which regarded reproduction as mostly a result of production, Marx's intuition was "a tendency for production and reproduction to progressively overlap" (Negri, 2009, p. 156). Such intuition is critical for Hardt and Negri's argument. Based on this, they can witness the course of the reproduction process being gradually subsumed in the production process, and the intensifying process of antagonism in production, and therefore announce the hegemony of biopolitical production, as well as the production of the subvert subjectivity for revolution.

Specifically, the so-called biopolitical production means that it "creates not only material goods but also relationships and ultimately social life itself" (Hardt & Negri, 2005, p. 109). The fact that Hardt and Negri chose *biopolitics* to define the hegemonic production, on the one hand, aims to address the disappearance of traditionally clear boundaries between politics, economy, culture, and society; on the other hand, it intends to emphasize the immaterial tendency in contemporary production. Comparing to the term *immaterial labor*, *biopolitical production* is more conducive to capturing the current "general tendency of economic transformation" and revealing "how general its products are and how directly it engages social life in its entirety" (pp. 94, 109). In this case, biopolitical production involves not only the production of material products on the strict economic sense level, but also touches on and produces all aspects of social life, economy, culture, and politics (p. xv).

Furthermore, one thing should be highlighted here is that biopolitical production is the production of subjectivity. Such argument comes with the transformation of labor, for "biopolitical production shifts the economic center of gravity from the production of material commodities to that of social relations, confusing, as we said, the division between production and reproduction" (Hardt & Negri, 2009, p. 135). In other words, production cannot be understood as a process in which one thing is the subject of production, and the other is the object of such activity. As the subject of production, "humans produce and humans are produced" (p. 136). To understand biopolitical production, we must notice that what is produced is social life, or living beings as a whole. For one thing, it means that in the general economic analysis (including Marx's critique of political economy), the law of value (the measurement and quantification of value) is no longer applicable—because commodities become intangible and cannot be measured by quantitative tools; for another, it means that to understand biopolitical production, we must be aware that its products are now taking common forms, and this will also lead to changes in the area of measuring labor value and exploiting surplus value.

In general, consistent with Marx's critique of political economy, the starting point and foundation of biopolitical critique is social production. For Marx, all of his theories began with the production of material life, which is the production of *life*. In the context of biopolitics, this discussion of the production of living beings has been further expanded. While Foucault has already discussed the *subject* that is produced, and the governance of subject concerning biopolitics, Hardt and Negri continue Foucault's approach. Meanwhile, since they have carried Marxism on with their development of biopolitics, they also take the view of labor into consideration. Thus, unlike Foucault, who valued more the top-down perspective of the subject being completely absorbed into the governance, Hardt and Negri emphasize the rising and constant new potential and subjectivity, which means the possibility of subversion of governance or domination. Meanwhile, the social background of informatization and globalization also provides them with reasonable arguments. In short, biopolitical critique advocates that today's capitalist production is defined by biopolitical production, which first and foremost manifests immaterial characteristics, namely, the production of subjectivity.

Foucault's Discourse of Political Economy and Biopolitics as a Medium

The transition from the critique of political economy to biopolitical critique, and the transformation of dominant mode of production, appear to indicate the break of biopolitical critique and Marx's critique of political economy. Nevertheless, the relationship between biopolitical critique and the critique of political economy should never be ruptured, but inherently related and continuous. Moreover, to clarify this inheritance between biopolitical critique and the critique of political economy, Foucault's theory plays a critical part here. As far as I understand, to trace the source of biopolitical critique in Marx's thought, one possible way is to use Foucault's discourse about biopolitics and political economy as a bridge.

How to understand the immanent relationship between the critique of political economy and biopolitical critique? We can firstly glimpse some clues to this question from Foucault. For one thing, Foucault himself has already provided us with some crucial understanding concerning Marx. In an interview in 1978, he talked about his own concern about Marx's "pertinent" argument: "Man produces man" (Foucault, 2001, p. 275). Against Frankfurt School, which in Foucault's view understood Marx in a more humanism way, Foucault thought the production of man meant to produce something new, and therefore it cannot be regarded as same as "the production of value, the production of wealth or of an economically useful object" (p. 275). That is to say, when it comes to the production of man and therefore the emancipation of man, it should not be the return to some human nature or essence which already exists, or the liberation from some kind of alienated state, on the contrary, it should be exactly as Hardt and Negri emphasize, the production of new subjectivity: "it's the destruction of what we are as well as the creation of a completely different thing, a total innovation" (p. 275). In my opinion, Foucault's explanation about Marx's production is accurate. On the one hand, Marx left Feuerbach's humanism on his way to the critique of political economy, and on the other hand, Marx saw the potential of revolution or subversion exactly in the area of the production of man. Only by presenting this as a premise can we then understand the intertwined relationship between Marx's critique of political economy and biopolitical economy, where Foucault's discourse of biopolitics and political economy plays as a medium.

For Foucault, biopolitics is a kind of governance of social power, and it is the basis and norm of rationalization of modernity rule. "Nor is it the right to allow people to live or leave them to die. It is the right to take life or let live", "and then the new right is established: the right to make live and to let die" (Foucault, 2003, pp. 240-241). In Foucault's view, this new technology of power is a supplement to the disciplinary form of power. "Unlike discipline, which is addressed to bodies, the new nondiscipline power is applied not to man-as-body but to the living man, to man-as-living-being; ultimately, if you like, to man-as-species" (p. 242). Modern demography and statistics based on birth rate and mortality are linked in this sense to economic and political issues, constituting the "first objects of knowledge and the targets it seeks to control" (p. 243). In other words, for Foucault, biopolitics is a kind of governance of capitalist social power.

In Foucault's view, biopolitics means the appearance of the modern governmental reason state of power. Governmental reason is the internal critique of self-limitation, the focus of which is on how to prevent the excessive governance of power through self-limitation. However, how is the self-limitation of governmental reason implemented? In this regard, Foucault further pointed out that political economy is a set of discourse system for modern governance. "And finally, political economy ... is a sort of general reflection on the organization, distribution, and limitation of powers in a society. ... it was political economy that made it possible to ensure the self-limitation of governmental reason" (Foucault, 2010, p. 13).

If we carefully analyze Foucault's discussion of biopolitics and political economy, we will find that Foucault's basic judgment is that biopolitics is the primary feature when the development of capitalist society comes to a certain state, which defines the governance of modernity. Meanwhile, political economy is this discourse of modern governance practice that gives the legitimacy and naturalness of the practice of capitalist society as a whole. As Foucault said, "in other words, political economy does not discover natural rights that exist prior to the exercise of governmentality; it discovers a certain naturalness specific to the practice of government itself" (p. 15). That is to say, political economy as a discourse is linked to practical activities. "On the one hand constitutes these practices as a set bound together by an intelligible connection and, on the other hand, legislates and can legislate on these practices in terms of true and false" (p. 18). In a word, as for Foucault, biopolitics is consistent with political economy.

Along with Foucault's discussion, we can then examine biopolitics and political economy from a Marxian perspective. Consequently, it will be possible to notice that Foucault's understanding of biopolitics is inherently consistent with Marx to some extent. It can be demonstrated from two sides. First, according to Foucault, biopolitics as a kind of governance means to treat living beings as objects, or more specifically, as commodities. That is to say, to regard and govern people as things. Same as Marx, Foucault believed that the issues concerning how to regulate and control the relationships among people as the existence of life, and the relationships among people for realizing the extraction of the surplus power are not only economic issues but the issue of ontology (Lazzarato, 2006, p. 11). It is obvious that Foucault looked at these issues from a same perspective of Marx, even though there was no such term as "biopolitics" in Marx's original thought. Therefore, it is plausible to consider Foucault's examination of biopolitics as a continuation of Marx's critical path. Second, for the issue of political economy, Foucault paid attention mostly to the level of discourse diachronically, which aimed at tracing back to the concrete development of biopolitics as a kind of governance. However, Marx put more on the level of practice, for his critique of political economy was in fact to criticize capitalist productive practice as a whole. Therefore, Marx captured political economy comprehensively, and then criticized the practice of production and life, which led his critique capable of further expanded of biopolitics. Since capitalist productivity in the era of Marx was still relatively underdeveloped, the issue of *biopolitics* in that period therefore cannot actually have the realistic conditions for being fully discussed and criticized.

Thus, it can be seen that based on the above-mentioned discussion on biopolitics and political economy, the critique of biopolitics and the critique of political economy are always co-existing in both Marxian and Foucauldian theories. Only on the basis of this conclusion is it possible to discuss the relationship between Hardt and Negri's biopolitical critique and Marx's critique of political economy. In other words, the issue of biopolitics appeared as early as Marx. With Foucault's further development, the paths of biopolitical critique and the critique of political economy tend to be united. When it comes to Hardt and Negri, the realistic possibility of further biopolitical critique along the path of Marx is already in place: The highly developed productivity makes biopolitical issues more prominent than ever in contemporary capitalist society. For Hardt and Negri, the dimension of biopolitical critique is contained in Marx's thought. Although the term *biopolitics* does not belong in the classic Marxism, the path of biopolitical critique is consistent with Marx's critical tradition. To understand the connection between Hardt and Negri's biopolitical critique and Marx's critique of political economy, it is necessary to discuss biopolitics and political economy in Foucault, because Hardt and Negri are re-continuing Marx after Foucault, and the theoretical path has created an important development from the critique of political economy to biopolitical critique.

In general, Hardt and Negri's biopolitical critique, by its very nature, should be regarded as Marxian, although it may contradict or nullify some classical Marxist conclusions. Hardt and Negri always emphasize the continuity between their theory and Marx's, for they believe that they cannot simply stick to some specific theoretical conclusions of Marx's—this is also the lessons learned from the development of theories and praxis in the 20th century. Therefore, for Hardt and Negri, *in Marx's footsteps* actually means to create something new. For one thing, the word *biopolitics* might be new to Marx; it nonetheless is derived from Marx's critical path. The uniqueness of this continuation is that Hardt and Negri see the clues of biopolitical critique intertwined with Marx's critique of political economy. Based on this, as Foucault's discourse of biopolitics and power relationships have supported, they develop the path of biopolitical critique. Moreover, unlike Foucault's analysis, which merely stayed at a discourse level, they inherit Marx's path of criticizing the real activities of capitalist production and the actual economic relationship.

Here is a last point to say. In Hardt and Negri's view, contemporary capitalist society and production are composed of a series of transformation, which enable Marx's concept of capital to be closely linked to Foucault's concept of power together. "Especially when considered in its historical development, from 'manufacturing' to 'largescale industry' and from the form of 'social capital' to that of 'financial capital'" (Negri, 2017b, p. 189), we can understand why Foucault's concept of power—"as the product of a relation of power, as an action on the action of another, as an effect of 'class struggle' with ontological implications" (p. 189)—can play such an important role in the process of re-understanding current capitalist society.

For Hardt and Negri, biopolitical critique relies on the concept of power to obtain a crucial foundation in ontology. The marriage of capital and power, as a notable feature of the new proletarian subjectification, "make it possible to relocate class struggle at the heart of capitalist development, as its engine. And also at the heart of its possible final crisis" (p. 190). Here, class struggle is defined by resistance and active, cognitive and productive force. This is precisely the new meaning of Marxian "class struggle" given by the changing social reality.

Conclusion

Hardt and Negri refer to biopolitical production as the dominant mode of production of contemporary capitalism, and the basis of such judgment can be found in Marx's thought. In my opinion, such judgment is profoundly reasonable. Biopolitical production emphasizes the immaterial and subjective dimension of production, and these analyses can be traced back to Marx, for whom the analysis and critique of the entire capitalist society was accomplished by identifying the dominant mode of production. The possibility of seeking revolution and subversion is crucial for Hardt and Negri, and it is their inheritance of Marx's methodology. By regarding biopolitical production as the dominant mode of contemporary capitalist production, biopolitical critique has a huge impact on the development of the critique of political economy.

Meanwhile, the inherent connection between biopolitical critique and Marx is fundamental, which means we can trace the source of biopolitical critique directly to Marx himself. Since Marx had never used the terminology *biopolitics*, it might be a potential way to use Foucault's discourse of political economy and biopolitics as a medium in order to interpret the relationship of biopolitical critique and the critique of political economy. As mentioned before, for Marx, there were both the approach of critique of the political economy and the approach of biopolitical critique, which is Foucault's critique of the governance of human being. Due to the capitalist condition of his own time, Marx focused more on the critique of political economy. However, when it comes to Foucault, reality of capitalist society is developed and therefore it is possible for the combination of the

two critical approaches. Subsequently, Hardt and Negri build their biopolitical critique based on Foucault's *biopolitics*. Moreover, unlike Foucault, whose concentration was primarily on the aspect of discourse, Hardt and Negri, consistent with Marx, land their critique on social production and practical activities. In conclusion, the relationship of the critique of political economy and biopolitical critique is not disruptive, but internally coherent. Therefore, to certain extent, biopolitical critique is developed straightly from Marx's thought.

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