

Platform Work and Human Values from the Theological Perspective*

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Abstract

Platform work, understood as the matching of the supply of and demand for paid work through an online platform, is still relatively small in scale but is developing rapidly in the world. Recently, delivery agency services such as Baedal Minjok, Yogiyo, and Coupang Eats, transportation services such as Uber and Kakao Taxi, and accommodation agencies are representative platform work. This dynamism and the ever-expanding scope of platform activities present economic opportunities, as well as challenges to existing regulatory frameworks. In a situation where the end of labor is predicted after the 4th industrial revolution, platform work is regarded as a new Job that is not restricted by time and place. However, platform workers are

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more economically subordinate than the existing labor structure, and they are more outside the existing labor laws.

This paper analyzes the labor structure in which platform work exploits and subordinates humans, and studies the meaning of post-labor and post-human from the theological point of view. In the situation of transition from a labor-oriented society to an employment-oriented society, most humans give up on self-actualization through work and choose a life that is employed solely for wages and subordinated for consumption. In an era when employment disappears due to the 4th industrial revolution, this study examines how human labor and values are described in the Bible, and in this process, restoration of human dignity through labor. I propose post labor and post human in the dimension of life for creative production and coexistence.

• Keywords

the 4th Industrial Revolution, platform work, platform economy, employment, human dignity, labor

I. The 4th Industrial Revolution and Platform Work

After the World Economic Forum in 2016, western advanced countries spurred the era of the 4th industrial revolution. The unprecedented development of information and communication technology and online network-based digitization have brought radical innovation to the overall industrial structure of the world.¹ Although the prospects for technological innovation and the restructuring of the economy have long been predicted, there is a sharp debate about how the scientific and technological revolution in pursuit of a better world will contribute to fully humanization and bring optimistic transformation to human labor and economic systems globally. Many scholars are skeptical as to whether technological civilization can preserve the structure of labor and human freedom and dignity in the industrial system as much as the material abundance brought to the capitalist world.²

The development of a society goes beyond economic and social changes led by corporations and the state to include the inclusiveness of individual citizens and a life worthy of humanity. Due to the 4th industrial revolution, human values and the structure of life have also been subjected to innovative changes.³ In the 21st century, the online market became common, but online-based platform consumption has developed rapidly in the past

1 Klaus Schwab, (*Klaus Schwab's*) *4th Industrial Revolution*, tr. Kyung-jin Song (Seoul: New Present, 2016), 24-29.

2 Seokman Hong, "Will robots and artificial intelligence save capitalism? The 4th Industrial Revolution Ideology and the Future of Work," *The Radical Review* 87 (3/2021), 142-43.

3 The 4th Industrial Revolution is defined as "the era of revolution achieved through information and communication technology (ICT) convergence." Namgyu Kim, "The Fourth Industrial Revolution, Jobs, and Records Management," *National Archives and Records* 39 (2017), 29.

decade. As everyone purchases and uses services with their smartphone apps, the global economy has transformed into a huge market. In Korea, portal sites such as Naver and Daum have turned into huge digital department stores, and online shopping and delivery services such as Coupang, Baedal Minjok, and Yogiyo have become strong players in the platform market. Sumgo, which provides living services such as moving and cleaning, as well as 'transportation services' such as Kakao Taxi and Uber, and 'accommodation services' such as Airbnb, has pioneered a blue ocean in the platform market. In the process, the relationship between numerous platform workers and platform companies and the monopoly structure emerged as serious problems.

Interestingly, Uber, the world's largest taxi company, doesn't own a single car, and Airbnb, the world's largest accommodation provider, doesn't own a single home. Facebook doesn't produce content, and Alibaba, the world's largest retailer, doesn't have warehouses and inventory.⁴ The singularity of the current economy is that capital does not own the means of production or that the means of production are not the foundational business. The 4th industrial revolution dismantled the traditional factors of production such as land, labor, and capital after industrialization. Investment for production was minimized, and capitalism without capital flourished. In the early days of the 4th industrial revolution, optimistic expectations for a "sharing economy" that efficiently share assets and services through online platforms were greater. However, in the sharing economy, rather than realizing the value of sharing and coexistence, as platform companies take over the market, the labor structure

4 Mankwon Kim, *A New Poverty Is Coming* (Seoul: Book Cube Networks, 2021), 140.

is also changing exploitatively. “The sharing economy is paved with innovation and sharing, but in reality, it is criticized as a predatory economy in which giant platform operators steal profits from existing small and medium-sized businesses.”⁵

In 2021, the Ministry of Employment and Labor reported that the number of workers based on the online platform was 2.2 million. This number corresponds to 8.5% of all employed (15-69 years old), of which 55.2% are young people in their 20s and 30s.⁶ As the number of platform workers increases every year, structural and legal problems with platform companies and workers are becoming serious. As the understanding of labor changes as the constraints of place and time are dismantled due to the 4th industrial revolution, it is important to prepare regulations and laws for platform work. In this situation, what kind of theological approach is possible to platform work and its problems? Therefore, this study seeks to first identify platform work and its problems, and to understand labor and human from a theological point of view. Post work, that is, a changed perspective on work, will be the work of restoring human dignity and worth.

II. Platform Work in Korea

1. Definition and Types of Platform Work

According to *Eurofound*, the terms that mean digital-based

5 Changwoo Kim, “Innovative icon sharing economy, the task is to prevent ‘plundering’ by platform providers,” *Jungang Sunday*, March 23, 2019, <https://www.joongang.co.kr/article/23419421>.

6 Heejin Ko, “This year, the number of platform workers ‘2.2 million’... 2030 youth 55%,” *The Kyunghyang Shinmun*, November 18, 2021, <https://m.khan.co.kr/national/labor/article/202111181450001#c2b>.

economic activities are variously used, such as gig economy, on-demand economy, cloud work, and crowd work, in addition to platform labor, and each term has a different meaning or the same meaning depending on the type and method of labor. However, even based on the common characteristics of digital-based labor, the recent terminology is collectively referred to as ‘platform economy’ or ‘platform work’ instead of ‘sharing economy’. Platform work is ranging from short-term work using services when needed, simple tasks such as data input, food-delivery and trivial tasks such as pet care services to invisible labor.⁷

Europound defines platform work as “a form of employment in which an organization or individual is paid to solve a problem or provide a service to another organization or individual through an online platform”.⁸ In addition, the OECD saw it as “a new form of work, a transaction mediated through an app or a website, which matches customers and clients, by means of an algorithm, with workers who provide services in return for money. Platform work can differ along several dimensions, including the relationship between the worker and the platform. A distinction is often made between services performed digitally (i.e. micro tasks, clerical and data entry, etc.) and services performed physically or on-location (i.e. transport, delivery, housekeeping, etc.).⁹ Platform work in Korea has a similar view. According to a policy study conducted in 2019, platform work is defined as “services in which goods and services (labor)

7 Eurofound, *Employment and Working Conditions of Selected Types of Platform Work* (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2018), 9-11.

8 Ibid., 9.

9 OECD, *Policy Responses to New Forms of Work* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2019), 14.

are exchanged and traded” on a platform, which is a ‘digital network that coordinates transactions in an algorithmic way’. This is subject to the following conditions: First, transactions on digital platforms are services or virtual goods, and second, they should be traded in the form of short jobs, projects, tasks, and third, paid work is organised through an online platform, and fourth, work should be open to unspecified people. This excludes simple advertisement bulletin boards for job search and asset rental services.¹⁰

As platform work is mediated through an online platform, its forms are very diverse. However, it is broadly classified into “web-based platform work” where work is done online and “local-based platform work” that is based on location such as delivery, driving, and housekeeping services.¹¹ They can be further distinguished based on the type of tasks performed, their duration and complexity. The former is a form of crowd work, in which a large corporation breaks up related work and distributes it to online workers, and the latter is a form of on-demand work based on regions. Platform workers are called ‘gig workers’, who make short-term contracts when needed, or crowd workers who perform micro-tasks. The following table is an example by job type and field according to the operation base of platform work.¹²

In addition, platform work is also classified according to how labor is distributed and controlled. For example, there is a “call

10 Jiyeon Jang & Minjoo Jeong, *Research Report: Review of statistics and survey methods to understand the platform labor situation* (Seoul: Iljaligihoe, 2019), 8-11.

11 ILO(International Labour Organization), *World Employment and Social Outlook: The role of digital labour platforms in transforming the world of work* (Geneva: ILO, 2021), 74-75.

12 Geumbong Kang, “The Current State and Challenges of Social Dialogue Related to platform work,” *The Social Dialogue* 12 (2019), 60-71; The ILO distinguishes between contest-based platform work and competitive programming platform work in web-based platform work, but collectively, they are regarded as one type here. ILO, *World Employment and Social Outlook*, 75-77.

platform” for food-delivery, parcel-delivery, and passenger transportation, a “managed platform” where prices are determined according to the evaluation and work distribution of services such as housekeeping, caring, and on-site repair, “matching platform” such as IT work, cargo, transportation and professional freelancers, “micro-work platform” such as survey and data input, and other “exhibition type platform”.¹³ Since it is difficult to divide platform work into a clear classification standard, it is agreed to follow the classification of platform work and its regulations by international organizations such as the ILO or Eurofound.

2. Platform Company: Operating System and Profit Structure

How is the platform company’s operation and revenue structure formed? This is not simply an intermediary structure of services through program creation and operation. First, platform companies have a mechanism for generating profits. They make ultra-short-term contracts with numerous platform workers, direct them to work, and provide income to companies and workers. They design programs to satisfy customers, dominate the online marketplace, and activate programs to control and supervise platform workers. Second, the platform company has the right to set the price. No platform customer/user or platform worker/customer has authority to set pricing. They only have the power to decide which platform to use. Third, platform companies have specific guidelines regarding the work of platform workers.

13 Gwiyeon Jang and Seokman Hong, “Characteristics of platform work in Korea,” *Investigation of the human rights situation of platform workers*, National Human Rights Commission of the Republic of Korea, 2019, 53.

In the case of a on-demand platform, workers are required to comply with detailed work requirements such as working hours, attitudes, and customer evaluation according to their contract.¹⁴

Types of platforms	Types of work	Detailed tasks/services
web-based platforms	Job search agency, Freelancer	IT/SW job broker, part-time job matching
	Competitive programming, Contest-based	artificial intelligence, data analytics, software development and other technical fields, marketplace for designers, writers,
	micro-tasks	AI learning data production, data input, data analytics
local-based platform	Taxi, Transport	taxi, ride sharing
	Delivery	food-delivery, Quick Couriers
	Household tasks	plumbing, DIY, gardening, tutoring, babysitting, and others.

<Table 1> Types of platform work

Network effects and algorithms are key factors for platform companies to generate profits. They gain competitiveness through “network effect” or “network externality”. In other words, platform companies have a network effect on workers and customers by preoccupying online market share before other platform companies. They need to design and run programs so that they can reliably secure producers and consumers who use the platform, and efficiently match customers and workers (service providers, producers). Therefore, new platform companies want to attract customers/ users by conducting promotions that provide some services and goods for free. the companies pay high fees to secure workers (service providers) and producers, even if there is a financial loss. Platform companies also offset loss costs by selling their customer information they have to companies that request advertisements.¹⁵

14 Heungjun Jung, “For a general understanding of platform labor,” *The Social Dialogue* 12 (2019), 42-59.
 15 Cheolsik Kim, “Governance of the Platform Economy,” *Investigation of the human rights situation of platform workers*, National Human Rights Commission of the Republic of Korea, 2019. 16-18.

Second, algorithm design and operation are essential for customers to easily and conveniently transact on online platforms. Platform companies collect and analyze data entered by customers to understand their purchasing patterns, behaviors and lifestyles. Based on this information, companies use sophisticated algorithms to analyze and interconnect users' interests, location information, preferred products, and human networks to encourage customers to actively spend on online platforms. On the other hand, platform companies generate more revenue in various ways through network effects and algorithms.¹⁶

In this process, as platform companies lead the global economy with huge capital, internal issues such as worker problems, service users' ownership and utilization of data rights, and monopoly and regulations have been raised. However, since Europe and the United States have little information on platform work, they are seriously aware of these problems and are preparing labor laws and regulations.¹⁷ In Korea, legislation to protect platform workers is in progress. Next, the reality and problems of platform work in Korean society are diagnosed.

3. Issues of Platform Work in Korea

#1. Autonomy and Subordination

Coupang Eats' "delivery partner," Mr. A has an experience of

16 Ibid. 19-22.

17 Jongjin Kim, "The domestic and international status of the legal status of platform and freelance labor providers and measures to guarantee labor rights," <Economic, Social and Labor Committee> 4th Temporary Work Committee Presentation Material, October 6, 2020, 23-25. In 2015-2018, countries other than France, the United Kingdom and the United States have drafted basic legislation to protect platform workers. Platform unions in Italy, for example, have basic legal networks such as minimum hourly wages, public holidays, overtime compensation, and industrial accident and rehabilitation compensation.

going a long distance unintentionally by “taking (orders) calls as they are given.” It is said that delivery drivers (‘self-employed’, platform workers) can work autonomously, but this is not the case. If the acceptance rate drops due to the rejection of the call, it will not be able to receive the call and become a hostage of the acceptance rate. If you work autonomously, eventually you will not be able to work.¹⁸

#2. Monitoring and Management

As food delivery platform companies such as Coupang Eats and Baedal Minjok started “delivery for one order”, they tried to attract delivery drivers. The company is operating a “designated call” algorithm to provide incentives to workers with high acceptance rates and to limit calls if the acceptance rate is low. Delivery drivers are not self-employed people who “work and rest when they want,” but workers who work under the company's "command and supervision.”¹⁹

#3. Customer reviews, Star score competition

In addition to shopping and delivery, the online platform provides services such as housework, private lessons, and taxi. Most platform companies have a customer review system, 5 stars score system. Customer reviews serve as a criterion for evaluating workers' abilities. However, evaluation often depends on the subjective mood of the customer rather than an objective criterion. ... The restaurant owner, who rejected the customer's

18 Taewoo Park, “Block your account after picking out a delivery call... What can I do?” *Hankyoreh*, November 8, 2021, <https://www.hani.co.kr/arti/society/labor/1018308.html#csidx74dd2dfe244ceea96b9df1a152a0acf>.

19 Ibid.

unreasonable request, suffered from bad reviews and died of a brain hemorrhage. The platform company even called the business owner four times to warn him about the review.²⁰

#4. The logic of monopoly and capitalism

Platform companies recruit delivery riders and affiliated restaurants at the expense of huge losses. However, when they grow up with a considerable network, that is, when the monopoly company has a foothold, the “betrayal of the platform” begins. Initially, they guaranteed riders a high delivery fee, but over time they cut the fee by 20%. Suppliers belonging to e-commerce such as Amazon and Coupang initially made a big profit due to increased product orders, but when suppliers are subordinated to the platform, platform companies force them to deliver the lowest price. Companies carry out strategies to get around labor laws. because they know that Korea's labor laws are very vulnerable to protecting day laborers.²¹

Platform work brought a new transformation in the employment relationship and labor market in that it was possible to work under free conditions without being restricted by place and time. In the case of crowd work, it is possible to choose a working environment according to one's ability, and it is possible to generate profits according to individual abilities. And it created new jobs amid rising unemployment. For example, household workers and unemployed workers have

20 Yunkyung Song and Wonjin Kim, “I am a king, you are a star slave. Looking back at Customer Reviews,” *Weekly Trend* 1452 (11/2021), <https://weekly.khan.co.kr/khnm.html?mode=view&artid=202107191038261&code=114#csidx760cfbe61f63259acb34bb7665109c0>.

21 Mingyu Oh, “Platform Enterprise's ‘Dense Retrofit’ Strategy... They dream of ‘exclusive’ from birth,” *Pressian*, August 19, 2021, <https://www.pressian.com/pages/articles/2021081814561671480>.

provided a system that allows them to work and make money if they have an online account. Platform work was considered an alternative form of labor that guarantees workers' autonomy and individuality.

However, platform work has destroyed traditional employment relationships. Neither the government nor related agencies have the information or regulations to regulate this industry. While regulating the monopoly position of platform companies, there is also an opinion that self-regulation should be implemented at the same time due to the characteristics of the platform.²²

It should be noted that the possibility of platform work soon becomes a vulnerability. The autonomy and individuality of workers blurred the boundaries between employment and unemployment, and produced a structure in which it was difficult to obtain stable income. In particular, as seen in #1 “Autonomy and Subordination”, the freedom of time and space was only a visible freedom, which actually meant the management and control of the platform company. With each delivery, the rider's location is reported to businesses and customers in real time. They work according to the manual but if they violate this, the employment contract is terminated. Delivery fees are determined unilaterally by the company. Platform companies claim that it is a contract between a delivery driver and a business owner, not an employment contract, but workers do not think so.²³

22 Jeremias Prassl, *Humans as a Service: The Promise and Perils of Work in the Gig Economy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 81-83.

23 Juho Kim, “Citizenship and Platform Work: Mismatch of Platform Work with Labor Law and Social Security Law from the Perspective of Citizenship,” *Phenomenon and Perception* 45 (2021), 206.

As seen in #2 “Monitoring and Management”, the incentive system is a kind of motivating system, in which workers are subordinated to the company in order to get more profit. It means that they are workers, not independent business owners.²⁴ However, once the company and the worker make a contract, the company doesn't pay any incidental expenses related to employment, and the worker is responsible for everything from assets, remuneration, insurance, and taxes. These regulatory arbitrages are typical predatory economies that exploit workers. They can't decide on their work patterns while on the road for a living for a long time. With more and more platform workers, working conditions are poor and incomes are low. Working hours, including waiting times, have also increased.²⁵

In addition, location-based platform work is evaluated through customer reviews. The rating mechanism is seen as a system for the self-employed, sole proprietors and customers. However, the algorithm of the evaluation system is not to promote quality and service and make better deals, but to control workers or individual owners by subordinating them to specific platform companies.²⁶ Platform workers are constantly exposed to emotional labor by businesses and customers. In this evaluation system, labor and human values are destroyed, and only fragmented work or service labor remains.

In the era of industrialization, there was a phenomenon in which humans were alienated from work. The method of mediating labor has changed through the platform. Current legislation is hesitant to give all platform workers the status

24 Park, “Blocking account when picking up a delivery call.”

25 Prassl, *Humans as a Service*, 55, 65.

26 Ibid., 115-16.

of workers. Even if it is impossible to grant legal status and institutions to all platform workers, it is unjust that workers are subordinated to large corporations and do not receive basic legal status and social protection as workers. In addition, companies focus on securing network effects to enhance platform competitiveness and brand value. They are dominating the market by locking both customers and workers into platforms and gaining control of massive data and human networks. This monopoly structure hinders fair competition and innovation and limits consumers' choices.²⁷

The platform economy structure that exploits and subordinates humans leads to extreme economic polarization. In the so-called neoliberal economic system, employment is unstable and low-wage non-regular workers and the unemployed are increasing. Social protection policies and enactment of labor laws are important, but reflecting on human labor and values should be given priority.

III. Labor and Human Values in the Age of the 4th Industrial Revolution

1. Post Industrial Technology and Labor

The situation of human inequality in platform work, that is, the situation in which humans are marginalized and exploited by technology, extends from a political issue beyond economic

27 Eunjung Kim, "Stop the monopoly and tyranny of online platform companies! Why a new competition law is needed," *Monthly Participation Society* 290 (11/2021), <https://www.peoplepower21.org/Magazine/1832292>.

issues to issues of labor value and human dignity. After industrialization, critical discussions on the relationship between technology and humans have been around for a long time.²⁸

The french philosopher, Gilbert Simondon (1924-1989) viewed technology as a fundamental mode of existence in which humans relate to the world around them in *On the Modes of Existence of Technical Objects* (1958). Humans live in a world mediated by technological objects along with technological objects. On the one hand, he rejected the contemporary view of techno-omnipotence from the point of view of usefulness, and on the other hand, he refused to oppose and dominate technology or machines. Rather than feeling anxious about automated machines replacing human labor, he suggested more fundamentally about the relationship between humans, automated machines, and technology.²⁹

Humans play the role of living conductors or organizers that connect machines, not subordinates or masters of machines. Machine automation is not a complete 'closed system' by itself. It is a medium through which heterogeneous things are communicated, and just as humans have a relationship with machines, machines also have relationships with each other through humans. Humans and machines are not to be understood as a hierarchical relationship, but as a mutually cooperative and horizontal relationship that solves a common

28 In the cooperative relationship between humans and technology, the democratization of science and technology is recently talked about, but it is necessary to continuously discuss whether this argument is effective in a capitalist society. Hwachul Son, "On the Empirical Turn in the Philosophy of Technology," *Philosophy* 87 (5/2006), 137-64.

29 Gilbert Simondon, *On the Mode of Existence of Technological Objects*, tr. Jaehee Kim (Seoul: Greenbee Publishing House, 2011), 12-19.

problem.³⁰ Kim Jaehee agreed with his argument and talked about “the labor of a society without employment.” She argued that “work” that creates sustainable values and “political actions” that can be discussed in public spaces, that is, post-work that we should pursue, can take place in a cooperative relationship between humans and machines, as Simondon suggests.³¹

However, before speaking positively of post labor, we must criticize who the machines are subordinated to in the neoliberal economic system. The moment the cooperative relationship between machine and human is incorporated into the monopoly structure of the platform company, the digital technology based on algorithm monitors and controls human labor, hiding the face of capitalism. Technology does not communicate with the world as a mediator between humans and the world, but operates as a means of subjugating humans in the market structure. As Simondon noted, in order for humans to communicate with the world and cooperate with machines through technology, human labor must be reconstructed as a value beyond employment-based wage labor.

In this respect, Bernard Stiegler’s (1952-2020) view on labor is very significant. As unstable labor without an employment relationship, platform work deprives human status. Then, we need to ask what labor is and what it should aim for. In Stiegler’s dialogue with Ariel Kyrou, *Employment is over, Come on work*, he predicts that this era has changed from a labor-oriented society to an employment-oriented society, and that the employment-based society will come to an end within the next

30 Ibid., 235, 320-24.

31 Jaehee Kim, “Jobless Labor and Rediscovery of Work,” in *Posthumans Are Coming*, ed. Sangkyu Shin et al. (Seoul: Akanet, 2020), 188.

20 years. But for a long time, “employment” was viewed as a mechanical activity to make money. On the other hand, work, as opposed to dominating workers and depriving them of their potential, enables humans to get along with machines. Therefore, he should actively welcome the gradual disappearance of employment, and says that we should do work (labor) that respects human values and enables communication with the world.³²

He points out that technocraticism has resulted in the destruction of the “knowing” of human beings, that is, the “knowing how to do” and “knowing how to live” by making the human body and soul annihilated and impoverished. He pays attention to how the governance of algorithms in an automated society implements the technology of power and further deconstructs human life. With global companies like GAFA, the structure of the employment economy allows humans to exist as automated machines and employees limited to jobs and wages. It creates an economy of indifference that does not take care of the world.³³

Platform workers do not know what their job is, and are isolated from the overall plan and design, and only perform their assigned tasks. In the end, they do not know where they are in this world, and it becomes difficult to even communicate with themselves and with others and the world. Human beings become a part of the economic structure, becoming ignorant and thoughtless.

Stigler insists that human knowledge and creative self-efficacy

32 Bernard Stigler and Ariel Kyrrou, *Employment is over, Come on work!*, tr. Ohryong Kwon (Seoul: Literature and Intelligence, 2018), 12-13.

33 Ibid., 87-89.

are possible by restoring the value of ‘work’, not ‘employment’. In the era of disappearance of employment, his discussion leads to the argument for contribution income.³⁴ In a society of contribution income, labor as the practice of knowing gives us a valid insight in that it provides a reason for post labor that can creatively realize human dignity and freedom.

2. The Theological Meaning of Post Labor

It is also a major value in the tradition of theology to affirm labor and see it as a creative practice. Dorothee Sölle (1929-2003) saw the core of creation belief as affirming the world created by God and at the same time confessing the relationship of man with God and the world as the image of God. Traditionally, labor derived from the creation myth was regarded as a result of sin to be carried out for survival, and human beings were regarded as beings living by repeating meaningless labor. However, she points out that this is a typical case of mistranslation of the creation myth, and a theological failure to understand labor. “Man has been created” means that man is a co-creator who realizes the image of God through love and labor. As co-creators, humans work not only for themselves, but also for others and the world. Therefore, human labor is related to the kingdom of God. Because human subjectivity reveals the presence of God, which means the realization of the kingdom of God. Therefore, labor that encompasses creative activities such as children’s play, students’ school studies, and workers’ production of daily necessities is messianic. However, the situation in which labor

³⁴ Ibid., 113-20.

becomes employment and is limited to wage labor signifies the end of labor in itself.³⁵ Her opinion points out the ‘end of labor’ at the point where the true meaning of labor is lost beyond the phenomenal meaning of the reduction in employment opportunities in the 4th industrial society.

She argues that the post-industrial employment economy destroyed human creativity and reduced human beings as part of the machine, resulting in alienation in various ways. Sölle’s discussion basically presupposes the alienation of man and labor as argued by Marx. In the process of theologically facing the problem of human dignity that labor implies, her opinions provide important insights for rethinking the attitudes of platform companies that undermine human values by exploiting labor. The reality that labor is reduced to a meaningless commodity apart from the market, treats people who do not work or cannot work as non-humans, and classifies people according to wages shows “the savagery of capitalism”.³⁶ As the standards of good and bad labor are determined by capital, the savagery of capital is spurring technological innovation and deprivation of human dignity.

Labor is something that cannot be traded or exchanged, and it must be a meaningful and creative process of value in itself and a process of relationship with the world. The theological understanding of labor is achieved in critical thinking in which technology and capital can no longer dominate or subordinate human beings. To ensure that labor is not accomplished and marginalized, one must note the following relationships, first

35 Dorothe Sölle, *To Work and to Love: A Theology of Creation*, tr. Kyungmi Park (Seoul: Bundo Publishing House, 2018), 108-9.

36 Ibid., 109-10.

the relationship between human and the product or outcome, second the worker's relationship to his own unique rhythm of life, and third the relationship with fellow workers.

The fact that human labor does not see the whole and becomes fragmented and mechanical is that it alienates humans from the product. For example, one should not become a worker who is merely an employee without knowing whether the product he or she participated in is a weapon or contributes to environmental destruction. The relationship between human beings and products is a major criterion for estimating alienated labor. In addition, even if the same work is repeated, labor that is not alienated is able to independently manage one's time and work and to express oneself.

Although platform work allows workers to have autonomy and individuality, it turns humans into beings who are waiting for work, capable of contracting and dismissing immediately at any time. As such, labor that puts humans in an unstable situation destroys human dignity beyond human alienation. According to Sölle, this kind of work goes against the rhythm of life in nature. It is the result of wage labor that labor in the technological age oppresses the human body and puts them in a state of anxiety and fear psychologically and mentally. Finally, the inability to interact with other workers and the world hinders the growth of humans and society. Beings must co-evolve in cooperation among living beings. True labor is creative, and it turns out to be a process of humanization as a process of communication between God, human self, and the world.³⁷

The exploitative form of labor seen in platform work did not

³⁷ Ibid., 101-3.

improve at all in the barbaric situation created by capitalism and human alienation in the early industrialization era. As Stigler puts it, the process of liberating labor from the end of employment should be a work that rejects the value of labor and human beings determined by capital, exposes the dehumanization brought about by technological innovation, and revives the value of labor that has been suppressed. This is the starting point of post labor. Labor that affirms human subjectivity and thought while protecting human freedom and dignity will in itself become a process of humanization that interacts with the world. In this regard, critical thinking that dismantles the structure of capital that coordinates and manages technological innovation will become the driving force for post labor. In post labor, we can see the potential for post human.

IV. Conclusion

We looked at how platform work subjugates humans in the capitalist structure in the era of the 4th industrial revolution. In a situation where the change and end of labor in any form was foreseen, platform work was regarded as free labor that was not restricted by time and place. However, in the process of platform work being fixed as labor without an employment relationship and without social protection, the monopoly and monopoly of companies is being strengthened. In response, global regulations and laws on new forms of digital labor are being renewed, and the scope of labor and workers is newly defined, protecting workers facing economic, political and social inequality and

improving the working environment.

However, more important than socio-economic, political, and legal regulation is the regulation of the relationship between technology and humans in technological innovation. We should thoroughly criticize technology and information becoming tools of power structures, and transform the world into a better world where humans and the world communicate through digital networks. The development of a society depends on how it embraces technological innovation. This includes the vision of human life and inclusiveness of individual citizens who embrace change beyond the state or corporate-led industrial economy and social change. Breaking away from the current employment-centered wage labor, we need to ask whether labor affirms human beings as existence itself, and whether it can contribute to the symbiosis and co-evolution of humans and creation. This will be the process leading to post-labor. Post-industrialization, the discussion of post-humans who rebuild damaged human values, cooperate with technology, and communicate with the world should be reflected theologically. It starts with discovering the messianic value in the lives of the workers who support our society.

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