

Alienation and Transmutation: The Standardized Pursuit of Family in Historical Logic

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Abstract: *Since Marx reduced the “sacred family” to the “secular family” and corrected the Hegelian inversion of the ethical structure of society, the theoretical critique of the family and the practical transformation of the family have become one of the main tasks of Marxism. The core idea of “elimination of the family” is, in a narrow sense, a critique of the abstract alienation of the family in capitalism, and, in a broader sense, a philosophical-social-scientific reflection on “where the family is going”. Nevertheless, the limited vision of the future family under the production relations of the past does not stop the romantic imagination, and it is undoubtedly legitimate and justified for us to take this opportunity to conduct a thorough reflection or questioning on the issues before and after the “elimination” from a new historical starting point.*

Keywords: Marx, Critique of the family, Historical logic.

1. Introduction

In the first chapter of *The Sexual Revolution*, Wilhelm Reich distorted Marx and Engels’ declaration of the “elimination of the family”. She summarised the main task of the social revolution as the replacement of the “natural family” by the “compulsory family” and the “matriarchal family” by the “patriarchal family” [1]. In fact, according to the materialist conception of history, the family is not an eternal “natural order” or an abstract “ethical entity”, but a dynamic social relation rooted in the ownership of the means of production. This is best demonstrated by the dissolution of the primitive clan community and the formation of the modern nuclear family. In the capitalist society, where human beings live under the coercion of the technological mode of production and the advancement of capital, the logic of objectification has infiltrated the family as the basic unit of social relations as an inevitable destiny, shaping it into a tool for concealing exploitative relations, solidifying the gendered division of labour, and realising the value-addedness of capital. Therefore, Marx and Engels did not advocate the “abolition of the family” or the restoration of “motherhood”, but rather the dissecting of the structure of private ownership hidden under the veil of mystery of the capitalist family. “To liberate the alienated family relations and their complementary phenomena from the metamorphosis and shackles of bourgeois social relations, and to truly realise civilised family and social relations between the sexes, in accordance with the measure and dignity of the human person [2].” That is to say, in the revolutionary practice of changing the world, free from the external economic, political and cultural coercion of the family, to realise “the true appropriation of human nature by human beings”.

2. Concept and Features of Family Alienation

When the secret of the “sacred family” was reduced to the “secular family” and the fundamental position of the family was restored in the ethical structure of society. The task of history is to critique the reality of the “family alienation” in theory and to change it in practice. Criticism, however, is always an activity of “clarifying presuppositions and delimiting boundaries” [3]. Just as Kant explored the a priori

presuppositions and boundaries of human knowledge, Marx and Engels’s critical theory of the family had to explore the presuppositions of the “family alienation”. This “presuppositionality” is based on “conclusiveness”. Without a realistic understanding of the “hunter-fisherman exchange”, one cannot move forward to the situation in which the historical principle of “modern capitalist commodity production” unfolds. Without examining the social reality of capital, which is the “family alienation”, the historical revelation of the “root causes of private ownership” will not be possible. This requires a scientific definition of the concept of ‘family alienation’ and an outline of its basic features.

2.1 Conceptual Definition

“Family alienation” is an extension of “alienation” in the sphere of private life. The human being creates history in “productive labour”, but in the capital society the free and conscious activity of the subject, which confirms its own essence, is reversed in the process of objectification, dominating and ruling the subject in the form of opposites, and acquires its completeness in the logical development of the “alienation of things - alienation of the self - alienation of the human essence - alienation of human relations”. According to the principle of objectivity, man’s relation to himself is realized and expressed only through his relation to others, and therefore, the social relations formed by the “real individual” in the human practices of “labour production” and “reproductive production” must also be shifted with the state of alienation, from the confirmation of their own nature to the relations of coercion. This coercion appears as an alienating force that rules over the labourer and exists in miniature in the family even before it manifests itself in class antagonisms. From a Western etymological point of view, the word “family” is derived from the Latin word for “slave”. In its original sense, it refers to the “community of servants” who work under the authority of the “pater familias” (father of the family) to maintain the family. Marx explains that “the word familia (family) does not really denote the modern vulgar ideal of combining warmth with domestic nastiness; with the Romans it did not even mean at first husband and wife and their children, but only slaves, famulus meaning a family of slaves, and familia the whole of the slaves belonging to a single person.

slave.” [4] The family became a field of domination and submission.

“Family alienation” is not an isolated phenomenon but historically constituted. Initially, to ensure survival, humans relied on “group alliances” and collective cooperation to procure subsistence materials and resist external risks. Throughout prolonged periods of familial evolution—from consanguine, Punaluan, to pairing families—these units engaged in “direct social production and immediate distribution”, precluding possibilities of commodity exchange and value transformation. This manifested as primitive communal ownership of means of production. Under the dominance of “blood kinship”, families maintained relative freedom and equality. However, a revolutionary shift occurred when “the family became entirely subordinated to property relations.” As surplus products exceeding subsistence needs emerged from familial labor such as hoe tillage and livestock rearing, divisions of labor based on gender and age were infinitely amplified. Men, leveraging their functional advantages, assumed roles in tool-making and wealth creation, gradually monopolizing ownership of these means. Driven by inheritance imperatives, they demanded “descent through the male line and paternal inheritance rights.” While the family as an “individual economic unit” became the explosive force dismantling the old clan-based society, it simultaneously engendered a hypocritical “monogamy”: enforced exclusivity for wives versus overt or covert polygyny for husbands. This “patriarchal dictatorship” was fundamentally shaped by male economic dominance.

“Family alienation” attains its most thorough manifestation under capitalist society. As demonstrated, the family’s existence is conditioned by material modes of production, and bourgeois history inherently alienates familial relations. With capitalist development, the socialization of production intensifies through mechanized industry, progressively subsuming families into commodity-based social structures. Working-class families—whether involving youth or elders, women or children—become reservoirs of modern industrial labor power. Even childbearing is subordinated to capital’s demand for future labor supply. In bourgeois families, wives function as privatized domestic servants confined to household management and childcare, veiled under hypocritical monogamy’s “sentimental guise.” Beneath this facade lies husbands’ licentiousness and de facto communalized wives. While proletarians are reduced to “compulsory celibacy and public prostitution,” the bourgeoisie exercises its privilege through “adultery and patronage of prostitution.” Marx and Engels thus characterize the capitalist family as “monogamy supplemented by adultery and prostitution.”

Human essential powers suffer dual deprivation within the familial sphere: the impossibility of freely developing sociality, coupled with the frustration of fulfilling emotional needs as natural beings. The primal intimacy rooted in blood ties and affection has become distorted by economic power, transforming into an instrument of class exploitation and domination governed by private property. Interfamilial relations are reified and instrumentalized, while familial functions lose their orientation toward satisfying human self-actualization. The task lies not in interpreting the family,

but in revolutionizing the social conditions that alienate it. Only through transforming the capitalist mode of production can the family regain its authentic form as an affective bond within the “association of free individuals.”

2.2 Basic Features

Under the rational domination of capital logic, the family—originally a cooperative unit grounded in blood ties and affection—is alienated into an instrument for maintaining property relations and exercising class domination. This alienation dissolves intersubjectivity among family members and severs the intrinsic connection between familial institutions and humanity’s species-being. Regarding the empirical manifestations of “family alienation”, existing literature delineates its characteristics through the tripartite framework of “profit-driven nature, power-dominance, and utilitarian rationality [5],” corresponding to attributes of individual economic units, patriarchal supremacy, and interest-calculated marriages. This study proposes to reconceptualize the characteristic matrix of alienated families through the triad of “interest-orientation, class determination, and ideological mediation,” aiming to further expose the latent perniciousness inherent in the abstract features of alienated domestic structures.

Firstly, interest. The domination of instrumental rationality has led to the decline of the traditional ethical order, and the family has been transformed from a fortress of emotional ties against materialism into an arena of private interests. Along with the development of industry, the family not only carries on the pursuit of interests of private ownership in the pre-industrial era, but also becomes more complex and systematic under the full penetration of the logic of capital. The first is the interest in marital love. A true marriage is a union based on the love of a man and a woman based on common ideals, without the interference of external factors. However, in a capitalist society based on private ownership, the love of both sexes is often neglected, and the choice of spouses is only “regulated by their property” and “determined by the class status of the parties concerned”. On the one hand, all sentiments of love are extinguished by the requirement of inheritance, whereby husbands choose their wives as the means of “procreating legal heirs” in order to guarantee the transmission of their property to their descendants by blood, and wives, in order to guarantee their own subsistence, are forced to accept a contract that appears to be voluntary, but is in fact an exchange of goods. On the other hand, both Catholic and Protestant countries have unanimously chosen to manipulate marriage by means of property relations and class privileges, and to practise ugly family or political marriages within the ruling class. Capital constantly breaks the boundaries between the “private sphere” and the “public sphere” set up by itself, and puts families, especially those involved in marriages, into the market of commodity exchange. Marriage has become a means of property redistribution among families, and women have been reduced to “intermediaries in the exchange of movable property”. The second is the interest in Domestic Labor. Originally collective labor fulfilling basic familial needs, household work expanded from gender-based divisions into social production realms, morphing into alien forces driving exchange-value pursuit upon the separation of mental and manual labor

(originating with private property). Externally, capital externalizes families' "material production" into society while transmuting "human reproduction" into the "reproduction of labor power," normalizing women's 18-hour grueling labor (as in industrial Britain) and children's integration into wage systems. Internally, though capital appropriates use-values and exchange-values generated through domestic labor, families obsessively pursue material accumulation beyond subsistence. Under conditions of "material dependency", the subjective aim of domestic labor becomes monetary gain—pleasure in acquisition and agony in loss. Consequently, families convert living spaces into makeshift workshops, obliterating all familial obligations and responsibilities.

Secondly, caste. Building on insights from ancient social history, Engels refined Marx's theory of class struggle by tracing its origins to "the dissolution of primitive land communalism." Crucially, classes do not emerge abruptly but evolve organically from familial structures. From a genealogical perspective, the egalitarianism of clan societies collapsed under the rise of private property—specifically, the economic independence emerging from individual households. As individual families stratified based on resource accumulation, they gradually polarized into two antagonistic classes: slave-owning aristocrats and plebeian slaves. This irreconcilable conflict gave birth to the state. Thus, the development of individual families is inextricably linked to the decline of clans and the emergence of state power. The first is the class nature of the family outside. Classes are divided by the amount of private property in the family and the degree of alliance between their interests. Proletarian families try to secure the monopoly of the means of production, including land and capital, as evidenced by the system of primogeniture in the feudal aristocratic families and the marital alliance in the bourgeois families; while proletarian families continue to produce labour in the service of capital under the ideological discipline of the proletarian family. Thus, the family, especially the proletarian family, actively participates in the construction of class social relations and becomes a tool for the reproduction of class status. On the other hand, the dynamic process of the evolution of the family maps the changes in class social relations. The evolution of the family, with social relations as its essence, is governed by the mode of material production and changes with the transformation of class social relations. The patriarchal family, for example, is a mapping of the triumph of private ownership over primitive public ownership. The second is the class nature of the family inside. Classes are divided on the basis of possession of the means of production and status in the social production system, and do not seem to descend into the internal sphere of the family, so why did Marx and Engels repeatedly emphasise that "the husband is a bourgeoisie and the wife is a proletarian"? The purpose of class within the family is to emphasise the isomorphic nature of the power structure within the family in relation to social class relations. On the one hand, there is the inversion of power relations within the family. Women's power of clan leadership in the era of group marriage was gradually lost as the surplus products created by men were transferred to the private ownership of the family. Husbands dominated the family order by virtue of their economic power, while wives were degraded, enslaved, and even turned into mere

instruments of procreation. This is the fundamental reason why Marx emphasised that "the first class oppression took place at the same time as the enslavement of women by men". On the other hand, there is the privatisation of domestic work. In addition to class oppression in the labour market, women in capitalist societies suffer more from gender oppression in the domestic sphere, which is reflected in the loss of the public nature of domestic work. When capital divests the household of social labour, the wife's labour becomes a "private service" and a subordinate to her husband's in economic dependence. In addition, the husband enjoys sexual hegemony. The husband's economic dominance gives him a voice in the family, where lust and abuse of wives and children become the norm, and "the bourgeoisie are not satisfied with having the wives and daughters of their proletarians at their disposal, let alone the formal prostitutes, who take the greatest pleasure in seducing their wives with each other."

Thirdly, ideological. Separated from "productive labour", the ruling class gradually specializes in "unproductive labour", such as science and the arts, and builds up its class consciousness in purely theoretical terms, such as philosophy, theology and morality. However, this consciousness did not want to be suspended in the realm of concepts, but on the contrary, it wanted to defend the interests of the class in reality, and the family, the basic unit of society, with its universal character, became the place where the ideology of the ruling class was anchored, and thus the "sacred concept of the family under the guise of grandiose words and universal hypocrisy"[4] came into being. This is, in fact, the process by which capital divests the family of its connection to the mode of production and shapes its sanctity. The first is the family's defence of private ownership. Through the intergenerational system of property inheritance, capital disguises the economic power represented by private property as the birthright of the natural relatives of the family, so that the instrumental nature of class oppression is legitimised and naturalised. At the same time, the oppression of labour is glorified as a result of contract and struggle, and the tenet of the sanctity of private property is planted in the consciousness of the individual, ensuring that the social basis of private ownership of the means of production is secure and dissolving the resistance that systemic oppression may bring. The second is the family's covering up of gender oppression. Through the packaging of religion, law and morality, such as the glorification of economic dependence to "love and responsibility" and female norms to "maternal vocation", the indissolubility of marriage is portrayed as an ethical law, the gender division of labour within the family is portrayed as a natural law, the reproduction of labour is portrayed as a natural duty, and slavery and exploitation are concealed under complementary harmony. The third is the cultivation of "mere commodities and instruments of labour". Through the power structure within the family, dominated by male authority, children are previewed in a hierarchical family and moulded into the docile and disciplined labour force required by capital. In short, the family, as an important space for the practice of human interaction, is shaped as an important site for the inculcation of bourgeois values from the outside in.

To sum up, the family has been alienated to the point of no return in a capitalist society. The principle of interest permeates the family, distorting it from a traditional

community of labour to a carrier of material exchange. Class identity is deeply bound to the family, transforming the harmonious relationship between family members and between the family and society, which is formed in the practice of production, into a sharp confrontation. Ideology counteracts the foundations of the family, creating a communion of moral sentiments as a tool for inculcating class concepts and maintaining the existing order. Interest, class, and ideology together constitute a spectrum of characteristics of family alienation, all indicating that the family has been alienated into an external object alien to the essence of man. The sorting out of the realistic representations of family alienation points the way to the emancipation of the family.

3. Multidimensional Causes of Family Alienation

The family alienation in a capitalist society is not accidental, but is the result of a combination of economic logic, political power, and cultural hegemony. The materialist conception of history shows that “the mode of production of material life governs the whole process of social, political and spiritual life” [4], and the capitalist mode of production is manifested in the socio-economic system with machine mass production and private ownership of the means of production as its core features, so the family alienation, which is the basic unit of production and life in the capitalist society, is due to the economy. The central reason for this is the economy. Political power and cultural hegemony, which are derivatives of economic logic, do not function independently, but they also play a derivative, additive role in the production of family alienation in the maintenance and consolidation of the economic structure of capital.

3.1 Core Economic Reasons

The Marxist critique of the family, as articulated by Marx and Engels, is both intrinsic to the critique of capitalist society and subsumed within the revolutionary discourse on humanity’s historical development. Consequently, their critique transcends mere condemnation of isolated familial phenomena, instead constituting an essential critique of the formative and developmental dynamics of family alienation—specifically, a radical interrogation of the foundational role of private property in engendering such alienation.

From the point of view of “historical materialism in the broad sense” and “historical materialism in the narrow sense”. The former is a holistic grasp of the trend of human historical development based on the natural antecedents of labour production. The social division of labour corresponding to a certain level of productive forces leads to the creation of ownership, and when the private relation is universally completed or becomes the decisive relation in the society, the “fundamental position of the relation of production in relation to all other relations” [4] shapes the essence of the family as a reflection of private ownership. But with the development of the productive forces and the spontaneous elimination of the social division of labour, the heterogeneous expression of the productive forces (alienated family relations) gives way to the genuine association of individuals. The latter is a substantive identification of a particular historical situation in which

economic forces invert the determination of man and society. Family relations have been losing themselves with the unfolding of modern economic activity (the totality of economic activities and relations for the purpose of exchange) and have been reduced to the subordination of private ownership characterised by class antagonisms and the exploitation of labour. But general historical descriptions alone cannot specify the core economic causes of family alienation, let alone construct a critical discourse on capitalism, and must therefore go deeper into the reality of the family.

The inherent nature of capital, as it acquires dominant economic power and develops markets for the appreciation of surplus value, leads it to extend its principles to all spheres, including the family. Despite its relative progress in destroying “feudal, patriarchal.....natural honour in all its forms and manifestations” [4], it has pushed the family into an even more alienating abyss. Marx and Engels pointed out that “on what foundation is the bourgeois family built? It is built on capital, on the system of private enrichment. Its complementary phenomena are the forced solitude of the proletarians and the system of public prostitution [4].” To expand on this, one is the private basis of the bourgeois family. As can be seen from the aforementioned genealogy of the characteristics of family alienation, almost all forms of family alienation derive from the development of the surplus product from the individual family, its privatisation, and its institutionalisation, “The family, by virtue of its inextricable connection with the private relations of production, usurps its own nature, is alienated, and takes on an abstract character [5].” The family, in the form of units such as the transmission of property and class divisions, has become a solid foundation for the universal rule of the bourgeoisie, as has the tendency of the modern state to sanctify private property. Second, the economic properties of the family in a capitalist society. The family as a “separate economy” is, on the one hand, a reflection of the remnants of the pre-capital mode of production. The surplus products accumulated from the division of labour in the individual family make it free from the primitive clan and become an independent economic unit that possesses the means of production and satisfies the needs of the family and part of the exchange in the form of agriculture and family workshops. On the other hand, there is the micro-mechanism that sustains exploitation in a capitalist society. By shaping the family as an “independent” economic subject, capital can pass on the costs of its functions of labour reproduction, ideological reproduction and so on. In short, capital has historically transformed bourgeois family relations into “purely pecuniary relations”, while the proletarian family, without the support of property, has been reduced to the tragic situation of “forced solitude and public prostitution”.

3.2 Political and Cultural Reasons

Political power and cultural hegemony, which are rooted in the logic of the capital economy, are intertwined and together constitute an additional cause of the family alienation. The bourgeoisie uses the political power of the State to shape the family as an instrument of domination, and the cultural hegemony of social opinion and theoretical defence to portray the family as an eternal entity. In fact, the additional role of both political power and cultural hegemony is aimed at

integrating the family into the capitalist production system.

Under the primitive clans, although the ethical principles of human behaviour enjoyed “absolute power and strength”. However, there was already a gradual political emergence of a system of “clan meetings” to select “guardians of the faith” to safeguard the interests of the family. When private ownership was established, the requirement of property inheritance split the interests of the family from the whole to the individual. In order to safeguard the interests of individual families, they gradually became “nobles” through alliance and hereditary succession, and possessed “kingship”. They gained legitimacy on the institutional and ideological side in the form of the “state”. In capitalist societies, these two roles have been maximised. The role of ideology has already been discussed, and it centres on the ideological tool of shaping the family in capital society as a natural law, a sacred fortress, rather than a structural product of economic exploitation and political oppression. And in terms of institutional safeguards, through legal forms such as marriage law and inheritance law, a political system that splits the private sphere from the public sphere is formed, so that the family assumes the functions of labour production, ideological tools and so on, that have been disciplined by political power. Under the manipulation of bourgeois political power, the bourgeoisie destroys the family by “dominating wives and children” and “seducing each other”, but marriage, property, and the family remain sacrosanct in theory. For they constitute the actual foundation on which the bourgeoisie builds its rule.

The bourgeoisie is not satisfied with political power over the family, but also with the right to speak out culturally. Firstly, the Communists are stigmatised for practising “communal wifery”. The moralistic bourgeoisie regards wives as mere tools of production, and when confronted with the Communists’ demand for the common ownership of the tools of production, the bourgeoisie is reminded that women will suffer the same fate, and therefore without realising their own problems, they cry in unison, “You Communists want to practise communal wifery!” [4] The bourgeoisie’s belief that the communists want to replace the covert system of public wives with the open system of public wives is a testimony to the remnants of the crude communist system of public wives. “Crude communism” requires the universalisation and equalisation of private property, so that women, as public property, are “treated as captives and handmaidens of the common lust” [4]. Indeed, true communism requires the active renunciation of private property, the true appropriation of the essence of the human person, and is therefore committed to the emancipation of women from their position as instruments of production. The bourgeois domination of wives and children and the mutual seduction of wives, which has “always existed” in the bourgeoisie, is the real and hidden “whore system”. The second is to seek a theoretical defence of the family. Hegel, in his *Principles of the Philosophy of Law*, casts the reality of the family in a capitalist society into discursive thinking. Hegel identified the ethical position of the family in the inversion of “the state determines the family and civil society”, and defended the rationality of the bourgeois family in the form of the “concept of the family”. The national economists, represented by Smith and Ricardo, argued from the theory of the value of labour and the theory of the organic composition of capital for the possibility of the

unlimited development of capitalist production, which provided the basis for the naturalness and eternity of the bourgeois family, which existed in connection with and as a constraint on it [7].

To sum up, the family alienation is the result of the multidimensional effects of economic logic, political power and cultural hegemony. In terms of economic logic, the family alienation is merely a micro-projection of the capitalist relations of production, and it is the inextricable link between the family and private ownership that makes the family transgress its nature and become alienated. In terms of political power, the family alienation is the result of the bourgeoisie’s institutionalisation of the family through the ideology and laws of the state, and the function of the family as a ruling order has been infinitely magnified. In terms of cultural hegemony, family alienation is a product of the bourgeoisie’s contract with various defence theories, and the family oscillates between various ideologies. Economic logic, political power, and cultural hegemony shape the material conditions, the institutional security support, and the legitimate trappings of family alienation, respectively. But this does not imply a triple yoke, but rather a nested system with the economy at its core, so that the restoration of the essence of the family and the revolutionary reconfiguration of family relations require that they take place in the elimination of the division of labour and private ownership and the transformation of the capitalist mode of production.

4. Solutions to Family Alienation

The family does not take its original form in the patriarchal system contained in the *Pentateuch*; rather, the family is a historical category. Drawing on Morgan’s “thumbnail sketch” of human history and the evolution of the forms of marriage and the family, Engels noted that “group marriage is appropriate to the age of ignorance, dyadic marriage to the age of barbarism, and monogamy supplemented by adultery and prostitution to the age of civilisation.” [4] This historical narrative shows that the family is not an idea, an ideological concept, but an activity rooted in the reality of the social-historical process. Therefore, change the family alienation in capitalist societies is necessary and possible. This world-changing theory of family critique calls for “real emancipation” “in the real world and with real means”, i.e. on the side of eliminating the division of labour and private ownership and transforming the capitalist mode of production.

4.1 Intrinsic Contradictions

Marx and Engels pointed out that “capital itself is a contradiction” [4] in which civilisation and barbarism, freedom and slavery, wealth and poverty are intertwined. The critique of the family unfolds on the basis of the critical nature of the dialectic, in the sense that “within the old society the elements of the new society have been formed” [4], and that the family alienation is both the historical fabric of capital and the condition for its elimination is nurtured in capital’s own contradictions. It is the nature of capital to multiply in motion, and thus it rips off the labourer and even the capitalist, leading to family alienation on a societal scale. However, in the logic of multiplication, which is “the transformation of surplus

value into capital and the expansion of the economic system through multiplication" [8], there is an implicit contradiction between "the socialisation of production and the private appropriation of capital". This element of "self-negation" will eventually destroy the economic and social basis for the family alienation.

Surplus value production destroys the economic basis of the alienated family. Since the birth of private ownership, the family has maintained the intergenerational transmission of economic power and has been the main force of social production or reproduction, which, in the form of the "separate economy" of capital society, plays the role of the economic basis of family alienation, which the contradictions of capital are going to bring about its demise. The first is the role of socialised production. The nature of capital's multiplication drives the transformation from cottage industry to factory craft to machine industry, a process of organisation and scale. In order to achieve as many of the "thrilling leaps" from commodities to money as possible, capital requires the maximum exploitation and use of human "natural forces", which includes labour intensification, the extension of the working day, and even the appropriation of the supplementary labour of women and children. When all human beings are put into the realm of social production, the decentralised, small-scale model of the family economy will cease to exist, and women will be transformed from private servants into equal subjects of production. The second is the expansion of the space of market demand. In order to alleviate the crisis of capital's unlimited expansion of production to the point of overproduction and unbalanced economic crises, it is necessary for capital to realise the expansion of markets from the domestic to the foreign, and from the territorial to the global. Family, with their consumption behaviour that sustains the reproduction of labour, are shaped by capital as passive "consumer subjects" for the realisation of surplus-value in the "G-W-G" formula of capital. But the family is always distinguished by its territorial scope, always restricting the conversion of capital on a large scale, so that the requirement of the universal interaction of capital inevitably destroys the single separate family. Third, there is the confrontation between labour and capital. The mission of capital to add value requires a relation of production that is compatible with itself. Initially, capital separates the labourer from the ownership of the means of production and transforms the labourer into a direct means of multiplication in the form of the transfer of the means of production to "personalised capital". This subordination, however, has become an object of urgent change due to capital's quest for relative surplus value in the form of the "social organisation of labour" and the "technological basis of the labour process" [9]. The direct result of the confrontation between labour and capital is the demise of the "antagonistic relations of distribution", i.e. the relations of private ownership, which were established in order to achieve the multiplication of capital. Thus, the alienated family, the relationship of dominance and domination that develops by virtue of private ownership, will die out in the inherent contradictions of capitalist relations of production.

Capital value-added expansion eliminates the social basis of the alienated family. The economic requirements of capital expansion are inevitably reflected in the reality of human

relations. In the period of capital expansion, the impoverishment and exploitation of labourers is the direct means of capital's multiplication, and it therefore requires a constant supply of people for capital by means of the family's function of "population production". However, due to the improvement of production technology and the blindness of capital expansion, the surplus-value product reaches a point where it cannot be converted into capital, which is represented by the economic crisis of overproduction. Marx and Engels stated that "the working population itself, while producing the accumulation of capital, produces on an ever-increasing scale the means of making themselves a relative surplus population." [4] Families, under the yoke of capital, reproduce large relative surpluses, but as production shrinks, although supported by capital in the form of the "levers of capital accumulation", more often than not they lose their jobs and are impoverished to the point of losing their basic security, and return to the struggle to take the goods of life. This removes the social basis of the alienated family: firstly, the worker is impoverished to the point of destitution, so that marital unions will be genuinely possible out of love; and secondly, the worker no longer treats his wife and children as commodities or instruments of production, and family relations become harmonious.

4.2 Pathways to Realism

The contradictions of capital imply a bright future for the family, but the reality of its alienation makes it impossible to wait for the "judgement of the last days" at the end of capitalism. On the contrary, through the proletarian revolution, the capitalist mode of production must be overthrown, and the family's link with private ownership severed, so that it can be liberated from the shackles of class and gender oppression, and become an integral part of the union of free people. "The spear of the revolution that eliminated the backward feudal autocratic configuration of social relations in the mould of the bourgeois mode of production, which once represented the advanced productive forces, is now in the hands of the proletariat pointing at the bourgeoisie itself [10]." The family alienation must achieve its own revolutionary reconstruction in a fundamental transformation of the capitalist mode of production.

The elimination of the division of labour and private ownership is the material prerequisite for the transformation of family alienation. The bourgeois family, coupled with private ownership, has historically taken on a bourgeois character of "interest, class, and ideology", and family relations have become a naked transaction of money. This requires the proletariat to awaken to its alienation and to untie the private system and the family in a revolutionary practice that will change the world, thus contributing to the advancement of the history of the family. At the same time, the fixed or compulsory division of labour (the process of private ownership), which is closely linked to the productive forces, is an important factor in the distortion of family relations, and it is therefore necessary to develop the productive forces in order to change the status quo of the bourgeois family's "material dependence" by means of a rich material base.

Promoting the emancipation of women and the socialisation

of domestic work. According to Engels, “the first prerequisite for the emancipation of women is the reintegration of all women into the public service; this, in turn, requires the elimination of the individual family as the economic unit of society” [4]. The root cause of gender oppression of women in the family lies in their confinement to the private sphere and unpaid domestic labour. More specifically, it is economic inequality that leads to unequal gender relations. It is only through the reintegration of women into the public labour force and their extensive participation in social production that they will be able to achieve economic and personal independence when “domestic work accounts for so little of their effort”. In addition, domestic work should be re-examined and socially recognised through the payment of wages, or redistributed in a socialised manner, for example, by transferring the family’s responsibility for childcare to the public sphere of society.

Social revolution and ideological change go hand in hand. In the case of family alienation, it is necessary not only to change the economic basis on which it is based, but also to critique the discourse that masks its alienating nature. Marx emphasised in *The German Ideology* that the dissolution of ideologies such as religion, morality, law and philosophy requires a practical critique of reality. The groundless slander of the bourgeoisie and the distorted theories in defence of the bourgeois family urgently require a response from the workers’ movement, and the seizure of the discursive high ground in the field of the family is a realistic requirement for practical change. At the same time, the family has become a tool for inculcating the values of the ruling class in the capitalist society, which requires family education to get rid of the tendency of instrumentalisation, to cultivate individuals with independent personality and critical consciousness, and to lay the ideological foundation for a new type of family relations.

In conclusion, the solution to the family alienation is not a conceptual game, but a real historical activity. The self-reversing nature of the capitalist mode of production implies the possibility of the demise of the economic and social basis for the family alienation; a definitive solution to the family alienation depends on the elimination of the division of labour and the system of private ownership, the socialization of domestic work, and the promotion of social revolutions and ideological changes.

5. Reconstruction of the Ideal Family Paradigm

Marx and Engels developed a critical theory of the family following the philosophical logic of “deconstruction - reconstruction” [11], but in the presentation of the text, there is more deconstruction than reconstruction, i.e., the future family is viewed from the perspective of the deconstruction of the alienated family, and there is no explicit prediction of the future form of the family. Marx Engels had the elimination of the family as a socio-economic unit in *The German Ideology*, and the inference of equal family relations in *The Communist Manifesto*. But the real scientific predictions and visions of the future family were realised in texts such as *The Abstracts of Louis Hen Morgan’s Book on Ancient Societies* and *The Origin of the Family, Private Ownership and the State*. Marx

and Engels, on the basis of Morgan’s findings, made a near-factual description of the future family from the principles of historical materialism and on the basis of grasping the general laws of family development:

One is a marriage based on love. “Only a marriage based on love is moral” [4]. The community of property breaks down all parental will and economic coercion, and love becomes the only motive and precondition for the conclusion or dissolution of a marriage. Secondly, the relations between the sexes tend to become equal. “With regard to the modern, monogamous family it is capable of further improvement until the equality of the sexes is attained.” [4] The means by which men bind women with economic privileges will no longer exist, and women will participate in social labour instead of being committed to men for reasons other than love. Thirdly, there is a high degree of harmonious family relations. Since the individual family is no longer an economic unit in which private property is preserved and passed on, wives and children in the family are no longer mere commodities and instruments of labour, and the relationship between husband and wife and the generations is no longer one of authority and obedience, but on the contrary is one of intimacy and harmony in the unit of emotional life. Fourthly, the true realisation of the monogamous family. The “exclusive cohabitation” of the wife and the “carnal orgies” of the husband have become a thing of the past, and monogamy, which is equally binding on both spouses, has been truly realised.

Marx and Engels’ construction of an ideal family paradigm is based on the deconstruction of the alienated family and thus lacks specificity and is only a hypothesis in principle. Whether it is realised or not depends on future practice.

Fund Projects

Baoji University of Arts and Sciences 2024 Graduate Student Innovative Research General Project “Alienation and Transmutation: The Standardized Pursuit of Family in Historical Logic” (YJSCX24YB04).

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