

The Hegelian Family:
An Analysis of the Nuclear Family Structure Under the Capitalist Gaze

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Throughout history, families were known to be the backbone of the prospering state or country. The family represented the multi-faceted identities in society that come together to define the state. Family in many cases contributed to the social and economic success of the individual family. Family has also been the origin of the social hierarchy and economic disparities within society. Philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel established an image of how the family should be seen within the gaze of society. A society that is now committed to the economic growth of the people and the establishment of the state through the maxim of family. Hegel paints a vividly beautiful picture of how the family should look and how their actions should be translated into the public sphere. In his writing of the family, he neglects to add the reality of the society for people who are non-members of the bourgeoisie class. His comments pertaining to his philosophy struck Karl Marx to counter his ideal society and challenge that under capitalism this family can only be obtained if you're a part of the ruling class. In this essay, I will explore Hegel and Marx argument pertaining to society, working, and the establishment of family through the state. I will use the essay of Claudia Jones to show how the weight of her Blackness and history of society makes maintaining societal standards complicated in her day to day life.

Hegel's Understanding of Family and Union:

Hegel addresses three important pieces of society, which are marriage (the union), the family (the outcome of the union), and the emergence of multiple identities that create a civil society. Yet, Hegel's idea of individualism neglects the harsh reality of living in a society that is based on necessity and the means of production. Hegel, unlike other philosophers, sees marriage as a "the *immediate ethical relationship*" and not a contractual agreement. An ethical relationship is an understanding of two consenting parties releasing their individual identities and

morphing into one identity (Hegel 360). In short, the union of the two consenting parties creates a connection based on their relationship to others. When the two consenting party emerges into one, they base their relationship to others around wealth, politics, property and other factors that help create a hierarchy in society.

This union contributes to the formation of various civil society identities that contribute to maintain status in a capitalist society. However, this idea of marriage and creating families with social identity doesn't apply in a society where certain individuals, such as women and Black people are excluded from civil society. Within the Hegelian family structure, he establishes his ideal society from an elitist perspective that disregards the accessibility to wealth which aides in establishing distinction in criteria that attributes to the Hegelian family structure. As well as wealth being one of the biggest contributing factors, property is the most important factor that also changes the relationship to people and the state. Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* is referring to a particular era where Black people were still considered a form of property and not include in the formation of a civil society. Women, in some sense, were considered property and had to engage in specific gender roles that aid in maintaining the image of the family besides the union. Adding the issue of capitalism that operates in the best benefit of the elitist class becomes complicated when Black people and women are given the right to engage in civil society far after Hegel writing this piece. This emergence into society raises issues of gender performance, family rearing and the disparities within a capitalist civil society that brings complications in trying to maintain the ideal Hegelian family structure. As times progress, the term "family" shifts in how one perceives a family, how intersecting identities or different identities understand their family structure, and most importantly how established socioeconomic standards transforms one's idea of a family. In this project, I tend to focus on Black family structures that struggles with

maintaining a Hegelian family structure in a capitalist civil society. In order to understand the issues that come with trying to maintain the Hegelian family structure in a capitalist society, it's important to explore the key components that attribute to the negotiation of property through marriage and society, the specific gender roles, and the emergence of identity. Essentially for Hegel, when one understands how marriage and family works then we establish civil society.

A complete Hegelian family is completed in three parts: "in the shape of its immediate concept, as marriage; in external existence [*Dasein*], as the *property* and *assets* of the family and their administration; in the *bringing up* of children and the dissolution of the family" (Hegel 200). A Hegelian marriage is not based on the idea of romance or a civil contract, but a marriage that is a "rightfully ethical love" where "the transient, capricious, and purely subjective aspects of love are excluded from it" (Hegel 201). In simpler terms, Hegel is arguing that marriage isn't the modern version of being in love or consensual agreement, but an ethical love that isn't temporary or fickle due to the capricious nature of love. Hegel views marriage as an ethical duty that starts off with the individuals having parents that are considered "intentioned" (201). Intentioned parents help with arranging sensible partners for their children. He states, "at one extreme, the initial step is taken by well-intentioned parents, and when the persons destined to be united in love get to know each other as destined partners, a mutual inclination" (201).

Hegel's ideal marriage sounds much like an arranged marriage with parents who seek potential partners for their children that will be beneficial for all parties involved. He believes pre-arranged marriage is more ethical than a non-arranged marriage not because of the parents being considered "intentioned" or wise, but because the emotional part doesn't come first. It's more of an understanding between each party that the two individuals are forced onto one another based on the families interests in politics, wealth, and the possibilities of this merging

union. For Hegel, once the two parties marry, they become one and this union forms another layer of civil society. Essentially, oneness leads to the erasure of individual identity and creates a singular identity for all the families involved. This new identity tends to lead to potential class hierarchy, ownership, and political gains that Hegel emphasizes is important factors of maintaining society.

The intricate part of Hegel's understanding of marriage is how he views gender that allows him and others to disregard female autonomy. He states, "Among those peoples who hold the female sex in the little respect, the parents arrange marriages arbitrarily, without consulting the individuals concerned;" (Hegel 201). Hegel is addressing that some people do not have respect for women and the arrangement of marriage based on the parent's choice doesn't address the potential need of the woman. Hegel understands that most people in society disregard the female autonomy and presence within society. He himself agrees with this disregard of female autonomy because marriage is not necessarily about individual desires, but a benefit for the collective. He believes that women should be complicit in the process of the union because women are the essential parts of this arrangement. The female autonomy in society is predetermined based on the societal standards that were already preexisting which results in the belief that women do not have say so when it comes to their personal roles in society. He further explains the previous claim by saying "the girl's only concern is to find a husband, and the man's to find a wife"(201). The main concern for Hegel is not the emotional needs or desires, but more of the potential gain of the merger. Hegel, as stated previously, feels that the modern version of marriage brings on capricious matters that will result in complications with the union, but prearranged marriage helps with forcing two people onto each other and bring certainty to the table. However, the two individuals, especially the woman, do not have their needs or

concerns addressed when the parents choose a partner for them. It's the blatant disregard that by nature a woman needs a husband, and a man needs wife which means fickle matters like love or desires doesn't need to be considered a requirement when choosing a potential life-long partner. Women are forced into these marriages for potential gains and assets which aides in their silencing. This is one of the many claims demonstrating that women have little to no regard importance when it comes to this union and the life to come for Hegel.

Essentially, Hegel argues that marriage is not a contractual agreement but rather an ethical love. Yet, he states, "marriage is not a contractual relationship as far as its essential basis is concerned. For the precise nature of marriage is to begin with the point of view contract"(203). He suggests this because he discusses the individual personality where the family is a single person and the members become the accidents (204). The individual when agreeing to marriages agrees that they'll remove this individualize personality to gain its ethical spirit. This refers back to the previous paragraph where he addresses how the parents choose the potential life-long partner. The intentioned parent chooses someone not based on their individuality or personality but on their position in society that can help establish a larger union. The expectations for the person(s) are to rid their individual identities, remain focus on maintaining their marriage and mostly to not get divorced. If one decides to divorce it ruins the ethical spirit and becomes an ethical end. Hegel argues that the wedding ceremony becomes a formality in the contractual agreement of marriage. If the marriage were to come to an end it will become legal informality because Hegel states:

"Just as the stipulation of a contract in itself [*fur sich*] contains the genuine transfer of property (see 79), so also do the solemn declaration of consent to the ethical

bond of marriage and its recognition and confirmation by the family and community constitute the formal *conclusion* and *actuality* of marriage”(204).

Hegel brings focus to the wedding ceremony because weddings become the focal point of where the two consenting individuals gather amongst their family and officiating the ‘contractual’ agreement of marriage. It makes the materialistic entities of marriage come with a concrete or literal merger while giving some form of emotional value to the individuals and the people gathering to attend the wedding. It also aides in pushing the motif of ‘oneness’ and sealing the deal for the contract of an ethical love. Taking this step-in front of family and other important figures in society officiates the marriage and displays the consent of creating a new family unit.

As much as the marriage is contractual agreement of two parties that helps to build the foundation of civil society, but marriage is also the perpetrator of enforcing sexist and chauvinist views. Hegel argues, “the *natural* determinacy of the two sexes acquires an *intellectual* and *ethical* significance by virtue of its rationality. This significance is determined by the difference into which the ethical substantiality, as concept in itself, divides itself up in order that its vitality may thereby achieve a concrete unity” (206). In this section, Hegel uses the term “natural” to justify the perceived differences of the sex in not in the literal sense, but as an emotional or mental matter. According to Hegel, the way one sees these differences by addressing the fact that the naturalness or determinacy of the sexes contributes to the roles each sex plays in the marriage. He states, “Man therefore has his actual substance life in state, in learning [*Wissenschaft*], etc., and otherwise in work and struggle with the external world and with himself, so that it is only through his division that he fights his way to self-sufficient unity with himself”(206). For Hegel, man is more integral in the productivity of state because he learns, work, and struggles with the external world or himself which helps to bring him back to his core.

When man deals with his family “he has a peaceful intuition of this unity, and an emotive [*empfindend*] and subjective ethical life”(206). On the other hand, women lack this ability to be intricate parts of the society because their duty is to exist in maintaining the family itself while the man is the negotiator for his family.

Hegel suggests that women in society can be educated, but “they are not made for the sciences, for philosophy and certain artistic productions which require a universal element”(207). Women are allowed to have thoughts or pleasures, but it’s limited to themselves because they’re not the ideal face of rationality. Hegel goes on to say, “the difference between animal and plant; the animal is closer in character to man, the plant to woman, for the latter is a more peaceful [process of] unfolding whose principle is the more indeterminate unity of feeling [*Empfindung*]”(207). In short, Hegel referring to a woman as a plant one thinks of the delicacy and daintiness of a flower. Defining men as animals display their more aggressive nature that suggests woman lack this aggressiveness or inability to be firm leaders. The institution of marriage becomes the foreground of enabling the gender stereotypes perpetrated in civil society. Inherently, women are only allowed certain privileges to maintain the gender equilibrium in society. Education becomes a leverage in understanding the differences between the gender roles and the expectations of each sexes. These differences in education, space, identity, and power aides in establishing the roles of the man and woman in their union. The Hegelian family structure enables this behavior and reenforcing in the arbitrary contract of marriage that insists in the natural difference of the sexes. In the previous pages, when referring to marriage Hegel consistently focuses on the need for a ‘contractual’ merger of the two parties and the sexes that results in maintaining the status quo. In order to maintain this status quo, the family becomes a resource for obtaining the contractual necessities such as, property and other entities that makes a

marriage while maintaining the differences within the sexes that influence the gender roles and expectations of every person in the family.

The Hegelian family structure begins and ends with the man. For Hegel, “the family as a legal [*rechtliche*] person in relation to others must be represented by the husband as its head. In addition, he is primarily responsible for external acquisition and for caring for the family’s needs, as well as for the control and administration of the family’s resources”(209). When a new family emerges it’s responsible for its own relationship with “kinship groups” or “houses” which comes from their bloodline ties (209). The new family is based on ethical love verses familial connections. With the new family, Hegel assures that, “the property of an individual is therefore also essentially connected with his marital relationship, and only more distantly connected with his kinship group or house” (210). The individual in this quote is referred to property that based upon their marital status can belong to their spouse which makes them less connected to their kin group. Naturally, women are viewed as property or the asset in the marriage that contributes to the monetary gains for all the parties involved. As mentioned before that the formation of the union is based on physical and monetary wealth that creates a marriage with assets that establishes their ranking in civil society. The intentioned parents searched for spouses that would help with capital gain and a successful merger that they would all benefit from. Essentially, the man becomes head of the household and the primary representative of the family business in civil society. The man has privilege to certain information and performs certain roles in civil society.

The last components in the Hegelian family structure are the children. Inherently, “children are free in themselves, and their life is merely the immediate existence [*Dasein*] of this freedom; they therefore do not belong as things [*Sachen*] either to others or to their parents”

(212). The only responsibility of the parents is the upbringing which allows the parents to focus on the child's emotional health and given disciplinary actions from time to time. The task of upbringing falls heavily on the mother which includes maintaining their physical wellbeing, educating, and contributing to their overall success. Hegel doesn't explicitly say that it's the mother's job to maintain the children, but one can infer that since the woman cannot work or interact in civil society, they assume the role of primary caretaker. The woman's 'job' per say is to maintain the home and her family from the inside. The woman is expected to clean, cook, and other tasks to keep her family image intact. Maintaining one's image in a capitalist society is important especially when it comes to business and status.

The Hegelian family structure is created by continuing the flow of generational wealth with marrying within specific family lines to ensure a well-established civil society. As much as Hegel argues that marriage and family isn't a contractual agreement, however, the expectations on both parties to bring some form of property, wealth, or credibility to the table to establish a new family with a new societal ranking. The family structure aides in perpetuating the gender stereotypes established by the mass powers. The state, civil society, and the people who occupy those spaces intentionally ignore the female autonomy and forces them into gender performance based on what they deem to be "easy" tasks for women. Women have no place in government, negation of property or business but they do have a place in their home when it comes to the upbringing of the children and taking care of her family. For Hegel, this family structure is ideal and will help to keep society functioning. In his description of what a Hegelian family structure is, he neglects the reality of society. He neglects that over a period of time this ideal family structure is hard to perpetrate when Black people are finally emerged into society as citizens then when women gain the right to be contributors in civil society. Society becomes much different

when the factors that make a union and a family is compromised by other factors in society. The expansion of capitalism begins to transform socioeconomic ranking and begin to marginalize groups of people based on their ranking in society. The lack of reality in Hegel's family structure aides in its inability to be executed and not everyone in society is privileged to own property or obtain it. Economist, Karl Marx, makes a similar critique of Hegel's idealist society that negates reality or the understanding that not everyone in society can obtain wealth, property, and a space in civil society.

Marx's Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*:

In Marx's "Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right", he aims to evaluate Hegel's political philosophy which gives him the scope to criticize the current political state (Marx 26). Essentially, Marx wants to evaluate Hegel's understanding of politics and economics. He breaks his argument into four extracts: *On Hegel's Dialectic*, *On Democracy*, *On Bureaucracy*, and *On Voting*. Each section is based on different points Hegel made in the *Philosophy of Right* that lacked a firm foundation of reality. In this section, I will use two extracts: *On Hegel's Dialectic* and *On Democracy* to critique Hegel's understanding of the state, the constitution and the laws that govern society.

In the first abstract, he's critiquing Hegel's dialectic for using abstract ideas that lack reality. Marx states, "The actual idea is Spirit which separates itself into the two ideal spheres of its concept, the family and civil society, which are its finite phase'-- thus the separation of the state into family and civil society is ideal, i.e., necessary, is part of the essence of the state; the family and civil society are real parts of the state, real spiritual instances of will, they are modes of being of the state; family and civil society make themselves into the state. They are the initiators" (Marx 26). Marx and Hegel have two fundamentally different ideas of the relationship

between family and civil society and the formation of the state. Hegel argues that state and civil society are divided and that one should be subordinate to the other (Hegel 219). On the other hand, Marx argues that the state comes from the groundwork of family and civil society. Civil society possesses real material life which the state is dependent on (Marx 27). Hegel argues that the idea of the state is real, and the material things are misleading copies of the state (civil society). He suggests that the true society will always be the state and civil society will always be the imitation of the state.

According to Marx, “the real becomes an appearance. Also, the idea has no other aim than the logical one to become explicit as infinite actual spirit”(Marx 27). In short, Marx refuses to believe that the conditions of our lives are created or controlled by external forces. In actuality, we created the conditions that we live in and we have the power to change these conditions. Ultimately, this is Marx's critique about Hegel because the goal of philosophy is to expose man's alienation from man or systems that be. Marx wants to rid any belief that the condition of man is merely controlled by alienated forces but by the systems we establish. The lack of self-consciousness or reality in Hegel's dialectic makes the human condition seem out of man's control when really, it's the opposite. Hegel's idea of civil society and the state enforces the bourgeoisie dreams by universally pushing their interests as the interest of the whole society. This is why it's the responsibility of the others who are not a part of the ruling class to dissolve this system and the existing order of society.

In the *On Democracy* extract, he focuses more on the formation of government, but also the stark differences between democracy and monarchy. Marx argues that “Democracy is the truth of the monarchy, monarchy is not the truth of democracy”(27). Democracy is the original condition while monarchy is “necessarily democracy as an inconsequence against itself, whereas

the monarchical element in democracy is no inconsequence”(27). Democracy can be understood in its own terms whereas Monarchy cannot. In democracy the people govern themselves based on the constitution and the people constitute themselves based on their own creation. This makes the people active subjects whereas in monarchy the people are not the active subject but subordinated by the constitution. Hegel believes the state is the foundation and that the people are the subjects of the state, however, Marx argues that the state or democracy begins with the people which then objectifies the state.

This is ultimately why Marx is critiquing Hegel’s understanding of the relationship between the state and man. Hegel’s interpretation of the state, the constitution, and laws align more with monarchy than democracy because in monarchy there’s the political man, the private man, and social man that move as separate entities. In democracy the political state is a manifestation of the people. Since democracy isn’t formed on the basis of one universal preference there becomes particular preferences that define multiple lived experiences. The state is not dominant because it’s the self-determined manifestations of the people who occupy the state. The state cannot define itself without the people and their own constitution. Hegel, unlike Marx, is interested in preserving the state and limiting the particulars of others. He wants to protect the universal interest to preserve the state and the state officials because of this notion Marx fears the authority that will come from this preservation of the universal. A government that is formed by one idea that only benefits a small majority will rule in what they think is best for public interest which is wrong because it eliminates the particulars. Overall, Marx's goal was to debunk Hegel’s idea that the existing state is a form of poor or better manifestations of the idea of the state, but it becomes contradicting when he’s arguing that there is only one idea of the state. Primarily, Hegel is trying to create a society that works in the state’s interest and the

universal interest, which is the bourgeoisie interest, that for Marx will eventually fail. Hegel believes that the state, the constitution, and the laws are the commands to preserve the system, and everyone abides by it whereas Marx feels that the state, the constitution, and laws should be an expression of the people.

As Marx develops his thoughts from his “Critique of the Philosophy of Right”, he begins to divulge in the structure of capitalism and how it impacts the state, the constitution, and the laws which causes tension for the active subjects in society. His goal in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscript* is to expand on his argument in the “Critique of the Philosophy of Right ” and address how Hegel’s one universal idea challenges many structures in society that causes the majority of the active subjects to feel alienated. In Marx’s *Economic and Philosophical Manuscript*, he focuses on the topic of “Alienated Labor” and how this alienation in a capitalist society doesn’t allow the workers or the proletariat class to have any individual identity or even a personal identity. Most importantly Marx writes this piece during the industrial era where factory jobs were common and the vast majority of proletariat men, women and children worked in these factories in order to live in society. Marx highlights the privilege in Hegel’s ideal society that suggests that Hegelian family and societal structure only aides to benefit the people who have the most power in a capitalist society. This idea of family or society only works in the favor of the elite (bourgeois) and ignores the reality of proletariat who cannot gain access to property or monetary gain from owning property. The gender performance shifts in proletariat class because men and women are expected to work in order to survive. Marx focuses on how capitalism shifts the way in how society is perceived and how this influences the individual.

To further understand how Hegel's ideal society is harder to imitate Marx discusses the terms we accepted in the current state of society. Marx says:

“We started from the presuppositions of political economy. We accepted its vocabulary and its laws. We presupposed private property, the separation of labour capital, and land, and likewise of wages, profit, ground rent; also division of labour; competition; the concept of exchange value, etc. Using the very words of political economy we have demonstrated that the workers is degraded to the most miserable sort of commodity; that the misery of the works in in inverse proportion to the power and size of his production; that the necessary result of competition is the accumulation of capital in a few hands, and this a more terrible restoration of monopoly;...and that finally distinction between capitalist and landlord, and that between peasant and industrial worker disappears and the whole of society must fall apart into the two classes of the property owners and the propertyless workers” (Marx 77).

Marx references the political economy terms that now plague the laws and the way we all naturally conformed to them. Based on these terms, one can conclude that these terms aid in degrading the workers or proletariat that are now oppressed by capitalism or political economy. The workers now become the commodity and the alienation begins when society creates two distinctions of people: “property owners and the propertyless workers “ (Marx 77). This is a central critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* because in order to be consider a member of a functioning civil society one must be able to own land or property. The workers that Marx is bringing attention to do not have money or time to own land or property. Due to the state of society, the ability to own property is a privilege and something that is not easy to obtain for an average worker. The worker works for the person who owns the property and producing labor

that essentially forces them to alienate themselves for their lives outside of their jobs. Marx argues that “political economy starts with the fact of private property, it does not explain it to us” (77). Political economy doesn’t ward us any explanation for the separation or the reason for the differences in terminology or laws or practices in society. The goal of the capitalist is to abuse the system as much as you can for their own personal gain that enables exploitation, greed, and competition.

Marx suggests that the facts of political economy where “the essential connection of private property, selfishness, the separation of labour, capital, and landed property, of exchange and competition, of value and degradation of man, of monopoly competition, etc.—the connection of all this alienation with the money system” (Marx 78). Political economy created economic practices such as, private property, competition, exchange and monopoly that stems from greed. These practices created the system of workers being alienated from their labour and the products they produce, but it also shows the alienation of money. Money that perpetuates the hierarchy in society that separates society by the powerful and the powerless. In the context of this text, Marx is arguing that the proximity of wealth equates to the access to partaking in the economic scheme of capitalism that places a margin in society that allows for the wealthy to become wealthier and the poor to remain poor. Ultimately, Marx goal when describing a political economy is to not create false narratives or to create fake scenarios, but use facts based on the reality of the capitalist society. He wants to start with the facts of the political economy, he says:

“The worker becomes poorer the richer is his production, the more it increases in power and scope. The worker becomes a commodity that is all the cheaper the more commodities he creates. The depreciation of the human world progresses in direct proportion to the increase in value of the world of things. Labour does not only produce

commodities; it produces itself and the labourer as a commodity and that to the extent to which it produces commodities in general” (Marx 78).

The facts of a political economy according to Marx is that the worker becomes the most exploited in this system of private property, monetary gain, etc. The workers remain poor while the rich capitalize from the workers’ labor. Essentially, the worker becomes a commodity because they create commodities, but they are the lesser version of a commodity. Due to the high demand of a political economy, the human world now shifts to a more materialistic state because of the demand or need of certain commodities. The value of things or the significance of commodities increases which results in not only labour creating commodities, but a lot of these commodities produce themselves and creates more commodities. Nonetheless, these commodities can be seen as a form of a good or a service or want which caters to the mass majority of society, but the point Marx is trying to argue with his facts is that the workers are exploited for this capitalist gain. Marx points out that the high demand for the production of commodities creates other political economy practices like, monopoly, corporations, competition and feudal property which results in the workers becoming an essential entity where their work is needed in order to maintain the momentum (Marx 77-78). The direct result of a political economy forces the workers to not only feel isolated from themselves, but they become isolated from their labour and the products they produce.

The assumption made from these facts according to Marx is that “the object that labour produces, its product, confronts it as an alien being, as a power independent of the producer” (78). In short, labour becomes a product of labour that becomes simplified to the object that the worker produces. The worker begins to become objectified which results in the alienation from the product being produced, the process of creating the product, and ultimately the self. These

three forms of alienation are considered the basis of a capitalist system of production where over time the worker becomes isolated from itself and its labor. Marx says, “in political economy this realization of labour appears as a loss of reality for the worker, objectification as a loss of the object or slavery to it, and appropriation as alienation, as externalization” (78). The worker becomes alienated because he begins to view the product of his labour as something foreign or alien to him which is a consequence of a political economy. Essentially, the shift causes a disruption in how the worker, who is an individual, views themselves through this labor. Marx argues:

“For it is evident from this presupposition that the more the worker externalizes himself in his work, the more powerful becomes the alien, objective world that he creates opposite himself, the poorer he becomes himself in his inner life and the less he can call his own” (Marx 79).

The worker becomes isolated by his labour because he spends an abundance of his time working and formulating a product. Due to the worker always working, this result in him becoming poorer in his personal life because the vast majority of his time is consumed by his work. The example Marx uses to describe this behavior is that when man pours into God more than himself, he leaves nothing for himself (79). This continuous exploitive system faces the consequences of workers becoming desensitized from reality and sees the world through the lens of his work. This cycle of work often leaves the worker with the inability to create or think freely because they're severely submerged into their work. For Marx, a grand portion of society relies on the creativity or work of others to partake in. Essentially, Marx is reflecting on the importance of life outside of work because it allows for the worker to separate himself from his work and do things that brings them pleasure. Marx discusses this when he addresses how the worker

becomes desensitized to the product and its usefulness in their life because the object is seen as something foreign or alien to them. The worker essentially isn't allowed to explore himself or society because he spends majority of his time working to maintain himself.

The issue of this political economy is the worker is the person who is most alienated and least to benefit from this system completely. This political economy aids in showing the economic disparities, but also the huge distinction in class. Marx in the beginning of the essay states that workers were people who were ranked the lowest in society. They depend on their jobs at these factories to maintain themselves and their family, unlike the beneficiaries of their labor, they do not have financial security. A lot of the workers subject themselves to this labor and system because that is their only way to survive in this society. In order to survive, these workers have to choose between having the freedom to be themselves or be forced into a system where they'll be exploited for someone else's wealth. Essentially life looks differently for each group of people in society where the bourgeoisie class tends to be the biggest beneficiaries of the corporations and the labor of the workers whereas the proletariat class and lower work themselves harder to obtain even a small fraction of the money the ruling class has. It's important to note that the important components such as family, work, and leisure looks completely different for the bourgeoisie and proletariat class. The ability to achieve success in each area of life in society one has to have access to some form of money and privilege that allows for them to have this opportunity. Even when proletariat and lower-class people engage in establishing a family and becoming

It is important to keep in mind, Marx is writing during the height of the industrial revolution where society has begun to take a shift from feudalism to capitalism (Heller 176). Society shifted in ways that the need for production gradually increased and the idea of scarcity

of goods or services no longer existed with this shift to industrialization (Heller 176). During the industrial revolution, the discourse around it centered on issues of capitalism and the exploitive nature, but also questioning if this is any different than the previous societal practices. For the duration of his writing, he's focused on the externalization of work and how this disruption ruins the true purpose of society. Marx in this piece doesn't explicatively say it but he alludes to some of the big issues surrounded with the life of workers in these new factories. It is no hidden secret that the working conditions in the factories were inhumane and detrimental to the health of the workers, but they were also an environment where most of the proletariat class worked and lacked the most resources. The people who were heavily in this work environment were children, women, and men who needed to provide for their families. This transition in society made thinkers like Marx question the systems that be and examine the nature of these systems. This essentially circles around to his critique of Hegel and his frustration of him not considering the reality of society when he's discussing the structure of society and family.

This shift to a more capitalist state creates a foundation for a society that's driven for the bourgeoisie class and leaving the others (proletariat and other groups of people in society who aren't deemed full citizens) that would have to constantly work in system that aides in their dehumanization. To fully understand society, one has to evaluate the economics, the class structure and the people's relation to life and work. Also, the historical context of labor and how similar labor patterns tend to find ways in new forms in society. Political economy enforces wage slavery where the workers who are predominately apart of the proletariat class become dependent on wages in order to live in society. This dependence stems from practices in political economy such as private property and how the state allows for them to regulate these spaces in society. The reason the factories were allowed to commit to illegal practices, pay low wages and

commit to other inhumane working conditions is because of the power the bourgeoisie class had over the state. Their wealth allowed them to be active participants in the political economy schema and institute practices that benefitted their continuous wealth.

Besides the issues of working conditions and the poor wages for the strenuous labor, Marx shifts his focus on outlining the severity of “objectification, the production of the worker, and the alienation, the loss of the object, his product, which is involved in it” (Marx 79). The issue the workers face is separating themselves from their work and their personal lives. The problem with the workers becoming desensitized from reality is that the worker cannot create anything or see themselves outside of their labor. The distinction between worker and the individual becomes obstructed when the worker is enslaved to the mass production of goods and services. A great example of this that a worker can be outside of work and can imitate some of the hand movements which shows how instilled this routine of creating for a means of production taints the mind of workers. The workers become a part of a system of repressing pieces of themselves to perform at work. Marx says, “...In these two ways the worker becomes a slave to his object: firstly he receives an object of labour, that is he receives labour, and secondly, he receives the means of subsistence. Thus it is his object that permits him to exist first as a worker and secondly as physical subject. The climax of this slavery is that only as a worker can he maintain himself as a physical subject and it is only as a physical subject that he is a worker” (Marx 79). He’s arguing that the workers receive an object which grants him work, but he gains subsistence.

Naturally, humans create their space and produce items or systems for their physical environment, however in the context of this essay, the means of production forces the individual to condition this naturalness in order to participate in schema of political economy. Instead of

naturally creating for the right reasons, the worker creates for the sole purpose of capital gain which aides in their externalization of their labor. Inherently, the worker becomes enslaved to the object to maintain himself as a physical subject but in order to be worker he has to be a physical subject. The labour forces a false narrative that the essence of the worker is their work when in actuality the work causes the workers to internalize themselves and become miserable.

Marx urges that the issue of externalization becomes the biggest issue of the working class. Marx describes the externalization as:

“Firstly, that labour is exterior to the worker, that is, it does not belong to his essence. Therefore he does not confirm himself in his work, he denies himself, feels miserable instead of happy, deploys no free physical and intellectual energy, but mortifies his body and ruins his mind. Thus the worker only feels a stranger. He is at home when he is not working and when he works he is not at home. His labour is therefore not voluntary but compulsory forced labour. It is therefore not the satisfaction of a need but only a means to satisfy needs outside of itself” (Marx 80).

Primarily, the labour of the worker is exterior or related outside of himself and does not belong to the essence of worker. Since labour is not the essence of the worker and his being, he denies himself when he subjects his mind and body to activities that do not invoke free physical and intellectual energy (Marx 80). This makes the worker feel alienated or a stranger to himself that when he’s at home he feels one with himself but at work he feels alienated. This causes his labour to change from voluntary labor to compulsory forced labour because his essential goal for this job is to cater to need that’s outside of himself. Essentially, the worker is forcing himself to commit to something that’s outside of his own desires which causes him to externalize his labour

and sees it as an end to his day to day means of living. It's not a something that becomes desired by the worker in his day to day but something he knows he's obligated to.

Marx ultimate critique of economist in the beginning of the manuscript is that political economy creates this unrealistic narrative of what it means to be a worker in the growing political. The reality of it all is that the worker is in a situation that isn't ideal for the personal individual development. The political economy becomes a system that indoctrinates their proletariat and subaltern class into a system that doesn't allow for them to gain a space in society that isn't surrounded by their socioeconomic status. The proletariat and subaltern class become the backbone of the capitalist society that perform work that dehumanizes and obliterate their existence in society. The significance of Marx analyzing the flaws of political society shows the ultimate disruption between the public and private self that feel conflicted with maintaining their being in a society that forces the poor to constant work and the rich to profit explicitly off their labor. The ultimate question that Marx is trying to address is when does the worker actually have time to be themselves? When do they have the ability to let their guard down and be the person outside of their labor? The constant dilemma of the worker is choosing between their individual indulgences and the urgent need to work.

The externalization of labor results in the proletariat and subaltern class becoming withdrawn from their work and miserable of the responsibility to be this huge commodity producing a greater commodity. Marx says, "the result we arrive at then is that man (the worker) only feels himself freely active in his animal functions of eating, drinking, and procreating, at most also in his dwelling and dress, and feels himself an animal in his human functions" (Marx 81). The workers find joy in his animalistic nature where he can indulge in joyful acts such as eating, drinking and procreating. The issue of political society is that there is no balance between

the life of the worker. Marx acknowledges that eating, drinking, and procreating are genuinely human functions but when you separate them from all other human activity and turn them into an ultimate end, they become animal desires. Inherently, the animal is one with himself and his behavior, but man makes his activities an object of his will and conscious decisions. Ultimately, “alienated labour alienates (1) nature from man, and (2) man from himself, his own active function, his vital activity, it also alienates the species from man; it turns his species-life into a means towards his individual life” (Marx 81-82).

Overall, the issue of the political economy schema is that it disrupts the balance of human nature. The political economy established hierarchy that disrupted the inability for select groups of people to actively live their lives because of the wealth disparities in the economy. With the shift from feudalism to capitalism, society became hyper focused on the ability to massively produce and shift the state in the best interest of the ruling class. At the hands of the state, the workers who were mostly apart of the proletariat class subjected their bodies to become commodities for goods and services for corporations. Many of these businesses and corporations were mostly owned by members of the bourgeoisie class that benefited the most from the labour of the workers. The political economy established the distinctive class difference amongst the people in society. Since society is based on wealth and potential gain forces the greater portion of their citizens to a way of living that is subdued to their socioeconomic standings. The significance in this distinction supports the narrative that society is geared towards those who can financially afford to obtain private property, finances to start or financially back a business and force certain practices and legislation on the state. The proletariat class and the subaltern class become the two most disadvantage groups in society. With the proletariat class leading the

workforce, they feel out of place in every area in society. The proletariat worker becomes disadvantage in not only their professional lives but in their private life.

The formation of state should be a clear reflection of the intentions of everyone that occupies that space. The capitalist state is a pure reflection of select group of people that solely benefit from the practices of the political economy. The ultimate goal for a functioning capitalist society is to allow the rich to become obscenely rich and the poor to remain poor. The latter of success in this economy is limited and a very once in a lifetime situation. The dynamics are not only complex for the people who reside in society but for those that are blindly forced to imitate a certain structure or practice. Marx defines the capitalist society as restrictive for the growth of the proletariat class who dominates the vast majority of work force and spend majority of their time working in order to survive. When they work, they're miserable and subjecting their bodies to labour that they don't want to commit to and when they are home, they don't feel comfort or really at place. The workers overly indulge in sex and drinking to feel as if they actually have some control or leisure in their day-to-day life. Hegel in his ideal society creates an image that everyone in society will be able to maintain themselves, further their families' legacies through marriage and maintain gender roles. Hegel unaware of the unforeseen class disparities of a capitalist society that maintaining his ideal nuclear family will become challenging for the citizens of the state who are not a part of the bourgeoisie class. The members of the bourgeoisie class looks different amongst the various gender and racial spectrum. The women of the bourgeoisie class have the option to not work and maintain every member of their immediate family while the women of the proletariat class work and have to also maintain their family in different ways. The proletariat woman role in her family shifts completely because in most cases becomes a co-contributor to her household and at times the sole provider for her family. Her

roles shift from only being responsible for rearing the children, but working, community service and still being active in society. The proletariat woman has multiple facades and not limited to one racial group in society. The proletariat woman becomes Black women and other woman of color who have gradually made their space in society since the initial writings by Hegel. Their identity in society becomes a controversial or wavering topic when Black people and women are allowed into the workforce.

Hegel's idea of marriage only works for those that benefit the most from the overall maxims of their society. Marginalized individuals such as Black people, people of color, and women cannot contribute to Hegel's ideal image of marriage because those that are marginalized in civil society lack access to certain benefits or resources. For marginalized groups, marriage is not about forming a union and creating important identities, but for necessity. Necessity for the wealthier families looks like maintaining status and wealth, but for marginalized groups it's about having another person to help with day-to-day life. A great example is when two factory workers decide to get together based on necessity. The couple both work in the factory but the woman's position is to assemble the product and the man's position was to keep record of how many products are created by hour. The difference in their positions is that the man makes a couple of cents more than the woman who makes close to nothing for her day labor. The two eventually get married because the woman feels that their union will ensure more financial stability and both parties will bring more money into the home. The union of the two consenting parties and their families are not merging to create social identities but they are just separate entities that are coming together to form a piece of civil society that is ignored based on their social standings. Marginalized groups do not have the resources to have a say so in a system that they benefit from the least, let alone an ability to get married for social status. The identities of

the marginalized groups or workers are based on their work and their relationship with others stems from their relation to them in the workforce.

The institution of marriage or family for the proletariat class of society cannot merge to create identities or space in society because of them being an essential part of the production of society. In the example used above, the woman decided to marry the man because of her relation to his positions in their workplace and how his positions come with more monetary value. Their merge isn't as significant as two of the wealthier people in society but it's significant because the two come together to gain some form of stability that they lack. Due to social standings, their union makes them two lower class individuals coming together out of necessity and both parties have a better foundation. Unions for the lesser class has no significance in society because there's no huge monetary merger in this particular marriage. The marriage didn't come with newfound wealth or a big company simply just two people who consented to an agreement that their marriage was to ensure some form of stability. Their identities in society will still be two factory workers despite their union because in a capitalist society they are considered the lowest in societal ranking.

The Preface to the History of Slavery, Claudia Jones and the Working Black Woman:

The legacy of slavery influences new standards for Black women and their families within civil society. Throughout the history of America, the scholarly debate around the practice of chattel slavery and the impact of it across the Black diaspora. Despite the constant scholarly conversation around slavery, the most neglected topic pertaining to slavery is the abuse and neglect of the Black female slave. The conditions for enslaved Black women were less illuminated because it surrounded by male chauvinist behavior and sexual violence (Davis 3). The issues of the treatment of Black enslaved women created a constant conversation that led to

how Black women should be treated in society. It's important to note in order to fully understand the plight of Black women, you need to exam the historical context of Black women from enslavement to post-slavery life.

According to Angela Davis, she says, "more Black women have always worked outside their homes than have their white sisters" (Davis 5). Black women have always worked that forced them outside of their homes dating back to slavery. For Black women, slavery overshadowed any other aspect of their lives because of the strenuous labor and "usefulness" on the plantation. The root of the Black women problem is their enslavement and according to a scholar, "the slave woman was first a full-time worker for her owner, and only incidentally a wife, mother and homemaker" (Davis 5)¹. As time evolved into the early nineteenth centuries, women were expected to be feminine nurturing beings that were expected to nurture their families, housekeepers, and companions to others (Davis 5). Black women of course became the exception of the rule and made themselves anomalies. The norm for Black women was much more complex than the issues of maintaining their household but they were bogged down with certain stereotypes of their being that didn't allow them the opportunity to be anything other than a caregiver. The ripple effect of slavery transcended into the shift of new womanhood for Black women in the early nineteenth century.

When society transitioned to industrialization, the term woman became comparable to other terms such as mother, housekeeper, wife, and other gender associated terminology (Davis 12). These gender terminologies fostered the ideology that women are in fact inferior to men based on their gender performance or roles within society. However, the impact of slavery and the formation of pre-civil war society means this particular ideology of women being inferior to

¹ Angela Davis referenced Kenneth M. Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Antebellum South* (New York: Vintage Books, 1956), p.343.

men didn't bud with enslaved Black people. For enslaved Black people there has never been a division between the sexes of who is more dominant or the face of their household because they were not considered active human participants in civil society. The role of the Black woman has always been ingrained into her labor and how she can provide for everyone. The origin of the Black family within the confines of slavery looked more matrilineal structure rather than a patrilineal (Davis 12). This is due to the fact that "throughout the South, state legislatures adopted the principle of *partus sequitur ventrem*—the child follows the condition of the mother" (Davis 12). This came about when male slaveowners fathered children with enslaved Black women and became an inactive parent within this relationship. Outside of the slaveowners fathering children with enslaved women, enslaved men didn't acknowledge fatherhood because their slaveowners deemed their families legitimate. The lack of legitimacy around slave families resulted in enslaved men lacking understanding of their roles as fathers but their roles as men. The fate of the Black family transitioned to become a matriarchal family structure. The familial structure of the Black family will always be damaged due to the impact of slavery.

In a study conducted by Daniel Moynihan², he links the matriarchal family structure to the socioeconomic problems of the Black community (Davis 13). Moynihan wrote,

"In essence, the Negro community has been forced into matriarchal structure which, because it is out of line with rest of the American society, seriously retards the progress of the group as a whole and imposes a crushing burden on the Negro male and, in consequence, on a great many Negro women as well" (Davis 13).

Essentially, Moynihan argued that the lack of masculinity within the Black community and familial relationships is the root of the problem when it comes to the socioeconomic problems

² Referend in *Women, Race and Class* pages 13-15

faced by Black people. The absence of male authority and male figures within the household that is causing a mass disadvantage in Black households. Moynihan's controversial argument lacks the understanding that the social and economic issues Black people faced is solely due to the lack of masculinity within the Black community and Black households. The negligence of scholars is that they had this falsehood of thinking that they adopted the theories surrounded around the effects of slavery in the Black community that is reflected in their familial relations and their socioeconomic standings (Davis 14). A vast majority of the scholars misinterpreted that Black people as a collective may have rejected the normal societal standards that didn't reflect the identity they were forging. The biggest misconception of these scholars is that they did not see the resilient self-reliant nature of Black women. Black women established a demeanor that they are independent beings that did not rely on their male counterparts or the subordination of their autonomy. For centuries, Black women have not only been the backbone of their families, but they have also been the leaders, caregivers, and providers for themselves. The part Moynihan did get right is that the "burden" of child rearing, working and navigating society has always been the greatest strength of the Black woman, but it is also her biggest disadvantage especially in a society that denies her existence and autonomy.

When Black women like Claudia Jones decades later write an essay displaying how the institution of slavery caused mass destruction that led to Jim Crow Laws that prohibited the advancement of the Black community, we see that the issue is not the lack of male masculinity, but slavery fostered an environment that made it hard for Black people to navigate their bodies in this space. In Claudia Jones "An End to the Neglect of the Problems of the Negro women" her essay was used to negate the idea that male supremacy isn't needed, and Black women's leadership has always been essential in the fight for her people's liberation. Jones establish an

image of Black women being advocate and providers outside of the mammie tropes that were established for Black women since the beginning of slavery.

Claudia Jones a Trinidadian native migrated to the United States at her young age with her parents (Davis 167)³. In her early years, Jones became an activist for civil rights, women's rights and other social groups. She mobilized and used her voice to outwardly fight the systemic issues that plague every aspect of her intersecting identity. With Jones being both Black and a woman, she's plagued with the burden of not only being responsible for her own life, lives of her family, but the reasonability of being an advocate for women's working rights and being a community leader. She also reiterates that the due to political, social, and economic schema of the capitalist society imitating the Hegelian family structure is not ubiquitous within the working class. Once again, Hegel's ideal family structure is truly meant for the white bourgeoisie class and not the vast majority of society especially Black families who faced difficulties to establish specific roles of each of member.

The Negro Woman, the Workplace, and the Family:

During the peak of the ⁴Negro liberation movement, the Black woman becomes an active participant in all aspects of life including the workforce and aiding in the fight for civil rights. Claudia Jones deems Black women the "symbols of many present-day struggles of the Negro people" (Jones 3). Jones, a known Marxist, centers her essay on the Negro woman and how she becomes looked over not only by society, but by her own family and community. The Negro woman militancy aides in progressing the civil rights and labor movements that pushes them to

³ "The Communist Women" in Angela Davis's *Women, Race & Class* pg. 167-171

⁴ In this section of the paper, I will use the term Negro and interchange with the term Black throughout this section. The word Negro is the terms that Claudia Jones used to describe herself in the context of her essay. Although the terminology may seem archaic, I find it appropriate to use her correct terms to further evaluate the historical and social issues pertaining to her identity.

the forefront of these movements. Her essay “An End to the Neglect of the Problems of the Negro Woman!” exhibits an intersectional analysis through a Marxist framework. Jones reflects on the historical lineage of the Black women being neglect in all aspects of life, but mostly how their contributions to society and family life forces them into roles that minimizes themselves for the strength of others.

In the beginning of the essay, Jones centers her argument on the militancy of the Negro women. According to Jones:

“To understand this militancy correctly, to deepen and extend the role of Negro women in the struggle for peace and for all interests of the working class and the Negro people, means primarily to overcome the gross neglect of the special problems of Negro women. This neglect has too long permeated the ranks of labor movement generally, of Left-progressives, and also of the Communist Party. The most serious assessment of these shortcomings by progressives, especially by Marxist-Leninists, is vitally necessary if we are to help accelerate this development and integrate Negro women in the progressive and labor movement in our own party” (Jones 3).

Essentially, Jones is asking for the end of the neglect of the Negro woman who works effortlessly at the forefront of these movements. she urges in order for the labor movement or civil rights movement to move forward the neglect of the Negro woman needs to come to a halt to see progression in these moments. She wants for everyone involved to understand that a movement can't move forward until the collective respects the various identities within the movement. At this point in history, women were now dominating the workforce especially in factories. The rise of the labor movements around the late to early 1940s arise when workers were demanding better labor rights with protection and for more pay. Jones in her essay is

arguing for more awareness of how the Negro woman falls into labor disparities as well. In order for people to unionize against the system, there needs to be understanding that all involved regardless of race or gender or other intersecting identities are impacted by the poor labor system. The Negro liberation movement also disregards the Negro woman when it comes to fighting for basic civil rights. In retrospect, both movements need to mobilize Negro women in order to gain progressive movement toward achieving any goals. Jones knows that if these two movements were to mobilize Negro women would result in the bourgeoisie and capitalist becoming fearful of the shift of power. Jones goes on to state that “the capitalists know, far better than many progressives seem to know, that once Negro women undertake action, the militancy of the. Whole negro people, thus of the anti-imperialist coalition, is greatly enhanced” (3). In short, the fear of giving the Negro women power would result in gained power for the entirety of the race which results in dismantling the power system that be.

Jones shifting from the capitalist narrative for a moment discusses the historical timeline of the Negro woman. She states,

“Historically, the Negro woman has been the guardian, the protector, of the Negro family. From the days of the slave traders down to the present, the Negro woman has had the responsibility of caring for the needs of the family, of militantly shielding it from the blows of Jim-Crow insults, of rearing children in an atmosphere of lynch terror, segregation, and police brutality, and of fighting for an education for children” (3).

One can conclude from Jones statement that the Negro woman has always been the main emotional and physical provider for the family. This statement opposes the Hegelian family structure because of the subjective experience. The Negro woman becomes the figure that protects and shields her family from the harshness of their reality. The responsibility of

protecting their family from Jim-Crow , raising children through legislation that infringes on their freedom, and fighting for the children's right to education falls solely on the woman. The woman becomes the head of the household from as early as the slave trading days. This structure displays the flaws in how Hegel's ideal family structure only works for particular groups of people and not those who were once considered property in society. The way the family is formulated for Black people shifts due to certain circumstances such as the impact of the transatlantic slave trade and even far after where Black people still struggle to maintain a place in society. Claudia Jones offers a timeline that displays the Negro woman being the person in charge of maintaining the family, being the protector and navigator for centuries. This fact changes the dynamics of family especially when one lives in a society where the man is expected to lead the way and commit to certain gender duties.

The Negro woman doesn't only become the important family figure, but she also becomes the protector for her race. Jones adds,

“The intensified oppression of the Negro people, which has been the hallmark of the postwar reactionary offensive, cannot therefore but lead to an acceleration of the militancy of the Negro woman. As mother, as Negro, and as worker, the Negro woman fights against the wiping out of the Negro family, against the Jim-Crow ghetto existence which destroys the health, morale, very life of millions of her sisters, brothers, and children” (3-4).

The reason for the militancy of the Negro woman stems from always being the subject of racial tension and disparities. The Negro woman has intersecting identities because not only is she a woman, but she is a mother, Black and a worker which puts her in a constant state of fighting for balance within her identities. The reality of the Jim-Crow existence causes a terrible weight on

the shoulders of Black people who are constantly the face of violence. The role of the Negro woman is to protect her family and other families from the ugliness of Jim-Crow that causes issues with health, the energy, and life of all Black people. It's hard for the Negro woman to maintain her family in a society where herself and her people are constantly oppressed by system that was created for their marginalization. The acceleration of the militancy comes from witnessing the death or the loss of hope of her people because of the constant turmoil from the Jim-Crow society. The most important part of this all is that the Negro woman continues to maintain her family and others regardless of the disparities prevalent in society. She uses her intersecting identity to protect, to work, and to unionize to support the core foundation of society which is the family. The family is important but it's hard to maintain when you live in a society that inflicts constant pain and terror that causes detrimental effects to the wellbeing of those around you. Jones understands the complexity of the situation and how her role in family shifts because of it.

As the Black woman and the people are plague with the disadvantage of acquiring their own space in society due to the harshness of Jim-Crow. They also face socioeconomic hardship that puts them at a disadvantage to be able to gain equity and access to opportunities like other racial groups. Another layer is adding on the fact that to be Black and to be a woman and working in a society that disregards both of your identities comes with hardship. Black women were subjected to economic disadvantages that makes it difficult for them to maintain their households. Jones adds,

“Negro women—as workers, as Negroes, and as women—are the most oppressed stratum of the whole population. In 1940, two out of every five Negro women, in contrast to two out of every eight white women, worked for a living. By virtue of their majority status

among the Negro people, Negro women not only constitute the largest percentage of the women heads of families, but are the main breadwinners of the Negro family. The large proportion of Negro women in the labor market is primarily a result of the low-scale earnings of Negro men” (4-5).

A large group of Black women in 1940 worked more than her white counterparts. Due to the economic disadvantages, Black women become the head of their households and the overall higher wage earner because of the lower wage earned by the black men. Black women became the largest percentage of women being the heads of household. In Hegel’s structure of society and the family, he focuses on the idea of two parties emerging for the potential gain of assets from both entities, however, he disregards the economic part of maintaining his society. There’s going to be groups of people that can’t gain access to property and become owners of land to maintain the financial stability of their families. In this case, Claudia Jones, who’s a Black and a woman, wouldn’t have the ability to even be privy to any information pertaining to economic gains especially since Black people still were not a part of society at the time. Black people were still regarded as property or a potential gain for families that owned them but not for themselves. As well as Hegel’s idealism neglects the fact that not all women could be stay at home wives and would have to help in providing for their family. In the very beginning of Jones’s essay, she briefly addresses that rearing children while working become challenging especially with the current state of America. The ability to have access to wealth, privilege, and upper hand in society is unlikely when you are marginalized or exploited by the system that benefits from your labor.

Throughout the course of American history, Black people specifically Black women were exploited the most through their labor dating back to slavery⁵. Historically, Black women always worked to maintain families and children that weren't their own. Once America made a shift from enslavement, Black people were still not indoctrinated into society where they can develop themselves like the rest of the active citizens in society. Claudia Jones is both Black and a woman so when she is fully engrained in society, she's stuck with navigating both of her identities. As a woman, she doesn't have the same socioeconomic advantages as her white counterparts. For centuries, Black women have always been the face of their households in the aspect of working in order to provide. A lot of these jobs from post-slavery to the 1960s era that Jones is writing in meant being housekeepers, nannies, and being responsible for others. Now that women are active participants in society, Black women are faced with disadvantages like the lack of resources to advocate for higher wages because the socioeconomic needs of Black women and Black people have always been set up in this way. Even when Black women do advocate for higher wages like their white counterparts it's still complicated to receive that advancement even when the statistics⁶ prove that Black women dominate the workforce, but she makes less than her white counterparts and less than Black men.

Hegel couldn't have predicted this outcome of society that eventually Black people will be more active participants of the state. He couldn't attest for the fact that ownership and family structure would be different within the current state of the world. He was writing in time where Black people especially women were not part of society. Due to historical timeline, Black people

⁵ In the previous section, I discussed how historically Black women have always worked outside of the home reference Angela Davis's *Women, Race & Class*. For a deeper analysis refer back to the previous section to understand the historical connection here.

⁶ Jones in the quote above alludes that the reasoning for the low wages of Black women contribute to the wage disparities in the workplace. However, towards the end of her essay she lays out the statistics of women to men pay disparities. Black and white pay disparities.

and women were economically disadvantage based circumstantial events that when they were integrated into society, they were still disadvantage because of the ghost of slavery that haunts America. Jones candidly describes the economic disparities by saying,

“Negro women—as workers, as Negroes, and as women—are the most oppressed stratum of the whole population. In 1940, two out of every five Negro women, in contrast to two out of every eight white women, worked for a living. By virtue of their majority status among the Negro people, Negro women not only constitute the largest percentage of women heads of families, but are the main breadwinners of the Negro family. The large proportion of Negro women in the labor market is primarily a result of the low-scale earnings of Negro men” (4).

Jones emphasizes on the point the Black women are the most oppressed group not only because of their gender but for their racial identity. Black women face double jeopardy because of their identities that causes issues where a majority of the time they're denied certain access to equity, equality and other essentials for success in a capitalist society. Despite the times progressing years after slavery, Black people were still heavily disadvantage in society when it comes to creating a life outside of the boxes that slavery forced them in. Statistically, Jones points out that more Black women at this time work outside of their homes compared to the lower percentage of white women who do not. The reason for this is the economic disadvantages because Black women made a bit more than the average working Black man that led to Black women being the heads of their households. In most of the white households at the time, the women were less likely have to work due to their socioeconomic standing in society. The men in these households still contributed to a large sum compared to Black men who were still considered the lesser man in society. The disruption in the Black household where both the women and man had to work

contributed to the economic disparities because of their blackness. Through their labor, they didn't have time to develop themselves outside of their work and even decades after slavery. Essentially, the economic disparities faced by Black people at this time didn't allow for the ability to not work and develop their identities outside of the statistic presented above.

A lot of the time Black women couldn't find jobs that were anything outside of domestic work. Legislation and other jobs would make it extremely hard for Black women to even work and this goes back to the fact that Black women were constantly seen as the mammy. The mammy trope derived from the peaks of chattel slavery practiced in the United States where the women were subject to breeding, raising their masters' children, cooking and cleaning to maintain the master's household ⁷. There were a small population of Black women who worked outside of domestic work, but they were still disproportionately paid less than white women who worked similar jobs. Jones even says, "in the film, radio, and press, the Negro woman is not pictured in her real role as breadwinner, mother and protector of the family, but as the traditional "mammy" who puts the care of children and families of others above her own" (Jones 7). Black women were forced into these domestic roles during enslavement and couldn't break this stigma of being mammies. The reality of it is that Black women were the breadwinners in their families, mothers, and protectors who attributed to the overall success of the Black family. In a society that receives women as a lesser minority, Black women do not receive their credit for their being active workers and being the faces of their family. This attributes to the fact that America still views Black people and especially Black women as lesser commodities. Their being was only beneficial when they were forced to do labour during slavery, but now as members of society

⁷ In the previous section, I discussed the historical context around the Black women and how her role in society has to always be perceived as the primary caretaker or domestic worker.

they're still viewed as non-legitimate despite the fact that they contribute to the economic success of America.

Historically, Black men and women were never pitted against each other when it comes to gender roles⁸ because slavery dismantled that belief. The slaves were already on the lowest totem pole in society and the only people they were inferior to white people. The systemic belief of slavery is that Blacks were the lesser human and needed to save from themselves. Enslaved men never questioned the notion that Black women became the superior sex or the matriarch of their families because to them they were all on the same level. The idea of gender superiority in Black families originated with the end of emancipation and that triggered an influx of material developed around the Black family life. The interest behind this stems from the idea of the nuclear family that Hegel describes in his *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* when he describes how the family should be. Black families historically have defied the system that Hegel creates especially with men being the patriarchs of their family. Once the previously enslaved became integrated into society, they're plagued with this constant battle to imitate and curate the family structures that Hegel describes in his family section. Jones recounts, "One freedman observed, during the Civil War, that many men were exceedingly jealous of their newly acquired authority in family relations and insisted upon a recognition of their superiority over women" (8). Black men began to notice that their positions in the familial structure was not as significant as the black mother who is the face of their family. With this shift, black families were pitted against each other in a similar sense as Hegel describes where families merged together in marriage to see the economic and physical growth. Jones even states, "After the Civil War, the slave rows

⁸ In the previous section, Angela Davis discussed how gender inferiority between Black men and women never exist because of slavery. It was clear that Black women were in fact the matriarchs of their families and held the position as heads of their family.

were broken up and the tenant houses scattered all over the plantation in order that each family might carry on an independent existence” (8). The expectation gradually became imperative that since Black people were now becoming active members of society, they have to engage in the practice of the political economy.

In the shift to integrating newly freed Blacks into society, they were forced into a new social and economic standing. The world for Black women has shifted from women being the breadwinners and heads of their families to Black men being put into a position of authority. This position of authority contributes to the view that women should be inferior to men and should be the only person achieving success, access to buying property, and maintain their family financially which is the role Hegel explained that men should have in society. Jones explain that due to this economic shift for the Black people it becomes operative that “in regard to his wife and children, the Negro man was now enabled to assume economic and other authority over the family; but he also could fight against violation women of his group where formerly he was powerless to interfere” (8). The Black man has gained economic respect which grants him the ability to have somewhat of voice in society. Previously, Black men were not given this respect nor were their voices significant in the speaking out against injustices pertaining to their women. In this economic advancement for Black people, it brings up the issue of maintaining the status quo of society while unbreaking the historic family structure that has been precedent in Black culture thus far. The goal of the capitalist or political economy gave Black men the leverage to gain capital, gender superiority and the position to be head of their households.

This subordination of Black women in the process of Black men gaining societal and economic access came with a change in their roles in the family. A lot of the women didn't agree

with how the subordination and behaviors of Black men in their new authoritative roles. Women a lot of the times walked away from their spouses with children to leave their harsh treatment. For so long, Black women were the matriarchs, the worker, and so many other roles that there was no need for them to be subjected to the behavior of Black men. Black women throughout gained the power to embrace their independence and not needing a spouse to tell them what to do. This integration to the political economy aided in the continual disruption of the Black familial structure. The harsh reality of the economic society is no matter how much Black men or women become faces in society their ability to obtain equity, equality, and respect will always be an obstacle. In the beginning of her essay, Claudia Jones addresses how even though Black women make a large majority of the workforce, huge participants in organization established for liberation, and other social groups, they were constantly dismissed by every aspect of their life.

Jones blames a lot of the misrepresentation of Black women to the ruling Bourgeoisie class that enforced this chauvinist way of life. She says, “the whole intent of a host of articles, books, etc., has been to obscure the main responsibility for the oppression of Negro women by spreading the rotten bourgeois notion about a “battle of the sexes” and “ignoring” the fight of both Negro men and women—the whole Negro people—against their common oppressors, the white ruling class” (13). The blame for the disruption of the Black family unit is at the hand of the bourgeoisie class that sets the tone for how the family structure should be and look like. Newly free enslaved Blacks were indoctrinated in the practice of creating Hegelian nuclear family structures that will disrupt and cause deeper issues within Black family. The significance around Black people imitating this nuclear family will gain economic benefits and contribute to maintaining the gender equilibrium. The contrast is that Black women have consistently been independent, the voice of her children and others, community leaders and most importantly

mothers. The roles of the Black women were too far distinct for the impulsive push for them to create the bourgeoisie family structure.

The issue with the Hegelian family structure is that when he imagined this ideal image of the family he was referring to the white bourgeois ruling class. Hegel who was a part of the ruling class didn't fully see the frustrations that would come about if groups outside of the bourgeoisie class that controlled the structure of the state. In his writings, he didn't think that eventually enslaved Blacks would be allowed to be active members in society either. The structure of the Hegelian family structure is built on the economic success of the family. Families that already had access to fortune that allowed them to have social and economic advantages that set them apart from the proletariat class. Society at this time moved from feudalism to capitalism which was already an exploitive system that became more prevalent during the rise of industrialization.

Claudia Jones is exploitive by her labor in the factories and other domestic service jobs that benefitted the most from her labor but denied her the pay she deserves. Historically, Black people were exploited in their labor constantly under enslavement where the slaves were forced to maintain land that was not theirs and contribute to the economic success of their slaveowners. From Jones we learned that maintaining the bourgeoisie Hegelian structure caused more harm than good when it came to the development of Black people in society. The point that Jones makes clear that the Hegelian family structure is not ubiquitous. Family structures across the spectrum looks entirely different than the one that Hegel imagines in his writing. Under the capitalist regime, Black people, women, Black women and other proletariat members were exploited and forced into categories based on societal beliefs about their station in society. Each one of these groups maintained economic difficulties that dated back to the earliest of times. It

wasn't until the end of the 1800s were Black people gained a right to exist within the confines of this society. Their access to property, money, their own land, and other key components of maintain a success family in society was limited or in Jones cases not available at all.

The family structure hinders the expansion and growth of the members of society especially for Black families that were already ruined because of slavery. When they attempted to imitate the structure of living that was introduced by the bourgeoisie class, they fell short and disrupted the nature of the family. Jones mentions the rise of the single mothers who organized together to raise their children and educate their children together. Hegel's ideal family structure doesn't work for a group of people who were always disadvantage by the systems that be. Family from the beginning looked completely different for Black people who were victims of the transatlantic slave trade. The Black family structure becomes redefined in a way that least beneficial in their ultimate success. Black families became a victim of another system that forced them into a structure that doesn't benefit their overall being. The Hegelian family structure under the gaze of capitalism is not achievable especially if one is a part of the working-class, Black, or a woman who are the soul providers for their families. The reality Hegel lacks is that each group of people have their own ways of viewing themselves and their familial structures that work solely for them. Hegel's maxim of a bourgeoisie family structure in the state eliminates the other factors that make the success of this form of family unobtainable. Living and creating a life under Hegelian structure did more harm and added to the socioeconomic disparities in society. The idea of a family structure shouldn't be contrived out of the thought of one man, but merely by the people who help to define their existence within the state. Family structures should be based on the individual and how they define their own families based on factors that are relative to their existence.

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