

## Analysis of Contemporary Consumer Group Images under the Influence of Consumerism and Pseudo Culture

Qiyu Chen\*

School of Marxism, Anhui University of Finance and Economics, Bengbu, Anhui, China.

\*chenqiyu1111@163.com

### Abstract

Contemporary Western capitalism has completed the transformation from a production oriented society to a consumption oriented society. In the era of economic globalization, Western consumerism exerts influence on consumer groups by using a series of carriers and devices such as symbols, technology, landscapes, and signifiers to empower the pseudo culture they shape. It actually serves the specific goals of sinking capital logic concepts, enslaving ideas, and controlling ideas. By establishing a new type of fetishism, it strengthens the capitalist development logic of objectification, identity, and expansion, resulting in the comprehensive alienation of human society. From the perspective of modernity, Marx's critique of the logic of capital should be applied to explore the dual implications of the fact and value of consumerism's pseudo cultural infiltration, and to seek a theoretical path for the review and restoration of the spirit of the new generation.

### Keywords

**Consumerism; Ideology; Alienation.**

### 1. Symbols, Technology, and Landscape: Carriers and Devices for the Operation of Consumerist Pseudo Culture

With the continuous deepening of the capitalist process, contemporary capitalist society is gradually transitioning from a production oriented society to a consumption oriented society. As the basic component of capitalist logic, consumerism has gradually become an ideology by forging culture, thus becoming an organic element of the ideological superstructure.

The consumer group images referred to in this article mainly “live in groups” in the highly developed society of network informatization in the contemporary new media era, and their spiritual fields generally exhibit symptoms of modernization, personalization, marginalization, and so on. As the future commercial entities of capitalism, consumer groups have become the objects of penetration in capitalist consumer society from the moment they are born.

As an ideological part of capitalism, the consumerist pseudo culture needs to maintain its independent and independent status as an ideological superstructure; More importantly, it requires continuous self-improvement to achieve monitoring of society and the public, and through a series of mechanisms and manipulation methods, it traps the public in an airtight capital logic cage. In contemporary society, consumerist pseudo culture exerts influence on the new generation of consumer groups through a series of carriers such as symbols, technology, landscapes, and signifiers.

#### 1.1 Symbols

##### 1.1.1 The duality of commodity alienation: “symbol object”

In the consumerist society with embedded capital logic, the “goods” as consumption objects are no longer the goods themselves, but gradually evolve into “symbol things”. The concept of “things” in the consumerist society has a dual structure. According to Baudrillard's analysis of his book *Consumer Society*, in the Primitive Society, tribal groups exchanged goods with each other in order to obtain the use value of goods. In the capitalist commodity society, items exchanged with money as commodities are stripped of their value and given a symbolic meaning above them. Therefore, when

symbolic symbols intervene in the system of goods, what people pursue when purchasing is not only their use value, but more importantly, the “symbols” that give symbolic meaning to the goods, which may be identification with identity and status, or external manifestation of taste and aesthetics.

### 1.1.2 Coding and cultural packaging: the mechanism of action of “symbols things”

When capitalism was still in the primary stage of a productive society, workers and their labor objects were at odds with each other; After entering the current era of consumer society, consumers and the goods they consume are engaged in a desire projection and confirmation game with each other. Undoubtedly, regardless of the stage of capitalism, what is hidden behind it is the logic of capital that controls the physical and psychological well-being of workers and consumers, and what has evolved is only the way of manipulation. Consumer symbols are contemporary deification shaped by the logic of capital in a new stage of development, and their mechanism of action is to meticulously arrange and decorate the vast commodity library through the creation of symbol codes.

The symbolic encoding logic behind the product is a set of refined principles of “differentiation” and “hierarchy”. Differences can be internal differences within the same level sequence, creating a false impression of 'personalization'. We know that pursuing individuality is an extremely prominent feature of the new generation of consumer groups. Consumerism cleverly captures the psychological needs of the new generation of consumers and uses the principle of “differentiation” to classify goods. So these carefully woven product symbols become bait for the new generation of consumer groups. By consuming products that represent different personalities and tastes, young consumers experience a unique “personalized” synaesthetic color in the symbolized products.

Similarly, differences can also be manifested as hierarchical distinctions between different hierarchical sequences. “Consumption is the orderly coding of status and identity, which is also the division of social classes.”[1] By marking different goods as symbols representing different social classes, goods become a representation of human value through symbols. It precisely utilizes human jealousy and vanity, stimulates human desires, and forces people to never meet what they have. Instead, they constantly improve their consumption level to obtain the illusion of realizing their life value. The majority of the new generation of consumer groups do not yet possess complete economic freedom or have just entered economic independence. The frequent occurrence of conspicuous, competitive, and advanced consumption forms reflects the desire and anxiety of this young consumer group for class leap.

The infiltration of the capitalist logic weaving commodity symbol system into the new generation of consumer groups cannot be separated from the assistance of popular culture. Symbols themselves may be dull and abstract. Through cultural packaging and the use of media for promotion, symbols become a vivid, concrete, and alluring medium. Most importantly, culture is seen as a demand in the spiritual realm, corresponding to low-level material consumption. Items are symbolized, and symbols are further wrapped in the cloak of culture, so the desire for material things is packaged as the desire for spirit.

## 1.2 Technology

In traditional cognition, science and technology and ideology belong to two different systems. Max Horkheimer, one of the founders of the Frankfurt School, put forward the statement that “science and technology is an ideology” in Critical Theory for the first time. His peer Marcuse further believed that in modern capitalist society, technology has broken away from its neutrality status as a tool only. Technological progress in the production field has led to a sharp increase in the size and quantity of goods, creating a false image of “prosperity”. More importantly, refined technology has provided strong support for the diversification and differentiation of commodity symbols. Only products that people cannot imagine, products that cannot be created without technology. “Technology... deprives individuals of independent thinking, autonomy, and the right to exist as opponents in the process of meeting their various needs.”[2] Human imagination is increasingly lacking in the face of technology, and in the face of magic like technological means, consumers begin to forget their own initiative and

willingly open their mouths to accept the feed of technology. Technology has become an important carrier of capitalist ideology and transformed into a means of enslavement and domination of people. The new generation generally has a worship of technology itself in the process of consumption. The frequent promotion of “black technology” as a selling point of goods is related to this. The updates and innovations of technological products and electronic products in each generation are stirring up the nerves of the new generation of consumer groups. At this point, technology has become a “symbol” attached to the use value of goods, which is pursued by the new generation of consumer groups.

In addition, technology provides a powerful media communication system support for the output of product symbols. In modern society dominated by consumerism, advertising, as a concentrated form of commodity symbols, has covered every corner of the Earth with its own symbol system due to technological advancements. This greatly increases the dissemination ability and coverage of symbols. The new generation of consumer groups is the main audience for communication tools dominated by technology. They are active in various corners of the internet and naturally become victims of technological plunder.

### 1.3 Landscape

#### 1.3.1 Goods - Landscape

Consumerist society is a landscape society that, as a new regulatory model, appeases people by creating a confusing visual world and numbing forms of entertainment. “[3] As a representative figure of western situationism, Guy-Ernest Debord systematically elucidated the concept of” landscape “in a fundamental sense for the first time and endowed it with critical connotations. He believes that the vast amount of images and various visual expressions in modern society are only the surface of landscapes, and the essence of landscapes is a tangible and materialistic worldview. It is an objectified worldview He further pointed out that in a consumerist society, landscape embodies the essence of goods, and landscape is the other side of money. Overall, it is abstractly equivalent to all goods and has become the main production content of today's society.

#### 1.3.2 “Separation” and “Diffusion”: Landscape Manipulation of Society

Firstly, the concept of 'separation' holds an important position in Debord's landscape theory. He believes that landscape and reality are separated from each other: “Overall, landscape is a concrete inversion of life.”[4] “In a modern society where production conditions are ubiquitous, the entire social life is displayed as a huge accumulation of landscapes Everything we have directly experienced has left us and entered a representation system.”[5] In modern society, landscapes become commodities themselves. A large number of image and visual products have become the target of consumers, especially the new generation of consumer groups.

Secondly, the process of landscape relying on mass media to penetrate consumers is called 'diffusion'. Landscape becomes the creation of commodity myths through mass media in the form of advertising, and media driven by commercial interests can enrich and strengthen themselves through advertising. Landscape is the moment when goods have fully controlled life. The relationship between goods is not just visible, but all that people can see. Through media advertising, goods are objectified as landscapes, and the world people see is the world of goods.

Finally, the diffusion of landscape to people through mass media is “one-way”, that is to say, the various symbolic concepts instilled by consumerism to consumers through landscape are a kind of mandatory instillation. When all the spaces people live in and all the time they are sober are occupied by landscape, they gradually become passive and insensitive, and are willing to accept everything brought to them by mass media, including entertainment, recreation Ideas and consciousness. In this sense, landscape has become an addictive opium of the new era.

## 2. Conceptual Sinking, Ideological Enslavement, and Value Control: the Goal Domination of the Operating Mechanism of Consumerist Pseudo Culture

The pseudo culture of consumerism, based on a series of carriers and devices such as symbols, technology, and landscapes, exerts influence on the new generation of consumer groups, in fact serving the specific goals of the sinking of capital logical concepts, ideological enslavement, and conceptual control. The different forms of operational mechanisms presented by consumerist pseudo culture are essentially the means by which capitalist ideology intends to preserve and develop itself. Marx's classical ideology theory believes that ideology, as the ideological superstructure, is relatively independent, and the greatest expression of this independence is the dynamic reaction of ideology to social reality.

### 2.1 Sinking of ideas: the invasion of ideology into daily life

The pseudo culture of consumerism acts on the new generation of consumer groups through diverse devices, which is a process of top-down conceptual sinking. The so-called concept sinking refers to the concretization of ideology: that is, from the abstract ideological superstructure to the concrete value standards, communication norms and daily life guidance that can be followed. Ideology, by “sneaking” into daily life, realizes its overall control over all social members from psychology to action.

Hungarian Marxist theorist György Lukács believes that the daily lives of individuals in society are of great significance. “The starting point and endpoint of each person's activities.” [6] Daily life is the soil of all human activities, and culture, science, art, and religion are higher-level forms of existence developed from daily life. The field of daily life has interactivity with culture, science, etc. The former provides materials and fields for the germination of the latter, while the development of the latter injects spiritual elements into people's daily lives, adding richness to their daily lives.

Therefore, as individuals in society, they are the most widely influenced and influenced by ideology through channels of daily life; On the contrary, if ideology wants to convey its own ideas and achieve control over individuals and society, it must also be fully penetrated into people's daily lives.

The new generation of consumer groups is lured by the dazzling commodity symbols and landscapes spread by capitalism through technology driven mass media, essentially due to the comprehensive invasion of the daily lives of young consumer groups by the sinking of capital logic and concepts. On the one hand, this penetration is manifested in time. For example, the major mobile apps seize consumers' fragmentation time, and personal time becomes the object of accurate calculation; On the other hand, it is manifested in space, such as the emphasis and development of the “sinking market” in the field of e-commerce. In the era where consumerism permeates everywhere, whether in large cities or small and medium-sized cities, counties, or rural areas below the third tier, it is impossible to escape the fate of being invaded and infiltrated by the pseudo culture of consumerism.

The ideology of consumerism invades daily life in a “hidden” way. Firstly, latent is an automation in which individuals automatically repeat external controls imposed on them by society in various ways, repeating them over and over again; Secondly, internalization is also a process of going from the outside to the inside, where ideology covertly transforms the control that was originally imposed on individuals from the outside into internal needs, transforming external indoctrination into internal desires. “Latent” implies the existence of an inner dimension that is different from or even hostile to external demands. This transformation is highly deceptive and covert, but people mistakenly believe that desires come from the inside, Little does it know that other desires are only external creations; Furthermore, 'latent' is a combination of personal consciousness and unconsciousness. The entire independent consciousness and freedom of an individual are surrounded by the unconscious of external ideologies, and the landscape and symbols enter the realm of free will. Human creativity and autonomy are polluted, and the unconscious and autonomous consciousness are mixed together. As the unconscious occupies more and more space, the unconscious becomes a part of human “inner

freedom”, “The direct consistency that an individual achieves with their society, and thus with the entire society.”[7]

## **2.2 Ideological slavery: the colonial movement of capitalist ideology in the field of personal concepts**

The ideology of capitalism lobbies the new generation of consumer groups through the forged mass culture of consumerism, essentially based on the fundamental goal of ideological slavery. The ideological enslavement imposed by the ideology of consumerism refers to the use of a systematic, standardized, and orderly ideological system to replace people's fragmented, authentic, and diverse conceptual values, driving out the “indigenous people” in people's minds, and thus establishing a conceptual system that is compatible with the overall goals of ideology.

The enslavement of ideology in the field of human concepts and the expansion of colonialism and capitalism in the real world have a certain sense of isomorphism with colonialism.

The contradiction between the expanding reproduction and the insufficient domestic effective consumption demand urges capitalism to expand outward, and alleviates the expansion of capital contradiction by turning more world population into a link in the capitalist chain and increasing the number of consumers. According to Marxism, the economic foundation determines the superstructure, and the contradiction of relations of production is reflected in the ideological superstructure, that is, it is internalized into the confrontation between consumption logic and people's independent logic. The result is that the capitalist consumption logic constantly erodes the true, autonomous, vivid, and diversified ideas that people have, and further realizes the enslavement of people themselves through ideological slavery and concept colonization.

The ideology of consumerism has a hidden nature in the colonial movement in the field of ideology. This concealment is not like the primitive accumulation of early capitalism described by Marx, which was carried out through violence, war, and plunder. The naked and terrifying scene of “Capital comes into the world, from head to toe, every pore drips with blood and dirty things.” [8] In a consumerist society, the use value of goods is hidden under a series of symbolic “symbols”, wrapped in dazzling images, presented in a “landscape” appearance, and finally conveyed to consumers through technological means. At the end of this chain, the use value of a product is not a reason for consumers to purchase, but rather the conceptual symbols attached to the use value that stimulate their desire to purchase.

The mentality of “pursuing individuality”, “showcasing personal taste”, and “seeking gold for love” commonly held by the new generation of consumer groups during consumption is a typical means of using commodity symbols to enslave the vast new generation of consumer groups in capitalist consumption logic.

The ideology of consumerism is also deceptive in the colonial movement in the field of ideology. The “symbol” of a product cannot be equated with the value of the product itself. More often than not, the concepts and values promoted by “symbols” are false promises. The landscape of capitalism, on the other hand, is a concrete reversal of life, an autonomous movement of inanimate beings. Consumers in a society surrounded by “landscapes” hear and see all the objects of consumption and aesthetics that are performed by others. Its true and tangible life has been replaced by pre packaged experiences and events promoted by mass media. In short, regardless of the device used, the intrinsic motivation behind the logical movement of capital is through the enslavement of ideas and the colonization of ideas, stimulating false consumer demand to promote economic growth.

## **2.3 Value integration: capitalist ideology intends to save the crisis of capitalist governance through the unification and integration of values**

The fundamental crisis of capitalism cannot be eliminated. On the premise that capitalist relations of production cannot be shaken, capitalist ideology uses consumerism as a breakthrough to prune and integrate the value of the entire capitalist society in the field of superstructure, in an attempt to delay the arrival of a fundamental crisis.



Marx has long pointed out that the fundamental contradiction of capitalism is the contradiction between the expanding reproduction and the private ownership of means of production. The cyclical economic crisis is the most direct manifestation of the fundamental contradiction of capitalism. In fact, after World War II, capitalism underwent a series of social policy adjustments and ideological fusion, which had greatly alleviated the class conflicts and structural crises in the economic field of capitalist society. The seemingly peaceful welfare society landscape once posed a huge challenge to Marx's crisis theory. But as we enter the 21st century, the arrival of a new type of crisis has had an unprecedented impact on the monolithic status quo of the capitalist world: the ecological environment crisis, the separation and racism crisis brought about by the rise of far-right forces, as well as the social unrest, ethnic conflicts, and value divisions brought about by the terrorist crisis, which are becoming increasingly severe. In order to ease social contradictions, capitalism needs to do value control work from the ideological superstructure to extend the death suspension of capitalism.

At present, the value control work of capitalist ideology takes consumerism as a breakthrough point, manifested in the following aspects:

Firstly, through the packaging of symbols and images, the product itself becomes a value that surpasses all other values. Class issues, identity issues, racial issues, and the true value of people are all hidden by the overwhelming promotion of goods. Apart from commodities, all transcendence cultural forms such as art, philosophy, religion, etc. have become popular, popularized, and fragmentation. In this way, commodities take precedence over everything and become the “god of commodities” worshipped by everyone in the new era. Secondly, the strong technological support behind consumerism is an instrumental prerequisite for ideological value control. The development of science and technology has provided a powerful communication tool for the expansion of capitalist ideology. Capitalist ideology envelops itself in constantly repeating advertisements, driving out the vivid individual autonomy from its mind, and then implanting the unconscious of machines and repetitive “purchases, consumption, and happiness” into it. As a result, everyone is unconsciously becoming a purchasing machine. Thirdly, one of the ways in which consumerist pseudo culture exercises value control is to actively modify and improve its own logic to cater to the mainstream value systems of freedom, rationality, science, and other values advocated since the Enlightenment. In terms of the ethical function of consumption, consumerism is popular among the general public, partly because the logic of freedom it actively shapes aligns with the ideals of freedom and comprehensive development advocated by the Enlightenment. On the other hand, consumerist shopping malls confuse irrational desires with people's true needs, using blind eye tactics to make people see desires as a necessity for human survival and life, as a basic guarantee for human freedom and comprehensive development.

### **3. Fetishism and Alienation: the Dual Effect of Consumerist Pseudo Culture Operation**

The consumerist pseudo culture uses “symbols”, “landscapes”, mass media technology and other practical devices and means in the new generation of consumer groups to promote self promotion and the propaganda and expansion of capitalist ideology, mainly because the concrete rather than abstraction means and human perceptual life have a natural affinity, which can promote the transformation of the abstract ideological superstructure from the dominant will discourse to the self narrative of social members, From the power centered mandatory concept indoctrination to the spontaneous and conscious daily life practice of social individuals, from the abstraction principled defense to the actual transformation into the personal survival practice, so consumerism disguised as the operation and interpretation of culture in daily life must have multiple effects in social history.

#### **3.1 New type of fetishism in the era of consumerism: space, landscape, and signifier fetishism**

Classical Marxist theory accurately describes the fetishism of early capitalist society with vivid strokes, and in contemporary society, fetishism has evolved into three new forms: space, landscape, and signifier.

In “Capital”, Marx believed that objects, as ordinary products of labor, do not originally have any sense of mystery, but once used for exchange and turned into commodities, they become “supernatural” things with the “enigmatic nature” they break free from. The reason is that commodity fetishism covers the relationship between people existing in commodities by virtue of the “image” of commodities, and this real relationship is replaced by the illusory relationship of things [9].

The fetishism of money is an upgraded version of commodity fetishism. Its core is the same as that of commodity fetishism: “The puzzle of money fetishism is the puzzle of commodity fetishism, but it has become obviously dazzling”[10]. The expansion of production also promotes the aggregation of a portion of currency into capital. Marx believed that capital was the “most fetishistic form”. Because the magic of capital is that it can automatically generate surplus value. After entering the era dominated by consumption in capitalist society, fetishism did not disappear with the adjustment of capitalist national policies, but emerged in a new form: spatial fetishism, landscape fetishism, and signifier fetishism are the three most representative forms among them.

The so-called fetishism of space means that space is regarded as a factor of production and incorporated into the capitalist production model, from which surplus value is produced. In the era of consumerism, people's desire for goods, currency, and capital has become a desire for space, which has developed into a new form of fetishism. The emergence of landscape fetishism is inseparable from the production and promotion of images in a consumerist society. The image appears to be clearly visible, but in reality it is an illusion. Debord believes that the landscape world composed of images exerts a “real 'hypnotic behavior' and stimulating power” on the people due to their obsession with the landscape, and capitalists can achieve the goal of exploiting workers by strengthening their control over the landscape [11]. And signifier fetishism refers to the worship of the “meaning” symbols of things. In a consumerist society filled with goods, goods have dual meanings of “function” and “intention”. The worship of goods in the Marxist era transforms into the worship of the signifier in the consumerist era. That is to say, the symbols and meanings attached to the use value of goods have the dominant power.

The existence of space, landscape, and signifier fetishism has changed the way capitalist ideology dominates and enslaves people.

Firstly, in order for capital to achieve its own value-added, it no longer requires workers to be fixed next to machines working day and night. Instead, as long as it occupies space, utilizes advanced technology to continuously produce images, and all objects become symbolic entities, it can achieve control and enslavement of people.

Secondly, compared to the early capitalist era, the three new forms of fetishism that emerged with the era of consumerism have a more subtle influence on human domination and control. The naked, bloody and violent means of the past have disappeared. Instead, there is a yearning, bizarre and magical call. Capital doesn't need to do anything, just build the mirage with symbols and image codes, and make up a new generation of consumer youth to worship voluntarily.

### **3.2 Alienation: a comprehensive distortion from goods to people**

The concept of alienation explained by Marx from the perspective of political economy comes from the black ontology. Hegel believed that alienation arises when objects that are externalized due to the dialectical movement of absolute spirit are no longer able to recognize themselves.

Marx first proposed the concept of alienated labor in his Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844. Alienated labor exists in the relationship between workers, labor products, and labor itself under private ownership. Among them, workers lose their free and conscious initiative and are passively enslaved by the labor products they produce. The alienation of labor further leads to the alienation of workers. Under the exploitation of capital logic, the spirit and social attributes of human freedom and autonomy are erased and turned into instinctive slaves.

After the transformation of capitalism from the era of mass production to the era of consumption, the phenomenon of alienation that Marx argued about did not disappear, but further expanded from the

field of production to the field of consumption, and a new phenomenon of alienation emerged. Commodities are alienated into symbols, the real lives of social members are alienated into images, and the entire world of life is alienated into landscapes. The alienation caused by the era of consumerism is fundamentally the alienation of the true world of human beings.

The so-called true world contains two levels of meaning. The first level refers to the purity of “things”: flowers are flowers, trees are trees, and dining tables are dining tables. Whether it is natural or human labor processed products, they all have their natural legitimacy and natural usefulness, independent of the “value” added by later humans. In terms of goods, their purity is manifested in their pure use value, where people purchase a certain product with the intention of obtaining its use value. The meaning of the true world at the second level refers to the autonomy and creativity of meaning and aesthetics. Human beings are spiritual creatures, and aesthetic judgment and meaning interpretation are the way for everyone to show his autonomy and initiative when exploring the universal time. But in a consumerist society, the two levels of the real world are completely alienated by capitalist logic using commodities as weapons.

Firstly, as Guy-Ernest Debord believed, everything in modern society is influenced by the landscape, and no one is spared. In a consumerist society, everything people see is composed of “symbols” and “images”, and the real world disappears.

Secondly, in a consumerist society, the individual's aesthetic consciousness and meaning world are constrained by mass media tools dominated by capital logic. The bestowal of aesthetics and meaning, which should have been a creative reaction generated independently in the process of practical interaction between humans and others, has now become a fixed pattern of “indoctrination acceptance”. The aesthetics and meaningful life pursued by most people are hardly the result of skin cutting experiences, and more come from repetitive brainwashing, indoctrination, and feeding. The propaganda tools are so powerful that people living in them cannot even distinguish where the boundary between self creation and mechanical reaction lies.

The consequence of the alienation of the true world of human beings is their overall distortion. In the era of consumerism, people regarded the possession and consumption of things as the full meaning and pursuit of life. Attempt to measure a person's total life value by possessing what and how much. Nowadays, there is a popular saying among the new generation of consumer groups, “You are what you consume

#### **4. Evaluation and Inspiration**

Through the analysis of the carriers and devices of consumerism's pseudo cultural operation, target domination, and the effects it produces during its operation, we believe that consumerism should not be a simple social culture, group lifestyle, or individual value orientation. Behind consumerism is the comprehensive expansion of capitalist ideology, which is dominated by the logic of capital. Capitalism, in order to maintain its long-term rule, not only spontaneously but also consciously uses a complete set of devices to provide internal incentives and external support for its own survival and development.

For consumerism and the capitalist ideology behind it, Marx himself and his successors criticized it historically and logically from different perspectives such as economy, society, and ideological superstructure. Their critical methods and perspectives have significant implications for how we view the reality of consumerist society, how to break away from fantasies and misconceptions about capitalism, and how to break through the cage of capital logic and break free from the fetishism and alienation of capitalism.

##### **4.1 Vision of historical materialism**

First of all, from the perspective of methodology, we should examine the economic basis of capitalism and the position of superstructure in the long history from the perspective of historical materialism.



Firstly, following in the footsteps of Marx, we must first affirm that the prevalence of consumerism in modern society is based on the development of capitalist productive forces and the remarkable achievements of capitalist rule in the economic field.

Secondly, the alienation phenomenon and the loss of human authenticity caused by the development of capitalism are inevitable results of the capitalist mode of production. Therefore, we should examine the issue of alienation from a dynamic historical development perspective. "The economic forms through which people produce, consume, and exchange are temporary and historical. With the acquisition of new productive forces, people change their production methods, and with the change of production methods, they change all economic relationships that are only necessary relationships of this specific production method." [12] From the perspective of historical materialism, a series of problems caused by consumerism society are historic, and they are generated from history and will be solved in history.

Thirdly, based on the isomorphism between the alienation problem in the consumption field and the alienation problem in the production field, a series of social problems that arise in the consumption field can be solved by referring to the production field. In the era of Marx, consumption issues did not yet replace production issues as the mainstream of theoretical research. Although Marx himself did not directly point out the problem of alienation caused by consumption and related solutions, consumption, like production, is a link in the capitalist mode of production. Therefore, Marx's grasp of the issue of human alienation in the field of production is inevitably applicable to the criticism of the phenomenon of social alienation in consumerism.

Marx emphasized the dialectical relationship between production and consumption. In his view, on the one hand, production has a decisive basic position for consumption: production creates raw materials for consumption and determines the way of consumption; Production indirectly triggers the desire for "need" in consumers through consumption of the goods it produces. Therefore, it can be said that the objects, methods, and driving forces of consumption are fundamentally generated by production. On the other hand, consumption has also become the core driving force of production. Consumption not only enables the production of products to realize their value and become a reality, but more importantly, it creates a continuous stream of new production needs, which is the "intrinsic motivation of creating production in terms of concepts". Therefore, examining people's survival situation in the field of production is a prerequisite for solving people's survival situation in consumption alienation.

In Marx's theoretical vision, no matter what stage history is in, the decisive role of productivity in relations of production runs through it all the time. Consumption is essentially a link of capitalist production, and the alienation caused by human society in the process of consumption belongs to the category of relations of production. Therefore, Marx advocated that the situation of human beings in the field of survival should be achieved through changes in production methods. Marx's historical materialism reveals that practice is the essential feature of human life, and the perfection and development of human life should be completed in practice [13]. The practical restoration of human nature is also the key to breaking the dilemma of human authenticity being alienated by commodities in consumerist society.

#### **4.2 The return to the essence of human practice and the revolution in daily life**

Under the control of capital logic, the consumer society relies on symbols and images to achieve a comprehensive penetration of people from material actions to spiritual thinking through visual synesthesia. Make the new generation of young people a shell of spiritual emptiness, loss of rationality and intelligence, and indulgence in consumption.

In theory, there are two paths of resistance to the logic of capital causing the entire society to fall into the quagmire of fetishism and alienation: one is retrospective, advocating for the revival of ancient symbolic exchange traditions invented by ancestors by returning to the origin of human society. Replacing the value exchange of goods with symbolic exchange affirms the fundamental power of human beings and achieves the return of simple social relationships. The other is forward-looking,

that is, the historical horizon of historical materialism mentioned above in this article regards alienation as one of the stages of the change and development of the historical process of capitalism. In the historical process of human development, the sublation of alienation is realized through social history changes. The successor of Marx and his social critical theory chose the latter route.

The highly developed level of productivity in contemporary capitalist society has created a wealth of material resources, and the people are no longer constrained by the level of productivity development. But in a society dominated by consumerism, people, due to the pseudo culture woven by consumerism, cannot confirm the significance of their practical activities in unproductive activities and instead seek illusory values and meanings from consumer behavior. The transfer of the true meaning of human nature from production activities to consumption activities can be seen as a transfer of its essential power. But under the capitalist relations of production, no matter in the field of production or consumption, people can not be free. Therefore, on the basis of the dialectical relationship between consumption and production, to solve the problem of human alienation in the field of consumption, it is necessary to first examine the situation of human beings in production.

Both consumption symbols and spatial landscapes belong to the self variation of consumption logic and do not have persistence. Therefore, we should advocate using human practical nature to resist the constraints of capital logic. By utilizing one's own subjective initiative to actively peel off symbols above the surface of goods, dispel obsession with illusory images, and leverage the true meaning of human practice under the unified structure of production and consumption, returning to a life that pursues faith and true value.

In addition to replying to the practical essence of human beings, the revolution in the field of daily life is also of great significance. Western Marxism inherits Marx's critical theory and delves into the reflection and criticism of daily life, proposing the catchphrase of daily life liberation that is deafening and inspiring.

Firstly, the slogan of daily life liberation is a spontaneous resistance to “zero meaning” life. The so-called “zero degree of meaning life” refers to the daily life filled with false symbols and propaganda in the era of consumerism, where the capitalist ideology skillfully manipulates media communication techniques to replace real experiences with false intentions. The French philosopher Henri Lefebvre, who proposed this slogan, believed that in the era of consumerism, daily life was a disaster zone where alienation occurred in all its aspects[14], surrounded by the false ideology of the bourgeoisie everywhere, the cultivation of human liberation does not lie in the grand and direct revolution of the state machinery, but in the trivial and onlooking daily lives of individuals. Therefore, Lefebvre elevated “daily life” to a strategic highland in philosophy, treating it as the overall source of solving modernity problems and achieving the liberation of all humanity.

Secondly, the revolution in daily life mainly focuses on the revolution in the cultural field. In societies controlled by consumption, people are first misled by symbols invented by popular culture to deviate from their true lives, thus playing a “reverse correction” role through cultural revolution.

Finally, the overall goal of the daily life revolution is to create a new experiential paradigm of daily life, allowing culture to break free from institutional and ideological constraints and integrate with the experiences of daily life.

It can be said that the ultimate goal of both the return to the essence of human practice and the revolution in daily life, which resist the logic of capital, is to rescue people from the life that has been alienated by consumption, and become a unified, authentic, and fully developed person of the subject and object.

## References

- [1] J.Baudrillard. Consumer Society [M]. Translated by Liu Chengfu and Quan Zhigang, Nanjing: Nanjing University Press, 2014, 11.
- [2] J.Habermas. Technology and Science as Ideology [M]. Translated by Li Li and Guo Guanyi. Shanghai: Xuelin Publishing House, 1999, 12.

- 
- [3] G. Debord. *Landscape Social Review* [M]. Translated by Liang Hong, Guilin: Guangxi Normal University Press, 2007, 1.
  - [4] G. Debord. *La Société du Spectacle* [M]. Translated by Zhang Xinmu, Nanjing: Nanjing University Press, 2017, 3.
  - [5] G. Debord. *La Société du Spectacle* [M]. Translated by Zhang Xinmu, Nanjing: Nanjing University Press, 2017, 1.
  - [6] G. Lukács. *Die Eigenart Des Ästhetischen* [M]. Translated by Xu Hengchun, Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, 1986, 1.
  - [7] H. Marcuse. *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* [M]. Translated by Liu Ji, Shanghai Translation Publishing House, 2006, page 11.
  - [8] *Collected Works of Marx and Engels: Volume 5* [M]. Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2009, 871.
  - [9] "The commodity form reflects the social nature of people's own labor in front of people into the physical nature of labor products themselves, reflecting the natural social attributes of these things, thus reflecting the social relationship between producers and total labor into the social relationship between things that exist outside of producers." Quoted from the *Collected Works of Marx and Engels: Volume 5* [M]. Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2001, 89.
  - [10] *Collected Works of Marx and Engels: Volume 44* [M]. Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2001, 113.
  - [11] S. Best: *Commercialization of Reality and Commercialized Reality: Baudrillard, Debord and Postmodern Theory*, published in *Kelner's Editions: Baudrillard, Critical Reader* [M]. translated by Chen Weizhen, Chen Mingda, etc., Nanjing: Jiangsu People's Publishing House, 2005, 81.
  - [12] *Collected Works of Marx and Engels: Volume 4* [M]. Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2001, 322.
  - [13] "Social life is practical in nature. Any mysterious thing that leads theory to mysticism can be reasonably solved in human practice and understanding of this practice." Quoted from the *Collected Works of Marx and Engels: Volume 1* [M]. Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1995, 60-61.
  - [14] "Alienation assumes that new and deeper meaning technologies have created various leisure machines, such as radio and television, which deprive daily life of its power and neglect its production and creativity." Henri Lefebvre. *Everyday Life in the Modern World* [M]. Trans, Sacha Rabinovitch, London: The Penguin Press, 1971, 14.