

# SOCIALIST FEMINISMS

*Louise C. Johnson*

## INTRODUCTION

Socialist Feminism comprises a set of interventions by feminists into socialist and especially Marxist theory, which aims to analyse and end the oppression of women in capitalist societies. As such Socialist Feminism is built upon key texts, writers, political events, and organizations which comprise the Marxist tradition. It is these which have helped shape the agenda for Socialist Feminist debates and reformulations of Marxism.

This chapter will chart a selective course through Socialist Feminist writings drawn from nineteenth- and twentieth-century Britain, North America, and Australia. Isolating key theorists in the Socialist Feminist Tradition is not an easy task, but when the mentors of contemporary Socialist Feminists are sought, it is not in the work of Utopian Socialists or later theorists such as Lenin or Kollontai, but usually in the writings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. The theoretical hegemony of Marx and Engels has set a problematic agenda for Socialist Feminists. For exactly what terms such as 'value', 'class', 'social reproduction', 'historical materialism', and 'alienation' meant for Marx and Engels is itself debatable. How exactly they relate to and construct the position of women is even more contentious, though such concepts have both limited and inspired much subsequent analysis. After a critical examination of these key notions in the work of Marx and Engels, this chapter will consider Socialist Feminist theorizations of women in the realms of *production* and *social reproduction* and the relations between Marxism and Feminism.<sup>1</sup> This discussion will include an analysis of how these theorizations have been informed by a materialist conception of *patriarchy*.

In the course of this discussion it will be argued that theorizations by Marx and Engels marginalized gender relations and made any specific consideration of women within their problematic extremely difficult, if not impossible. Those Socialist Feminists who have attempted to situate women in Marxism have had to move from *applying* the concepts to women, to *redefining* those same concepts. The result is a series of

reformulations which owe much to other feminist priorities and theorizations, a major debt to historical materialism but little to the many other ideas developed by Marx and Engels. What constitutes this new materialist foundation of contemporary Socialist Feminism will be questioned in the final section, as 'minority' women begin to articulate *their* Socialist Feminisms. Their critique highlights excluded positions in Socialist Feminist theorizing – exclusions based on race or colour, and the origin of much Socialist Feminism in the material experience of white, privileged women. New directions for Socialist Feminism therefore involve further reformulations of Marxist theory, up to the point of its abandonment, and a new multiplicity of historically grounded, theoretical interventions.

### **KARL MARX AND FRIEDRICH ENGELS: CLASS, FAMILY RELATIONS, AND THE POSITION OF WOMEN**

The socialist tradition long predates the work of Marx and Engels. In the theorizations and practices of nineteenth-century Utopian Socialists there was extensive consideration of gender oppression within capitalism (Taylor 1980, 1983). From being integral to a conceptualization of capitalism, women's position is increasingly marginalized in socialist work by a focus on paid labour and class relations. This occurs with the rise in importance of Marxism and a male-dominated organized Left (Hartmann 1981; Mitchell 1971).

While any straightforward account of the writing of Marx and Engels rides over enormous debate as to what they *really* said, it is a necessary starting point (Jaggar 1983). Longtime friend and co-author Friedrich Engels described Marx's ideas as a synthesis of the German idealist philosophy of Hegel, French political theory, and English political economy – especially the work of Adam Smith and David Ricardo (McLellan 1983, p. 24). Many of Marx's writings were both critiques and radical reformulations of these lions of nineteenth-century philosophy, political theory, and economics. In this exercise, Marx began by situating their thought materially and historically and in so doing revealed that analyses generated by bourgeois philosophers and economists expressed their privileged class interests (Marx and Engels 1976, p. 59).

In contrast, Marx saw his own work as moving beyond the appearance of bourgeois society, constructed as it was by these dominant class interests, both to uncover the true workings of capitalism and to speak from the position of those most oppressed by it – the working class. In such a way Scientific Socialism would replace bourgeois/Utopian Socialism and the ideas of the ruling class would be revealed as mere obfuscatory ideologies.

The method to achieve such an analysis of capitalism for Marx was dialectical historical materialism. Marx and Engels describe the reasoning as follows:

## FEMINIST INTERVENTIONS

As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with *what* they produce and with *how* they produce. Hence what individuals are depends on the material conditions of their production.

(1976, pp. 31–2)

Beginning with *material conditions* and at a high level of *abstraction* it is not always clear to subsequent interpreters where an abstract analysis of a mode of production ends and a more concrete analysis of a social formation begins – in particular, at what point gendered beings can enter the analysis. Nor is it clear just how non-sexed any notion of an abstract individual can or should be. Does the use here by Marx of ‘the individual’ imply not abstraction but a grounding of his theory on the experience of men? The fact that men and women can and usually do have quite different relations to ‘nature’, to the means of production and to biological reproduction, may thereby be situated *outside* the Marxist problematic from the beginning. For me this is indeed the case, but Marx’s abstract schematization of capitalism has also proved a vital starting point for Socialist Feminists, especially as they apply to women the principles of historical materialism and extend Marx’s consideration of production to include reproduction.

The material foundation of Marxism is a fundamental element incorporated into subsequent Socialist Feminist discussions. Such a foundation, primarily in the realm of *economic production* however, is a key part of Marx’s analysis which has been questioned by feminists. For there is no *logical* reason why social action on nature to create the means of subsistence is any more a fundamental necessity than action between people for the purpose of biological reproduction. As Mary O’Brien has argued, Hegelian dialectics could just as easily have been materially grounded upon the social *relations of reproduction* (O’Brien 1981, 1982). Such a focus is not possible within Marx’s theory. But a dual focus on production and reproduction was possible and it is one taken up later by Engels.

Central to later debates has been Marx’s conception of *labour*. Much of Marx’s theoretical edifice rests on this concept and it remains an issue for Socialist Feminists whether its conceptualization may be readily applied or whether it excludes a specific consideration of women’s as well as men’s labour. For Marx, in the transition from feudal to the capitalist mode of production, the means to produce wealth – tools, expertise, land – were centralized into the hands of one class; the bourgeoisie. Deprived of the means of production, the proletariat retains only its ability to labour. Such a class embodies the ability to create *value* by the application of *labour power* to nature and the transformation of nature into commodities. As commodities with some utility they contain a *use value*. This value and the

labour power contained within this product can be realized only if others want the commodity – if it has an *exchange value* in the marketplace. In return for such *productive labour* the worker receives a wage, which has within it two components – one a measure of profit or the *surplus value* appropriated by the capitalist; and the other, the product of *necessary labour*, is used by the workers to sustain themselves, their family, and the next generation (Marx 1974).

It is questionable whether these abstract notions of 'labour' and 'value' preclude or open the possibility of a specific consideration of women. How exactly women's unpaid domestic labour fits into this schema becomes an urgent question for Socialist Feminists. I would argue that such a formulation of labour, while admittedly a theorization of *capitalist class relations*, assumes and is built upon the sexual division of labour. For labour has value only in relation to the wage; while the necessary wage has integral to it a component for domestic life and worker 'reproduction'. Women's work becomes theoretically relevant only when it becomes like men's – paid – while domestic labour is a vital but untheorized component of 'social reproduction'.

There is a third class within Marx's schematization of capitalism – a group which is only tenuously linked to the production process at any one time – the underemployed, the unemployed, and the immigrant worker. This group comprises various parts of the *reserve army of labour*, ready to be mobilized when production needs to be expanded rapidly and then demobilized during times of recession. Whether women form a sepecific subgroup of this reserve army of labour is an issue taken up by Socialist Feminists in their dual efforts to apply Marxist theory to the position of women and to explain\* the particular place of women in contemporary capitalism.

For Marx it is these class relationships which provide the motor for history. For there exists an antagonism of interests between the two basic classes – of worker and bourgeoisie – which generates continuous conflicts. The capitalist strives to increase the amount of surplus value extracted from the worker while the workers seek to raise their share of what they produce.

Separated from nature, deprived of the means to produce subsistence, and subject to increasing discipline and regulation as wage labourers, Marx argued that workers lost touch with their own selves. As a result of the wage-labour relation, workers were not only exploited but they were also *alienated* from their labour, each other, nature, and their species being (McLellan 1983; Ollman 1976).

It is in this conception of *wage labour*, especially its value, and its daily and generational reproduction that Marx leaves the place of women under capitalism specifically untheorized, though simultaneously building in their presence as dependent *others* within this concept. It is the contradictions

and silences within this conception of wage labour which prove enormously problematical for those Socialist Feminists attempting to apply Marxism to analyses of women's labour – in the home and as wage labourers.

If the primary focus of Marx was on production relations, Friedrich Engels embarks on an extended analysis of social reproduction and the family.

Engels constructs in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1975), an argument which both ties women to the family and class relations and sets the agenda for much Socialist Party and state activity to liberate women. As Michèle Barrett writes: 'This work, whatever its failings, has been highly influential in Marxist thinking on the family and women's oppression and has provided the starting point of a materialist analysis of gender relations' (1980, p. 48).

Engels's essay focuses on pre-modern, pre-capitalist families whose male-female relations are very different from those under capitalism. His argument rests on ethnomethodological studies which document the existence of familial arrangements in which women have power. Thus, Engels maintains, in the eras of Savagery and Barbarism, in various forms of group marriages, women had power within the household; over the management of their productive and reproductive labour and over descent and inheritance (Engels 1975, pp. 106, 113–14). The transition from such an era to the present class-based 'civilization' – from group to monogamous marriage – involves the 'world historic defeat of the female sex' by men (p. 120). It is this transition which is of most interest in that it reveals the logic of Engels's analysis and the implicit contradictions within it which have been the focus of much Socialist Feminist debate.

If the communalistic household 'is the material foundation of that supremacy of . . . women' (p. 113), why women come to occupy this realm is not made clear by Engels. He writes: 'The division of labour between the sexes is determined by quite other causes than by the position of women in society' (p. 113). Rosalind Delmar isolates in Engels's and Marx's work these 'quite other causes' in the 'spontaneous sexual division of labour arising out of physiological difference' – of women as child breeders (1979, p. 284). She goes on to castigate this implicit biological origin of the sexual division of labour as a major flaw in Engels's analysis (1979, p. 285).

A fundamental problem in Engels's analysis for Socialist Feminists then, is the assumption of a 'natural'/physiological foundation for the division between women and men. Though this division is *later* to enter particular social relations and to be theorized by Engels within these, the question of *origins* is consigned to the realm of the non-historical. As Moira Maconachie writes in a recent collection (Sayers *et al.* 1987) which reconfirms the importance of Engels's work to contemporary Socialist Feminism: 'Engels makes the family an object of historical enquiry but regards the relationship between men and women as already constituted'

(p. 108). How relations between kinship and production interact to move a family from one stage to another is explained for Engels by property and labour relations. He argues that it was an alteration in property relations which comprised the 'new, social forces' (1975, p. 117) that gave men ascendant power over women. With their initial command over outdoor food collection and labour, the domestication of animals and the ownership of slaves in this realm gave men more material power. Engels continues:

Thus on the one hand, in proportion as wealth increased it made the man's position in the family more important than the woman's, and on the other hand created an impulse to exploit this strengthened position in order to overthrow, in favor of his children, the traditional order of inheritance.

(p. 119)

The conversion of men's greater wealth into power over women thus derives from a recognition of the male role in the creation of children and an 'impulse' to control the disposal of that wealth amongst *his* children. Once this power is asserted, it takes on even more oppressive dimensions. The monogamous family thus becomes *patriarchal* as women's power to control her labour in the household and as a reproducer is not only destroyed, but reoriented to the service of men.

From what does this oppression of one sex by another derive? In Engels's work there is a dual answer to this question – one which is extensively theorized, and the other consigned to the feminine and to nature. Engels argues explicitly that male power over women derives from their command over material resources and a wish to control the disposal of those resources. It is this focus which is extensively developed by theorists discussing The Woman Question<sup>2</sup> and by some contemporary Socialist Feminists working within the organized Left (Waters 1972).

But there are other impulses moving this historical motor: desire, sexuality, and anxieties over paternity. These forces also cause changes in social and familial relations to occur. So, for example, men *needed* to have control over inheritance and be assured of their paternity. It was this desire which produced the imperative to defeat 'mother right' (Engels 1975, pp. 119, 120). For Engels too the sole sexual drive is to heterosexual monogamous coupling and not 'the abominable practice of sodomy' (p. 128). These desires and drives are not closely examined or theorized by Engels and do not become part of the Socialist Feminist theoretical field until questions of ideology, desire, and subjectivity enter Marxism and feminism (Coward 1984; Mitchell 1979; Sayers 1987). It is from this perspective, for example, that Mary Evans questions the assumptions of heterosexuality and 'natural' sexual urges in Engels's account (1987, pp. 84 and 85).

What does take analytic priority in Engels's examination of the family is

the material world of property and production. This focus is most clear when he describes the 'modern' marriages amongst the different classes. The bourgeois marriage is a marriage 'of convenience' (a 'property exchange') negotiated by 'the' parents (or rather arranged by the fathers). In this the class position of the women is that of her father and he in turn guarantees the like class of the husband. In the proletarian marriage, the wife assumes the class position of her husband – and so it is as a proletarian wife that she enters the labour market. *Class positions* are therefore something men occupy. A woman assumes the class position of the man whose 'family' she inhabits – be it her father or husband.

From being a primary division, therefore, sexual differentiation is obliterated by the primacy within Marxist analysis of class antagonism. The agency for thus rendering women's particular position invisible is the family, divided only by class and not sex. A major contradiction within Engels's account, therefore, is the simultaneous rendering of male–female relations as crucial, but then subsuming them within the theoretically and politically more important class relations.

This linking of women to the family has both limited and opened up theoretical possibilities for later Socialist Feminists as they grapple with the class position of women and the importance of the family in structuring women's oppression.

For Socialist Feminists, the problems of subsuming women within a male-headed family differentiated primarily by class relations, become even more acute when the socialist future is projected.

To achieve the end of women's oppression, Engels proposes the extension of legal equality to them (1975, p. 137) and then their mass entry into public industry (p. 138). Such moves would be a prelude to the alliance of *all* women with the working class to socialize the means of production, abolish private property, and usher in an age of monogamous sex love.

If the oppression of women is built upon the economic and legal power of men over them and if that power is class-based, then indeed it follows that abolishing private property and socializing production destroys the economic foundation of women's position. However, the experience of socialist countries has been used to question this logic (Bengelsdorf and Hageman 1979; Cliff 1984; Coward 1983; Davin 1987; Einhorn 1981; Eisen 1984; Mitchell 1971; Porter 1980; Randall 1979; Rowbotham 1972; Scott 1976; Stacey 1979) and the logic itself has been questioned and reformulated. Some Socialist Feminists have accepted, with qualifications, the priority to theorize social reproduction and production as separated but related sites of oppression (for example Beechey 1977 and Vogel 1983). Others have seen in the dual emphasis on production and social reproduction a valuable way to reconsider Engels's work (see the essays in Sayers *et al.* 1987 by Humphries, Gimenez, and Redclift) and to direct

Socialist Feminist theorizing (Eisenstein 1979b; Hartman 1981; Kuhn and Wolpe 1978). The debt to Marx and Engels remains central in all of these departures. But others see the specific absence of women in that analysis as crippling and question the analytical priority given to Marxism (Delphy 1984; Campioni and Gross 1983; Matthews 1984a).

Campioni and Gross (1983), for example, see in the triumph of Marxism a systematic process whereby this political theory is absorbed into various institutions and comes to dominate the field of oppositional discourse. They argue that this occurs because of the phallocentrism of Marxism and its sharing with bourgeois liberal theory of many common assumptions about truth, reason, reality, and causality. As a result, they conclude, Marxism is not radically 'other' to capitalism except as a method and is *unable* to incorporate feminist demands.

In much subsequent Socialist Feminist work, Marx's and Engels's historical materialism does provide a foundation on which Marxist categories can be modified and a base from which to build new theorizations of women's materiality. These various reinterpretations though, must be situated within both the history of western Marxism and the women's liberation movement.

### THE WOMAN QUESTION, THE NEW LEFT, AND WOMEN'S LIBERATION

It was with great optimism that Socialist Feminists looked to the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 to realize their dual goals of socialism and female emancipation in Russia. For the theory promised that a working-class revolution would automatically liberate women. Even though the revolution had contravened much of Marxist orthodoxy; especially in the vital leadership role played by a disciplined, centralized party; women were an active force in the events of 1917 and in reforms which followed (Cliff 1984; Lenin 1982; Porter 1980; Rowbotham 1972).

Under the stresses of war and counter-revolution during the 1920s and 1930s many of the pro-woman reforms were abandoned, as women's liberation was put off to a more distant future. Nevertheless the inspiration of the early years of the Soviet revolution remains. So too do the positions held by Left parties derived from the thought of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Kollontai, and Trotsky. These can be summarized (though are not necessarily uniformly held by derivative Left parties) as:

- (i) the primacy of a historical materialist analysis;
- (ii) the primacy of the class struggle over all other forms of struggle;
- (iii) the importance of a party organized along hierarchical lines, with a centrally determined position on issues and a brief to lead revolutionary activities;

## FEMINIST INTERVENTIONS

- (iv) a consideration of women (or any other subgroup) *within* a historical-materialist, class-based analysis;
- (v) the origin of women's oppression as a physiological weakness related to childbearing which was transformed in the distant past to male control of women's labour and private property, and the monogamous patriarchal family;
- (vi) women's liberation will follow from their alliance with the working class to seize the means of production and property and then to socialize production, domestic labour, and child-rearing.

These positions, in general, which were borne by the organized Left through the Second World War and Cold War, were then re-evaluated by the New Left in the 1950s and 1960s and confronted Radical Feminism in the 1970s.<sup>3</sup>

By the 1960s a new generation – confronted in the United States, Britain, and Australia with the Vietnam war and other Third World revolts, Black Power movements, and an upsurge of student radicalism around these issues – produced a revival of critical interest in the thought of Karl Marx. The earlier identification of revolutionary socialism with the horrors of Stalinism and a Marxism which looked more and more mechanical and economic now came under review (O'Brien 1970).

## THE RE-EMERGENCE OF SOCIALIST FEMINISM

It was in the pages of the *New Left Review*, a major arena for the critical revaluation of Marxism, that one of the earliest statements on contemporary Socialist Feminism appeared. In the December 1966 issue, Juliet Mitchell published 'Women: the longest revolution' (1966). The essay was given even wider circulation in the often reprinted book *Woman's Estate* (1971). Mitchell wrote of previous socialist work on The Woman Question: 'To this point, the liberation of women remains a normative ideal, an adjunct to socialist theory, not structurally integrated into it' (1971, p. 81). She described the related experiences of many women in both radical groups and socialist parties – a phenomenon similarly encountered in France, England, Holland, the United States, and Australia – where women were generally treated with contempt, rarely as political equals and useful only as whores or wives. She wrote:

Not one single left-wing movement: working-class, Black or student can offer anything to contradict this experience. . . . Radical feminism – the belief in the *primary* and paramount oppression of women was born as a phoenix from the ashes of this type of socialism. If socialism is to regain its status as *the* revolutionary politics (in addition to the scientific analysis it offers of capitalist society) it has to make good its practical sins of commission against women and its

huge sin of omission – the absence of an adequate place for them in its theory.

(1971, p. 86)

Radical Feminism dominated the early years of the women's liberation movement's second wave. Most energy was concentrated on the articulation of women's oppression and organized movements for its amelioration. Socialist women too were caught up in this activity, and it was some years before Mitchell's call for a feminist reconsideration of Marxism occurred, a process greatly aided by the foundation Mitchell set down in 1966. Much of her essay was concerned with welding Marxist method to feminist priorities around what she argued were the four key structures of women's situation: production, reproduction, sexuality, and the socialization of children (Mitchell 1971, p. 101).

In the essay and her subsequent work (1979; Mitchell and Rose 1982), Mitchell drew heavily on the reinterpretation of Marxism given by Louis Althusser. As a result ideology, as a material and cultural force, became paramount. Her analysis of women's oppression in turn looked to the exchange theory of Lévi-Strauss and the psychoanalysis of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan to construct a view of patriarchy which placed sexuality to the fore in feminist debate.

For Mitchell patriarchy is the symbolic law of the father. Under capitalism this law is primarily expressed as ideology. Patriarchal law, she argued, can be overturned by a *cultural* revolution. This revolution is necessary at the same time as the socialist revolution destroys capitalist relations if women are to be liberated from patriarchal as well as class oppression. The linking of psychoanalysis and Marxism by Mitchell, while a crucial re-intervention for feminists, has been critically assessed by a number of Socialist Feminists for its inadequate *material* grounding of psychoanalytic theory (Beechey 1979; Eisenstein 1979a). Her work though has inspired other Socialist Feminists in their pursuit of material foundations for ideology, sexuality, and subjectivity (Barrett 1980; Coward 1983), though the distance from Marxism attained in such quests raises the question of whether such work can still be seen as part of the Socialist Feminist tradition.

Mitchell's 1966 essay moved the socialist discussion of The Woman Question on to the feminist agenda. It owes much to theorizations within the New Left and to Radical Feminism. Major additions heralded by Mitchell were a focusing of interest on women as a specific group; a legitimization of concerns for 'personal life'; and a focus on biological and social reproduction. Her essay also situates Socialist Feminism squarely within the various theoretical debates which were occurring at the time, especially the reformulation of Marxism by Louis Althusser and a subsequent interest in ideology; and the reclaiming of Sigmund Freud's work on the acquisition of gender identities.

But at the time Socialist Feminists did not go on to further theorize Mitchell's four structures of women's oppression. It was rather her more general quest to apply Marxist theory to feminist questions which was taken up.

The eminence accorded the work of Marx and Engels, especially by women whose political education had occurred within the New Left, led theorists in two main directions: to a focus on *production* and *social reproduction*. Until 1979 these areas assumed analytic priority for Socialist Feminists with sexuality and the socialization of children re-entering consideration only more recently.

### SOCIAL REPRODUCTION AND DOMESTIC LABOUR

In an early influential text, Betty Friedan opened her study of *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) in North America with a summary of a key tension bedevilling middle-class women at the time, that between an image of the ideal woman, dedicated to husband, home and children, and the question which flowed from the daily grind of this experience: 'Is this all?' (p. 13). The analysis which followed joined another study of the captive, housebound woman in Britain by Hannah Gavron (1966) to make the work of women in the home not only visible, but an object of theorization (Bland *et al.* 1978, p. 36).

The first Socialist Feminist attempt at such a theorization was by the Canadian Margaret Benston. Explicitly building on Juliet Mitchell's earlier discussion of women's 'marginal' work, she also criticizes her emphasis on 'superstructural' rather than 'basic economic factors' (1969, p. 202). From there Benston draws her analytical direction from Engels and the political economist Ernest Mandel rather than from Mitchell or Althusser, to argue:

that the roots of the secondary status of women are in fact economic . . . women as a group do indeed have a definite relation to the means of production and . . . this is different from that of men. . . . If this special relation of women to production is accepted, the analysis of (their) situation fits naturally into a class analysis of society.

(p. 199)

This specific relation to production is the unpaid domestic labour of women. The home was seen by Benston as a pre-capitalist site of production where a woman's labour produced use values rather than exchange values and was paid for by the male wage. While women could enter the labour force, they had no structural responsibility in this area and such participation was ordinarily regarded as transient (p. 201). Legitimately performing work only in the home, Benston saw women as a vast 'reserve of labour' (p. 206) who entered a secondary labour market because of this identification. Benston's paper joined those by Peggy Morton (1970) and Mariarosa Dalla

Costa and Selma Jones (1972) to set the terms of a protracted debate in Socialist Feminist theory as to the meaning, status, revolutionary potential, and value of domestic labour. The debate became even more intense as an international campaign demanding wages for housework built upon it.

Mary McIntosh (1982) summarizes the various *theoretical* dimensions of the Domestic Labour Debate:

whether housework was 'productive' or 'unproductive' in the technical Marxist sense of producing surplus value, whether housework was an integral part of the capitalist mode of production or had only an indirect relation to it, whether unpaid housework served to raise or lower the value of the husband's labour power, whether or not housewives were part of the working class, whether what is now done as housework could ever be socialized under capitalism.

(pp. 110–11)

In short, the debate quickly assumed the character of a battle over the efficacy of Marxism to explain (women's) domestic labour.

A look at some specific statements within this vast debate will illustrate this general observation and chart a course in the debate from a primary focus on Marxist theory to a greater concern with the oppression of women.<sup>4</sup> As a result, there occurs in Socialist Feminist theorizing on domestic labour, a regrounding upon a more broadly conceptualized *experience* of domestic labour rather than upon the relevance of Marxist categories to it.

In Britain, though the issue had been extensively canvassed in magazines, pamphlets, and discussions within the women's movement (Secombe 1973, p. 4), domestic labour entered mainstream New Left politics as Juliet Mitchell's ideas had done seven years before – through the pages of the *New Left Review*. In 1973 Wally Secombe sought to situate 'The housewife and her labour under capitalism' more explicitly and 'rigorously' than Benston, Dalla Costa and James had done within the Marxist problematic. Secombe argued that in *Capital*, Marx laid out a framework within which domestic labour clearly fitted. He proceeds to describe capitalism in a similar vein to that of Benston, as comprising an 'industrial unit' and a more backward 'domestic unit'. Akin more to petty commodity production than commodity capitalism, the domestic unit is linked to capital in a key way – by producing the commodity labour power in a daily and generational cycle. Such domestic labour while vital is not 'productive' in the Marxist sense of generating surplus value and therefore, within this problematic, it has no 'value'. It does, though, have to be sustained and it is this cost which is met by the labourer's wage. It is this which is paid for by the necessary labour component of the working day.

The intense argument which followed over the next seven years in the pages of the *New Left Review* and elsewhere was primarily concerned with

the accuracy or otherwise of Seccombe's reading of Marx, with adding further theoretical rigour to Benston, James, and Dalla Costa, and with assessing the usefulness of Marxist concepts to an analysis of women's labour in the home (Coulson *et al.* 1975; Edholm *et al.* 1977; Fox 1986; Gardiner 1975, 1976; Molyneux 1979).

Paul Smith (1978) takes the concern with Seccombe's (mis?)reading of Marx to its logical conclusion when he writes:

Domestic labour is, then, not problematic for Marx's theory of value because it is not part of its object, the production and exchange of commodities. Consequently, it does not form part of the capitalist mode of production of commodities, but rather one of its external conditions of existence which it continually reproduces.

(p. 211)

Not only did Seccombe misread Marx, but so too by implication did the bulk of those engaged in the Domestic Labour Debate as the participants misguidedly grappled with the relevance of Marxist categories to housework. Smith therefore prioritizes Marxist theory over the issue of women's oppression or domestic labour. In concluding that domestic labour doesn't fit, Smith continues to conduct the debate within a Marxist rather than a feminist problematic. Marxism is never seen to be inadequate, just feminist applications of it!

Bonnie Fox points out that a focus on domestic work, the family, and the relevance of Marxist theory to women's labour has provided some key theoretical insights from which to build a materialist analysis of women's position both in the home and more generally (1986, pp. 181–9). Many Socialist Feminists, while acknowledging the problems of the debate, also accept many of its assumptions in their analyses. There remains a commitment to *apply* Marxism in some way. Increasingly though, this desire has been focused on specific concepts – such as labour, production, and reproduction – and on the method of historical materialism (Burton 1985; Delphy 1976, 1984; Vogel 1983). More recently *feminist* concerns have moved Socialist Feminists beyond a preoccupation with Marxism to questions of sexuality and power.

In 1983 for example, Lise Vogel reasserted 'the power of Marxism to analyse the issues that face women today in "their" struggle for liberation' (p. 2) by developing 'a theoretical approach that puts child bearing and the oppression of women at the very heart of every class mode of production' (p. 8). She argues that the need by the ruling class for the daily and generational replacement of labour power heightens the significance of women's biological power to bear children and creates the material conditions for a sexual *and* a patriarchal division of labour between home and work and in the home. What form this takes is a historical rather than a theoretical question (pp. 136–50). In such a way Vogel argues that

Marxism can be extended to provide a materialist theorization of women in class societies. Her analysis builds on the Domestic Labour Debate and Marxist categories, but to these adds explicit consideration of biological reproduction, and women's experience of gender oppression as well as class relations. In this she prioritizes the analysis of women's oppression and women's materiality over Marxist theory.

A similar priority leads Christine Delphy in a different direction. First published in France in 1970, but not in English until 1976 and again in 1984, Delphy's pamphlet on 'The main enemy' argues for the separateness and primacy of the domestic world for women. It is this world which she proposes as a separate mode of production in which women are exploited.

Yet unlike others in the Domestic Labour Debate, Delphy does not analyse this domestic or family mode of production using Marxist categories, but rather examines the labour performed by married women in France with concepts only loosely derived from Marx. From this she concludes that women's labour is not controlled by or of primary benefit to capital but is performed *for* men. Not only does this relationship constitute the material foundation of oppression for all women, but it gives them a common class or caste status from which to challenge it (pp. 67–72). Delphy thereby *prioritizes* women's oppression within a '*materialist*' analysis.

Maxine Molyneux, when evaluating Delphy's essay, criticizes her careless use of Marxist categories. Concepts such as 'mode of production' and 'labour power', Molyneux argues, have been transformed 'into empiricist, common sense, constructs . . . quite at variance with conventional definitions' (1979, p. 7).

Such criticisms may indeed stem from a concern with conceptual accuracy and rigour, but they also confirm an observation made by Campioni and Gross on the unquestioned status of Marxism. For, they argue, Marxism is a theory which acts as a standard to which all else is compared and found wanting (1983, pp. 116–17). Nevertheless Delphy's work brings to the fore in Socialist Feminist debate male oppression of women, and suggests that such a focus may ultimately be impossible within a Marxist problematic. This re-prioritizing of women's oppression has been vitally important in post-1980 Socialist Feminist theorizations – impelled in part by the Women's Movement's new concerns with male power and violence (Segal 1987) but also, I would suggest, by the status of theoreticians such as Delphy and by the inadequacies revealed in Marxism by feminists attempting to *apply* it to women working at home and elsewhere.

Such a shift is also evident in another area of Socialist Feminist concern: production and class relations.

## PRODUCTION AND CLASS RELATIONS

Juliet Mitchell writes of *production*, one of her four key 'structures of women's situation': 'far from women's *physical* weakness removing her from productive work, her *social* weakness has . . . made her the major slave of it . . . women have been *forced* to do "women's work"' (1971, pp. 103–4). The causes, nature, and possibilities of ending the low status of 'women's work' have been of great interest to Socialist Feminists – delimiting the site not only for theoretical interventions but also direct actions (Cockburn 1984; Coote and Campbell 1982; Hague and Carruthers 1981; Segal 1987). A focus on paid work was impelled by its analytic priority in Marxism, but it can also be seen as a response to the concrete changes occurring from the 1960s of women entering the labour market and experiencing particular forms of oppression and ghettoization within it (Anthias 1980, p. 50). As with domestic labour, theorizations of women's place in production began with attempts to situate them within existing Marxist categories. These categories were subsequently re-formulated first by adding new gender-specific categories – such as the sexual division of labour – and then by grounding conceptualizations more explicitly on gender-sensitive, historical materialist analyses. The result of these later studies has been to transform the Marxist foundations of Socialist Feminism. Such shifts will be detailed by considering how women have been theorized as a reserve army of labour within the framework of a sexual division of labour and how, in turn, this relates to class.

Veronica Beechey begins her 'Notes on female wage labour in capitalist production' (1977) with the work of Marx and Engels, though she quickly points to the need to go beyond them (p. 48). It is women's specific place within the family – as a childbearer and rearer, and as a domestic labourer paid by the male wage to reproduce labour power – that for Beechey shapes their utility for capital and forms the basis of their specific place within the reserve army of labour.

It is therefore *married* women 'who do not, by virtue of the existence of the family, have to bear the total costs of production and reproduction out of their own wages' (p. 54) and thereby it is they who are of particular value to capitalists and whose entry into the labour force is usually resisted by white, male, skilled workers. It is the cheapness and family orientation of married women workers which positions them in a particular way in the class structure, for it allows them to become a subgroup of the reserve army of labour and the working class. The constitution and mobilization of women as this reserve army is related by Beechey to the role of the state, to the historical conditions of labour recruitment and to the existence of working-class resistance in Britain.

Evaluation of Beechey's conceptualization of women's wage labour has been both theoretically and empirically based. Floya Anthias (1980) and

Lucy Bland *et al.* (1978) question Beechey's use of Marx's reserve army of labour idea and the theoretical place of women within it. For example, Lucy Bland and others argue for the need to consider more than production relations when the reserve army of labour is theorized. They write:

it is this role in the family which limits the extent to which we can *understand* women's subordination *only* through the economic relations of capital. We are, therefore, directed 'outside' the relations of capital to the patriarchal relations between women and men which capital 'takes over', and to the particular ideological constitution of femininity that those relations construct.

(Bland *et al.* 1978, p. 35)

It is from this position that they introduce sexuality and patriarchy into the constitution of wage work, 'women's work', and the reserve army of labour. Even labour power, they argue, is charged with sexuality so that, for example, the secretary or the boutique assistant is valued very much because of her sexuality.

The importance of sexuality to the constitution of production relations has become more apparent as Social Feminists have engaged in detailed studies of particular workplaces and new international divisions of labour (Cavendish 1982; Cockburn 1981; Elson and Pearson 1981; Game and Pringle 1983; Milkman 1982; Phillips and Taylor 1980; Pollert 1981; Westwood 1984). These studies are also further challenging the applicability of the reserve army thesis. In particular historical and contemporary studies in Britain (Bruegel 1979), Australia (Currey *et al.* 1978; Power 1983), and the United States (Milkman 1982) have re-emphasized the importance of the sexual division of labour in shaping the experience of women workers in times of capitalist crisis.

As a result of changing material conditions affecting the employment of women and new theoretical priorities in the areas of sexuality, power, and the family, the previous attempts by Socialist Feminists to *apply* Marxism to analyses of women's waged work have been transformed into the recasting of Marxist categories. The move is towards a historical materialist conception in which women are variously constructed and oppressed by sexuality, the family, and by work (paid and unpaid). Such a move is also evident in theorizations of class.

Women's relations to the class system delimited by Marx have perennially foundered on the formulation of class as a concept only relevant to *waged* workers. The argument over women's place in the 'reserve army of labour' is about their availability, utility, and dispensability in the paid labour force. Other discussions of class also concentrate on where women fit in a hierarchy of occupations – though they are always seen as occupying a particular, lesser, or secondary position within a

sexually differentiated workforce (Baron and Norris 1976; West 1978; CSE Group 1982).

It is therefore hard to disagree with Kuhn and Wolpe's introduction to Jackie West's attempt to theorize women's class position:

while the conclusion here is that the only basis for analysing the class position of women is through capitalist labour relations and the specificity of women's position within them, the problem of how to deal with married women who are not paid workers . . . is left unresolved.  
(1978, p. 221)

The move from this conclusion to an abandoning of 'class' as a concept inapplicable to women has rarely occurred amongst Socialist Feminists (an exception being Matthews 1984c). Rather, the theoretical question remains but is sidestepped by those who *believe*, from experience, political training, and theoretical grounding in Marxism, that class remains a fundamental determinant of social relations in capitalist societies.

Class as something lived through the family unit and through paid work, experienced differently by women and men at particular junctures, becomes for Anne Phillips the means to write about *Divided Loyalties* (1987). For Phillips, gender and class provide the basis of unity but also division in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Britain. Class remains an abstract, objective, but never clarified category for Phillips. In her description women adopt the classes of their fathers or husbands and of their paid workplace at various times, but her main concern is with class as a dynamic, lived and gendered reality. She writes: 'Class has undoubtedly defined the experience of women; the female experience has in turn defined the meaning of class. But the way this has happened has altered through time' (1987, p. 29). Her concern then is not with the relevance of Marxist notions of class to women, but with how a loosely apprehended division between the working class and the middle class assumes a complex set of meanings and realities over time. The objective is not a broadened Marxist orthodoxy but a theoretically informed, historically grounded account which will offer some clues to answer a vital contemporary question: how can a women's movement, built on a notion of gender unity, also acknowledge and respect our divided loyalties: our class, racial, and ethnic differences?

In this Phillips is responding to the critique of Socialist Feminism by women of colour as much as to the bluntness of Marxist theorizations on class. It is a move also impelled by the inadequacy of general theorizations on the relationship of Marxism and feminism, capitalism and patriarchy (pp. 20-1).

## MARXISM AND FEMINISM OR MARXIST FEMINISM?

After a period in Socialist Feminist theorizing dominated by efforts to relate Marxism to women's paid and unpaid labour, concern shifted in the late 1970s to specifying the theoretical links between a concept widely used by Radical Feminists and Women's Liberationists – patriarchy – and Marx's theory of capitalism. While for many women who maintained their links with the organized Left this question was already answered – so that women's oppression was coterminous with their family and class position and would end as a result of a party-led socialist revolution (Ehrenreich 1975; Smith 1977; Waters 1972) – to many others it was of vital theoretical concern.

In both the United States and Britain, between 1978 and 1981, there emerged concerted attempts to link Marxism and feminism. The problem was no longer defined as fitting women into Marxist categories, but rather as *uniting* and *transforming* two quite separate theoretical traditions. Reviewing some of this work Diana Adlam (1979) described two approaches to this problem: one prioritized patriarchy and saw capitalism as but one particular modification of patriarchal relations (Eisenstein 1979b; McDonough and Harrison 1978); and the other constructed capitalist relations as essences conditioned in the form of their appearance by the *needs* of patriarchy (Beechey 1978; Hartmann 1981).

The attempts to fuse Engel's concern with *both* production and reproduction, to theoretically unite Marxism and feminism, thus prove ultimately unsatisfactory. The efforts by, for example, Zillah Eisenstein (1979b) and Heidi Hartmann (1981) to generate a grand theory of capitalist patriarchy collapse under their own dualistic assumptions; and also, I would argue, from the ultimate incompatibility of the two political and theoretical projects. These attempts though do push the debates boldly ahead in a number of different directions and create an important legacy in their *materialist* definition of patriarchy.

Through such theorizations by Eisenstein, Hartmann, and others *patriarchy* enters Socialist Feminist discourse. While use of the concept has generated a heated debate (Alexander and Taylor 1980; Beechey 1979; Court 1983; Kuhn 1978; Magarey 1984; Rowbotham 1979; Women's Publishing Collective 1976) its incorporation into Socialist Feminism moves to centre stage the issue of male power. For, once male power is seriously prioritized, as Christine Delphy had earlier argued, Marxist theory is revealed as increasingly inadequate. The attempts to weld Marxist to feminist theory stumble on this point. The problem has led to the increasingly *non-Marxist* theorizations in the name of Socialist Feminism already suggested in discussions of domestic and paid labour, and to more historically grounded studies of particular situations (Phillips 1981, 1987; Matthews 1984b). For some, with whom I must agree, it has led to

the conclusion that theories of Marxism and patriarchy are ultimately incompatible (Adlam 1979); and that Marxism itself may be thoroughly sexist and unable to incorporate feminist concerns (Campioni and Gross 1983; Delphy 1984; Matthews 1984a), though its method and historical materialist base can still be of use.

### FEMINIST HISTORICAL MATERIALISMS?

Theorizations which detach themselves from the Marxist tradition and prioritize female materiality and oppression have occurred in all three countries considered in this chapter.

In 1983 Mia Campioni and Elizabeth Gross writing in a Sydney-based journal portrayed Marxism as a 'Master-knowledge of the left' which relegated 'other forms of knowledge and struggle to a secondary or auxiliary position' (1983, p. 117). These 'others' included the feminist struggle for women's liberation. As a result of the institutional position of Marxism within the academy, trade unions, and the organized Left, the definition of itself as radically other to capitalism and its theoretical assumptions, they argue that Marxism is phallogentric. Further, they suggest that the concepts and values of Marxism and its dominance of the Left political field 'are in fact effects of the suppression of the problem of sexual difference' (p. 133). They elaborate:

One of the most striking elisions of marxist theory is its neglect and ignorance of the role of the body in constituting consciousness and in characterising exploitation and oppression . . . marxism has seriously arrested work done by feminists and others on specifying that particular forms of bodies and bodily processes mark out differences between subjectivities, that subjectivity is sexed. By simply dismissing all of this as biologism and essentialism, the necessary analysis of biological existence and its representation in psychical life is neatly pre-empted, and the role of men in women's oppression is conveniently ignored.

(p. 132).

From this point they urge a historical materialist feminism grounded upon women's bodies. This is not a Radical Feminist call based on a unified female biology, but derives from a multifaceted conception of the body. They write:

This implies that there cannot be one or even two kinds of subject, but many different kinds, bounded not simply by the biological body but by its necessary social and individual signification. The body is

not simply the 'seat' of subjectivity; it is also the target of technologies of power and forms of social control in all cultures.

(pp. 132–3).

Further detail as to what form this analysis could take is merely suggested in such a passage. But in another country, a sensitivity to the sexed body and to the technologies and ideologies which define it has led the American Donna Haraway (1985) to outline a transformed Socialist Feminism.

Haraway bases her reformulation within a Socialist Feminism concerned not only with production relations but also culture, post-modernism, and utopianism, as well as women's diversity and contradictory interests. She also grounds her theorization on the new high-tech world of information technology – a world in which the interface between human and machine, home and work, idealism and materialism is breached. It is a world where a 'cyborg myth' transgressing these and other boundaries can form the basis for seizing control of the processes engendering our domination. She writes:

The actual situation of women is their integration/exploitation into a world system of production/reproduction and communication called the informatics of domination. The home, workplace, market, public arena, the body itself – all can be dispersed and interfaced in nearly infinite, polymorphous ways, with large consequences for women and others. . . . One important route for reconstructing socialist–feminist politics is through theory and practice addressed to the social relations of science and technology, including crucially the systems of myth and meanings structuring our imaginations. The cyborg is a kind of disassembled and reassembled, post-modern collective and personal self. This is the self feminists must code.

(1985, p. 82).

For Haraway such coding is not to be attained by the generation of grand theories but by the 'subtle understanding of emerging pleasures, experiences, and powers with serious potential for changing the rules of the game' (p. 91). Such understandings create cyborg myths, oppositional discourses, potent subjectivities which challenge and rewrite the material and cultural grids of our oppressions. One such myth Haraway describes as *Sister Outsider*, or 'women of color':

In my political myth, Sister Outsider is the offshore woman, whom U.S. workers, female and feminized, are supposed to regard as the enemy preventing their solidarity, threatening their security. Onshore . . . Sister Outsider is a potential amidst the races and ethnic identities of women manipulated for division, competition, and exploitation in the same industries.

(p. 93)

With subjectivities defined by 'fusions of outsider identities', 'women of color' have contested these definitions and done so by writing themselves. As Haraway concludes: 'Cyborg writing is about the power to survive, not on the basis of original innocence, but on the basis of seizing the tools to mark the world that marked them as other' (p. 94).

In Britain too, a new direction and one of the most profound questionings of the material foundations of Socialist Feminism itself, has emerged from 'women of colour'. Building on a broader political movement for the recognition of institutionalized racism and drawing on American Black Feminism, a number of challenges were made in the mid-1980s to 'Imperial feminism' (Amos and Parmar 1984). Quickly exposed by such challenges were some of the power relations occupied by those who were defining Socialist Feminist theory. As Michèle Barrett and Mary McIntosh wrote in their effort to reconsider their book *The Anti-Social Family* (1982) from an awareness of race and ethnicity:

Most . . . white feminist writers are middle-class intellectual women who are immersed in specifically British traditions of education and political thought, largely left and libertarian. Most of them, however disadvantaged they may feel as women, have immense privileges in terms of race and class, which give them access to publishing, the media, teaching, public meetings of various kinds. These privileged white feminists, such as ourselves, have been able to make their voices heard, and to some extent at least, respected.

(1985, p. 25)

The exchange surrounding this attempt contained in the pages of the (Socialist) *Feminist Review* reveal the discursive foundations of much contemporary Socialist Feminism and suggest a new materialist base from which different theoretical interventions will come. For not only do Barrett and McIntosh acknowledge their own class and racial privileges, but they *begin* a process of questioning Socialist Feminist theory in these terms – as something produced by mainly white, middle-class women, using a Leftist tradition largely unconcerned with racism. It is from these positions that they look again at their own work on the division of labour, the family, and patriarchy. All of these concepts are found to 'negate the existence and experience of black women' (1985, p. 35), but not all are thereby in need of a radical reconceptualization, for Barrett and McIntosh remain bound to a particular branch of the Socialist Feminist tradition. So, for example, 'patriarchy' as an 'unambiguous male dominance' (p. 38) is rejected for a definition which is specific to social relations, one which 'combine(s) a public dimension of power, exploitation or status with a dimension of personal servility' (p. 39). As a non-general, all-embracing formulation, Barrett and McIntosh see this redefined notion of patriarchy as able to incorporate the diverse experiences of women, blacks under slavery, and

black women's 'personal service' work in contemporary Britain (p. 39). However, as Hazel Carby observed:

we find that even this refined use of the concept cannot adequately account for the fact that both slaves and manumitted males did not have this type of patriarchal power. . . . There are very obvious power structures in both colonial and slave formations and they are predominantly patriarchal . . . the historically specific forms of racism force us to modify or alter the application of the term 'patriarchy' to black men. Black women have been dominated 'patriarchally' in different ways by men of different 'colours'.

(1984, p. 218)

Barrett and McIntosh's evaluations of other concepts are similarly criticized as being too blunt to encompass the diversity of experiences structured by class, race, and sex. More seriously, their reformulations are seen as unable to include the particular case of black women. So, for example, they reject the point made by Hazel Carby that black families have 'functioned as a prime source of resistance to (racial) oppression' (1984, p. 214) as one from which they should re-evaluate their position on the 'Anti-social family' (Barrett and McIntosh 1985, p. 423). In this they follow the analytic imperatives of Socialist Feminism which prioritize class and social reproduction as the major sites of oppression for women. As Althusserians they also transform racism into ethnic difference operating primarily in the realm of the ideological. Not only is the horror of racism rendered outside the 'academic' discourse, but ultimately so is its theoretical importance. What is sidestepped is the necessary transformation of that theory in the light of black women's experience, an experience not of ethnicity but of racism (Kazi 1986; Mirza 1986; Ramazanoglu 1986). As Hamidi Kazi concludes her assessment of Barrett and McIntosh's reflection: 'They have thus hidden the real issues of racism, sexism and the capitalist exploitation of black women behind ethnic characteristics' (1986, p. 90). Barrett and McIntosh do not *theorize* the question of race – though they point to the urgency of such a task (1985, p. 41). Heidi Safia Mirza responds:

The fact that we can articulate our own and others' economic, political and social realities within the confines of a black feminist analysis can seem very threatening to socialist-feminists, who have hitherto conducted themselves as the vanguard of our oppression from their intellectual ivory towers.

(1986, p. 104)

While none of the women engaged in this exchange reject the importance of theoretically articulating class, sex, ethnicity, and race, it is primarily at the level of political practice that their analyses are conducted – not in the

realm of debating Marxist theory. The implications are that such theory and those who champion it derive from a white Socialist Feminist tradition and they have to recognize their own powerful and particular positions (Bhavnani and Coulson 1986). By implication Socialist Feminists must acknowledge the different materialist positions occupied by women who define themselves as racially or ethnically different as a source of new transformations of the Socialist Feminist intervention.~

## CONCLUSION

Building on a particular set of texts in the Marxist tradition, Socialist Feminist interventions have occurred first to include women into and then progressively to transform and ultimately to abandon, much of the Marxist problematic. Shifts have occurred in the light of different feminist theorizations impacting upon Socialist Feminism – especially from psychoanalysis and cultural criticism – and as a result of different political priorities, which have moved women's oppression by men, and finally racial oppression, on to the theoretical agenda. The present point then is a multiplicity of possible directions all loosely embracing *historical materialism* as the place from which new Socialist Feminist interventions will be made.

## NOTES

- 1 In an earlier version of this chapter other areas of interest to Socialist Feminists – in particular the family, the state, sexuality, and ideology – were included. Space prevents a detailed inclusion here of this work.
- 2 From the time of Marx and Engels until the re-emergence of a self-conscious Socialist Feminism in the 1970s Socialists have considered the position of women in their theory, in their parties, and in their states under the rubric 'The Woman Question'. In such considerations the priorities accorded class over gender in analyses and action is rarely questioned, and the theoretical place of women is, by implication, located outside mainstream considerations. This is unlike the approach taken in the 1970s and 1980s by those seeing themselves as Socialist Feminists.
- 3 The question of the alignment or non-alignment of Socialist Feminist women with organized Left parties ranging from the far Left to Labour parties has been a vital issue for many women especially in Britain and Australia (Ballantyne 1979; Campbell 1984; Rowbotham *et al.* 1979; Segal 1987). Space does not permit a detailed examination of this issue here.
- 4 Such a shift is not only being urged by those theorists critical of the Domestic Labour Debate and by those informed by other theoretical developments, but also by theorizations embedded in careful empirical studies of women's domestic worlds. Thus Meg Luxton's (1986) study of three generations of working-class households draws out the class and patriarchal relations of the small, remote, single-industry Canadian town of Flin Flon. The result for Roberta Hamilton confirms the importance of such studies in reorienting the Domestic Labour debate to the 'experience of women's oppression' (1986).

REFERENCES

- Adlam, D. (1979) 'The case against capitalist patriarchy', *m/f*, 3, pp. 83-102.
- Alexander, S. and Taylor, B. (1980) 'In defence of "patriarchy"', *New Statesman*, 1 February, p. 161.
- Amos, V. and Parmar, P. (1984) 'Challenging imperial feminism', *Feminist Review*, 17, pp. 3-19.
- Anthias, F. (1980) 'Women and the reserve army of labour: a critique of Veronica Beechey', *Capital and Class*, 10, pp. 50-63.
- Ballantyne, G. (1979) 'Who decides? Perspectives on the abortion campaign', *Scarlet Woman*, 8, pp. 23-30.
- Barrett, M. (1980) *Women's Oppression Today: Problems in Marxist Feminist Analysis*, Verso, London.
- Barrett, M. and McIntosh, M. (1982) *The Anti-Social Family*, Verso, London.
- Barrett, M. and McIntosh, M. (1985) 'Ethnocentrism and socialist feminist theory', *Feminist Review*, 20, pp. 25-47.
- Barron, R. D. and Norris, G. M. (1976) 'Sexual divisions and the dual labour market', in D. L. Barker and S. Allen (eds) *Dependence and Exploitation in Work and Marriage*, Longman, London, pp. 47-69.
- Beechey, V. (1977) 'Some notes on female wage labour in capitalist production', *Capital and Class*, 3, pp. 45-66.
- Beechey, V. (1978) 'Women and production: a critical analysis of some sociological theories of women's work', in A. Kuhn and A. M. Wolpe (eds) *Feminism and Materialism: Women and Modes of Production*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, pp. 155-97.
- Beechey, V. (1979) 'On patriarchy', *Feminist Review*, 3, pp. 66-82.
- Bengelsdorf, C. and Hageman, A. (1979) 'Emerging from underdevelopment: women and work in Cuba', in Z. Eisenstein (ed.) *Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism*, Monthly Review Press, New York, pp. 279-95.
- Benston, M. (1969) 'The political economy of women's liberation', in E. H. Altbach (ed.) *From Feminism to Liberation*, Shenkman, Cambridge, Mass., pp. 199-210.
- Bhavnani, K. K. and Coulson, M. (1986) 'Transforming socialist feminism: the challenge of racism', *Feminist Review*, 23, pp. 81-92.
- Bland, L., Brunsdon, C., Hobson, D., and Winship, J. (1978) 'Women inside and outside the relations of production', in Women's Studies Group (eds) *Women Take Issue: Aspects of Women's Subordination*, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, Hutchinson, London, pp. 35-77.
- Bruegel, I. (1979) 'Women as a reserve army of labour: a note on recent British experience', *Feminist Review*, 3, pp. 12-23.
- Burton, C. (1985) *Subordination: Feminism and Social Theory*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney.
- Campbell, B. (1984) 'Transforming the socialist movement', *Australian Left Review*, 83, pp. 10-15.
- Campioni, M. and Gross, E. (1983) 'Love's labours lost: Marxism and feminism', in J. Allan and P. Patton (eds) *Beyond Marxism?: Interventions After Marx*, Intervention Publications, Sydney, pp. 113-41.
- Carby, H. V. (1984) 'White woman listen! Black feminism and the boundaries of sisterhood', in *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s Britain*, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, Hutchinson, London, pp. 212-35.
- Cavendish, R. (1982) *Women on the Line*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London.
- Cliff, T. (1984) *Class Struggle and Women's Liberation*, Bookmarks, London.

## FEMINIST INTERVENTIONS

- Cockburn, C. (1981) 'The material of male power', *Feminist Review*, 9, pp. 41–58.
- Cockburn, C. (1984) 'Trade unions and the radicalizing of socialist feminism', *Feminist Review*, 16, pp. 43–6.
- Coote, A. and Campbell, B. (1982) *Sweet Freedom: The Struggle for Women's Liberation*, Picador, London.
- Coulson, M., Magas, B., and Wainwright, H. (1975) 'The housewife and her labour under capitalism – a critique', *New Left Review*, 89, pp. 59–72.
- Court, D. (1983) 'The centrality of patriarchy', *Arena*, 65, pp. 162–71.
- Coward, R. (1983) *Patriarchal Precedents: Sexuality and Social Relations*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London.
- Coward, R. (1984) *Female Desire: Women's Sexuality Today*, Paladin, London.
- CSE Sex and Class Group (1982) 'Sex and class', *Capital and Class*, 16, pp. 78–93.
- Currey, C., Moore, M., and O'Sullivan, G. (1978) 'The reserve army under seige', *Scarlet Woman*, 7, pp. 11–13.
- Dalla Costa, M. and James, S. (1972) *The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community*, Falling Wall Press, London.
- Davin, D. (1987) 'Engels and the making of Chinese family policy', in J. Sayers, M. Evans, and N. Redclift (eds) *Engels Revisited: New Feminist Essays*, Tavistock, London, pp. 145–63.
- Delmar, R. (1979) 'Looking again at Engels's "Origin of the family, private property and the state"', in J. Mitchell and A. Oakley (eds) *The Rights and Wrongs of Women*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, pp. 271–87.
- Delphy, C. (1976) *The Main Enemy*, Women's Research and Resources Centre, London.
- Delphy, C. (1984) *Close to Home: A Materialist Analysis of Women's Oppression*, Hutchinson in association with The Explorations in Feminism Collective, London.
- Edholm, F., Harris, O., and Young, K. (1977) 'Conceptualising women', *Critique of Anthropology*, 3:9 and 10, pp. 101–30.
- Ehrenreich, B. (1975) 'Speech to the National Conference on Socialist Feminism', *Socialist Revolution*, 26:5(4), pp. 85–93.
- Einhorn, B. (1981) 'Socialist emancipation: the women's movement in the German Democratic Republic', *Women's Studies International Quarterly*, 4:4, pp. 435–52.
- Eisen, A. (1984) *Women and Revolution in Vietnam*, Zed, London.
- Eisenstein, Z. H. (1979a) *Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism*, Monthly Review Press, New York.
- Eisenstein, Z. H. (1979b) 'Developing a theory of capitalist patriarchy and socialist feminism', in Z. Eisenstein (ed.) *Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism*, Monthly Review Press, New York, pp. 5–40.
- Elson, D. and Pearson, R. (1981) 'The subordination of women and the internationalisation of factory production', in K. Young, C. Wolkowitz, and R. McCullough (eds) *Of Marriage and the Market: Women's Subordination in International Perspective*, CSE Books, London, pp. 144–66.
- Engels, F. (1975) *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, International Publishers, New York.
- Evans, M. (1987) 'Engels: materialism and morality', in J. Sayers, M. Evans, and N. Redclift (eds) *Engels Revisited: New Feminist Essays*, Tavistock, London, pp. 81–97.
- Fox, B. (1986) 'Never done: the struggle to understand domestic labour and women's oppression', in R. Hamilton and M. Barrett (eds) *The Politics of Diversity*, Verso, London, pp. 180–9.
- Friedan, B. (1963) *The Feminine Mystique*, Penguin, Harmondsworth.

## SOCIALIST FEMINISMS

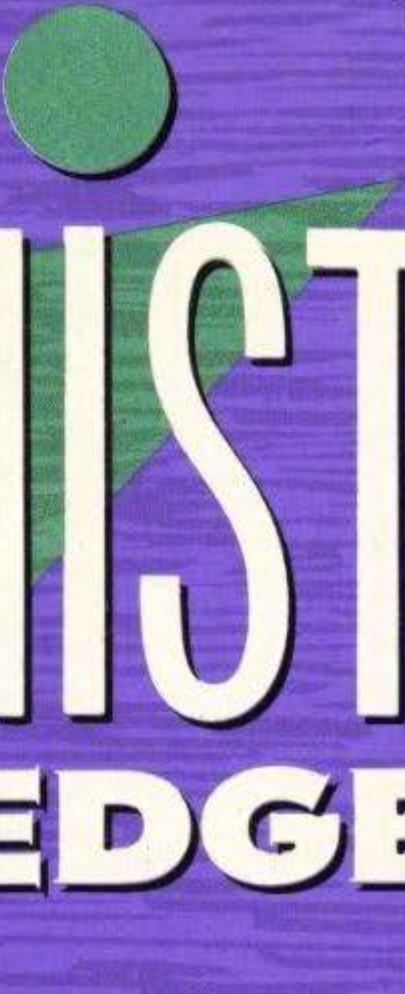
- Game, A. and Pringle, R. (1983) *Gender at Work*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney.
- Gardiner, J. (1975) 'Women's domestic labour', *New Left Review*, 89, pp. 47–58.
- Gardiner, J. (1976) 'Political economy of domestic labour in capitalist society', in D. L. Barker and S. Allen (eds) *Dependence and Exploitation in Work and Marriage*, Longman, London, pp. 109–20.
- Gavron, H. (1966) *The Captive Wife: Conflicts of Housebound Mothers*, Penguin, Harmondsworth.
- Hague, D. and Carruthers, L. (1981) 'Socialist-feminism and trade unions: work in the P.S.A.', *Scarlet Woman*, 13, pp. 2–5.
- Hamilton, R. and Barrett, M. (eds) (1986) *The Politics of Diversity*, Verso, London.
- Haraway, D. (1985) 'A manifesto for cyborgs: science, technology and socialist feminism in the 1980s', *Socialist Review*, 15:2, pp. 65–107.
- Hartmann, H. (1981) 'The unhappy marriage of marxism and feminism: towards a more progressive union', in L. Sargent (ed.) *Women and Revolution*, South End Press, Boston, pp. 1–41.
- Jaggar, A. M. (1983) *Feminist Politics and Human Nature*, Harvester Press, Sussex.
- Kazi, H. (1986) 'The beginning of a debate long due: some observations on ethnocentrism and socialist-feminist theory', *Feminist Review*, 22, pp. 87–91.
- Kuhn, A. (1978) 'Feminism and materialism', in A. Kuhn and A. M. Wolpe (eds) *Feminism and Materialism: Women and Modes of Production*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, pp. 1–10.
- Kuhn, A. and Wolpe, A. M. (eds) (1978) *Feminism and Materialism: Women and Modes of Production*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London.
- Lenin, V. I. (1982) 'Women and society', in K. Marx, V. I. Lenin, F. Engels, and J. V. Stalin (eds) *The Woman Question: Selections*, International Publishers, New York, pp. 49–55.
- Luxton, M. (1986) 'Two hands for the clock: changing patterns in the gendered division of labour in the home', in R. Hamilton and M. Barrett (eds) *The Politics of Diversity*, Verso, London, pp. 35–52.
- McDonough, R. and Harrison, R. (1978) 'Patriarchy and relations of production', in A. Kuhn and A. H. Wolpe (eds) *Feminism and Materialism: Women and Modes of Production*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, pp. 11–41.
- McIntosh, M. (1982) 'The family in socialist-feminist politics', in R. Brunt and C. Rowan (eds) *Feminism, Culture and Politics*, Lawrence & Wishart, London, pp. 109–29.
- McLellan, D. (1983) *Marx*, Fontana/Collins, Glasgow.
- Magarey, S. (1984) 'Can there be justice for women under capitalism? Two views. Questions about "Patriarchy"', in D. Broom (ed.) *Unfinished Business: Social Justice for Women in Australia*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, pp. 181–7.
- Marx, K. (1974) *Capital: A Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production*, vol. I, Progress Publishers, Moscow.
- Marx, K. and Engels, F. (1976) *Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels: Collected Works*, vol. 5, Lawrence & Wishart, London.
- Matthews, J. J. (1984a) 'Putting women first', *Australian Left Review*, 83, pp. 16–19.
- Matthews, J. J. (1984b) *Good and Mad Women*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney.
- Matthews, J. J. (1984c) 'Deconstructing the masculine universe: the case of women's work', in *All Her Labours: Working It Out*, ed. Women and Labour Publications Collective, Hale & Ironmonger, Sydney, pp. 11–23.
- Milkman, R. (1982) 'Redefining "women's work": the sexual division of labour in the auto industry during World War II', *Feminist Studies*, 8:2, pp. 336–72.
- Mitchell, J. (1966) 'Women: the longest revolution', *New Left Review*, 40, pp. 11–37.
- Mitchell, J. (1971) *Woman's Estate*, Vintage Books, New York.

## FEMINIST INTERVENTIONS

- Mitchell, J. (1979) *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*, Penguin, Harmondsworth.
- Mitchell, J. and Rose, J. (eds) (1982) *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the Ecole Freudienne*, Macmillan, London.
- Mirza, H. S. (1986) 'The dilemma of socialist-feminism: a case for black feminism', *Feminist Review*, 22, pp. 103-5.
- Molyneux, M. (1979) 'Beyond the domestic labour debate', *New Left Review*, 116, pp. 3-27.
- Morton, P. (1971) 'Women's work is never done', in H. Altbach (ed.) *From Feminism to Liberation*, Schenkman, Cambridge, Mass., pp. 211-27.
- O'Brien, P. (1970) 'Some overseas comparisons', in R. Gordon (ed.) *The Australian New Left: Critical Essays and Strategy*, Heinemann, Melbourne.
- O'Brien, M. (1981) *The Politics of Reproduction*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London.
- O'Brien, M. (1982) 'Feminist theory and dialectical logic', *Signs*, 7:1, pp. 144-57.
- Ollman, B. (1976) *Alienation: Marx's Conception of Man in Capitalist Society*, Cambridge University Press.
- Phillips, A. (1981) 'Marxism and feminism', in Feminist Anthology Collective (eds) *No Turning Back: Writings from the Women's Liberation Movement 1975-80*, Women's Press, London, pp. 90-108.
- Phillips, A. (1987) *Divided Loyalties: Dilemmas of Sex and Class*, Virago, London.
- Phillips, A. and Taylor, B. (1980) 'Sex and skill: notes towards a feminist economics', *Feminist Review*, 6, pp. 79-88.
- Pollert, A. (1981) *Girls, Wives and Factory Lives*, Macmillan, London.
- Porter, C. (1980) *Alexandra Kollontai: A Biography*, Virago, London.
- Power, M. (1983) 'Women as a reserve army: the experience of Australian women in the 1974-82 crisis', paper presented to Conference on 'Australia and Canada: Differing consequences for women of a common culture', Vancouver.
- Ramazanoglu, C. (1986) 'Ethnocentrism and socialist-feminist theory: a response to Barret and McIntosh', *Feminist Review*, 22, pp. 83-6.
- Randall, M. (1979) 'Introducing the family code', in Z. Eisenstein (ed.) *Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism*, Monthly Review Press, New York, pp. 296-8.
- Rowbotham, S. (1972) *Women, Resistance and Revolution*, Penguin, Harmondsworth.
- Rowbotham, S. (1979) 'The trouble with patriarchy', *New Statesman*, 21/28 December, pp. 970-1.
- Rowbotham, S., Segal, L., and Wainwright, H. (1979) *Beyond the Fragments: Feminism and the Making of Socialism*, Merlin Press, London.
- Sayers, J. (1987) 'For Engels: psychoanalytic perspectives', in J. Sayers, M. Evans, and N. Redclift (eds) *Engels Revisited: New Feminist Essays*, Tavistock, London, pp. 57-80.
- Sayers, J., Evans, M., and Redclift, N. (eds) (1987) *Engels Revisited: New Feminist Essays*, Tavistock, London.
- Scott, H. (1976) *Women and Socialism: Experiences from Eastern Europe*, Allison & Busby, London.
- Secombe, W. (1973) 'The housewife and her labour under capitalism', *New Left Review*, 83, pp. 3-24.
- Segal, L. (1987) *Is the Future Female?* Virago, London.
- Smith, D. E. (1977) *Feminism and Marxism: A Place to Begin, A Way to Go*, New Star Books, Vancouver.
- Smith, P. (1978) 'Domestic labour and Marx's theory of value', in A. Kuhn and A. M. Wolpe (eds) *Feminism and Materialism: Women and Modes of Production*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, pp. 198-219.

## SOCIALIST FEMINISMS

- Stacey, J. (1979) 'When patriarchy kowtows: the significance of the Chinese family revolution for feminist theory', in Z. Eisenstein (ed.) *Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism*, Monthly Review Press, New York, pp. 299–348.
- Taylor, B. (1980) 'Lords of creation: Marxism; feminism and "Utopian" socialism', *Radical America*, 14:4, pp. 41–6.
- Taylor, B. (1983) *Eve and the New Jerusalem*, Virago, London.
- Vogel, L. (1983) *Marxism and the Oppression of Women: Towards a Unitary Theory*, Pluto, London.
- Waters, M. A. (1972) 'Feminism and the marxist movement', *International Socialist Review*, October, pp. 8–23.
- West, J. (1978) 'Women, sex and class', in A. Kuhn and A. M. Wolpe (eds) *Feminism and Materialism: Women and Modes of Production*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, pp. 220–53.
- Westwood, S. (1984) *All Day Every Day: Factory and Family in the Making of Women's Lives*, Pluto, London.
- Women's Publishing Collective (Cooper, S., Crowley, S., and Holtam, C.) (1976) *Papers on Patriarchy*, Patriarchy Conference, London.



# **FEMINIST KNOWLEDGE**

CRITIQUE AND CONSTRUCT

**EDITED BY SNEJA GUNEW**

# FEMINIST KNOWLEDGE

## CRITIQUE AND CONSTRUCT

edited by  
*Sneja Gunew*



ROUTLEDGE  
London and New York

First published 1990  
by Routledge  
11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada  
by Routledge  
a division of Routledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc.  
29 West 35th Street, New York, NY 10001

Collection as a whole © 1990 Routledge; individual  
contributions © 1990 the respective contributors

Typeset in 10/12pt Times by  
Hope Services Ltd.  
Printed in Great Britain by  
Richard Clay Ltd, Bungay, Suffolk.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or  
reproduced or utilized in any form or by any electronic,  
mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter  
invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any  
information storage or retrieval system, without permission in  
writing from the publishers.

*British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data*  
Feminist Knowledge: critique and construct.

1. Feminism  
I. Gunew, Sneja  
305.4'2

*Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data*  
Feminist knowledge: critique and construct/edited by Sneja  
Gunew.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 0 415 01226 0. – ISBN 0 415 01227 9 (pbk.)

1. Feminism – Philosophy. 2 Feminist criticism.

I. Gunew, Sneja Marina

HQ1154.F44565 1990

305.42'01–dc20 89–10960

# CONTENTS

## INTRODUCTION

*Sneja Gunew*

1

### Part I Feminist knowledge

#### 1 FEMINIST KNOWLEDGE: CRITIQUE AND CONSTRUCT

*Sneja Gunew*

13

#### 2 FEMINIST KNOWLEDGE, WOMEN'S LIBERATION, AND WOMEN'S STUDIES

*Susan Sheridan*

36

### Part II Contemporary theories of power and subjectivity

#### 3 CONTEMPORARY THEORIES OF POWER AND SUBJECTIVITY

*Elizabeth Grosz*

59

#### 4 FEMINISM, SUBJECTIVITY, AND SEXUAL DIFFERENCE

*Philipa Rothfield*

121

### Part III Discourses of definition

#### 5 PHILOSOPHY

*Elizabeth Grosz*

147

#### 6 PSYCHOANALYSIS AND FEMINISM

*Hazel Rowley and Elizabeth Grosz*

175

#### 7 THE DEFINITION OF MALE AND FEMALE: BIOLOGICAL REDUCTIONISM AND THE SANCTIONS OF NORMALITY

*Gisela T. Kaplan and Lesley J. Rogers*

205

<b>8 RELIGION</b>	
<i>Marie Tulip</i>	<b>229</b>

#### **Part IV Feminist interventions**

<b>9 RADICAL FEMINISM: CRITIQUE AND CONSTRUCT</b>	
<i>Robyn Rowland and Renate D. Klein</i>	<b>271</b>
<b>10 SOCIALIST FEMINISMS</b>	
<i>Louise C. Johnson</i>	<b>304</b>
<b>11 CONCLUSION: A NOTE ON ESSENTIALISM AND DIFFERENCE</b>	
<i>Elizabeth Grosz</i>	<b>332</b>
<i>Notes on contributors</i>	<b>345</b>
<i>Index</i>	<b>349</b>