

https://dspace.org/

Feminist interpretations and South African studies: Some suggested avenues for exploration

Bozzoli, Belinda

1981-10-19
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/8438

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

AFRICANA LIBRARY
BOZZOLI

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND

A F R I C A N S T U D I E S I N S T I T U T E

African Studies Seminar Paper
to be presented at Seminar in
RW 319 at 4.00 pm on Monday,
the 19th October, 1981.

FEMINIST INTERPRETATIONS AND SOUTH AFRICAN STUDIES; SOME SUGGESTED AVENUES FOR EXPLORATION

by Belinda Bozzoli

I INTRODUCTION

Our understanding of South African society has been radically revised and deepened over the past decade. But in the absence of a significant South African feminist movement, the recent radical revision of South African history, sociology and politics, has not, by and large, been accompanied by feminist reinterpretations of conventional wisdoms. Women remain hidden from South African history. Marxists have not been challenged by a substantial liberal or radical feminist movement into rethinking their framework of interpretation. Indeed they have often proclaimed their cynicism about what they dismiss as 'bourgeios feminism'. They forget, perhaps, that it was in many cases the prior insights of 'bourgeois political economy' which provided Marx with the basis for many of his own discoveries. And so it has been with the thrusting and revolutionary insights of radical feminists in Europe and the US. It has in many cases been their uncompromising insistence on the need to conceptualise and examine the relations between the sexes (in their eyes this indeed is the primary task of social analysts) that has provoked a spate of original and creative thought. And it is on the basis of these 'prior insights' that socialist and Marxist feminists have revised and deepened our understanding of the interaction between gender, class and capitalism. In some cases, they have begun to challenge some of Marxism's own unquestioned tenets. The impact of feminist thought has been to enlarge our sphere of understanding to include women. But it has also led us to challenge some of our common assumptions about the whole body of theory with which we work.

In spite of the fact that there has been a growth in recent years of interest in 'women in South Africa', it would seem that it is precisely this two-way interaction between feminist and Marxist concerns, that is missing. With a few outstanding exceptions, there is a lack of awareness on the part of many South African scholars of the major concerns which feminists have raised about social explanation. Our

sphere of understanding has not generally been 'enlarged' to 'include women'; while our analytical tools remain too blunt to cope with the subtleties of analysis which their complex social position demands.

Had radical feminists of the stature of Firestone[1] or Millett[2] been confronted with the South African reality, their first aim would have been to establish the patriarchal character of this society. This would not have been difficult to do. On the cultural level the Sunday Times, self-appointed arbiter and defender of that patriarchy[3] against the (usually mythical) attacks on it by lunatic libbers, would provide an excellent starting point for the analysis of female oppression of the English-speaking variety; while the proclamations of Afrikaner nationalist spokesmen about *volk, vaderland en vroumens* would surely reveal that Afrikaner patriarchy has a (hitherto unexplored) character of its own. Black culture too provides easy evidence of sexist assumptions and ideologies, as well as of rapes, wife-beatings and desertion. A cultural catalogue of chauvinism would not be hard to compile. It is, therefore, a pity that no-one has thought to compile it.

On a structural level, too, the patriarchal character of the system as a whole reveals itself readily to anyone prepared to look. The vast cleavages of race and class in this society are paralleled by the equally vast one of sex. The legal system, wages, access to positions of power and authority, are all structural mechanisms whereby a hierarchical, unequal, relationship between men and women is perpetuated.

The radical feminist would continue her analysis by looking at ideology - and again her examination of the facts would confirm the overwhelmingly sexist nature of ideological discourse in South African society. Wifehood and motherhood are the supreme female virtues; while cinema advertisments proclaim the necessity for a caricatured machismo on the part of men to complement the sweet-smelling fluffy femininity of the women who wait behind while they finish winning yacht races, rounding up cattle or flying to the moon.

We know all these facts about South African society, and we know that many books could be filled with writing about them. A radical feminist could, therefore, present a convincing case for patriarchy in South Africa. She may not persuade us that the patriarchal features of the society are its only, determinant and central, features, or that 'patriarchy' is an undifferentiated structure, but that it exists must surely be acknowledged.

It is this acknowledgement of the existence of a patriarchal system, or, as Michele Barrett would prefer to call it, 'female oppression'[4], that has been the precondition for the development of Marxist feminist thought. For having acknowledged its existence, Marxists consider it their task to go far beyond the descriptive and idealist formulations of the radical feminists. They have questioned the usefulness of the essentially biological rather than social category of 'women'; and they have attempted to construct *explanations* for patriarchy in materialist and historical terms. They have attempted to discover how it, as a relatively autonomous system of oppression

interacts with class (and in a few cases, race) and with capitalism.

Because this prior demonstration of the existence of patriarchy has not been carried out in South African studies, and perhaps partly because of the somewhat colonised mentality many South Africanists have towards 'foreign theory', what few attempts there have been to approach feminist issues in this society have been peculiarly a-theoretical, or have adopted inappropriate theoretical approaches. Many studies have been of what one might call a 'rectificatory' nature - they have undertaken the essential and as yet incomplete task of rectifying the imbalance in history-writing by recovering from the past the history of women, particularly the role played by women in resistance[5]. The value of such studies in initiating the discovering of the character of female oppression in South Africa is enormous. However, it is not clear whether these studies in themselves have fully confronted the question of patriarchy as a system or have provided an explanation for female resistance which goes beyond the 'oppression leads to resistance' notion of causation. Thus in several papers, the demonstration of the fact of female oppression is assumed to be a sufficient basis for the explanation of female participation in resistance - an assumption which fails to acknowledge the subtle variations in ideological and organisational forms taken by that resistance, and fails to provide a materialist explanation of those ideologies and forms. A rigorous materialist theory of patriarchy in South Africa is needed in order to make such explanations more possible and likely.

Besides those concerned with rectifying past omissions there have been Marxists in South Africa and elsewhere who have attempted to provide a material explanation for female oppression. They have tended to place their primary emphasis on the relationship between that oppression, and the capitalist mode of production. They have attempted to show the *functionality* of female oppression for the capitalist system. This argument, which has taken place over a whole range of issues, carries a certain conviction: female low wages and exclusion from participation in trade unions is a manifestation of capitalist manipulation and division of the working class[6]; the nuclear family, and the isolated unpaid or low paid labour performed by the woman (wife or domestic servant) within it, serves to lower the cost of reproduction of labour power[7]; the black woman in the reserve economies also functions to lower the cost of reproduction of labour power[8]; women act as a reserve army of labour, to be absorbed and rejected by capitalism in times of economic prosperity and depression respectively[9], and so on. Female subordination and inferiority do in fact suit the capitalist mode of production in certain crucial ways, and these ways can be demonstrated to great effect.

However a number of criticisms can be made of this kind of approach and indeed have been made by several analysts although their criticisms have not usually been made in the South African context[10]. The first is that while such analyses explain the

points at which female oppression and the capitalist mode of production suit each other, there are many aspects of female oppression which are not explained by such an emphasis. The prevalence of rape, for example, or the fact of the exclusion of middle class white women from positions of power and authority, can only be attributed to the machinations of capital by the most zealous and deterministic of Marxists. This criticism implies the second - which is that such analyses are based upon functionalist assumptions which are unacceptable. The problem of functionalism rests in the fact that what is in fact a description is presented as an explanation. Because female oppression performs certain functions for capitalism, this does not mean that it was a pure creation of capitalism. To posit this would be to deny the history of female oppression in other, non-capitalist, societies, and to fail to acknowledge its existence in socialist ones. This functionalist tendency in Marxist attempts to cope with female oppression reflects an anti-historical and economistic basis.

The third criticism, originally made by Hartmann, concerns the omission by such explanations of the *sine qua non* of patriarchy - the existence of unequal relations of domination and subordination between *men* and *women* - not only between *capitalism* and *women*. The 'functions performed for capitalism' argument deflects concern completely from any consideration of the fact of *male* dominance[11]. The struggle against patriarchy becomes synonymous with the struggle against capitalism.

This collapsing of female oppression into the capitalist mode of production has been the dominant tendency in analyses of women in South Africa today. It is a tendency which has suited the indigenous left, reluctant as it is to consider the implications of its own internal sexism. It appears to be far more comfortable for the left to absorb feminist struggles, or indeed subordinate them, into the general struggle against capitalism, than to begin to consider the vast implications of admitting the relative autonomy of female oppression.

The fourth and final criticism concerns the appropriateness of making use, in South Africa, of concepts and theories which have been developed by students of advanced capitalism, when the character and degree of development of capitalism in this country is itself an issue surrounded by controversy. Furthermore, the 'faultline' of race which cleaves the capitalist system adds analytical complexities which students of advanced capitalism have not fully confronted in this particular feminist sphere.

Some have suggested that the culprit in many of these imperfect approaches is Marxism itself. Hartmann, for example, suggests that 'Marxist categories are sex blind', for Marxism is about the 'allocation of places' in society, and has little concern with the specific character of those occupying those places[12]. And indeed if one accepts the variety of Marxism which *does* concern itself with the 'allocation of places' in an empty structure, then one must accept Hartmann's suggestion that categories outside of Marxism must be sought which will

enable us to 'see' women and the relations between the sexes in their specificity. For example, the structuralist couple 'production-reproduction' besides containing a functionalist bias, is not gender-specific. By using the concept 'reproduction' to explain the role played by somen in the reserves or in the home, one is still unable to explain why it is *women* and not *men* who play that role. The reproductive 'function', or 'place' is filled by someone, but who that someone is cannot be explained by reference to the internal nature of the concept 'reproduction'.

Wolpe's article 'Capitalism and Cheap Labour Power in South Africa'[13] epitomises many of these problems. Wolpe's structuralist interpretation of the genesis and functions of the 'reserve' economies over the decades since the discovery of gold, has seduced many who are interested in analysing the problem of 'women's oppression' into thinking that that very issue is one of his concerns. As the demands of the 'capitalist mode of production' for labour increased, he argues, so men were drawn, or forced, off the land, and women were increasingly left behind to maintain the subsistence economies. Men, it is suggested, were drawn into capitalist production, while women performed the function of reproducing, maintaining and sustaining in times of sickness and old age, the cheap labour force required by the mines. This interpretation has been taken by many as the 'theoretical' basis for an analysis of the role of black women in South African society[14]. And yet the model itself provides no explanation of the fact that it is women who remain behind, and men who leave. For there is no logic in the fact of proletarianisation which determines that men should be first off the land, as historians of 19th century African societies are well aware[15]. In some parts of the world, and indeed in certain parts of Boer society, young girls have been the first to leave the rural area; while in others whole families have left from the very beginning. Forces are at work which the blunt concepts of 'reproduction' and 'production' are unable to encapsulate.

Thus it may be the case that it is not Marxism itself that is the culprit, but a certain kind of Marxism - the kind which takes as its starting point, rather than its ever-changing and flexible partner, the 'structure' of social orders. It may be suggested that it is the hegemony which structuralism has exerted over South African studies in the past few years, which has made it difficult for feminists to engage with Marxists in any sort of meaningful dialogue. Theories which interpret the family as an 'ideological state apparatus'[16] are unlikely to provide fruitful ground for discourse about the struggles between men and women within it; or the struggles between the family as a social unit, and the wider system in which it is located.

To return to the original point, patriarchy as an over-arching system has not successfully been explained in spite of a variety of attempts to analyse the position of South African women. When female oppression is considered at all,

it has tended to be confined to 'rectification studies', reduced in an a-historical manner to the requirements of capitalism, or encapsulated within structuralist and often functionalist notions of production and reproduction, which are incapable of 'seeing' the specificity of gender.

The purpose of this paper is to suggest that an alternative approach to the explanation of female oppression in South Africa can be developed, an approach which draws on a rather different body of literature from that which has prevailed until now, but which remains within the Marxist tradition.

The approach tentatively put forward here rather than being based upon the notion of structure, is based upon that of struggle. What is Marxist about this approach is that it retains a materialist and historical focus; and also posits that social change is based upon the results of contradictory and opposing forces confronting one another, coming to a temporary resolution, and yet further contradictory and opposing forces emerging from that resolution. What is feminist about it is that it posits that the relevant conflicts and contradictory forces for our purposes are located in the 'domestic sphere', and that in certain crucial cases they involve conflicts between certain men and women.

To return to Wolpe, for example, it is clear that his approach does not allow us to ask questions about the sexual division of labour in the pre-capitalist modes of production with which he is concerned, or indeed about other class and age-based differences either. Based as his work is upon that of Meillassoux, Wolpe may be subjected to the same criticisms as have been made of Meillassoux: that he fails

> to understand or confront the feminist problematic, that is, the fact and implications of women's subordination to men, and of women's struggle against that subordination[17].

In pre-capitalist modes of production, Mackintosh suggests:

> Control of women's fertility and sexuality, labour and progeny, has always been sought by dominant groups and classes as one means of control or reproduction of the social system. And this control has always had to be fought for, and maintained, by political, economic and ideological means[18].

The fact of the subordination of women is taken for granted not only in Wolpe's much criticised work, but in many other examinations of the character of pre-capitalist modes of production[19]. And yet some understanding of the nature of this subordination is surely important, not only in itself, not only for the sake of making sense of how these modes of production operated[20] but also to clarify our understanding of the path taken by the subordination of that mode of production to capital, and the disgorging of a labour force, initially male, from it. This is not to suggest that the

patriarchal character of the pre-capitalist mode of production is the only factor which should be considered in explaining the kinds of migrant labour which it engendered. Delius and Beinart[21], for example, have shown that age hierarchies and property relationships played an important, indeed central, role in the creation within Pedi and Pondo society of a young male migrant labour population. However it may be suggested that a consideration of the possibly more fundamental (and therefore perhaps more invisible) relationships of patriarchy, of what Wright has called 'Men's control of women's labour'[22] would allow us to ask questions about the so-called 'articulation of the modes of production' which have not systematically been asked before. Thus, for example, in those societies in which control over cattle in the form of bridewealth constituted a pivotal feature[23] and which facilitated control over women, the entire system must surely be predicated upon the fact that these women were *able* to be controlled, exchanged and brought into the lineage from the outside. It is the examination of this analytically *prior* process of subordination that must surely underpin an analysis of chiefly power and state formation in Nguni systems[24] ? The pervasive influence of Meillassoux *et al* has not permitted these questions to be asked.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of the penetration of settler capitalism into South Africa was the difficulty it encountered in destroying (by extermination, for example, as in the case of Australasia, or by full proletarianisation, as in Western Europe) pre-capitalist modes of production. In an influential recent article Brenner has argued that the failure of capitalism to destroy precapitalism should not be attributed, as it had been by 'underdevelopment' theorists, to the particular needs and whims of capital in the Third World, but to the strength of those modes of production, and the *incapacity* of capitalism to destroy them[25] . The resilience of particular modes of production, and indeed the struggles of the people within them to retain them, are accorded a central place in Brenner's analysis, which overturns much of the functionalism and reductionism implicit in underdevelopment theory.

Modes of production do not 'articulate', as Wolpe suggests, but they conflict, often in brutal and bloody fashion. And that conflict takes place, in periods of proletarianisation, around the domestic economy. As in all conflicts of this nature, the power and strength of the opposing sides in the conflict must be taken into account. Where does the power of the pre-capitalist mode of production rest? Surely in its internal relationships, its capacities to resist proletarianisation, to retain access to the land, and to continue to produce and reproduce, as well as to retain some sort of cultural and social independence.

Thus the re-organisation of the male-female division of labour in African societies in South Africa, and in particular the capacities of these societies to sustain themselves for a

certain period of time through the use of women's labour, is an issue of central importance. It is not, as Wolpe seems to assume, (following Meillassoux) automatic and unproblematic that

> the extended family in the Reserves is able to, and does, fulfil 'social security' functions necessary for the reproduction of the migrant work force. By caring for the very young, and very old, the sick, the migrant labourer in periods of 'rest', by educating the young, etc. the Reserve families relieve the capitalist sector and its State from the need to expend resources on these necessary functions[26] .

On the contrary, two points can be made about this assumption. The first is that this neat switch, the sudden imposition upon *women*, not 'the family', of full responsibility for the maintenance of a social system under increasing and devastating attack, must surely have involved some conflict, some vast social, moral and ideological reorganisation, some rough edges. And the second is that the capacity of the pre-capitalist system to impose these tasks upon its women, the patriarchy which was, it has been suggested, one of its fundamental characteristics, was quite possibly one of its most potent weapons against the onslaught of capitalism. The question of why women remained on the land and why men migrated, the issue of how and why women were able, for a limited period it is true, to take on the tasks of the absent men, and to sustain the cultural autonomy of rural systems too, these issues are central to the explanation of the fact that South Africa's labour force remained partially proletarianised for so long.

Following Brenner, but injecting his approach with a feminist concern, two forms of struggle need to be identified then. The first is struggle *within* the domestic mode of production, between the sexes (although this does not exclude the important struggles which take place between other groups); the second is struggle *between* the domestic sphere and the capitalist one. Both these manifestations of what I shall call 'domestic struggle' are important, not only because their outcome often determines the kinds of lives people are destined to live in a certain society; but also because their outcome often conditions and shapes the very form taken by capitalism in that society. Thus the question of the resilience of the South African pre-capitalist systems, which, it has been suggested, rested partly on their capacity to subordinate women's labour effectively, is intimately connected to the emerging segregationist form of the South African state.

It is the concept of 'domestic struggle' which, it is suggested here, could provide a fruitful starting point for the development of an historical and a materialist theory of patriarchy. The first use of the term (internal domestic struggle) concerns the extent to which the domestic sphere

is the site of labour and of property relations, (both factors which are incapable of being analysed with the use of the concept 'reproduction'). If these factors are present, the domestic system will become an arena in which power relationships must become of central importance - the factors which determine how that labour and/or property is distributed are factors of power and are consequently the subject of struggle between members of that sphere. These struggles are not simply of importance to the personal lives of those involved in them, but are intricately connected with the form taken by the society itself. And relationships of power and authority between the sexes are frequently those which shape the character of these struggles.

The second use of the term (external domestic struggle) concerns the conflicts that take place between the domestic sphere and the wider society. For as soon as the family economy is incorporated into a wider economy, (usually with the penetration of merchant capital) these struggles affect and are themselves affected by, the shape taken by the overall system. Once again, for the purposes of developing a feminist analysis, it would seem that the resilience or brittleness of domestic (pre-capitalist) economies is tied up with the sexual division of labour and power within them.

So far in this analysis much use has been made of the problem term 'patriarchy'. Many radical feminists have misused this term, using it to support their view that women's subordination is a universal and unchanging phenomenon, and that *all* women are subject to domination by *all* men[27]. Marxists have rightly pointed out that in granting absolute autonomy to the concept, radical feminists have ended up being both a-historical and idealist[28]; while in positing that all men and all women are in conflict with each other, they have created a blunt and barely illuminating analytical tool. However the term is retained for this paper, with one important proviso - that its use be linked to particular historical eras, particular class systems, or particular modes of production[29]. Thus it would seem to be useful, particularly if one is to locate the 'domestic struggles' mentioned above in any sort of structure, to retain a notion of what may be called perhaps 'tribal' or 'chiefly' patriarchy - a term which refers to the particular form taken by the subordination of women within pre-industrial African societies. If a comparative and historical concept of patriarchy is retained then it too becomes a useful historical device with which to explore further the basis for the emergence of modern, capitalist patriarchy in South Africa.

In order to illustrate further how these concepts (domestic struggle, patriarchy) may be made to work for us, they need to be mobilised in the context of a real historical case study. If we are to get away from functionalism we need to inject movement into our analysis; and if we are to mesh Marxist and feminist concerns, we need to embed our analysis in the wider context of the evolution of South African

capitalism. In the following pages a preliminary attempt will be made to do this. On the basis of the admittedly inadequate secondary literature available, an attempt will be made to periodise the development of domestic struggle and patriarchal relations in South Africa; as well as to reveal the ways in which their development is intricately linked with wider social processes at work - such as the penetration of merchant capital, the process of proletarianisation, the rise to a position of domination by mining capital, and the overall process of class struggle.

2 THE ORIGINS OF A PROLETARIAT: A PATCHWORK QUILT OF PATRIARCHIES

19th century South Africa contained not one patriarchy, (a radical feminist notion) but many, each connected with a particular society. The ultimate origins of these patriarchal forms are largely known, and we would do well to heed Rowbotham's warning against the 'futile search for origins'. However what is known is that there were important changes inflicted upon patriarchal systems by the penetration of merchant capital and colonial conquest up to and during the 19th century. These changes may well have been to the detriment of women. We know that in general merchant capital acts as a somewhat insidious force, which modifies but does not revolutionise, pre-capitalist forms. As far as male-female relations are concerned, it has been shown to strengthen the power of men over women[30]. If men possess greater physical mobility (by virtue of not being tied to the domestic domain) they are better able to respond to the demands of trade; mercantile penetration may involve the appropriation by men of craft and other productive activities previously associated with women; or indeed the effects of commodity exchange may be to eliminate crafts altogether; or colonial and missionary activity may, in unintended ways exacerbate the conditions of female life by drawing off young girls to attend school, thus reducing the amount of help the mother has in the home. These various effects may introduce substantial modifications in male-female relations. And yet merchant capital on its own does not destroy or create uniformity among the systems which it encounters. It results in a 'patchwork quilt' - a system in which forms of patriarchy are sustained and even entrenched in a variety of ways depending on the internal character of the system in the first instance.

It may be these historical features which go some way towards explaining the differing approaches which appear in the literature on the position of women in pre-industrial South Africa. Some, like Marks and Unterhalter[31] want to emphasise that women were subordinate in a whole variety of ways, in all Bantu-speaking societies. In spite of differences between matrilineal and patrilineal systems, and between systems with and without a central state, they argue that:

> in virtually all of these societies women were subject to the tight control of chiefs, headmen and the heads of families[32].

Actual cultivation, they suggest, was the responsibility of the woman of the household in all African societies at this time; while a range of prohibitions 'prevented women owning or being associated in any way with cattle'. This prohibition excluded women from access to the primary source of wealth in these societies.

Wright too wishes to suggest that this prohibition in Zulu society was central to the subordination of women; added to it, he suggests, were ideological controls 'operating largely through the kinship system, which served to socialise females into accepting a position of inferiority[33]; and material controls, 'as exercised by married men over their wives' and daughters' access to the main means of producing the necessities of life, and to the products of their own labour'[34].

Such interpretations are of course attractive to feminists; but they are forced to undergo some modifications, in the light of other kinds of assertions about women's place. Thus Bernstein wishes to emphasise the degree to which 'a woman shared her father's or husband's rank. She undertook much of the laborious work at home and in the fields, not for an employer but for a family to which she and her children belonged. What she produced or acquired did not become the "property" of her husband. It formed part of a joint family estate which he managed, not in his capacity as owner, but as head and senior partner'[35].

That women occupied a subordinate position is not questioned - but the ideological context in which that subordination took place granted, it is claimed, status, rights and mutual obligations to the respective roles of men and women which were of great importance to the self perception of women and which deeply influenced their consciousness and orientation in times of revolt. It is the harking back of modern African women to times when their power and influence was great, that leads to the conclusion that a progressive relative deterioration in the position of women in relation to men may have preceded the era of full-blooded capitalism[36] as well as having accompanied it.

While early and important changes took place in the systems of patriarchy during the 19th century, it is to 20th century studies that we must look for evidence of the more radical transformations wrought by migrant labour. While 'domestic struggles' in earlier times may have been affected or even shaped by merchant capital, in the era of full-blooded migration they became far more profoundly distorted. The conventional notion is that the 'drawing off of migrant labour' results in the 'reorganisation of labour on the land'. Monica Hunter provides spectacular evidence of just what this 'reorganisation of labour' meant. She describes the character of the working day of two men and two women, in Pondo society in the 1930s:

> August 16th
>
> Maime: Went hunting badger. Returned with one

> the size of a mealie cob.
> Maime's wife: She still had water left over from the night before, so did not go to the river, but got up and stamped mealies, and put them on to cook. She went to gather firewood and *imifino* in the fields 2-3 miles distant. She returned at midday and ate some stamped mealies, her first food that day. She put the *imifino* on to cook, ground mealies to put into the *imifino*. The *imifino* eaten by the women in the evening. She boiled maize and made a milk dish for the men. At sunset she will go to fetch water.
> Cemfu: Went to a beer drink across the *umTakatyi* (2-3 miles away).
> Cemfu's wife: Got up and went to the river to fetch water. Warmed water and washed her baby of 4 months. Ground mealies and cooked porridge for breakfast for the men. Went to fetch firewood and *imifino* with Maime's wife. Left her baby with the twins, of 10 years. Returned, helped Maime's wife to prepare *imifino*. Remade the surface of her floor. Sunset, went to fetch water. Then sat and suckled her baby. Washed baby again in warm water.
> NB She only fetched water twice on this day but sometimes she goes 4 or 5 times. The *umzi* is on the road and travellers call for drinks.[37]

The division of labour was, it is true, not only unequal between men and women of the same age, but also across age and gender - for example, grandmothers of a particular *umzi* did not labour; while children's labour was clearly divided along sex lines, with young girls, it seems, being groomed for the heaviest work of all - that undertaken by young wives and mothers (like the two cited above), while young boys herded cattle. But husbands in the prime of life did not, it seems, from Wilson's detailed account of the division of labour, contribute a significant amount of labour to this particular economy at this time; while wives and mothers in the prime of their lives bore the brunt of agriculture, childcare, cooking, cleaning, housebuilding and maintenance and a range of other tasks.

This pattern is echoed in Schapera's *Married Life in an African Tribe*:

> And so the days pass, the women carrying on their chores and such other work as they have to do, the men occupying themselves occasionally with some special task or just idling about'.

In more detail, he writes:

> The village day begins early, sometimes before dawn. The women usually rise first, dress, ... (and) set about their daily tasks. They clear the ashes from the hearth and sweep the courtyard

> floor, gathering up the rubbish in potsherds and dumping it just outside the compounds; they light the fire and cook porridge, or start stamping corn; they wake the children, see that they wash, and give them what food is available, or they go off, their pots on their heads, to fetch water from the river or bore-hole ...

Women then serve breakfast, stamp corn, fetch water, sweep huts, wash out cooking pots, shake sleeping blankets, feed fowls and pigs, fetch firewood, and this is their morning work. In the afternoon they take care of the compound itself, smooth the floor of the huts, prepare new plaster for the walls, (which entails fetching loads of earth, and working it into suitable mud), building new huts or granaries, excavating and carrying home supplies of lime for cleaning food bowls, decorating the hut walls, take out and spread in the sun the corn in the granary periodically; winnow and ash it; wash the family clothes, repair them; make beer, pots, baskets or dresses. As in the Pondo case, reports Schapera: 'Men, on the other hand, have no regular daily work in the village, unless they are employed as teachers, shop-assistants, domestic servants in European households, etc. The herding of such livestock as may be at home is done by the boys ... Specialists like the doctors and thatchers will generally have something to do almost every day, but the rest seem to work spasmodically, and frequently spend days on end merely lounging about[38].

These studies seek to suggest that some change in the division of labour has taken place in these economies since the 'advent of migrant labour', implying that at some earlier stage the male contribution was more substantial. The assumption is that migrant labour has brought this change about. But this assumption needs far more complex and careful elaboration. It is not simply the men's absence that places the burden of domestic and agricultural labour on the women. It is also their superordinate position - or, put another way, so as not to place all emphasis upon the generalised biological category 'men', it is the capacity of the system to subordinate women's labour. Indeed one might even go so far as to say that the giving up of migrant labour by these societies was predicated upon their capacity to subordinate women's labour; and that it is in this capacity that the resilience of these systems to 'full proletarianisation' must rest.

The 'struggle' within the domestic economy over the subordination of women's labour cannot be reduced to a struggle between 'men' or 'women' it is true. Perhaps it is is more accurately described as a struggle between patriarchal chiefs and women. Evidence of this is adduced by Yawitch who points to Plaatje's description of the 'drastic measures adopted by chiefs and tribesmen to stop their women from migrating'. Women were prevented from buying bus or train tickets or travelling alone[39]. 'Chiefly' or 'tribal' patriarchy seems, however, to have been an important foundation for the capacity of pre-

capitalist African societies to survive for as long as they did, while disgorging a permanent, male migrant labour force.

It is of course obvious that in spite of the common characteristics of the various black patriarchal systems, there were and are important differences between them. It is not easy to find discussions which point to these differences - it would be useful to discover the historical and cultural origin of the popular notion that 'Xhosa women are more 'cheeky' to their men than are Zulu women'. Furthermore it would be useful to develop an analysis which could relate such differences to the differential rates at which various societies disintegrated and gave up a proletariat[40].

Important as the contrasts might be between various African systems, a more vivid contrast seems to lie in the distinction between African and non-African societies in the 19th century. Boer society in particular, seems to have exhibited a different form of patriarchy from that displayed by African distributive lineage or tributary systems. In some senses, indeed the use of the term 'patriarchy' in the stricter, narrower sense to mean 'rule by the father' can more readily be applied to Boer society than to African ones. For the domestic economy seems to have centred on the *pater familias* with his wife and children existing in dependent and subordinate relationships to him, rather than on a wider kinship system with the chief as the controlling male. The patriarchy of Boer society seems to have been semi-feudal in character rather than tribal, with land ownership being located in the patriarch, and social reproduction having its focus on the family nucleus and its immediate appendages.[41] While kinship and 'purity' ideologies were used in the African systems to provide an ideological system of control of women, in Afrikaner society Christianity provided the legitimation for their subordination.[42]

It does not seem as if Boer women occupied the central role in agricultural production held by black women. Instead, their labour was (and again the feudal-peasant analogy seems useful) located around the household itself.[43] The Carnegie Commission report suggested that in the rural areas the mothers of Boer families on isolated farms (where little community help was available) had to prepare almost all foods from raw materials ; to make bread, butter, dripping, soap and candles; slaughter sheep, milk cows or goats and carry water. In addition they undertook the task of helping on the farm at lambing or kidding time; or in some areas taking on total responsibility for goats. The report outlines in a poignant fashion the stories of isolated farm women giving birth to their children in lonely squalor (although the use of midwives appears to have been common); and rearing and educating them themselves. Mention is made at various parts in the report of the fact that daughters helped mothers with domestic labour, although the drawing off of girls into schools may well have deprived the mother of their labour.

The character of the rural family, and the nature of the sexual division of labour within it, were important factors in rendering the Boer systems more brittle than African ones in the face of economic hardship and the development of the cash economy. The spread of commodity exchange no doubt relieved the Boer woman of certain of her tasks. The Report suggests that:

> 'in homes forming part of any real community ... the supplies brought by the father are already prepared for use. The animal has already been slaughtered, and the meat is delivered ready to be cooked. The meal is bought ready ground or the bread ready baked; and many other foodstuffs are bought ready for consumption; there is an extensive choice of ready-made clothing or material for clothing.'[44]

School and church take on educational functions, while health services are available to mothers giving birth and rearing children.

While the spreading of cash relationships undoubtedly played a similar part in Black societies, what relief this may have afforded the black women was offset by the greater agricultural burden being placed on her at the same time. In the case of the Boer women, however, the lightening of the domestic load was accompanied by a different form of pressure - that of class formation.

While African societies were of course stratified and inegalitarian the kind of class formation which Boer society underwent in the late 19th century was clearly distinguishable from stratification in the African systems. With property relations, inheritance patterns, and cultural norms focussing on the individual family, and in the absence of redistributive mechanisms to inhibit accumulation by some families and not by others, the agricultural crisis of the late 19th century and into the twentieth century gave rise to differentiation within the Boer population between well-to-do families and their poorer tenants.[45]

The system of primogeniture exacerbated (although did not,as the Carnegie Commission suggests, cause) the process of rural impoverishment of many Boer families. Once this impoverishment had reached its limits, proletarianisation of the Boers began to take place.

The interesting thing about this proletarianisation is that it provides both a vindication of our suggestion above that proletarianisation is not a uniform process; and a confirmation of the assertion that the 'domestic struggles' within a society are crucial determinants of the pattern taken by its response to economic hardship. (They are of course, not the only determinants). For Boers, unlike blacks, did not leave the rural areas through the development of male migrant labour; instead whole families entered the towns from an early date; while in

some cases, young Afrikaner women, the daughters of impoverished families on the land, were the first to enter the towns, and indeed in many cases sent back remittances to their families.[46] The Carnegie Commission attributes this early migration by women to the fact that the domestic economy was not making full use of their labour:

> 'In the country even the daughters of more comfortably situated farmers find little scope for profitable occupation, but in the poor households they can contribute practically nothing towards their own support and that of the family.'[47]

Thus, they conclude 'the rural exodus ... is stronger among women than among men. By the time of the 1926 Census, there were 58,153 male and 64,057 female 'persons of Dutch South African parentage' in the ten biggest urban centres.[48] Immediate and 'complete' proletarianisation (a dubious term since it begs the question of the reasons for and form taken by the differential proletarianisation of men and women) was thus the form taken by Boer society, a factor which, we shall suggest below, is of crucial importance in underpinning the development of urban class consciousness amongst Afrikaners.

These two examples, of Black and 'Boer' domestic relationships and their importance for understanding the origins of the twentieth century proletariat, could easily be supplemented by a whole range of others. For example, the 'peasantisation' thesis put forward by Bundy[49] could and should be re-cast in the light of questions about the 'domestic struggles' which took place in those societies which became peasantised. Peasantisation usually involves the mobilisation of family labour in cash crop production; but this process of mobilisation of labour should not be taken for granted, as it is by Bundy. The capacity of the (male) head of the peasant family to control and direct the labour of the family towards the end of peasant production is an important consequence, one must assume, of the patriarchal character of African societies; while the destruction of that peasantry through legal redefinitions of land tenure relationships, seems to have involved an attack by the state on the form of these patriarchal relationships, and their substitution by a new form.

A further example may be drawn from black-white relationships on Boer farms. An interesting hint of the significance of male-female relationships in this regard appears in the Carnegie report:

> 'Farmers give preference to native labour, (over bywoners) and advance various reasons for so doing. Many have repeatedly found the poor white disappointing as farm labourer. Besides,

> the farmer can often avail himself of the services of the native's wife and children to a far larger extent that in the case of a European labourer, whose wife has her own household duties and whose children have to attend school.'[50]

While the Carnegie commission has taken this to mean that the black wife does not have her own duties to attend to, we may interpret it as suggesting that the economic and social weakness of the black woman is an important factor in shaping the emerging class relationships on white farms, a factor which needs further exploration.

To conclude this section, then, we are left with a picture of a variety of systems of female subordination, each in the process of penetration and transformation by economic forces. The emerging irony of the position of women in the 'patchwork quilt of patriarchies' is that in certain crucial cases their weaknesses are turned into strengths and their strengths to weaknesses. Thus a weak and subordinated female population in Black societies, upon whom much of the burden of agricultural and domestic labour, rests, is ironically protected from proletarianisation for longer; and indeed begins to develop a certain autonomy and power in the rural areas;[51] while the relatively stronger Boer women, whose position within the household is alleviated by the spread of the cash economy, are torn from the land much more rapidly, and forced to enter the industrial proletariat from the earliest times.

3 MODERN PATRIARCHY AND URBAN 'DOMESTIC STRUGGLES'.

These historical foundations for the development of modern patriarchal South Africa are of central analytical importance to the theory being presented here. With the penetration into South Africa of mining capital, the 'patchwork quilt' of societies becomes subordinated to the hegemony of a more powerful and revolutionary form of capital than ever before. While the form taken by the modern South African state may be fragmented on the surface, one integrated system of domination and subordination was forged out of the mining revolution. As far as patriarchy is concerned this meant that systems whose male-female structures of control and subordination were different and separate, relatively speaking, in the 19th century, came to a state of interpenetration in the modern era.

The forging of modern patriarchy thus must be interpreted as the result of the interplay between the process of state formation on the one hand; and the 'historical givens' of the pre-existing societies in the region on the other. This lends tremendous complexity to the analysis which needs to be undertaken. For do we assert that 'one patriarchy' exists, because of the emergence of a single central state, and the passing of most lines of domination

and subordination through that state; or do we retain some notion of 'many' patriarchies, because of the historical and cultural specificity of the experience and resultant social position, of men and women of different groups? My tentative answer to this question is that we opt for neither of these stark alternatives; but that we attempt to evolve an analytical framework which will allow both perspectives to be catered for. On one level, the level at which this article opens the discussion, there is one 'patriarchy' in this society, in that certain common ideological, political, economic and social characteristics are exhibited differentially between men and women; and these are to a degree entrenched in law, or the wider system of political and social hegemony. On another level the complexities of the real (rather than normative - for it is often on normative factors that radical feminists rely) relationships and struggles in the 'domestic' sphere and outside of it, defies a reductionist, simplified approach of this sort. 'Patriarchy', like 'racism', has a broad social and ideological manifestation, whose reality on one level we would be foolish to deny. But its real workings on the ground involve a complex series of processes of interplay with historical and material factors. It is on the ground, as it were, that the system is created and reproduced, and this is the important arena for our analysis.

In this section of the paper some attempt will be made to sketch out the development of patriarchy during the process of state formation; both in terms of its manifestation in the superstructures evolving during the mining revolution; and in terms of its effects 'on the ground'. We know already that the process of state formation involved the establishment, simultaneously, of cleavages of 'class' and 'race', in their modern forms, in South Africa. Some knowledge of the processes whereby this took place will be assumed in the analysis that follows. What will be attempted is a modification of our received conventional wisdom on these processes of state-formation, to take into account the factor of gender.

The era of the mining revolution was it is generally agreed, an important watershed in the formation of the racist South African state. What has been neglected, however, is any consideration of the part played by patriarchy in that revolution. Once questions are asked about gender in the mining revolution, certain interesting patterns do seem to emerge, which suggest that it was an equally important watershed in the formation and consolidation of patriarchal relationships and ideologies in South Africa.

While everybody knows that the mining industry required large numbers of workers at the cheapest possible rates, and that this requirement shaped many of the emerging state structures of the time, what has not been examined in any analytical manner has been the fact that this labour

force was a male one. Just as it has too readily been assumed to have been 'natural' and 'automatic' that the first blacks to have left the land should have been men, so it has been assumed 'natural' that the labourers used by the mines should be men. And yet there is nothing 'automatic' about this at all. Certainly the arduousness and unpleasantness of mine labour cannot be cited as the inhibiting factor. Capitalists and mineowners in other parts of the world have not hesitated to use female and even child labour in the most arduous of jobs, while South African farmers have felt free to use female labourers in heavy farm work. We already know that women in African pre-industrial societies undertook some of the heaviest jobs. There is thus clearly something to be explained here.

Perhaps the two factors which come most readily to the fore, amongst many, are those of the ideologies and social vision of the mineowners themselves; and the fact that, in the initial stages, male labour was the only available labour. This second factor is one we have already considered - and it is here that we find the link between the character of pre-industrial patriarchy, and the emergence of modern patriarchy. As far as the first factor is concerned, a few tentative suggestions maybe put forward.

Mineowners and state officials assumed, it would seem (like their modern academic counterparts) that male proletarianisation was the 'natural' form of proletarianisation. Polygamy, they believed, was nothing less than the enslavement of African women by their men; its destruction

> 'would leave his social fabric a wreck. It would, in the first place, raise the status of women, and would also deprive the man of the cheap labour which now maintains him in idleness ... but its chief result would be to force the native man to work, and thus habituate him to labour'[52]

Influential mine managers like Hennen Jennings (whose American background may have influenced his notions of the ideal labour force,) assumed as a matter of course, that male labour was naturally best suited to mining:

> 'the men of the strongest physique could go to the mines, but the younger and older men and some of the women could work on the farms'[53]

he proposed in one of his statements on the ideal future of mining.

Besides the mineowners themselves, the imperialists under whose aegis the new South African state was forged had themselves been drawn from a Britain in which the state's interest in 'motherhood' and childrearing had

become considerable. Imperial ideology was male-centred; in Davin's words: the vocabulary of the time reflected 'the anxiety to build a race of strong men, to promote virility and so on.' She goes on:

> The mothers' role in the creation of a healthier workforce, as of a virile army and navy, was crucial. In the fixing of the workforce, the development of a new kind of family, with head and housewife and pride in possession, bound to one place and one job by a new level of emotional and financial investment in an increasingly substantial 'home' was also to pay a substantial part.'[54]

The separation between males (production,/war) and females (reproduction/family) was thus part of the social consciousness of the dominant classes, a factor which should not be underestimated in assessing the nature of their visions for the future South Africa.

A further sphere in which gender bears upon the process of state formation is that of the formation of a white working class. We have already been persuaded by a number of analyses of the central importance of the white working class at the turn of the century to the forging of a segregationist state. A key analysis, that of Davies, argues in a somewhat functionalist manner, (and with explicit acknowledgment to Wolpe's own analysis,) that a certain crucial stage mineowners rejected whites as unskilled labourers because of their higher necessary means of subsistence.[55] Whites, he argues, were fully proletarianised, and blacks were not. Whites, therefore, 'had to' be paid higher wages than blacks. This decision, he suggests, was the foundation for the formation and perpetuating of a structurally divided working class, one of the basic ingredients of the new racist state.

This kind of analysis is deceptive in its simplicity. It avoids consideration of a whole universe of struggle.[56] In the first place it avoids any contemplation of the problems involved in the concept of 'full' proletarianisation. For this is indeed something to which 'gender' is central. It is a notion based on the 'black' model of proletarianisation - i.e. the pattern in which males leave the land first, and are thus 'partially' proletarianised; and their families later may follow them, in which case they become 'fully' proletarianised. Even for blacks, this model leaves room for some considerable doubts, as we shall see. Briefly, one cannot assume that the later women who leave the land 'belong' to the men who left earlier. But if it is questionable in the case of blacks, it is much more so in the case of whites. For if young daughters leave the land, are they a 'partial' or 'full' proletariat? What if they marry in the towns? Does their

class position suddenly change? I am not suggesting that people do not move from being 'partially' to being 'fully' proletarianised; it is rather that the processes involved in such a move are complex, and involve matters such as culture, ideology and family structure: and that of course the assumption that males are always first off the land and always heads of households, is a grossly incorrect one.

The other assumption underlying the Davies model concerns the notion of 'necessary means of subsistence'. His argument is based upon the notion that the 'necessary means of subsistence' of any particular working class is worked out by capitalists, rationally; and that due consideration is given to the needs of workers' families. Furthermore it seems to assume that workers are males whose wives do not earn a wage. Such conceptions remove all notions of struggle from the issue of wages. For what is meant by the 'workers' family'? How many kin does the capitalist take into account in assessing the 'ideal wage' for a particular stratum of the working class? If the worker is single, does he earn less? If he has eight children, does he earn more than if he has two? Powerful and far-seeing as the capitalist class was in South Africa at the turn of the century, Davies and Wolpe seem to attribute to it an omniscience which it did not possess.

However, again, this is not to deny that there is a real issue at stake here - which is that different strata of the working class are able to command different wage levels, on a consistent basis. This consistency appears to override the very factors which Davies cites as its causes. Thus black mineworkers earn less than white ones even if the families of the black ones are destitute and living in the towns (as some of them already were in the 1890s); and even if the whites concerned are single young men who are also migrants (as in the case of Cornishmen in the 1890s and 1900s). The dubious and unspecified concept of 'full proletarianisation' cannot explain consistently different wages on its own, although it may be an important factor.

This stratification in the working class, which Davies quite correctly seeks to explain because of its centrality to the process of state formation, was not the automatic consequence of differential forms of proletarianisation, but was decided in the process of struggle between capitalists and workers. In the case of white workers this struggle took place over two central issues - the presence and cost of wives and children; and the use by the white family of domestic servants. Both of these struggles could be categorised as 'domestic', in the sense in which the term is used above; and both, in the long run, concern women.

In the case of 'wives and children', their presence in the mining areas was partly the result of explicit manipulation by capitalists. As Percy Fitzpatrick said of Rand Mines:

> We recognise that until men can settle in their homes with their families under reasonable conditions as to comfort and cost, a stable and contented mining population is not to be expected.'[57]

Housing policy was self-consciously used by mineowners to ensure a stable white working class, to reduce its militancy, and to ensure its reproduction. The creation of a particular family form was thus a weapon in the class struggle.

The issue of domestic servants was a further clearcut example of domestic struggle, this time a struggle won by workers rather than capitalists. For from the earliest times, the white family was able to build into the cost of its reproduction (its 'necessary means of subsistence') the price of domestic labour. White workers, and particularly white women, were thus able to exact a price from capital in return for their 'stability' and acquiescence- the price of a relatively high standard of living. A middle class lifestyle was defined as being both attainable and necessary for the white working class. This was not only a moral victory for the white working class family 'against' capital; but a victory for the white woman within that family. Through the employment of domestic labour she was able to defend herself against the isolating and unrewarded labour which capitalism would otherwise expect her to perform. Her victory was at the expense of the subordination and oppression within the white family of the black male domestic worker;[58] and in later years, of the black female.[59]

How 'functional' the institution of domestic service has been for capitalism is debatable. In the early years of mine labour shortage, for example, domestic service drew vital male workers away from the mining industry; throughout this century, white working class wages have had to include the price, however pitifully low, of one or more servants; some of these servants, moreover, perform tasks such as gardening, waiting at table and so on, hardly essential items to the reproduction of the labour force. These 'dysfunctions' are just as important to recognise as are the functions of domestic labour - for in time, it did come to absorb the otherwise unemployable, and thereby act as a mechanism of social control[60]. But its existence must surely also be seen as a victory for the white woman against capitalism's tendency to privatise and trivialise domestic work.

The institution of domestic service has different consequences for the working and middle class white family (and of course, for the black servant, but this will be discussed below). In the case of the working class it frees the woman to work outside the home. In the case of the middle and upper classes, it seems to have different effects. Middle class wives have had to pay a high price for their cushioning from the worst experiences of nuclear family domestic oppression. Their protest against the

system of patriarchy to which they are subjected has been bought off; while they have not been driven by the boredom, monotony and oppression of isolated wife and motherhood into seeking a place in the wider world. The presence of domestic servants grants their position as wives and mothers a certain status; they have become the managers of labour rather than the performers thereof. The enclosing of white women in the purdah-like exclusion of the wealthy suburbs is not dysfunctional to the overall patriarchy of the system as a whole. For women who do venture to seek a place in the wider world find it already occupied and well-protected by a long-established system of male privilege.

The gentility of middle class white home life has an almost pre-capitalist character, akin to the plantation life of white American slave-owners. This pre-capitalist ethos is no accident. For although the domestic sphere is nuclear and apparently a modern capitalist institution as far as formal, kin relationships are concerned (although even here, extended family networks seem to operate more effectively in white society than in, say, the North American equivalent), it is in fact a sub-system within the wider economy with a clearly pre-capitalist character. The domestic labourer has a semi-feudal relationship with her employer, where she is paid partly in kind; and is tied to the employer by a series of obligations, by economic need, and sometimes by law.[61]

Relationships within the white family have not been subsumed under the law of value, although there are indications that this may cease to be the case, for two reasons: the first is because of the use of paid labour in the home. Indications are that the semi-feudal character of this labour is breaking down in Johannesburg and contract, or charring labour is being introduced. The second is related to the introduction of labour-saving applicances in the home, a form of 'deskilling' of certain forms of domestic labour. Those forms which are incapable of being mechanised (such as child-care), are not subjected to these pressures; but certain domestic tasks, such as cleaning, gardening and cooking, are capable of a considerable degree of mechanisation.[62] It is through processes such as these that capitalism is likely to be able to penetrate and transform white family relations once more, and a new and different form of domestic struggle is likely to emerge.

It is to these kinds of factors and processes that we need to look to explain the absence of a strong middle class feminism in South Africa. It is not simply the economic privilege of whites as a whole which explains the middle class woman's acquiescence. It is surely her enclosure within a particular kind of domestic system.

In the case of white working class women a different ideological configuration seems to have emerged, at least in the case of some of the Afrikaner women whose fortunes since their impoverishment on the land, we now need to trace further.

Because of the male-centred character of the initial mining revolution, white, Afrikaner women too were excluded from employment within the mining industry. However unlike Black women, this exclusion did not take place late in South Africa's capitalist development, but relatively early on, because, of course, of the early proletarianisation of white women. From the beginning of this century, then, white women began to seek employment outside of the mining industry. This search for work led them in some cases into similar directions to those taken by black women - many became prostitutes;[63] while some sought employment as domestic servants.[64] But to the extent that small industries did exist outside of mining, white females began to find work there, until by the 1930s they had effectively come to dominate the garment, sweet-making, confectionary and textile industries.[65] In some cases (the garment industry is the most well-known), they replaced, by undercutting and deskilling, older white craftsmen in these industries.[66]

Socialism had always been one of the minor manifestations of Afrikaner consciousness, male and female.[67] However, while the early Afrikaner socialists at the turn of the century had been undermined by the growth of nationalist ideology Afrikaner women workers in the garment industry in particular, demonstrated a considerable resilience to attempts by the nationalists of the 1930s to undermine their emergent trade unionist and socialist consciousness.[68] One of the major reasons given for this resilience is the fact that Afrikaner women were not structurally subjected to the threat of undercutting by cheap black labour; while their male counterparts on the mines most certainly were. The timing of their entry into factory labour, the absorption of black men by mining, the lateness of the proletarianisation of black women, were all factors which contributed to the failure of these white factory women to develop a white supremacist consciousness - in ironic contrast to the nationalism and populism of their black counterparts.

The 'whiteness' of white women, as well as their specific class positions and historical experiences, must be taken into account in this racially divided system, in explaining their overall position. The comparatively early granting of the vote to these women, itself the result of a struggle, could be interpreted as a reflection of their centrality to the buttressing of the white state[69] while the domestic servant whom white women of all classes are able to employ, albeit for different wages and with different effects, lends a certain similarity to their experiences and perhaps consciousness.

Many of the arguments presented in the case of white women are reinforced and enriched by a comparison between black and white female experiences of proletarianisation

and urbanisation. For one of the ways in which women are 'hidden from history' is through the numbing of our sensibilities to the specificity of women's position. This numbing takes place partly through the endless and often boring uttering of 'conventional wisdom' about womens' experiences. 'Of course' women were (left behind in the rural areas/responsible for maintaining the labour force/ employers of domestic servants). The 'of course' part of these repetitious, often purely descriptive, approaches has hopefully been substantially challenged here. As was demonstrated in the case of the rural experiences of women, one of the most effective methods of challenging it is through the comparison of the experiences of different groups of women (in this case black and white) with each other. It is through such devices that we may begin to 'see' the actors whose significance was previously hidden by a smokescreen of platitudes. The same should apply in the case of urban women.

In the case of blacks, the primacy of male proletarianisation had a complex series of major consequences. For those women left behind in the rural areas, the departure of men in increasingly large numbers could, depending on the region and the circumstances, lead to a strengthening of the female position within the domestic sphere, although this is not to suggest that the impoverishment and dependence of that sphere are not overwhelming. Thus Showers has suggested that in the case of Lesotho, "a segment of the female population is developing an alternative definition of society, one in which they can keep the authority which their mothers had to give up. Out of this is emerging the concept of a more self-sufficient female world".[70]

Yawitch hints that in certain circumstances not only was women's position within the domestic sphere strengthened but that their retention of a rural base had placed some of them in a stronger position in relation to outside forces as well. Thus in the Western Transvaal she suggests that in the late 1950s rural women were in a much better position to resist the imposition of passes than were their urbanised counterparts in the Zeerust location, who 'could not afford to lose their jobs, unlike rural women who were fairly independent of such concerns'.[71] However, evidence concerning these "strengths" is often outweighed by evidence which suggests that patriarchal controls persist[72] so no generalisations are possible across time and region.

The process of proletarianisation is filled with ironies; capacity to retain access to the land for too long could in some circumstances be disastrous for the women concerned. For of course some of the systems they were defending were doomed in any case; and if their doomed systems persisted into the period of high apartheid, then by the time their turn had come to be proletarianised, to enter the towns, strict prohibitions had been set up to prevent them from doing so. The tragedy of homeland

poverty, starvation, malnutrution and economic crisis, and the crime of resettlement place upon women and children, a great burden of suffering.[73]

As far as black women who did become proletarianised are concerned, further complex consequences of domestic struggles in the rural areas may be identified. Proletarianisation of black women took place in South Africa from the time of colonial conquest. However, it has already been suggested that the distinctive thing about this proletarianisation was that it almost invariably followed that of black men. Not only did it follow that of black men, but it also followed that of whites - both men and women - of the working classes. Black women have, generally speaking, been the latest to be proletarianised.

The mining industry did not use female labour; but this did not mean that at the time of the greatest wave of black female proletarianisation (the 1940s) other sectors of the economy were capable of absorbing women. On the contrary, the industrial sector too had by that time become the monopoly of black male and/or white workers. The lateness of their proletarianisation thus proved a disadvantage to women in the urban context just as it had in the rural one.

It is to the patterns of proletarianisation that we must look for an explanation of the fact, therefore, that women entering the urban areas, while proletarianised (in that they were separated from the means of production), were not by and large to become part of the industrial proletariat (in that they entered factory-based wage labour). Instead they were to enter into 'Laundry, Liquor and Playing Ladish'. The occupations of washerwoman, liquor-brewer and seller, and domestic service, as well as that of prostitute prevailed amongst Johannesburg township women in the first three or four decades of this century.[74] Thus those women who entered the urban areas after the main industrial and mining proletariat had been formed; and before influx control began to block entry of women (i.e. in the period between about 1920-1960) formed the bulk of the urban female population, and were relatively advantaged in two respects. The first was that they had avoided being incorporated into proletarian factory labour; the second was that they used their relative economic strength to establish an independent base within the urban family.

Black women coming into the towns from patriarchal systems were able to avoid or delay full incorporation into capitalist relations of production and exchange. In the case of some occupations (such as beer brewing and other informal sector activities) this was partly tied up with their retention of certain rural occupational skills (skills which in the case of rural peasants undergoing proletarianisation in Europe, had often been more

completely destroyed or undermined by capitalism). This is not to suggest that these women were always or necessarily "better off" than men. The use of the term "strength" used to refer to these processes is not meant to denote that these strengths are necessarily to the advantage of women. What it is meant to denote is that capitalism's capacity to transform all relationships was hindered, and that women were not proletarianised as fast or as fully as men. Thus in the modern era, black women, until very recent times, were less a part of the factory proletariat,than the occupants of positions outside the mainstream of economic activity - in the Reserves, in domestic service and in the townships.

A functionalist approach, which seeks to explain the position of urban women in terms of the functions they perform for capitalism, is not able to illuminate the processes whereby this came to be the case. It would identify the kinds of occupations in which women came to be involved as 'reproductive' - rather than being 'productive' of surplus value, they tend to be concerned with maintaining the labour force in the reserves; providing leisure outlets for workers in the cities; or 'reproducing' the white family through domestic labour, and laundry work. And yet identifying these tasks as 'reproductive' in itself cannot explain why and how it was women who ended up doing them, nor can it enrich our understanding of these women as active participants in the shaping of their own destinies, often in conflict with capitalism.

As in the case of the rural areas, features of women's position which initially appear to be "strengths" may turn out as weaknesses in the long run. Avoiding factory labour,like avoiding proletarianisation, may work against women in the end. The kinds of occupations they do enter are often vulnerable to cyclical variations in the economy; to state action and manipulation by dominant groups. In the case of domestic service, organised resistance is difficult to achieve. To the extent that these occupations are ultimately eroded away, the women within them are eventually forced into factory labour. Here they enter the factory last, and are consequently the weakest, least organised and lowest paid section of the working class.

But even this final step into proletarianisation has been delayed or hindered by women's resistance to it. Liquor sellers and landladies in particular have successfully resisted state attempts to erode their position of relative strength and independence in the townships.[75]

As far as the issue of "domestic" struggle is concerned, certain interesting patterns seem to emerge which could be related to the relative economic strength of township women in certain key occupations. In particular it would not seem too far-fetched to argue that it is on the basis of their economic resilience in urban life

that many women have been able to develop domestic resilience too.[76]

In the urban areas the black family has by no means taken on a "capitalist" character (if we are able to assume that the archetypal patriarchal nuclear family is a concomitant of capitalism). Urban black families may retain certain general patriarchal characteristics which represent continuity with rural patterns. The division of labour within the home remains, it would seem unequal between males and females; the daughters of the home are obliged to help with domestic labour; extended family obligations persist; while the father, where he is present, assumes the place of 'household head'.

While urban families may remain patriarchal, generating and reproducing a conservative, familial ideology to which many women seem to adhere, many of them have become matrifocal. However, in cases where women have been deserted, divorced, or never married, it is they who provide not only the income for the family, but the source of stability and ideological continuity. The capacity of these women to develop a viable independent family form and to sustain extended family links to support them in so doing, is a dimension of "domestic struggle" which has too often been by-passed in analyses of capitalism's assumed requirements for a nuclear family form. The emergence and use of both créches (introduced by liberals) and childminders in townships is another aspect of domestic struggle which needs further examination, as does the more general ideological role played by white liberals (often themselves women) in attempting to alter and manipulate black family forms.

Struggle in the domestic realm also manifests itself organisationally. "Manyanos" or separate women's Christian organisations, while they are not overtly "political", are often sought out by urban women "for a number of reasons closely related to their particular structural position"[77]. Women use them, argues Kros: 'to express their grievances in however confused a fashion, and as a way of redressing them.' Manyanos ('stokvels') may not have been part of the wider political struggle, but could certainly be interpreted as an organised form of 'domestic struggle', in which the isolation of the woman heading a family under conditions of poverty and 'social disorganisation' is overcome, and her capacity to undertake the dual responsibilities of 'work' and 'home' strengthened. Women may thus be interpreted as defending the family form which they valued, against its disintegration; certainly the ideology which seems to be articulated in these organisations appears an intensely conservative one, in the sense that it seeks to conserve and consolidate the family and the woman's position within it.

A functionalist approach would be hard put to explain the matrifocal and extended character of many urban families. For if, according to the domestic labour debaters,[79]

the nuclear family is functional to capitalism then what conclusion do we draw from the fact that such a nuclear family did not emerge in black townships? Does this mean capitalism is not functioning? Does it mean that South Africa is not capitalist? Of course it means neither of these things, for unlike the functionalists, we should not assume that capitalism's existence or capacity to survive is predicated upon any single family form. It is true that capitalist ideologues posit the nuclear family as an ideal in many cases.[80] But we should give due analytical weight to the propensity and capacity of members of subordinate classes to forge their own family form in spite of the propagation of the nuclear ideal by the dominant classes. Black women - often abandoned by their men and seeking independence from pre-industrial restrictiveness - were capable in certain cases of reshaping the family form in new ways, and our framework of analysis of patriarchy as a wider system, must permit this to be taken into account.

The form and character of African women's resistance, particularly in the urban areas, has been the subject of analysis by several writers.[81] Hopefully what this brief series of suggestions has done has been to provide the beginnings of a framework for explaining that resistance in an historical and materialist fashion.

The central feature of the emerging position of black women in modern South Africa is the relative absence from the central axis of capitalist exploitation, the prolongation of their incorporation into capitalist relations, and their assertion of a position of comparative power and strength within the domestic sphere both urban and rural. The male orientation of the dominant form of capital, the exigencies of 'domestic struggle' in pre-industrial and modern times, and the pattern and pace of proletarianisation have been put forward as factors which may explain this feature. It is in the course of actual struggles, not only within the domestic sphere, but also between those involved in domestic relationships and those attempting to control them from outside, that the implications of this pattern taken by women's oppression in South Africa may be assessed.

Unorganised resistance on the part of African women is a little studied but vitally important area for analysis - many secondary sources are marred by their "institutional" bias. Nevertheless the very existence of identifiable women's organisations in the urban areas is testimony to the specificity of the experience and class position of their women members. In the case of more overtly 'political' struggles (although we should heed the feminist notion that 'the personal is political') such as the widespread resistance in the 1950s on the part of African women to the imposition of passes upon them, we should again note, as do Lodge and Kros, that

the ideological mould in which this resistance was cast was a conservative one.[82] These women did not, in the 1950s, adhere to class ideologies, but popular, nationalist ones. And furthermore, this populism and nationalism, being as it was located in a domestic sphere which was successfully protecting some of its pre-capitalist features against capitalist penetration, was of a patriarchal character.[83] Women expressed their grievances in terms of an ideology which exalted their place within the home; which looked back to a past where their dignity and status was intact, and which mocked men for their "weakness" in resisting. Their resistance, both urban and rural, was a partial success - for even today pass restrictions in the movement of African women remain less stringent than those for men. And yet in almost every other sphere of their existence, African women remain more heavily controlled by the state than do their men. In few of these cases was their resistance provoked. It seems almost as if women accepted the subordinate place defined for them by law as long as that subordination did not challenge their right to forge and control their own families. It was the threat to the family entailed in the extension of passes, that provided the most heated response.

The conservatism of feminine resistance provokes consideration of some of our more general conventional wisdoms about South African society. Take for example, the often quoted assertion that the "fundamental cleavage" in South Africa is now one between capital and labour, since pre-capitalist systems have been thoroughly destroyed. Yet in the case of the vast majority of women, this is surely not the case? For capitalism has not fully succeeded in transforming the domestic sphere, whether in the homelands, the townships or the suburbs. Most women at home, and to a considerable extent, at work, are not involved in relationships which are of a fully capitalist nature - and we have not even considered the position of women on white farms. No socialism, let alone feminism, is likely to arise from people engaged in these kinds of relationships for a long time to come. This is not least because of the history and character of domestic struggles outlined above.

4 CONCLUSION

This study has sought to discover ways in which we may better understand the place of female oppression in the development of the capitalist, racist state in South Africa. I will first look at the relationship of female oppression to capitalism, and then to racism.

Patriarchal relations preceded capitalist ones for women from diverse origins. This does not mean however,

that "patriarchy", as a separate system, developed autonomously from capitalism. Instead the various patriarchies were seized upon by the processes of capitalist penetration, proletarianisation and class and state-formation, and transformed in significant ways in the 19th and 20th centuries. However, this in turn does not mean that these patriarchal relations came to be subordinated to capitalist relations or that they are reducible to them in any way. The thrust of the argument put forward in this essay has been, therefore, that neither radical, separate, feminist approaches, nor economistic, Marxist-reductionist approaches will suffice in advancing our understanding of female oppression and its relationship to capitalism. Functionalist approaches which seek only to demonstrate the ways in which female oppression suits capitalism may avoid all consideration of the ways in which it has suited other modes of production in the past and could serve possible future modes of production. The concept of "domestic struggle" has been put forward here in an attempt to provide us with means whereby we may analyse the relationships between particular modes of production and particular forms of female subordination.

The concept of 'domestic struggle' is readily applied to pre-industrial systems, for the way has already been opened up to its use by the currency of terms such as 'pre-capitalist modes of production', 'relations of production', and so on. In spite of the functionalism and structuralism prevalent in some of the literature on these issues there is a general acknolwledgment that (a) the domestic and the capitalist sphere are distinct and clashing forms; and (b) that the conflicts within the domestic sphere are important. Thus it does not take a particularly large leap of imagination to suggest that these conflicts be widened to include conflicts between dominant men and subordinate women, shaped by the patriarchal system.

In the case of the urban areas, the 'domestic economy', however, exists in only a stunted form - that of the urban family. While some, it is true, have attempted to argue interestingly that the urban family is a 'pre-capitalist subordinate mode of production', which 'articulates' with the capitalist mode'[84] most discussions, by feminists or Marxists, fail to provide analytical space for a notion of struggle to be applied to family forms. The functionalism which prevails in the 'domestic labour debate' is a case in point. Here the family's <u>functions</u> for capitalism are sought. The concept of 'reproduction' too, rests upon the notion that the family is a creation of, and subordinated to the whim of, capital,while the notion of the family as an 'ideological state apparatus' is similarly fraught with problems.

Here we suggest that the urban family whether black, white, working or middle class, while it may not be a 'pre-capitalist mode of production', is a sub-system within the wider capitalist system, analogous to the pre-capitalist subsystems analysed above; and that the notions of internal and external 'domestic struggle' may be applied to the family with fruitful results. Indeed writers such as Genovese[85] and Gutman[86] in their discussions on the black family in North America have demonstrated the absence of a necessary functionality between family form and dominant mode of production, even under slavery where manipulation of the family life of the subordinate class must be more extreme than in any other class-based mode of production.

Under capitalism too, therefore, particularly an emergent, only partially established settler capitalism, while the process of class formation was rapidly accelerated at the turn of the century, the arena of domestic, personal, home life becomes one of struggle and conflict. Once again, as far as our search for an analysis of patriarchy is concerned, struggles between certain men and women within the emerging urban domestic sphere must be accorded a central place ; but must also be placed in the context of other internal domestic struggles and struggles between family and dominant mode of production.

Thus like many social institutions, the urban domestic sub-economy cannot be understood as a functional unit. Its evolution, nature and genesis must surely be understood as the result of a process of conflict and its character at any one moment a momentary crystallisation of power relationships between conflicting groups. The men and women who enter the urban areas to become capitalism's working class are drawn from the very 'patchwork quilt' of social forms we have already discussed, and bring with them a belief in the sanctity of certain kinds of family relationships. Of course they have experienced the erosion of these relationships - their very presence in the urban areas is in part an indication of the successful undermining of the family systems from which they are drawn. And yet the particular form and degree of that undermining is not universal or consistent. Capital might attempt to 'dissolve and conserve' a particular family form, but the people whose lives are being transformed will seek to preserve the kind of family life (and this will include the kind of patriarchy) in which they have been raised.

The middle or upper class white family is also a site of conflicts, both internal and external; conflicts which reflect the complex interaction between race, class and patriarchy. White women's employment of black servants frees them from domestic slavery and is a form of racial privilege; but it does not necessarilty grant them class

mobility; while it has been suggested that it reinforces their exclusion from the system of male upper/middle class occupational privilege.

On a whole variety of levels, therefore, family form is an essential basis for understanding female oppression and what has been called "gender hierarchy" in the developing capitalist system. Most importantly, pre-capitalist domestic relations are crucial determinants of the pace and sequence of proletarianisation, which in turn is one basis for occupational hierarchies in the working class. At the same time, that working class, as we have seen, seeks to reconstitute (or modify) pre-capitalist family forms in the urban areas and in so doing sets in motion a further set of processes which affect the gender hierarchies in the wider system.

However, it is not only "gender" that is illuminated by the depiction of these processes - it is also the wider system of class formation itself. One of the underlying aims of this paper has been to demonstrate the two-way interaction between Marxist and feminist concerns - and at several points it has been suggested that the wider concerns of non-feminist Marxists may also be illuminated by an examination of some of the factors mentioned here. Thus it has been pointed out that the nature of proletarianisation; the structure and consciousness of the white working class and its wage-levels; the occupational structure and the nature of black nationalism, are among the many areas in which the kinds of concepts put forward here may be illuminating. One of the most general points revolves around the notion that capitalism's capacity to transform all relations of production has been delayed. Women have not been proletarianised as rapidly or completely as men. This must be taken fully into account in attempts to explain why South African capitalism is retarded. The "peripheral" character of South African capitalism is thus intimately connected with the experiences and resilience of women on the land, the non-capitalist character of the work they do in the towns, and the persistence of old family forms.

As far as the system of racial domination is concerned, different forms of interaction with patriarchy may be identified. The history of nationalist resistance in this country would seem to indicate that national oppression has been identified by many blacks, men and women, with the erosion of per-capitalist patriarchy - and that the restoration of national dignity is seen to be intricately linked with the restoration of the subordinate, if allegedly dignified, place of women in pre-industrial black culture. The assertion of "national" pride is often interpreted as the assertion of "male" pride by the man in the street. The theme of masculine assertiveness in popular black counter-culture is a dominant one. Black women, excluded as they are from the central axis of capitalist relations, have not challenged this in the past, but have rather reinforced it, by themselves casting

their protests in terms of "masculinity", and the sanctity of the pre-capitalist family ideal.

The problems identified in this essay are unlikely to be solved by writing separate, sentimental studies on "women", or indeed on "men and "women"; or by glorifying in an uncritical manner the resistance of women in the past. If we are to provide ourselves with a rigorous basis on which to make decisions about how gender relationships interact with class and race ones, we need to develop a general theory, which is also an historical one, and which considers the place of gender in the system as a whole.

Anti-feminists, or "Marxist-reductionists" should not, however, see this as an excuse for dismissing "women's studies" as a trivial or bourgeois concern. For the development of an encompassing general theory to take place, it is necessary that there be a revolution in the consciousness of writers on South Africa, for minds to be expanded to take account of the importance of "domestic struggle" to our understanding of this complex society, of the consciousness of the people within it, and of the historical and material bases of patriarchal power.

* ********** *

FOOTNOTES.

1. Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex*, (London 1971)

2. See Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics*, (London 1969)

3. 'Patriarchy' is a controversial term, retained in this discussion only with certain provisos, discussed below. For discussions concerning the use of the term see Sheila Rowbotham, 'The Trouble with Patriarchy', and S. Alexander and B. Taylor, 'In Defence of "Patriarchy"', both *in* R. Samuel (ed.), *Peoples History and Socialist Theory*, (London 1981). See also the discussion by Michele Barrett, in her *Woman's Oppression Today*, (London 1980), Chapter 8; and Gayle Rubin, 'The Traffic in Women' *in* A.M. Jaggar and P.R. Struhl (eds.), *Feminist Frameworks* (New York 1978).

4. Barrett, op. cit.

5. Women's organised resistance in South African history has been discussed in several recent papers. See, for example, C. Kros, 'Urban African Women's Organisations and Protest on the Rand from the Years 1939-1956', B.A. Hons. Dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand 1978; J. Yawitch, 'Natal 1959: The Women's Protests', paper presented to the Conference on the History of Opposition in Southern Africa, 1978; C. Walker, 'The Federation of South African Women', paper presented to the Conference on the History of Opposition in Southern Africa, 1978; B. Kaim, 'The New Surgery: The Illicit Liquor Problem on the Rand, 1920-1945', Sociology III Project, University of the Witwatersrand, 1978; I. Obery, 'Makabongwe Amakosikazi! The FSAW and mass struggle in the 50s', *Africa Perspective* 15, Autumn 1980; J. Wells, 'Women's Resistance to passes in Bloemfontein during the inter-war period', *Africa Perspective* 15, Autumn 1980; J. Yawitch, unpublished essay on the Bafurutse Revolt against passes; J. Wells, 'The Day the Town Stood Still: Women's Resistance in Potchefstroom, 1912-1930', paper presented to the History Workshop, University of the Witwatersrand, 1981; R. De Villiers, 'The Resistance to the Extension of Passes to African Women, 1954-60', unpublished paper; Cherryl Walker, 'Women in Twentieth Century South African Politics: The Federation of South African Women, its Roots, Growth and Decline', M.A. thesis, University of Cape Town, 1978; and T. Lodge, 'Women's Protest Movements in the 1950s', unpublished ms.

6. *South African Labour Bulletin*, Vol. 2, No. 4, (n.d.), contains two articles which adopt this approach: one by C. Stone, 'Industrialisation and Female Labour Force

Participation'; and one by J. Westmore and P. Townsend, 'The African Women Workers in the Textile Industry in Durban'.

7. See, for example, L. Callinicos, 'Domesticating Workers', *South African Labour Bulletin*, Vol. 2, No. 4, (n.d.)

8. J. Yawitch, 'Black Women in South Africa: Capitalism, Employment and Reproduction', B.A. Hons. Dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1978; reprinted by *Africa Perspective* 1980.

9. C. Stone, op. cit.

10. Most trenchant of the criticisms of the functionalism contained in the debate over domestic labour is that by Maxine Molyneux, 'Beyond the Domestic Labour Debate', *New Left Review*, No. 116, 1979. For other criticisms, see H. Hartmann, 'The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union', *Capital and Class*, No. 8, 1979; and M. Barrett, op. cit.

11. Hartmann, op. cit.

12. Ibid.

13. H. Wolpe, 'Capitalism and Cheap Labour Power in South Africa: From Segregation to Apartheid', *Economy and Society*, 1, 4, 1972.

14. See, for example, Yawitch, 'Black women in South Africa', op. cit.

15. This criticism is thus a commonplace amongst historians of societies undergoing proletarianisation in the 19th century. See, for example, J. Kimble, 'Concepts in Transition: Labour Migration in Southern Africa c. 1890-1910, with reference to Basutoland', paper presented to the seminar on Peasants, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London 1980; and W. Beinart and P. Delius, 'The Family and Early Migrancy in Southern Africa', paper presented to the African History Seminar, University of London School of Oriental and African Studies, 1980.

16. L. Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses', in *Lenin and Philosophy*, (New York 1971)

17. Maureen Mackintosh, 'Reproduction and Patriarchy: A Critique of Claude Meillassoux, 'Femmes, Gremiers et Capitaux', *Capital and Class*, 2, 1977, p. 119

18. Op. cit., p. 126-7. For further criticisms of the French structuralists see M. Molyneux, 'Androcentrism in Marxist Anthropology', *Critique of Anthropology*, 9 and 10, 1977.

19. See, for example, the collection edited by S. Marks and A. Atmore, *Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa*, (London 1980)

20. A task which John Wright has set himself in his article 'Men's Control of Women's Labour in the Zulu Kingdom', unpublished seminar paper, Natal University Working Group on Women, 1980.

21. W. Beinart and P. Delius, 'The Family', op.cit.

22. Wright, op. cit.

23. See S. Marks, and A. Atmore, 'Introduction', in Marks and Atmore, *Economy and Society*, op. cit., p. 10

24. As Rubin says, 'We (should) look for the ultimate locus of women's oppression within the traffic in women, rather than within the traffic in merchandise ... Women are given in marriage, taken in battle, exchanged for favours, sent as tribute, traded, bought and sold' ... The exchange of women, she suggests, 'is a profound perception of a system in which women do not have full rights to themselves', 'The Traffic', op. cit., pp. 160-1

25. R. Brenner, 'The Origins of Capitalist Development: a Critique of Neo-Smithian Marxism', *New Left Review*, 104, 1979

26. Wolpe, 'Capitalism and Cheap Labour Power', op. cit., p.

27. This, for example, is the use to which the term is put by Millett and Firestone, op. cit.

28. Thus both Rubin, op. cit., and Barrett, op. cit., wish to replace the term 'patriarchy' with other terms; Barrett thinks 'patriarchy' could be usefully used in its narrower sense, to refer to 'rule by the father', and rule by older men over younger men.

29. Chris Middleton, for example, uses the term 'patriarchy' in a dynamic and historical manner, in his 'Peasants, Patriarchy and the Feudal Mode of Production in England: A Marxist Appraisal', *Sociological Review*, Vol. 29, No. 1, 1981

30. See Kate Young's brilliantly executed analysis of the effects of mercantile capital on the place of women in a remote Mexican region, 'Modes of appropriation and the sexual division of labour' *in* A. Kuhn and A. Wolpe (eds.), *Feminism and Materialism*, (London 1980).

31. S. Marks and E. Unterhalter, 'Women and the Migrant Labour System in Southern Africa', unpublished paper, Lusaka 1978.

32. Ibid.

33. John Wright, 'Men's Control of Women's Labour', op. cit.

34. Ibid.

35. Hilda Bernstein, *For Their Triumphs and For Their Tears: Women in Apartheid South Africa*, (London 1975). Her views are based on those of Simons, see below.

36. H.J. Simons, in his *African Women: Their Legal Status in South Africa*, (London 1968), is perhaps the most persuasive exponent of the view that the subordination of women in 'traditional' society was tempered by the granting to them of status and rights, and that to ignore this fact is to adopt the moralising ideological stance of missionaries of the time.

37. Monica Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, (Oxford 1936), pp. 106-7. See also her 'The effects of contact with Europeans on the status of Pondo women', *Africa*, VI, 1933

38. See I. Schapera, *Married Life in an African Tribe*, (Harmondsworth 1971), p. 160

39. See S. Plaatje, *Native Life in South Africa*, (London 1916), quoted in J. Yawitch, 'Black Women', op. cit.

40. As, for example, Charles van Onselen has done in *Chibaro*, (London 1976), where he attributes the different places in the hierarchy of the black working class, of various 'tribes' to the differential rates, degree and timing of their proletarianisation.

41. This is based on a conception of 'feudal' patriarchy derived from the perceptive and illuminating analyses of both Chris Middleton, in his 'Peasants, Patriarchy', op. cit., and in C. Middleton, 'The Sexual Division of Labour in Feudal England', *New Left Review*, 113-4, 1979; and Roberta Hamilton, *The Liberation of Women*, (London 1978)

42. This is not to suggest that a certain status was not conferred upon Boer women within the patriarchal structure as well.

43. However the point about the feudal household, and this applies to the 'Boer' one too, was that it was a site of productive activity - in contrast to the modern capitalist one, in which production is socialised and removed from the domestic domain. See E. Zaretsky, *'Capitalism, the Family and Personal Life*, (London 1976)

44. This discussion is based upon the Carnegie Commission Report, Vol. V(b), *The Mother and the Daughter of the Poor Family*, (Stellenbosch 1932), pp. 169-97

45. See the Report of the *Transvaal Indigency Commission, 1906-8*, (Pretoria 1908); and the Carnegie Commission Report, Vol. 1, *Rural Impoverishment and Rural Exodus*, for the background to this argument.

46. Carnegie Commission Report, Vol. 1, op. cit., pp. 214-229. This is confirmed by Solly Sachs in his book *Rebel's Daughters*, (London 1957)

47. Carnegie Commission, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 215

48. Ibid.

49. C. Bundy, *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry*, (London 1979)

50. Carnegie Commission, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 60

51. This is suggested by Colin Murray in his *Keeping House in Lesotho*, unpublished thesis, Cambridge, 1976.

52. B. Bozzoli, *The Political Nature of a Ruling Class* London 1981), p. 54

53. Bozzoli, op. cit., p. 87

54. Anna Davin, 'Imperialism and Motherhood', *History Workshop Journal*, 5, Spring 1978, especially pp. 12-24.

55. R. Davies, 'Mining Capital, the State and Unskilled White Workers in South Africa, 1901-1913', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 3, 1, October 1976.

56. The critique that follows owes much to the work of Charles van Onselen in his 'The World the Mine-Owners Made' in *Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand, 1890-1914*, 2 vols., (forthcoming), as well as to Maxine Molyneux's thought provoking 'Beyond the Domestic Labour Debate', op. cit.

57. Bozzoli, op. cit., p. 96

58. See C. van Onselen, 'The Witches of Suburbia' in *Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand, 1890-1914*, op. cit.

59. C. van Onselen, in 'The Witches', op. cit., discusses the transition from male to female, as does J. Cock in *Maids and Madams*, (Johannesburg 1980)

60. J. Cock, 'Disposable Nannies', African Studies Institute Seminar Paper, University of the Witwatersrand, 1981

61. L. Callinicos, in 'Domesticating Workers', *South African Labour Bulletin*, Vol. 2, No. 4, (n.d.), puts forward this concept.

62. See J. Shindler, 'The effects of influx-control and labour-saving appliances on domestic service', *South African Labour Bulletin*, Vol. 6, No. 1, July 1980

63. L. Freed, *The Problem of European Prostitution in Johannesburg*, Johannesburg 19); and C. van Onselen, 'Prostitutes and Proletarians', in *Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand, 1890-1914*, op. cit.

64. The Carnegie Commission Report, Vol. V(b), *The Mother and the Daughter*, op. cit., refers to the entry of young white women into domestic service, although the earlier volume of the same Report, (Vol. II, *The Poor White*) suggests that there existed 'a dislike for this kind of employment', p. 138. See also C. van Onselen, 'The Witches', op. cit.

65. Carnegie Commission Report, Vol. 1, op. cit., pp. 214-220; see also Hansi Pollak, 'Women Workers in Witwatersrand Industries', *South African Journal of Economics*, 1, 1935.

66. See S. Sachs, *Rebel's Daughters*, op. cit.

67. C. van Onselen, 'The Main Reef Road into the working class' in *Studies*, op. cit.

68. S. Sachs, *Rebel's Daughters*, op. cit.

69. Cherryl Walker, 'Suffrage and Passes; Two South African Women's Campaigns', Nusas Women's Seminar paper, Stutterheim 1975.

70. See Kate Showers, 'A Note on Women, Conflict and Migrant Labour', *South African Labour Bulletin*, Vol. 6, No. 4, November 1980, as well as Colin Murray, 'Keeping House in Lesotho', op. cit.

71. J. Yawitch, 'The Bafurutse Revolt', op.cit., p. 3.

72. Thus the thrust of Kate Showers' paper is to emphasise the contradictory effects of migrant labour on women, with many of the older generation still being controlled by men both physically and through appeal to the norms and expectations of patriarchal culture. Marks and Unterhalter in 'Women and the Migrant Labour System', op. cit., are at pains to keep away from any temptation to make blanket assessments of the effects of migrant labour.

73. L. Clarke and J. Ngobese depict this suffering in their survey, *Women without Men*, (Durban 1975), a study of the Nqutu district in Kwazulu; as do J. Yawitch, 'Black Women', op. cit., in which the resettlement camp Winterveld is examined; and Colin Murray, in his 'Keeping House in Lesotho', op. cit., as well as in his 'The Effects of Migrant Labour: A Review of the Evidence from Lesotho', *South African Labour Bulletin*, Vol. 6, No. 4, 1980

74. For reasons of space, more details of the precise ways in which women came to occupy these positions cannot be given. See, for further evidence, D. Gaitskell, 'Laundry, Liquor and 'playing Ladish': African Women in Johannesburg 1903-39'; B. Kaim, 'The New Surgery: the Illicit Liquor Problem on the Rand, 1920-1945, unpublished essay; E. Hellman, *Rooiyard*, (Johannesburg 1935); E. Hellman, 'The Importance of Beer-Brewing in an Urban African Yard', *Bantu Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 1935; C. van Onselen, 'The Witches', op. cit., and 'Prostitutes and Proletarians', op. cit.; J. Wells, 'The Day the Town Stood Still', op. cit.; J. Barrett, 'Knitmore: a Study in the Relationship between Sex and Class', B.A. Hons. Dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1981; and J. Cock, *Maids and Madams*, op. cit.

75. See B. Kaim, 'The New Surgery', op. cit.; and J. Wells, 'The Day the Town Stood Still', op. cit., for discussion of women's resistance in the spheres of liquor selling and lodging respectively. C. Kros, op. cit., examines protest more generally.

76. The following discussion is based, amongst others, on L. Longmore, *The Dispossessed: A Study of the Sex Life of Bantu Women in and around Johannesburg*, (London 1959), and B.A. Pauw, *The Second Generation*, (London 1963)

77. See M. Brandel, *Black Women in Search of God*, (London 1962), and C. Kros, 'Urban African Women's Organisations', op. cit.

78. Kros, op. cit.

79. For an overview and comprehensive critique of this debate, which is a complex and vast one, see Molyneux, op. cit.

80. For example, as in the case of capital's manipulation of the white family, discussed above; or in the case of housing policies in townships, which assume a nuclear family structure, or attempt to impose it upon resistant residents.

81. Both Lodge and Kros have made this point in their essays cited in Fn. 5 above.

82. Thus Kros suggests that 'what emerges most insistently' from the campaigns against passes, is the emphasis on the undermining of "womanhood" as it is "traditionally" understood', op. cit., p. 58

83. Kros, on pp. 58-9, argues that 'protests are frequently registered in terms which represent the carrying of passes as a fundamental denial of the woman's right to privacy and respect. Mr C.D. Ncombo ... catches the general feeling nicely: The African women will strongly resist the issue of reference books to them. They will feel that their sacredness is being invaded. In the long run there will be no respect for the woman as required by Western civilization. The Government ought to have thought of something better for women, something that will preserve their dignity.'

84. Christine Delphy attempts to argue this, in her *The Main Enemy*, (London 1977); see, for a similar argument, M. Mackintosh, 'Domestic Labour and the Household', in S. Burman, (ed.), *Fit Work for Women*, (London 1979)

85. E. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, (New York, 1972)

86. H.G. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925*, (Oxford 1976)